

Addis Ababa University
College of Social Sciences
Department of History

The Evolution of Tenancy in Harärgé (Ca. 1887-1975)

By

Mohammed Hassen

A Dissertation Submitted to
The Department of History in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

June 2016

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Advisor

Professor Bahru Zewde

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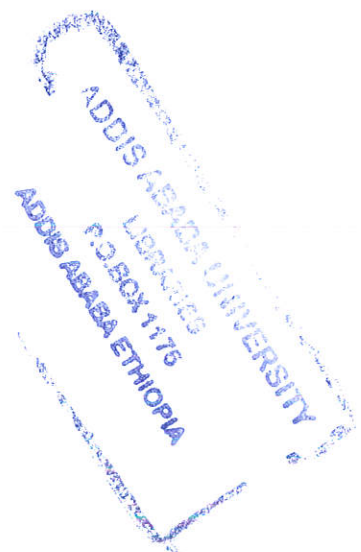
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Abstract

For most of its history, Harärgé's rural community did not get a proper historical study. In an attempt to fill this gap, this dissertation explores the agrarian history of Harärgéca 1887-1975. It examines the economic, socio-cultural, legal and political history of tenancy. As a vast and spacious ethno-geographical region, Harärgé demonstrated variegated economic formations before the conquest. Harär town and its environs settled by the Oromo agriculturalists practiced a well-developed plow-based agriculture and cultivated cereal crops such as sorghum, maize, wheat and barley sufficient for their own subsistence while pastoral economy predominated the Čärčär plateau and some peripheral arid areas.

The political and military processes of the late 19th century which led to the conquest and incorporation of Harärgé gave rise to the control over the means of production, mainly land. Subsequently, the transfer of property right was sanctioned by the state's land grant and land sales. Shaping a new land holding pattern in their own favor, the settler communities nurtured cereal culture in all parts of Harärgé and established the ascendancy of crop agriculture in the economic formation. The subject of this dissertation is therefore tracing the economic transformation wrought by property ownership and the changing patterns of production relations from the indigenous means of subsistence to the mälkäñña system since the conquest to 1935 and then to the full-fledged landlord-tenancy relation since 1941.

Since land without labor was worthless, the process of privatization of land wrought competition for labor. As labor was abundant relative to land, there emerged different forms of labor mobilization of the land hungry productive force. One of the mechanisms through which this unequal distribution of land and labor was reconciled was tenancy. Cognizant of this, this study tries to demonstrate that the evolution and spread of tenancy in Harärgé was intimately associated with the transfer of land from the indigenes to the settler communities. Within that framework the central thesis of the dissertation is that from among the different agrarian problems that hindered agricultural productivity in rural Hararge, tenancy figures prominently.

This study views tenancy as a means of surplus appropriation in the form of rent, produce and labor by the landowning class. Surplus was appropriated through different forms of tenancy arrangements such as sharecropping, contract tenancy and labor tenancy. From these sharecropping was the dominant form. It was also an indispensable condition for the survival of the landowning settler communities who were grossly undercapitalized in the sense that many would have been unable to profit from their land without it. On top of the high rental payment in the form of cash or produce, tenants were required to fulfill a number of obligations and sundry labor requirements, which aggravated the plight of tenants and undermined agricultural productivity.

The dissertation analyzes these and related themes within eight chapters by using complementary sources of evidence. Oral data were carefully collected through interview. Wealth of archival sources from various centers were also extensively used. By bringing together these sources with the ideas of several authorities on peasant studies, the study attempts to analyze the overall picture of stagnating agricultural production and the impoverished living conditions of Harärgé's rural community.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation owes a debt to a number of individuals and institutions. Without their support, cooperation and friendship during my stay at the university over the years, its birth would not have been possible. I am particularly indebted to my advisor Professor Bahru Zewde for his constructive and invaluable comments in the course of my dissertation work. When I was assigned by the department to work under the supervision of Professor Bahru, the initial topic of my dissertation, *Land and Agriculture in Harärgé*, was too murky and unmanageable to handle. It was only on Professor's thoughtful and critical advice that it was finally decided to focus just on tenancy, which I found to be so interesting and attractive only lately. As my supervisor, Professor Bahru has spent a great deal of his precious time reading, reviewing and shaping my work meticulously. In short, since the time of my undergraduate studies in the department, I have benefited a lot from his wit, unique professionalism, friendly approach, discipline and intellectual guidance.

During my field work, a number of individuals and institutions contributed to the success of this study. Most of all I should thank my informants who sacrificed their precious time and shared me their knowledge and experiences on local and regional historical developments. Along with them, many others deserve a special gratitude for facilitating conditions and for providing me protection against possible and real threats to my security. Besides fixing appointments with my oral informants often in very tight schedules, they created an atmosphere conducive to the data gathering process in the face of security problems existent in rural areas.

People who are working in National Archive and Library Agency (NALA), WäldäMäsqäl Tariku Memorial Research Centre (WMTMRC), the manuscript section of the Institute of Ethiopian

Studies (IES), Haräri National Regional State Administration archive and East Harärgé Administrative archive also deserve special thanks. In spite of the unorganized nature of archives, especially in WMTMRC and in Harär, and the health challenges the archives posed in almost all archival centers, the archivists have helped me greatly in accessing the requisite documents. Besides, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the IES librarians who have patently availed materials I was looking for.

I also extend my special thanks and appreciations to all staff members of the Department of History of the Addis Ababa University. Especially Dr. Belete Bizuneh, Dr. Wudu Tafete, Professor Tesema Ta'a, Dr. Teclehaymanot G/Sillasie, Dr. Tekalign W/Mariam and Professor Shiferaw Bekele deserve my heartfelt gratitude. The informal discussions I made with them have helped me greatly in one way or another in shaping my thinking in my work. In addition to his ideas, Dr. Belete has greatly helped me in accessing materials which are not easily available in the library through long period of loans.

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Key to Transliteration system

- I. The following transliteration system used by the institute of Ethiopian studies is adopted to spell Amharic words and names

Vowel	Symbol	Example	Amharic
1 st order	ä	Abäbä	አበበ
2 nd order	u	Ayu	አዩ
3 rd order	i	Iyyasu	ኢየሱስ
4 th order	a	Ras	ራስ
5 th order	é	Qés	ቂስ
6 th order	e	Meder	ሞድር
7 th order	o	Qolla	ቆላ

II. Consonants are represented as follows

Consonant	Symbol	Example
ሸ	Sh	Shäwa
ቸ	Ch	Gerazmach
ኸ	Ñ	mälkañña
ዠ	Ž	Gäž
ጀ	J	Däjjazmach
ገ	G	Gälämsö
ቀ	Q	Qälad
ጠ	T	Taha
ጨ	Č	čärčär
ጸ	Ts	Tser

VI. Geminating should always be indicated doubling the consonant

E.g. Abba አባ

On the other hand all words of Oromo origin are spelled according to Oromo alphabet i.e

Qube

Key to Qube

I. Vowels

Short	Long	Example
A	aa	<i>Walaabu</i>
E	ee	<i>Ulee</i>
I	ii	<i>miila</i>
O	oo	<i>oboroo</i>
U	uu	<i>muuda</i> /Odaa Buultuum

II. Sequence of more than two vowels is possible only if separated by glottal stop (.)

Example: Re'ee, Bu'ee

III. There are five paired phonemes in qubee that are formed by combining different consonant letters. These are ch, sh, ny, ph and dh. Out of these, ch and sh have English equivalents.

Oromo	English	Example
Ch	Ch	<i>Gudifacha/Kombolcha</i>
Sh	Sh	<i>Shägoye</i>

The remaining three (dh, ny and ph) have no English equivalents.

Examples: Dh: Voiceless, dental, implosive as in “*dhadha*” (butter) or “*dhadhacha*” (legal court)

Ny: Voiceless, palatal, nasal as in “*Nyapha*” (enemy)

Ph: Voiceless, ejective as in “*Kophe*” (shoes)

VI. Of the consonants (C) and (X) have different sounds while the remaining have almost the same sound as the English consonants. They would be read as follows:

Afaan Oromo

Meaning

C : *Cafee*

Parliament or assembly

X: *Qurxumi*

Fish

Glossary

Abägaz governor of a wide area and was assisted by a number of *mālkāñña* in his district. He received his *gibir* from the inhabitants of the administrative area

Arafa tax tax introduced in Harär by the Egyptians. It was paid on the Muslim feast of *arafa* and the amount was one maria Theresa dollar.

Aṭbiyadañña the lowest local official that link peasants and the administration above it. Its origin was in *rest* areas but with the gradual expansion of the Ethiopian empire to the south through military conquest, it became common also in the southern regions.

Bajirond an honorary title conferred upon a treasurer.

Balabat Lowest local official link between peasants and administration in areas conquered in the late 19th century. *Balabat* were elected from the local population and it literally means one who has father.

Blata Page.

Bulcha tax paid for the services of cattle grazing in Western Harärgé such as in Qunne, Gubaqoricha, Mäsäla, Hancaret. The land is not suitable for agricultural activities and is with salt water.

Burqa Clan chiefs of the local community in Chercher who knew the culture and the territorial boundary of each clan among the Ittu. The title could be heritable from father to son as long as the son wins the support of the clan members and knew the culture and territorial boundary of each clan. With the conquest, they were integrated into the administration of the central government.

Damina chief of a lineage group among the Eastern Oromo, who came to power with the decline of the *rabadori*. His power rests on the people and was responsible to adjudicate blood compensation and other conflicts within the community.

Däjasmach a politico- military title below *ras* which literally means 'Commander of the Gate'. It is conferred upon members of the aristocracy

Diwan a land registration office set up in Harär to register holdings and to record their transfer through purchase, inheritance, or any other way.

Enderassé title for provincial governorers under Emperor Haile Sillassie which literally means deputy or a substitute in the absence of the Emperor.

Fitawrari a politico- military title given to members of the nobility which literally means commander of the vanguard and is below *däjazmach*.

Garada the chief subordinate of the *damina*. He was supposed to collect tax as his power emanated from the clan land administration. He was given 600 *jerib* as his *rest* land.

Girazmach a military title given of members of the nobility which literally means 'Commander of the left'.

Guza community labor in Harärgé mobilized for different agricultural and non agricultural community services

Hujja a document for land entitlement which was issued from the *diwan*

Jerib a unit of measurement of land applied in Harär and its surroundings. Its origins are traced from Arabic.

Malaq a local official below *garada* and has 300 *jerib* land as his *rest* land. He also administers the equitable distribution of irrigation water in agricultural fields.

Mälkäñña local governors during the imperial times whose remuneration was received in the form of *gibir* from the inhabitants of the administrative area.

Milki land owned by the Harärias their *rest* within the five km radius of the town.

Miri a type of tax in Harär collected from the Haräri *rest* lands i.e *milki* surrounding the town of Harär

Mofär Zämät tenant who did not construct his house on the *qälad* of the landlord and comes from other settlement of his own.

Qäññazmach a politico-military title which literally means Commander of the right flank and is above *gerazmach*.

Qolo Maret land owned by the *garada*. It was 300 *jerib* out of the total 600 *jerib* and on which the *garada* can install tenants or give to other peasants in return for serving him as his *gabar*. Sometimes it was called *rarogarada*.

Ras the highest military rank conferred on both the commoners and the nobility. Literally it means 'head', Commander the army'.

Shibeta Plot of land in Harärgé measured more by its produce than its actual size. Its etymology is traced from the Arabs.

Shuna a granary built and owned by the government in which tithe (*asrat*) was collected and redistributed for government servants especially for soldiers.

INTRODUCTION

The Study

A little more than a decade after the incorporation of Harärgé into the expanding imperial state of Ethiopia, the British traveler, Count Edward Gleichen, commented on the high level of taxation and tribute imposed on Harärgé peasants by the Shāwan administration. According to him the *mālkāñña* system ground down the conquered people with heavy taxes, leaving them with little incentive to improve their primitive methods of cultivation. He argued that unless the prevailing conditions undergo a fundamental change, the native cultivators would confine their energies to the production of the bare necessities for existence.¹

In retrospect, the *mālkāñña* system as depicted by Gleichen was far better than the succeeding landlord-tenant agrarian relations. An outgrowth of the *mālkāñña-gäbbar* relations, the landlord-tenant relation was much harsher than its predecessor. As a mode of production it evolved until it reached its full-fledged production relation in the post Italian period.

Tenancy and land lord tenant relation has been the subject of scholarly debate in Ethiopia. On the origin of tenancy in southern provinces, which Harärgé is also part, different scholarly works were done and the overwhelming majority of them relate its origin with the conquest of the southern provinces in the late 19th Century. As part of that effort, several Ethiopian and expatriate scholars have suggested various explanations. From Ethiopian writers Gebru Tarek, Dessalegn Rahmato, Bahru Zewde, Shiferaw Bekele, Bizuwork Zewde, Tekalegn W/Mariyam,

¹ Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menilek*, 1897 (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), p.70. Gleichen was appointed as intelligence officer to Ethiopia after Adwa. His book was the first account of the British Mission to Shāwa. It gives a valuable glimpse of Harärgé province in spite of his roadside biases.

Workineh Abebe, and Ketebo Abdiyo, can be cited as examples.² Some of the few foreign scholars who contributed on the subject are John Cohen, Arne Lexander, H.S Mann, J.C.D Lawrence, Donald Crummey, Michael Stahl and Siegfried Pausewang.³ Like Ethiopian scholars almost all of them agree that land grants to northern soldiers and settlers, privatization of land in the conquered provinces, and the expansion of mechanized agriculture were the commonest factors causing tenancy in the southern provinces. Probably due to the focus of their research, Bizuwork and Workineh have tried to uncover additional causes in Arsi and Käffa respectively. Accordingly, the increased level of taxation, land sales, land measurement and re-measurement were discussed as additional factors that raised the tenancy rate in these provinces. These were also commonly applied in Harärgé.

² Gebru Tarek, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest. Peasant Revolts in the 20th Century*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).; Dessalegn Rahmato, "Conditions of the Ethiopian Peasantry" Challenge *In North African Studies* 1970, Pp.25-49.; BahruZewde. *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974*. (London: James Curry, 1991).; Shiferaw Bekele. "The Evolution of Land Tenure in Imperial Era" In *an Economic History of Modern Ethiopia*. Sheferaw Bekele (ed).; CODESRIA, 1995.; Tekalegn W/Mariam,, "A City and its Hinterland: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa (1887-1974)" Ph D Dissertation .Boston University, 1995.; Bizuwork Zewde. "The Problem of Tenancy and Tenancy Bills with Particular Reference to Arsi" MA Thesis. (Addis Ababa University, 1992).; Ketebo Abdiyo. "The Political Economy of Land and Agrarian Development in Arsi 1941-1991" Ph.D dissertation. (Addis Ababa University, 2010).; Workineh Abebe. "Land Tenure and Agricultural History of Käffa. 1941-1974." MA Thesis. (Addis Ababa University, 2005).

³ John, M. Cohen, "Effects of Green Revolution Strategies on Tenants and Small- scale Landowners in the Chilalo Region of Ethiopia" Reprinted from *Journal of Developing Areas*. Vol.9, no.3. Macomb: 1975, pp.335-358.; John M ,Cohen, and Weintraub. *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia. The Social Background to a Revolution*. (Koninklijke van: Guorcum.B.V Company, 1975).; Donald Crummey,. *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia from Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).; Arne Lexander. "Land ownership, Tenancy and Social Organization in the Wajji Area." CADU Publication, No.50, 1970.; H.S, Mann. "Land Tenure in Chore. A Pilot Study." *Monograph on Ethiopian Land Tenure*. No.2., 1965. Siegfried, Pausewang, *Peasants, Land and Society. A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*. (Munich: Welforum Verlag, 1983).; Michael ,Stahl, *Contradictions in Agricultural Development: a study of three Minimum Package Projects in Southern Ethiopia*. (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1973). Research Report No.14.

The works of these scholars show that the percentage of tenancy in the southern provinces was high. According to Cohen and Weintraub around 60% of the southern peasantry were tenants. Gebru also argues that well over half of the southern peasants were tenants. Mann on his part claims that although the tenancy figure varies in the country as a whole, about 2/3 of the farmers of Ethiopia are tenants. Bahru also claims that between 50%-65% of all holdings were considered to be under tenancy.

The figure for Harärgé differs among scholars. Bahru gives us somehow a higher figure i.e. 75%. On the other hand the figure that Cohen and Weintraub gave, i.e. 49%, appears more conservative for the tenant population in Harärgé as a percentage of total rural population.⁴ The fact that there has been a frequent administrative adjustment for Harärgé might have contributed for this low figure.

John Cohen, who has done an extensive work from the perspective of rural sociology in Chilalo region of Arsi province, discussed the unintended consequences of the Green Revolution. In an attempt to benefit the small scale landowners and tenants, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) initiated the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) in 1967. Sharing the same view, Donald Crummey also discusses the impact of the Green Revolution technology and its accelerating role in the eviction of thousands of peasants thus contributing for the creation of tenants as landlords began to use tractors on lands which were previously worked by peasants. According to these scholars the project started out to increase the peasants' income through a package of measures beginning with the introduction of better seeds,

⁴ See footnote Numbers 2 and 3. Addis Hiwot claims a rather inflated figure for Čärčär province by claiming that 91% of the holdings were under tenancy which implies it was the highest figure for the country in general. However, he does not indicate the source. Addis Hiwot, *Ethiopia: from Autocracy to Revolution*. (London: Merlin Press, Review of African Political Economy, 1975), p.50.

fertilizers, new farming methods and tools, high-breed cattle and poultry, etc. However; it ended up accelerating the eviction of small scale farmers that was already set in motion by the introduction of mechanization of agriculture and turning them into tenancy.⁵ Although package programs were not implemented in Harärgé, Cohen's and Crummey's works have their own relevance since in the late 1960s eviction was a common practice in Asäbot area by investors who had engaged in commercial agriculture.

The findings of the Central Statistical Office in 1968 in its national sample survey of eleven provinces also indicate that the majority of peasants in the southern provinces were tenants farming less than ½ of the agricultural land. The same survey also estimated that 10-40% of the landowners in the southern provinces were absentee owners who controlled 12-48% of the land.⁶ These absentee landowners did not engage in any productive agricultural activity.

It was the general position of most donor nations, external advisors and international development agencies that until land and agrarian reforms were implemented, tenancy exploitation would continue to be one of the principal characteristics of the Ethiopian land tenure dynamics. A corollary of this development was that Ethiopia would continue to rank as one of the poorest, most underdeveloped countries in the world until profound changes were made in the land tenure system.

The Ethiopian government responded by drafting legislations promoting tenant security, limiting rents, providing for measurement and registration of land and taxing unutilized land to force

⁵ John, M. Cohen, "Effects of Green Revolution Strategies on Tenants and Small- scale Landowners in the Chilalo Region of Ethiopia" Reprinted from *Journal of Developing Areas*. Vol.9,no.3.Macomb:1975,pp.335-358.; Donald,Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia from Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

⁶ Central Statistics Office, National Survey Sample of Arsi,Begémeder,GamoGofa,Gojam,Harärgé,Illubabor, Käffa,Shäwa, Sidamo,Tegray, Wälläga and Wällo (Addis Ababa,1963-68).

landowners to put their holdings under production, payment of compensation for improvements paid by the landlord upon the termination of tenancy relationship, pre-emption etc.⁷ In fact the draft legislation was short of the most fundamental issue of land reform –ownership of land. Even then, the conservative political forces considered the draft legislation as too radical and prevented its passing and implementation until they were ousted by the 1974 revolution. Thus tenancy remained a fundamental obstacle for agricultural development during the old regime.

The condition of tenancy and tenant's life in Harärgé had similar features with the other southern provinces where tenancy was prevalent except some minor differences. Based on the CSA report of 1968, 99% of the economically active population in Harärgé was engaged in occupations pertaining to agriculture. This implies almost all of the population of Harärgé had a rural livelihood implying the central position land had in Harärgé's economy. Based on the same source 49% of the households rented their cultivable land, 46% were owner cultivators while 5% were part owners and part renters.⁸ Thus about 54% of the households were tenants.

The origin of tenancy in Harärgé could be traced back to the Shāwan conquest. After the incorporation of west Harärgé in 1886 and East Harärgé in 1887 following the battle of Čällänqo, the Shāwan administration under *Ras* Mäkonnen confiscated land from the local population and redistributed the rights of using the produce of the soil and the labor of the natives among the settler soldiers according to their ranks. Subsequent settler members of the family and relatives of the newcomers obtained huge land grants. The peasants were dispossessed of their ancestral

⁷ Imperial Government of Ethiopia, Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C) .Draft Legislation on Landlord-Tenant Relations.“Bä Balärestena Čisña Mäkakäle Y alewen Ginuñenät Lämāwāsän Yāwāṭa Awaj”Amharic Version. National Archive, File No. 01-01-09.1963 E.C;04-04-1965 E.C.

⁸ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Central Statistics Office, Sample Survey Report on Harärgé Province (Addis Ababa, November 1968), National Sample Survey Report No.12.In fact the CSA report lacks reliability and is not methodological sound. Its figures are on the conservative side and are not representative .In spite of this; however, they throw light on the general pattern of the situation.

lands and were reduced to tenancy. When the settlers took the land, they also gained control over the people on it. This allowed them to extract surplus labor in a variety of ways. They benefited, for instance from the labor invested in the past in the form of cleared and cultivated lands.

In fact tenancy was introduced in a gradual process until it became full-fledged after the decline of the *mālkāñña* system. Tenancy spread in Harärgé through a large scale eviction of the native peasants by the newcomers. More broadly, it was a consequence of the intensification of privatization of land ownership and the greed of settler landlords to generate as much income as possible from the land they occupied.

This had become a major cause of instability in rural Harärgé. Thousands of the evicted rural cultivators continued to live precariously on lands belonging to the newcomers. The rural cultivators had a latent claim on the land which their ancestors had cultivated and lived on for generations. But due to their eviction, they had no alternative place to live and no alternative means of survival. The evicted peasants swelled the ranks of the absolutely landless and the destitute. They found themselves at the mercy of other landowners for shelter. As a result, contrary to West African societies where land is abundant and labor scarce,⁹ in Harärgé, due primarily to the unequal ownership of land, an agrarian economy commonly described as “labor surplus” was created.

As new owners of the land, the landlords instituted new methods of leasing the land and squeezing the products out of it. Hence through the terms and conditions dictated by them and with minimum interference from the central government, they rented land to the landless. The

⁹ A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa*. (London:Longman,1973) For specific cases such as Ghana See Gareth Austin, “Labor and Land in Ghana,1874-1939: A Shifting Ratio and an Institutional Revolution”, *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol.47.No.1.(2007), pp.95-120

tenants had no alternative but to negotiate a share of their produce and exchange a portion of their household labor for conditional access to land.

The central government rarely if ever organized peasant production. It was the *mālkāñña* who was imposed on the people and collected agricultural resources on behalf of the state in the form of tribute. Rather than directly controlling, it was through the *mālkāñña* that the state got access to the resources which the former provided with little amount after preserving the lions' share of what was produced. Hence, there was no elaborate system that governs the flow of tribute to the coffers of the central government. In the absence of strong state machinery there developed an elaborate mechanism of extracting surplus by the landlords through rent, taxes and tribute. In fact these same economic forces were the political elites of local administration. By using the authority exercised through the government office they were in charge of, they manipulated the flow of property into their own coffers.

In an agricultural system where small scale peasant production provides a hand to mouth existence and where tenancy features prominently, it is natural for agricultural production to stagnate. The effect of this was low productivity, apathy, hopelessness, low saving capacity and low standard of living for the mass of the agricultural population. Overall, the extractive nature of tenancy was responsible for depriving the virtues of peasant proprietorship. It is the underlying cause of stagnating crop production. But this fundamental aspect of rural economy is not yet given the scholarly attention it deserves.

This work is an attempt to explore this prevalent agrarian problem. It is essentially an agrarian history of Harārgé province from 1887-1975. It is the study of broader issues of economic, political and social dynamics of tenants, landlord and state relations and interactions. Placing

tenants and their relations with the landlord at the center stage, the study tries to analyze the development of rural differentiation and impoverishment due to landlord extraction from tenants of their agricultural surplus through various tenancy arrangements and labor exploitation. In this process of surplus extraction, the state is viewed as a partisan political force that was entrusted with the role of keeping the hegemonic position of the landlord and its associated settler community. That very role also kept the state very weak and disadvantaged as it failed to collect the necessary revenue through taxes. The study tries to trace the non-harmonious state –peasant relations and the process of keeping rural producers in their subordinate position to its backdrop of conquest and a plethora of peasant reaction to state intervention and landlord exploitation. More precisely, it is a study of the historical interaction among large –scale political, economic and social forces and the dynamics of small scale societies.

This introduction has five main sections: The first, already presented above, is the statement of the problem. The second section is dedicated to a discussion of the temporal and spatial scope of the study. The third part will situate the study in the context of the relevant literature while the fourth part deals with the research methodology and a discussion of the sources used. The final section describes the organization of the dissertation.

Mapping Harärgé in Space and Time

Harärgé is a province located to the East of the Great Rift Valley which dissects Ethiopia roughly into two halves. It is characterized by diverse physical features including rugged terrain, steep hills and mountainous landscapes. Harärgé plateau as a geographical region extends from Čärčär Mountains southeast of the Awash valley to the plains of Hargeisa in Northern Somalia. The highland of Harärgé forms the middle and eastern section of the Ethiopian southeastern

highlands. It consists of three major geographic regions:¹⁰ the Čärčär or western highlands, the Garamulata or the central highlands, and the Harär or Eastern highlands. These regions will be treated at some length in chapter one.

The northern part of Harärgé descends precipitously into the Awash valley and the hot dry plains of southern Afar. To the south it is bordered by the arid and semi-arid region of the Somali plateau. Tilting from north-west to southeast, the plateau descends through gentle slopes to Somalia and the Indian Ocean.

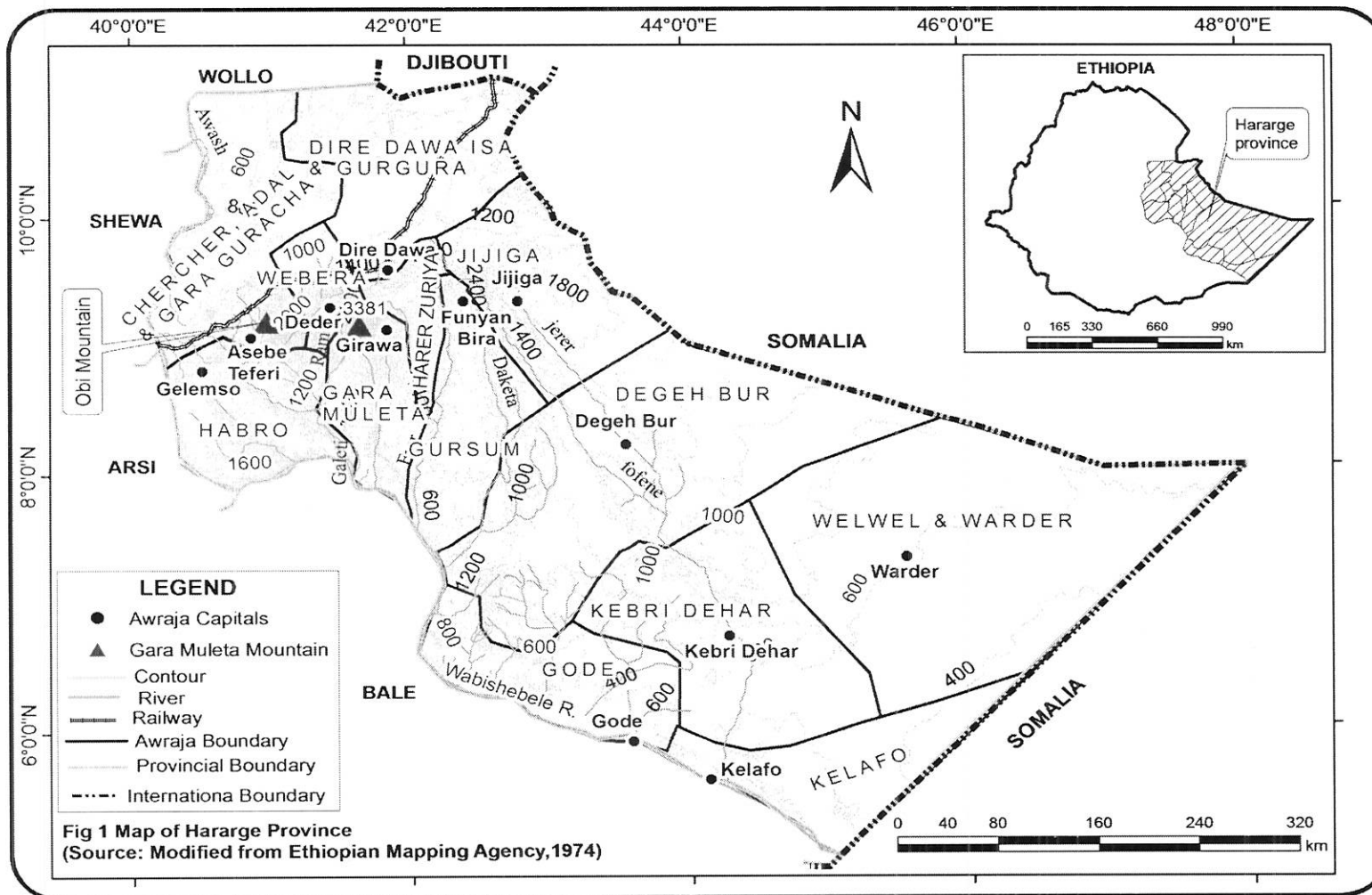
By far the greater part of Harärgé is *wäyna däga* or temperate. *Däga* (high altitude) is prevalent in the southwest and Čärčär where elevations of above 8500 feet are common. *Qolla* (hot lowlands) also covers a considerable part of Harärgé, including the Somali region, the Dire Dawa area, the valley of BurqaTirtira settled by the Aniya and the lowlands of Čärčär.

Agriculture has always been the mainstay of the population in the *däga* and *wäyna däga* parts of the province. Using primitive techniques of production, the cultivators produced cereals such as sorghum, maize, wheat, barley, legumes, tree crops such as coffee, and *čät*. These agriculturalists also used to practice animal husbandry before major transformation took place that forced them to drastically decrease the number of their cattle due to the shortage of pastureland. This part of Harärgé is suitable for human settlement and crop cultivation. As a result the majority of Harärgé's population is found in this zone. It is interesting to note that when the settler community, mainly the Amhara, settled in Harärgé, in the wake of the conquest it was on the *däga* and *wäyna däga* parts that they did so. They have settled in nearly all parts of the central

¹⁰ Clarke Harding Brook, "Settlement of the Eastern [Oromo] Härärgé Province, Ethiopia" (PhD Dissertation in Geography, Lincoln Nebraska, 1956). For most of the discussions in this section and in chapter one on the physical landscape of Härärgé Brook's discussion is closely followed.

highlands. Many reside in towns and small market centers, but most are cultivators in hamlets and rural villages. Their settlement resulted in a large number of native cultivators being evicted from these parts of Harärgé.

As a result it was in these parts of Harärgé that tenancy became the predominant feature of rural life. The overwhelming majority of these native cultivators who became victims of eviction were Oromo belonging to the Afran Qällo sub groups and the Ittu. Their settlement can be traced from Mächara, a small town in Western Čärčär, all the way to Činakson. The details of these developments will be discussed in chapter one. Thus, spatially the *däga* and *wäyna däga* parts of Harärgé will be the main focus of this study. This included the sub provinces of Čärčär, Harär, Obbora, Dire Dawa, Garamulata, and Adal and Garaguracha. The arid and semi-arid parts of Harärgé, largely settled by pastoralists, are well beyond the scope of this study, though there will be some passing references.



In agricultural societies, the significance of peasant cultivators is central. Hence, in order to understand rural society better, I found it logical in this review to situate tenants within the social category of the peasantry as the existing literature treats the subject that way.

I. Peasant and Peasant Society

During the 1960s and the 1970s peasant studies excited new interest among social scientists. In the previous half century peasant wars and revolutions in Mexico, China, Russia, Algeria, Vietnam and Cuba, among other places, had indicated that peasants had become important political actors.¹¹ However, despite the corpus of data generated on peasants, of which tenants were a part, social science research did not reach consensus in providing useful guidelines that help to identify the economic, social and political features of peasantry.

In spite of this lack of consensus among scholars, there are some major anthropological attempts to explain the major features of the peasantry which may be useful for an analysis of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular. The anthropological approach views the peasantry as distinct from the isolated tribe. To this approach belongs Kroeber's definition of the peasantry, which has served as the point of departure for most successive studies. It states that while tribal culture belongs to a small isolated, close-knit society,

Peasants are definitely rural- yet live in relation to market towns; they form a class segment of a larger population which usually contains also urban centers, sometimes metropolitan capitals. They constitute part-societies with part- cultures. They lack the isolation, the political autonomy and the self-sufficiency of tribal population; but their local units retain much of their old identity, integration and attachment to the soils and cults.¹²

¹¹ Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York : Harper and Row, 1969)

¹² A.L. Kroeber, *Anthropology: Culture Patterns and Processes*. Rev. ed (New York : Harcourt, Brace and World, 1948),p. 92.

Following Kroeber's lead many scholars have utilized and elaborated on the approach to view the peasantry as part society and part culture. Among the more significant in this regard, Redfield has focused on this approach in terms of peasant culture which he saw as being expressed in the division between a "Great Tradition" and a "Little Tradition" which is basically the distinction between the level of the "enlightened" elite and high priest of education and religion and the level of the illiterate rural cultivators.

While the "little tradition" represents the peasantry, it cannot be studied, according to Redfield, without reference to the "Great Tradition" since the culture of the peasantry is but a reflection of elite culture and is maintained only through continued interaction and communication between the two.¹³ For Redfield then the essential problem for the study of the peasantry is the relationship between the elite and the peasant and the chief criteria for a definition of the peasantry is the symbiotic relationship between the two.

Besides, Redfield views peasants as rural cultivators who produce just enough for their subsistence, with no substantial surplus for market, and therefore avoiding entering into cash or exchange relations. For their subsistence they use only their family labor and are content with simple production rather than a capitalist oriented production for markets.

Although Redfield's argument is more of a modernist approach that views the world as a dichotomy of "traditional" and "modern" society, at least for the period when tenancy became the dominant feature of rural life in Harärgé, especially since 1941, Harärgé peasants were largely subsistence oriented. This was due to the fact that the landlords in Harärgé did not allow the tenants to produce cash crops like coffee and *čat* (*Catha edulis*). In any case, at least up to the

¹³ Robert Redfield, "Peasant Society and Culture" *In the Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 40-41.

in which all of the most valued things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantity only and are always in short supply as far as the peasant is concerned. Further, according to Foster, not only do these and all other "Good Things" exist in finite quantities, but in addition there is no way directly within the peasant power to increase the available quantities. As a result the peasantry is, according to Foster, essentially conservative although it is conservatism born of oppression and repression by the larger society.¹⁶

While Redfield, Wittfogel and Foster and others have emphasized different aspects of the peasantry as a class segment of a larger society the work of Eric Wolf represents at least a partial synthesis of the various approaches within a broader framework which is particularly useful here. For Wolf, the key criterion for a definition of the peasantry is both economic exploitation and sociopolitical oppression by the larger society. Peasants, Wolf comments, "... are rural cultivators whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers that uses the surpluses both to underwrite its own standard of living and to distribute the remainder to groups in society that do not farm but must be fed for their specific goods and services in turn."¹⁷ In further elaboration of this point, Wolf argues that:

The peasant ...does not operate an enterprise in the economic sense ;he runs a household, not a business concern....In primitive society, surpluses are exchanged directly among groups; peasants, however, are rural cultivators whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers....A peasantry always exists within a larger system....There exists in more complex societies social relations which are not symmetrical, but are based, in some form, upon....Where someone exercises an effective superior power... over a cultivator, the cultivator must produce

¹⁶ George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good", *American Anthropological Association*, Vol.67, No.2(1965),P.296.

¹⁷ Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp.3-4.

a fund of rent. It is this production of a fund of rent which critically distinguishes the peasant from the primitive cultivatorso far, then, the term 'peasant' denotes no more than an asymmetrical relationship between producers of surplus and controllers.¹⁸

It may be said that Wolf's definition, based on both economic and socio-political criteria, is an improvement on the previous rather static definitions of Kroeber, Redfield and Foster in so far as it emphasizes that peasants are created through interaction within the larger society.

Another leading scholar of peasant studies, T. Shanin, followed Wolf in making the 'underdog' position of the peasantry one of the critical diagnostic features of peasant status. He writes: "The political economy of peasant society has been generally speaking, based on expropriation of its "surplus" by powerful outsiders, through *corvée*, tax, rent, interest and terms of trade."¹⁹ Again in his discussion of peasantry as a process, he notes that "... [structural] changes in peasantry have been undermined (or at least triggered off) by the impact of non peasant sections of society, a situation which can be explained both by the character of the peasant social structure...and by the very fact of peasant domination by powerful outsiders."²⁰ In this definition it can be seen that peasants' partial involvement in the market and their partial subordination to the state or the appropriating class were their most salient characteristics.

Concurring with the overall thrust of Wolf's and Shanin's definitions, Sidney Minz emphasized that the structural subordination of the peasantry to external forces is an essential aspect of its definition. An obvious but important consequence of this is in terms of research approaches, that

¹⁸ Ibid.,pp.2-10.

¹⁹ T.Shannin, "Peasantry: Delineation of a sociological Concept and a field of Study." *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol.12,No.2, (Cambridge University Press,1971), pp.289-300.

296.(1971a)

²⁰ Ibid.,p.298.

a peasantry should not be studied in isolation but always in relation to the prevalent political system.

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that nowhere do peasants form a homogenous mass, but are always and everywhere typified by internal differentiation. It is also clear that the composition of any peasant society varies in space and time so that it might compose the entire fabric of rural life. Various modes of share tenure, such as sharecropping, squatting etc., typify peasant societies.²¹

With the above brief survey of some of the general features of the peasantry in mind, it is possible to attempt to determine the extent to which they apply to Africa in general and this study in particular. From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that a number of writers have argued that the term "peasant" applies to Africa only in a marginal sense. To a large extent these arguments are based on or influenced by the seminal article by Lloyd Fallers, which concludes that African cultivators could at best be called "proto-peasants" or "incipient peasants".²² It may be indicated here, though, that this article has been superseded by a later and more comprehensive work which amends Fallers' argument and broadens the analysis to include some of colonial and post-colonial Africa. The main thrust of Fallers' argument that a peasantry of the type familiar in Latin America, Europe and Asia does not exist in Africa is his reinterpretation of Kroeber's and more specifically Redfield's formula of the peasantry as part society and part culture.

²¹ Sidney W. Mintz, "A note on the Definition of peasantries", in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol.1:11973, pp.93-94.

²² Lloyd A Fallers, "Are African Cultivators to be called 'Peasants'?" *Current Anthropology* Vol 2, No. 2 (April 1961), pp.108-110.

sufficiently widespread.”²⁴ Sharecropping implies some form of written or verbal contract. The contract refers to circumstances where access to some factors necessary for production is provided by one party, in return for payment of a prearranged proportion of the resulting produce. Since land is essential to crop production, sharecropping contract entails the provision of or access to land. Apart from labor, other means of production will also be necessary to the activity and the provision of all or some part of these may also be part of the contract. In general, then sharecropping contract constitutes the provision of the means of production or some part of it by one party in return for a share of the crop yield by another party.²⁵

In Harärgé, this arrangement is a common feature of share tenancy. The tenants received access to the means of production, most importantly land, while the landlord receives a part of the product. The percentage and how much of the produce goes to the tenant and to the landlord depended on the relative power of the two sides; quite obviously, the landlord would have a better bargaining power.

On the efficiency or otherwise of share tenancy there is a large body of literature by economists that deserves attention. Marshall analyzes the system as an inefficient way of using land and labor. This is what economists called the “traditional view”. According to Marshall, share

²⁴ Sharecropping was found to be a common practice in ancient Greece, ancient China, ancient India, and Persia and in the Roman Empire. During the medieval period it was commonly practiced among the western European societies like in France, in Italy. Sharecropping survived into the recent past in France, Italy and Spain. It was also a common practice in Eastern European societies especially in Russia. In all these societies sharecropping had whether a “transformed itself or survived in some form. But in all its emergence and re-emergence it had kept its essential feature that is surplus appropriation in labor and or in cash. After the American civil war sharecropping also spread into America as slavery was legally abolished to replace it. For details see T.J.Byres, “Historical Perspectives on Sharecropping” In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies.ed. T.Y Byers.Vol. 6. pp.1-38.For details of these see for example, Adrienne Cooper, “Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal ,1930-1950:The Dependency Web and its Implications”, in *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*.Library of Peasant Studies.ed. T.Y Byers.Vol. 6.pp.232-261.;Jay R .Mandle, “Sharecropping and the Plantation Economy in the United States South”. In the case of Africa, sharecroppers were found in South Africa, the Gambia, Lesotho, Ghana.The best example for South Africa is Timothy Keegan’s “The Sharecropping Economy on the South African Highveld in the Twentieth Century”In*Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies.ed. T.Y Byers.Vol. 6. pp.205-231.

²⁵ Ibid.

cropping is inefficient on the grounds that sharecroppers would stop supplying labor sooner than wage workers since the marginal return they would get from their labor would be less than the marginal return the landowners would get from wage labor.²⁶ The inefficiency argument by Marshall further implies that share tenants would not use inputs (supplied by them) to their optimum levels because of lack of adequate incentives and hence the productivity of share rented land would be lower.

On the other hand, Martinez Allier, Cheung and others argued that when private property rights are well defined and freely alienable, maximization of wealth by the landlords and competition for land among the prospective tenants will ensure that the productivity of the land (hence input use) cannot vary with tenure status. They further add that sharecropping is more efficient than wage labor in the sense that production will be higher and both the landowners' and sharecroppers' remunerations may also therefore be higher than under wage labor. They also argue that it is an appropriate risk sharing arrangement between the landlord and the tenant.²⁷

However, these analyses by economists have for the most part attempted to theorize about sharecropping rather than examining them from different perspectives. They do not address the socio-cultural aspects and the influences of local political forces in shaping the making of sharecropping in the rural economies. Furthermore, the analysis by economists ignored the non-

²⁶ A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*. 8th ed. (New York and London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), pp.640-645.

²⁷ J. Martinez Allier, "Sharecropping: Some Illustrations" In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies, ed. T.Y Byers, Vol. 6. pp.94-106.; S.N.S, Cheung, "Private Property Rights and Sharecropping", *Journal of Political Economy* 76:No.6, November 1968, pp.1107-1122.; See also R. Pearce, "Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View." In *Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol. No. pp.42-70.; Pertev Rashid, "A New Model for Sharecropping and Peasant Holding" In *Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol. No. Pp.25-49. Efficiency or performance of owner cultivators or share tenants is often indicated by the amount of yields (quantity) of some major crops grown by the farmers, intensity of use of various inputs, acre value of all crops grown over the year and cropping intensity. For details see M.A Taslim, "Allocative Efficiency of crop share cultivation: Interpreting the Empirical Evidence" *The Pakistan Development Review*, 28:3 (Autumn 1989), pp.233-250.

communities are in the possession of the land they were cultivating but their production was controlled by outside rulers who appropriated parts of peasant surpluses through tribute. Under this mode of production, societies are divided into two major classes: the peasantry organized in communities and a ruling class which controls the political organization of the society and exacts tributes from the rural communities.³¹

The tributary mode of production was also common in some African societies during pre-colonial times. For instance, Edward Steinhart, working in western Uganda, identified herders and farmers as direct producers. They were held in a relationship of political /legal subordination and were required by the state to pay tribute in labor or in kind (in the form of cattle or agricultural produce) to political officials or state agents who were thus provided with the resources to support them as a non laboring class.³²

On the other hand, under the feudal mode of production, the means of production, i.e. land, was owned privately by feudal lords and the appropriation of surplus by means of feudal rent was paid to private landlords. In other words, the tributary mode of production becomes feudal when the land itself was appropriated by the rulers and the peasants are reduced to tenants, each peasant family becoming directly subordinated to a landowner. The peasant families could no longer protect individual members of their families. In the feudal mode of production, surplus appropriation still takes place in the form of tribute.³³

³¹ Micheal Stahl, pp.22-23.

³² Edward Steinhart, " Herders and Farmers :The tributary Mode of Production in Western Uganda" In *Modes of Production in Africa .the Pre-Colonial Era*. Donald Crummey and C.C Stewart (Eds).(London: Sage Publication, 1981), pp.115-155.

³³ Donald Crummey, "State and Society: 19th-Century Ethiopia" In *Modes of Production in Africa .the Pre-Colonial Era*. Donald Crummey and C.C Stewart (Eds).(London: Sage Publication, 1981), pp.227-249.

I argue that the tributary mode of production was a common feature of surplus appropriation in Harärgé at least from 1887-1935. From 1941 on the feudal mode of production and surplus appropriation seems more appropriate. As is well known, Menilek II's conquest of Harärgé did result in the imposition of the *mälkäñña* system in which in the greater part of rural Harärgé land and labor together were apportioned for the maintenance of the soldiery. Thus there was no major land alienation except in few cases. Land alienation and the spread of landlord tenancy relation became wide spread only after the restoration of the imperial power at the end of the Italian Occupation in 1941. With that the tributary mode of production graduated into the feudal mode of surplus appropriation.

By situating sharecropping in its economic context, this work applies the concept of the feudal mode of surplus appropriation. With the introduction of the Ethiopian land tenure system in Harärgé and the subsequent alienation of land from the cultivators and pastoralists and the introduction of landlord tenant relations, the landlord took a share of the produce by leasing out his land to the tenant. This form of rent appropriation was compounded with other forms of labor demands which the tenant was forced to provide. In addition, approaching Harärgé's landlord tenant relations through the concept of surplus appropriation has the merit of looking into the power asymmetry of the landlord and tenant relations which is central in shaping the rural socio economic features of Harärgé. With regard to this dependence web of tenants and landlords, the available literature is rich in demonstrating that landlords had dictated the economic and non-economic relations that existed between the two social groups.³⁴

³⁴ Adrienne Cooper, "Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal, 1930-1950: The Dependency Web and its implications" In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. T.J.Byres (ed) (London: Frank cass and Company Limited, 1983),pp.232-261.

As a consequence and /or manifestation of this power imbalance, in order to ensure the efficiency of their tenants, the landlords in Harärgé adopted various disciplining measures which required the tenants to handle the rental land properly. One of these measures was the general policy of the landlords to choose as their tenants only those who had a reputation for being good, hardworking and reliable tenants. Moreover, they rationed the land among those tenants according to their command or ownership of the resources necessary for cultivation. In order to qualify as a good farmer, the prospective tenant must have been engaged in farming for a while so that his farming abilities can be determined. Usually he must also possess the requisite inputs. Two such important inputs were oxen and sufficient family labor. A further disciplining influence was the threat of eviction if tenants were found negligent. To implement this, the landlord granted only short term leases to those tenants whose sincerity and ability was not yet proved.³⁵ Furthermore, reserving the right of eviction, the landlord demanded the labor of his tenants at any time, as well as imposing conditions which the threatened tenant met promptly.

III. The Politics of Peasant Resistance

In their day to day interaction with the state and the landlords, tenants reacted to their subordinate and “subaltern” positions in different ways.³⁶ Their reaction and relentless struggle

³⁵ Some of these methods were applied by landlords in Bangladesh and found to be useful instruments. Here in Harärgé, too according to informants these methods were found to be successful in controlling peasants and enhancing the potential gains by the landlords from their lands.

³⁶ The subaltern as a social composition encompasses all “subordinate groups” who do not belong to the “elite”; that is all those of inferior rank. Whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, economic power, office or any other way. The rural producers (peasants) obviously belonged to this category. The notion of subalternity is taken from Gramsci, who was at least initially something of an inspiration for the project of subaltern studies, because of his keen interest in ideology and popular culture. As an academic exercise, the pedigree of the subaltern studies series is basically a critique of the historiography of colonial India and focuses on issues connected largely with rural transformation. The rationale of the subaltern studies derives from the division of subaltern and elite and the desire to write history from the view point of the subaltern. It is about the peasantry in the colonial era while some contributions cross the boundary into the post-colonial period. Still others claim that its methodological/theoretical approach transcends the colonial/post colonial divide. Implicitly or explicitly therefore the subaltern studies framework can also serve as a model for analyzing contemporary peasant movements. For details see for example Ranjit Guha (1983); N.K. Chandra (1983); A.N. Das (1983); D. Chakrabarty (1984)

against the state and other external exploitative agents who sought to extract surplus from their labor, rent, food and taxes are captured in the growing literature in social sciences. This struggle was well treated in the social and political history of pre-colonial, colonial or independent Africa. This form of resistance is known as every day or hidden form of resistance.³⁷ The concept was derived from American slavery and European agrarian historiography.³⁸

It refers to small scale and apparently innocuous activity undertaken by peasants on an individual basis, corresponding to widespread non acquiescence by thousands of peasants. It is articulated through various mechanisms such as foot dragging (go-slows), strikes, theft, sabotage, camouflage, flight and other weapons of the weak.³⁹ When used appropriately against the influential rural elite, they have significant ramifications. The importance of such actions, as argued persuasively by the exponent of this concept, James Scott, lies in that they entail little or no co-ordination or planning; in other words, they were spontaneous. They make use of implicit understanding and networks, often symbolize a form of individual self-help and typically avoid any direct confrontation with authorities.⁴⁰ Scott concludes that in many ways this form of resistance was a more effective form of action in that peasants are more likely to accomplish the goals they fail to achieve through more dramatic large scale rural mass mobilization. James Scott

³⁷ James, C Scott, "Every Day Forms of Peasant Resistance" *Journal of Peasant Studies*.1986.Vol. 13.No. 2. Pp.5-35. The concept of everyday resistance is challenged by many scholars. Genovese, (1974) and Mulin (1972) for example contend that only insurrections represented political action and that everyday struggles do not ultimately qualify as resistance since they did not directly challenge the system. On the other hand Scott advances a broader formulation. "Class resistance", he argues "includes any act by a member of a subordinate class intended either to mitigate or deny claims by the super ordinate class or to advance its own claims vis-à-vis those super ordinate classes. For details see James C.Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).The major drawback of Scott's formulation however, is his overemphasis of peasants' struggle against the state, merchants and landlords and pays little attention to the complex issues of dissent and division in the rural communities.

³⁸ Allan Issacman, "Peasants and Rural Social Protests in Africa" In *African Studies Association*, Vol.33. No. 2 ,1990,p.31.

³⁹ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pP.xvi,29.

⁴⁰ Scott,1985, pp.xvi-xvii.

argues that everyday forms of resistance were natural in that they endeavor to guard their survival against the threat of external capitalism.⁴¹

Every day forms of peasant resistance offer a unique perspective to understand the resistance of Harärgé's tenants to exploitation by the landlords and is closely followed in this dissertation. In the first place, the concept of everyday form of peasant resistance privileges peasants as historical actors rather than mere victims of historical processes. It considers peasants as autonomous agents who create their own form of oppositional culture and identity, whose ideas and actions are not to be represented or appropriated by elite agents and discourses that claim to speak on their behalf.

As a result tenants in Gursum, Gälämso, Hirna, Dädär, Garamulata and other rural villages made their own strategic everyday forms of resistance. This was so not so much because tenants lack the necessary organizational skill but more because the terrain is so rugged that any co-ordinated peasant movement was impossible.

A closely related concept worth reviewing in the literature on peasant resistance is that of moral economy. The moral economy argument emphasizes its ahistorical character ('naturalness') in protecting the subsistence ethic against an external capitalism, a theoretical position which Wolf also entertains and shares with Scott. The moral economy argument maintains that peasants are moved to protest when capitalist penetration of the countryside leads to the loss of subsistence as a result of the breakdown in patron-client relations linking them to elites. The "moral economy" element consists of the fact that pre-capitalist relationships and institutions protect the peasantry against hardship and starvation and it is this pre-existing form of insurance or subsistence

⁴¹ Ibid.

guarantee which is destroyed by capitalism. Therefore, Scott and Wolf claim, the object of peasant resistance against capitalism is to protect this traditional source of provision.⁴² Here one qualification needs to be made in order to apply the concept of the moral economy in Harärgé. Capitalist penetration was not yet a historic phenomenon and capitalist mode of production was not the feature of exploitation in rural Harärgé. Tenant exploitation was made possible by a pre-capitalist relation of production that resembles more the feudal mode of production.⁴³ It was through this mode of production that the settler community extracted surplus from the cultivators that endangered the very subsistence of the latter. The danger could extend as far as evicting the tenant from the land he was cultivating which would leave the latter without the major means of survival.

The concept of every day resistance can be quite awkward used crudely or taken out of context; it can misrepresent or render meaningless the notion of resistance itself. At the level of explanation, the term everyday forms of resistance, frequently interchanged in written sources with hidden, normal, routine forms of resistance, is somewhat deceptive.⁴⁴ Even though work slowdowns, pilfering, and dissimulation may have happened every day, flight and sabotage did

⁴² Tom Brass, "Moral Economists Subalterns, New Social Movements and the (Re-) Emergence of a (post-) Modernized (Middle) peasant. In *the Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol18., No. 2. 1991, p.173-205.; See also James.C. Scott, *The moral Economy of the Peasant : Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976)

⁴³ The application of Feudal mode production is somewhat controversial in the Ethiopian case. In as far as the southern provinces are concerned, I agree with the application of the term and the system was widely observed in Harärgé. For the feudal mode of production in Southern provinces, see Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia from Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).; Addis Hiwot, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London: Merlin Press, Review of African Political Economy, 1975).; John Cohen, "Ethiopia: A survey on the Existence of a Feudal Peasantry." *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol 12, No. 4, (1974), pp.665-672 and many other works. On the other hand there are scholars who do not agree with the feudal mode of production approach in Ethiopia and claim it as flawed.

⁴⁴ Allan Isaacman, "Peasants and Rural Social Protests in Africa" in *African Studies Association* .Vol.33.No.2, 1990, pp 31-32.

not. Other descriptive terms are not free from a similar lack of accuracy.⁴⁵ To call these actions concealed is to view them from the top down. Peasants who were involved in such protest understood the risks and benefits of their action. The terms normal and routine presume that all peasant struggles charted a different path and could at least be reduced to specific communal actions. Compounding this trick of semantics is a penchant in the literature for piecing together various actions with diverse objectives. Consequently actions such as pretending illness, sabotage, flight and banditry are rather diverse oppositional forms with disparate anticipated consequences.⁴⁶

Finally, what these daily or hidden protests are alleged to represent is that they were not rebellions, revolutions or other broad-based social movements. Instead, they tend to be individual, localized forms of insurgency. That these insurgent acts were often covert poses the additional problem of intent. Many such acts went unrecorded and even if we can document that a particular act occurred, unless we are able to listen critically to the voices of the actors, it is extremely difficult to determine their intentions. In some cases, the intentions of peasants become clear. For example, in Ethiopia, Crummey demonstrated that plundering may have been a way of resisting surplus extraction, of feeding an undernourished family and of accumulating a small amount of capital.⁴⁷ Peasants surreptitiously refraining from paying taxes or fleeing from forced labor regimes were often driven by similar anxieties, as is well documented by Issacman in Mozambique.⁴⁸ Although the assumption of multiple intentions generates a certain analytical ambiguity in real life, for my argument on the nature of resistance, it seems sufficient to

⁴⁵ Allan Issacman, pp.31-32

⁴⁶ Allan Issacman, 1990, p.32.

⁴⁷ Donald Crummey, "Banditry and Resistance: Noble and Peasant in 19th Century Ethiopia" *In Proceedings of the seventh international Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Ed. Sven Rubenson. Addis Ababa, East Lansing and Uppsala. pp.263-277.

⁴⁸ Allan Issacman, "Social Banditry in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Mozambique, 1894-1907: An Expression of Early Peasant Protest" *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 1977, Vol. 4, pp.1-30.

demonstrate that one intent of the insurgents was to block or undercut the claims of the Imperial state of Ethiopia and/or its associated landlords to the resources of the peasants.

In spite of the problems inherent in the concept of every day resistance, to ignore the weapons of the weak is to overlook the peasants' key arsenal. The overwhelming majority of these every day forms of resistance centered on three critical issues: the control of peasant labor, withholding peasant production and the politics of retribution.⁴⁹ I will demonstrate that all of these forms of peasant resistance were quite common in Harärgé. Hence for the purpose of this study, the concept of everyday resistance is appropriate and is applied in the relevant topic of this dissertation for the following reasons:

A. Tenants in Harärgé commonly practiced flight from areas where the landlords' treatment was harsh and their labor demand was excessive. Through flight tenants maintained control over and jealously guarded their own labor and tried to increase the possibility of meeting household food requirements. The common sites preferred for flight were forests and lowlands where the new settlers could not easily access or prefer for permanent settlement.

B. In their attempt to reduce the exaction of surplus, tenants frequently applied various strategies in order to withhold their production. One of the most frequently observed tactics was hiding grain products before their collection on the threshing grounds. There were also cases when peasants ambushed tax collectors and thus settled the score sheet.

C. Towards the end of the imperial era, tenants frequently took vengeance on their landlords through robbery of the grains accumulated, taking cattle by force and other property of the

⁴⁹ Allan Issacman, 1990, p.33.

landlords. These tactics and actions are quite concurrent with everyday forms of peasant resistance and their success can be measured through what they achieved.

Another aspect of every day resistance revolved around popular culture or verbal protest, which is created and implemented recurrently in the countryside. Peasants' songs and proverbs which are usually narrated by informants are the archetypal forms of resistances through popular culture. These were the only open media of public discourse which the landlords could not control or extinguish. As such, they were a forum for mockery as well as criticism of the system. The values, norms, sense of justice and anger inscribed in these acts often helped to shape a culture of rebellion.⁵⁰ In Harärgé villages, tenants had proverbs and songs that expressed their grievance of exploitation in the hands of the landlords. They were powerful instruments of defiance of the dominant culture. These forms of resistance also challenged the structures of class, ethnic and gender oppression. But they did not construct an oppositional ideology.

Another genre of literature on peasant resistance in Africa is the conflict within peasant communities. The colonial incorporation of Africa accentuated rivalries and divisions between chiefs and their subjects, wealthier and poorer peasants, creditors and debtors. At the community level the most pronounced and best documented conflicts were between loyalist chiefs and their subject populations. Throughout colonial Africa chiefs were placed in a contradictory position vis-à-vis both the colonial state and the peasantry, requiring them to mediate between the oppressor and the oppressed.⁵¹

This ambiguous position of African chiefs can also be observed in rural Harärgé. The *damina*, *burqa*, *garada* and *malaqa* were given the unpopular task of restructuring rural production. They

⁵⁰Allan Issacman, 1990. p.40.

⁵¹Ibid., pp.40-42.

served as labor recruiters and tax collectors. In return they were rewarded with land grants. The *damina* for instance were in control of some of the best lands; they used unpaid labor to develop their fields. This did not go without opposition from the tenants, in some cases demanding the replacement of local appointees with what they called “legitimate” rulers. The Ittu opposition and petitions to the emperor against Ahmed Ali Tesé in the 1960s in Čärčär was a manifestation of this as will be discussed in some detail in chapter eight.

Sources and Methodology

Local histories face considerable difficulties in getting adequate and representative sources. The problem is even more compounded in subaltern studies. It is not therefore an exaggeration to claim that there is a scarcity of written sources in reconstructing agrarian history and topics that focused more on the day-to-day activities of the broad masses.

In this study of the agrarian history of Harärgé, three broad categories of sources are utilized. The first and most useful for this study is the range of oral sources I was able to collect by conducting interviews with informants for ten months. I began my field research in Harärgé villages in November 2013 by interviewing elderly people who were identified by my interlocutors as knowledgeable in local history. The composition of my informants is diverse: it included former tenants and their descendants, ex-local administrators, merchants, former landlords and their descendants, civil servants etc. In terms of age and gender composition, there is also a reasonable diversity.

Spatially my interview covered villages of what are now western and eastern Harärgé zones of Oromiya regional state, Haräri regional state, Dire Dawa administrative council and parts of Somali regional state. As much as possible, attempt has been made to cover villages where

tenancy was claimed by informants to have been pervasive. Some of the villages were visited twice after referring to the archives for some unaddressed issues and themes that need further elaboration. This was characteristically the case with Garamulata, Hirna, Čiro, and Gursum. Thus it can be judged that in terms of oral sources fairly representative data are collected from the villages of Harärgé in spite of the vastness of the province.

Guiding informants to pertinent topics of discussion was a tough business. Apparently they discuss topics of their interest which they considered as history proper and events that are prominent in local memory. Often political events like the battle of Čällänqo, the death of *Ras* Mäkonnen, the frequent official visits of Emperor Haile Sellassie, Iyyasu's imprisonment at Gerawa etc. are events referred by informants as events of particular historical importance in local history. But apart from their passing reference, local political events remembered by informants are less helpful to reconstruct agrarian history.

Interview sessions were arranged by field assistants. Often afternoon sessions were preferred by informants for various reasons and I have to comply with their time tables. It is difficult to tap the necessary information by following the formal way of discussion all through; as a result I had to adjust to the situation. Formal interview sessions with semi structured questions gradually developed from initial informal discussions. As the interviewees got involved in the discussion and were directed to rural history, they had a lot to narrate. The interview sessions were conducted in most cases at individual level. But there were some group discussions as conditions dictated. In general the interview sessions run from a few minutes to several hours.

As most of the informants were former tenants or descendants of tenants and landlords, they narrated their experiences. The testimonies of these participants of the events were carefully

collected and analyzed. These oral testimonies provide us with the possibility of understanding the complexities of rural life by getting at tenants' self-perceptions and trying to decipher what they might mean while there is obviously not a perfect correlation between what tenants thought and the social realities in which they lived. At individual levels, tenants narrate about the power imbalance between them and their respective landlords, including economic exploitation, political maladministration, social injustice and cultural subjugation.

In addition to the individual voices of Harärgé tenants, oral interviews have captured their collective voices through songs, proverbs and dances addressed during social events, festivals, cooperative works (*guza*), etc. These forms of popular culture as sources for historical studies offer a unique although not always easily accessible view of the complexities of everyday life in rural Harärgé. Embedded in many of these cultural forms is a hidden transcript of the oppressed. A careful decoding of these texts often provides an opportunity to uncover and understand the thoughts and actions of tenants. These songs, proverbs and dances passed on vital information and provided social commentary. Tenant songs in Harärgé provide insights into the local definition of power and justice and demonstrate how tenancy and forced labor mobilization were able to mock and dehumanize the oppressed. Similarly proverbs and verses reveal deeply embedded contradictions and tensions between tenants and landlords.

Oral sources have their own drawbacks such as their aversion for chronology. Oftentimes informants tend to merge *Lij Iyyasu's* imprisonment at Garamulata with the coup that deposed him several years earlier. Informants are also subjective and biased towards their ethnic, religious or social background. It is also important to mention that informants tend to exaggerate, in fact unintentionally, certain events and personalities. A case in point is *Fitawrari Täklähawaryat's* role. They considered that *Fitawrari Täklähawaryat* was responsible for the

foundation of big towns in Ethiopia. On the basis of his achievements in Čiro, Jigjiga and Hirna, they attribute the foundation of other towns to him while historical evidence does not support their claims. They also considered that he was responsible for the introduction of different trees and crops, some of which like eucalyptus tree and mango were obviously not attributable to him.⁵²

In spite of these shortcomings, however, oral sources, if carefully collected and rigorously analyzed, provide an important body of knowledge for a new social and economic history of the countryside. They can help extract valuable information on crop management system, risk aversion strategies, tenants' strategies at maximizing their share vis a-vis the landlord, mechanisms of surplus labor extraction, their subordinate position to the landlord, their farming practices in small farm plots, as well as other rich life experiences. It was such mine of information that was extracted from informants and used in this work.

The second major source of data used for this study is archival material. These are diverse in content and nature comprising letters, administrative reports, petitions by tenants (often in groups), memoirs, minutes, etc. These kinds of materials are found deposited in various ministerial offices, regional offices, and archival centers. The archives of the former Ministry of Interior deposited in the National Archives and Library Agency (NALA) were found to be indispensable sources. They provide information on land grants, taxation issues, patterns of land

⁵² In his autobiography it is indicated that he introduced avocado from abroad during his exile during the Italian occupation. These seeds were first planted at Doba , later expanded to other estates. During my field work I have visited a vast land covered by avocado trees in Hirna . In short in their world he was the real leader of the country. Their memory shares that he had been a big presence in his days which leads to exaggeration.

distribution, peasant protests and rebellions, correspondence between the provincial office and the ministry on the one hand and people's petitions on the other.

The archives at Wäldämäsqäl Tariku Memorial Research Center (WMTMRC) were also found to be extremely informative. Tenants' petitions (often in groups), land sales, huge government grants for various grantees, distribution of government land and its distribution to those who could farm on rental basis, land measurement and re-measurement, taxations issues, land lease on government lands, the administration of *béterest* land in Harär, the case of tenants on *béte rest* land etc.

The same kind of information, with some varying details, is found in NALA. These sources are found to be more organized and easy for citation as they were digitally supported. Besides information found at WMTMRC, the national archives have material on security matters and the tensions that persisted between landlords and tenants. On the eve of the revolution these tensions erupted into open conflicts between the two groups.

The archives of former Harärgé province are also other important sources of data that were consulted and found to provide vital information on local developments, individual land holding registries (*hujja*), land measurement and re-measurement, Haräri farms on the outskirts of the town, land grants to local *balabats* and other land related matters. The other vital aspect of Harär's archives is in narrating the role of students of Haramaya (then Alemaya) College of Agriculture in instigating the rural mass of Harärgé to oppose the system by taking the land issue and tenancy to the forefront. A vast amount of propaganda work was done by students while the regime also took its counter measures. By consulting these archival documents, it is possible to reconstruct the history of the interaction of the major actors of rural Harärgé. Besides in the

1940s, there was a mass movement throughout Harärgé. This was better known in local parlance as *Hannolato* or *Kulub*. The archives narrate the involvement of the rural masses in the movement and the challenge they posed to the central government.

The archives in Harär have also another dimension. The Italians had been confiscating land in some selected sites for both urban development and agricultural expansion. Of these measures, the confiscation through the payment of compensation for urban lands stands out. In some urban areas like Harär and Dire Dawa they also bought lands. Records of these were found in the archives and they add a new dimension to our understanding of the Italian period. These archives are found in soft copy, having been scanned and digitized under the auspices of the Haräri Culture, Tourism and Heritage Bureau. They consisted of 12 volumes with 5905 folders. This has made the citation process difficult.

Another invaluable source of archival material that merit mentioning are the court records of the former Harärgé *Ṭäqalaygezat* deposited in East Harärgé zone high court. They provide information on local land tenure, patterns of power relation, gender relation, landlord tenant relations, land related disputes and court proceedings, etc. The archives demonstrate how differing peasant perspectives shaped production relation and resource exploitation.

Given the bulk of the material and the diversity of issues they addressed, one may run the risk of relying entirely on these documents. But a study of agrarian issues should not rely solely on state records. Archival data sometimes masked and distorted social realities. They exhibit a predetermined external bias towards the political center which produced the archives. Therefore they need to be critically analyzed. All of the archives consulted and cited here are not free from politics and power relations.

During the imperial regime and even in the post revolution period, although it is not the scope of this study, there has been a constant drawing and redrawing of administrative boundaries. Accordingly, this shift of local boundaries follows the locus of political power necessitating the transfer of archives from district to district or from *awraja* to *awraja*. In the meantime it appears almost impossible to trace archives for academic purposes. Sometimes men in charge of these documentation centers could control access to them, rendering it too problematic as they view the documents as too politically sensitive.

Archival data also tended to emphasize exchange relations over production process. They say almost nothing on social reproduction. Hence they ignore critical dimensions of peasant village and household life.⁵³ Archives are also reticent on crop regimes and climate that could be used to reconstruct the ecological history of the region. What they provide us are reports on crop failure as a result of insects, pests and the absence of rain for a year or two.

More importantly archives do not reveal the hidden forms of rural protests. When for example the landlord or his agent discovered actions such as feigning and sabotage, illness, rent defaults, these incidents were almost invariably depicted, when they went into state records, as another indication of the 'lazy' and 'inefficient' nature of the tenant. In some rare cases when tenants along with other rural social groups get involved in armed resistance, state records depict these actions as 'robbery', 'banditry' etc. without fully capturing the social realities of the rural folk.

However, to note the limits of the official records is not to negate the possibility that a careful reading of these texts along with a cross-checking with other sources like oral data can yield

⁵³ The literature on the social reproduction of peasant villages is vast. One good example of the African case was Claude Meillassoux, "The Economic Bases of Demographic Reproduction: From the Domestic Mode of Production to Wage-Earning" *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. VI.11.No.1, pp.50-61.

valuable material on the countryside. In the course of collecting archival materials and oral data I discovered that some potential documentation centers had been consumed by fire. A case in point was Čiro. According to some informants and observers, the archives of the former Čärčär *Awraja* deposited for long in Čiro town was destroyed by fire that attended the 1991 turmoil following the collapse of the military government and the fight between armed groups like the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).⁵⁴ This documentation center would have been vital to reveal local historical developments pertaining to agrarian relations in what is now administratively known as Western Harärgé.

In Harärgé the immediate post Italian period had also its own impact in destroying the archives. A letter written on *Yekatit* 12, 1934 E.C, by *Afä Mäsfīn* Andargachew Mäsay, the then governor of Harärgé *Awraja*, to *Tsehafl* *Te'ezaz* W/Giorgis, describes that the British deliberately destroyed the *awraja*'s land register center which was full of *hujja*.⁵⁵ Those incidents have their own repercussions on our understanding of the historical processes in the city of Harär and its surroundings on issues related to land ownership and taxation. Accordingly, for the pre- Italian period land tenure and taxation issues are retrieved from individual collections and some surviving documents found outside the *hujja* house.

Thus it can be judged that reconstructing Harärgé's agrarian history is complicated by the paucity of written records for some periods. In the post-conquest period, up to the Italian occupation, there is clearly a dearth of documents, while the post Italian period is rich with archival materials that can be gathered from the different centers discussed above. In an effort to lessen this problem a modest attempt is made to use the collection of letters in the Institute of

⁵⁴ Informants: Legesse Bekansa, Umar Ahmed Ali Täsé and JemalAbdurahman.

⁵⁵ National Archive. File No. 17-1-7-30—02. Letter Written on *Yekatit* 2, 1934 E.C. There are also different letters in different archival centers .See for example WMTMRC Folder No.1/561.

Ethiopian Studies (IES). There were letters written by different officials to *Ras* Imiru that talk about different matters, letters written by *Ras* Täfäri Mäkonnen on land grants and series of *diwan* collections. The *diwan* letters talk about such matters as inheritance, land sale, land disputes, tenancy arrangements etc. These materials have definitely contributed in bridging the paucity of sources for the period between the Shāwan conquest and the Italian occupation.

The third category of sources relates to the research reports and observations made by external observers of different provenance and for different audiences. It includes the accounts and studies created by people who lived in one or another part of Harärgé province for various reasons and at different periods. Despite their varied origins, all these documents explore some aspects of rural life in Harärgé or its landscape, the people, their culture and agricultural practices based on their observations or systematic research and data. They range from some European travel accounts to the reports of agricultural experts working for different institutions.

Expert reports and research findings referred in this work were largely done by the Haramaya College of Agriculture in collaboration with American Universities on various agrarian issues. These were published and were made available for researchers and general readers in the university library. These publications, commonly serialized as experimental bulletins, discuss various aspects of Harärgé's agriculture, especially small scale agriculture. Hence they are found to be vital for the purpose of this study.

We have also the reminiscences of two eminent political figures – *Ras* Imiru and *Fitawrari* Täklähawaryat. These political figures lived in Harärgé for a good portion of their lives as state officials and at the same time as landowners. They wrote their own memoirs during their life

times which were published long after their death by their descendants. Their works illuminate important features of Harärgé's rural life and are valuable sources for this work

To these studies of reports and travel accounts, we have the added value of the different government newspapers such as *Addis Zämān* and official gazettes like *Nägarit Gazetta*. Especially the latter published the different government proclamations on different matters pertaining to land reform, taxation reforms, administrative reforms etc.

By bringing all these sources together, I have attempted to compare and contrast as well as critically examine them. When all these documents are brought together and analyzed for what they speak and do not speak a narrative of the history of tenancy in Harärgé province from 1887-1975 can be reconstructed. It is my belief that such comparison, crosschecking and critiquing will help me overcome some of the gaps and biases of the sources. The use of all these sources generated by the historical agents and observers has been central to the analysis of tenancy and agricultural production in Harärgé. In my research I will demonstrate that tenancy was the major obstacle to agricultural productivity. I will argue that tenancy spread in Harärgé due to a large scale eviction of peasants by the newcomers. More broadly, it was the intensification of the privatization of land ownership and the greed of the newly implanted landlords to generate as much income as possible from the land they occupied that intensified tenancy.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of eight chapters in addition to this introduction. Towards a better understanding of the history of tenancy in Harärgé province in between 1887-1975, the chapters deal with different degrees on the economic, political, social and legal issues of agrarian change. The chapters examine the mechanisms of agrarian resource control, the production and

appropriation mechanisms, state-society relationships and the role of different groups of social actors (both individuals and institutions) in shaping it.

Chapter one charts the historical background of Harärgé. It deals with the physical and human landscape of the province. This helps us to analyze the effects of human settlement (both in space and time) and the physical landscape with its rich agrarian potential which made the evolution of tenancy possible.

A study of tenancy and its attendant production relations in any society should ground itself on the land tenure dynamics prevalent in that society. Thus chapter two bases itself on the land tenure of Harärgé province. In order to understand the dynamics, a comparison of the tenures before and after the conquest is provided. While the nature of land tenure before the conquest is treated in chapter one, the moments of interaction between the inhabitants and settlers which is treated in chapter two marks the dissolution of the old and the imposition of the new land tenure system along with its institutions.

Since it was the introduction of a new land tenure system that transformed property ownership and social relation, due emphasis is given for the diverse land tenures introduced after the conquest. The post 1887 era hence marks the evolution of interaction and competitions through which the new settler communities managed to regulate access to agricultural resources. The chapter also documents the various institutions the government introduced to administer land related properties and implement the diverse legislations and mechanisms that transferred land to the new settlers.

In chapter three I will trace the evolution and spread of tenancy in Harärgé. The various forms of tenancy and the mechanisms through which surplus appropriation took place are treated. Chapter

four builds on it to examine the degree of tenant exploitation. To that end different tenures are selected as cases on which tenants settled. Accordingly *qālad mārét*, *béterest*, *yāmāngest mārét*, *Sāmon mārét*, *Fitawrari Täklāhawariyat*'s land are treated along with the living and working condition of tenants.

Chapter five documents the relationship between tenants and landlords. The chapter examines both the economic and the non-economic aspects of the relationship through which tenants were subordinated to their landlords. The thrust of the chapter is the central point of the asymmetric relationship in which the power relation favored the landlords.

While the preceding three chapters deal with the economic features of tenancy, chapter six treats the legal aspects of landlord-tenancy relationship. It starts with the rights and duties of the two social groups and goes on to capture the nature of disputes that frequently erupted between them. Then the chapter attempts to bring into picture the various mechanisms such as the modern system of courts introduced by the state and the traditional means of resolving disputes. Since landlord-tenant conflicts escalated in the post Italian period, the chapter attempts to cover the entire 1941-1975 period to highlight the half-hearted attempts of the imperial regime to regulate tenancy and the attendant political contradictions.

Chapter seven focuses on the social dynamics of tenancy. It tries to examine the social distance between tenants and landlords which are reflected in ethnic identity, religious affiliations and differential access to other social amenities. Central to the social gap was the difference in property ownership first in the form of land but later accelerated in the accumulation of wealth in various forms. This was manifested in the standard of living of the two social groups.

The last chapter tries to bring all the economic, legal and social contradictions into a political opposition against the system that impoverished the inhabitants while the few settler communities accumulated wealth. The political opposition was partly inspired from outside such as by students and other organized political groups who influenced the peasantry in various forms and degrees. The chapter highlights some of the resistance of tenants to their landlords and the state as well as the violent forms this resistance took. This chapter ends the dissertation by introducing the March 4, 1975 land reform proclamation and the attendant legal termination of tenancy in any form of agrarian production relation and surplus appropriation.

CHAPTER ONE

Historical Background

The role of physical and human agency in shaping historical processes is undeniable. This is even more true for agrarian society where crop choices, the use of agricultural implements, mobilization of labor, access to vital means of production, settlement patterns etc are greatly influenced by the human and the physical landscape. This chapter is an attempt to provide a background for the successive chapters by putting the study in the proper context of physical and human landscape and analyze how they affected historical processes. It draws its discussion from information culled through interviews with informants, archives and secondary sources.

1.1 The Physical and Human Landscape

1.1.1 The Physical Landscape

I. Topography

Harärgé province lies between 5-11^{1/2} degrees north latitude and between 40-48 degrees east longitude. It is the most eastern province of the country. It was also the largest province of the Ethiopian empire with a total area of 259,800 square kilometers. In 1965 a total of 8748 square kilometers was cultivated with food crops; 761 square kilometers were covered by other cash crops; 2400 square kilometers were fallow; 2940 square kilometers were covered with forest; 244,951 square kilometers were meadow, pastureland and waste land.¹

¹ Eicheberger, G.W. "Food Production and Consumption in Ethiopia." In *Miscellaneous* 8., p.239.

Harärgé's international boundaries are French Somaliland in the north and the Republic of Somalia in the East. Internally it is bounded by Wällo sub-province in the north and Balé in the south, while Shäwa and Arsi are in the West.² Harärgé's topography is characterized by irregular shapes with highlands and lowlands. The region has three highland massifs: the Cärčär, Garamulata and Eastern highlands.³

Cärčär is the name given to a portion of the Ethiopian central highlands that divides the rift escarpment from the great Cärčär rift valley. The Cärčär Mountains are located between the plains of Bädessa and the town of Čällänqo covering an area of approximately 5,000km². The high peaks and deep valleys of the Cärčär Mountain comprises of limestone, sandstone and basalt formations that carry intermittent rivers to the Wabi Shabalé River and the Afar basin. Its inhabitants (mostly Obbora and Ittu Oromo) refer to the region with local clan names.⁴

The origin of the term Cärčär is controversial. Linguistic evidences may help in this regard. It might have a Haräri origin as 'čar čar' in Haräri is a cliff that creates a deep gorge. On the other hand Oromo informants claim that the term 'Čär-čär' is a derivation from the sound that emerges out of a ground water that covers a *rari*, grassy area.⁵ It is true that even today Cärčär has huge

² Sileshi Wolde-Tsadik, "Land Taxation in Harärgé Province", Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture Experiment Station Bulletin No.48.(DireDawa,1966); p.5.;See also Imiru Haile Sillase, "Kayehut Ka Mastawisew", (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press,2001 E.C),pp.91-92.

³Clarke H Brooke, " Settlement of Eastern [Oromo], Harärgé Province,Ethiopia" (PhD Dissertation in Geography:Nebraska,1956),pp.30-37.

⁴ Ezekiel Gebissa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia 1930-1991", (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University,1997),pp.48-50.;Some clan names are wrongly written in state archives. For instance Obbora, one of the sons of the Afriq Qallo wrongly written as "Webera". The logical corollary is to name the places and administrative divisions in the same way. In this work the names used by the people themselves are applied for all which are wrongly spelled in state archives.

⁵ Clarke H. Brooke, " Settlement of Eastern [Oromo], Harärgé Province,Ethiopia" (PhD Dissertation in Geography:Nebraska,1956), pp. 30-33.; Peri Klemm, "Cärčär" in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol. I, Ed. Siedbert Uhlig, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), p.685.; Informants: Abdusamad Edris, Ayub Abdulahi, Umar Ahmed Ali ,Abdurahman.

underground water. Gleichen identified a lake called Cärčär in Boroma.⁶ Today this lake is totally dried up. But in many parts of Cärčär small basins within broad valleys collect and retain sufficient water during the rainy season to be covered to a shallow depth usually no more than two or three inches. At such places, called “*rari*” the water level drops soon after the rains cease, but enough moisture is retained through the dry months to support a luxuriant cover of grass. The *rari* are important grazing grounds for the cattle of the inhabitants.

Another highland massif is Garamulata. It is a flat summit mountain at the northern end of a volcanic range running from the northwest to the southeast and ending at mount Geyle at an altitude of over 3000 m.a.s.l. The range towers above lakes Adele and Haramaya. The mountain chain is named after the spur’s most elevated mass. Two well defined valleys isolate the Garamulata massif from the surrounding areas and give the region definitive boundaries on the East and west: to the east is the valley of the Wator river and on the west, the Ramis; both are perennial rivers. These are deep valleys, indeed; at some places the slopes rise for more than three thousand feet above the valley floors.⁷

⁶ E.Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik, 1897*.(London:Edward Arnold,1898), p.99. Boroma is a plain area just to the northwest of Bädéssa. Today Boroma is subdivided into three *wärädas*: Boké, Habro and Oda Bultum.

⁷ Clarke H Brooke , pp.33-34.; See also Alian Gascon, “Garamulata” in *Encyclopedea Aethiopica*, Vol. II, Ed. Siedbert Uhlig, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005),pp.695-696.



Figure 2: A partial view of Garamulata massif (photo taken by the author in July 2014)

The third part of the Harärgé highland is the Harär high plateau which lies northeast of the main valley of the Wabi Shebelé. It largely consists of limestone and earlier sedimentary rocks which have been exposed by erosion. The plateau is well over 1000 m. and slopes gently to the south. It is drained by the left bank tributaries of the Wabi Shebelle such as the Galetti, Ramis, Mojo, Gobeles, Erer, Daketa and Fafan rivers.⁸

Harärgé has also lowlands where a pastoral way of life is prevalent. The most predominant and extensive lowland part of Harärgé is found in the areas inhabited by the Somali pastoralists. Thus the sub provinces of Degebur, Warder, Qabridahar, Gode, Qallafo and Jigjiga are lowlands. The other part of the province where lowlands are found is the Adal and Issa area, the northern most

⁸ Clarke H Brooke , pp.35-37.

part of the province where Afar and Somali pastoralists are found. The lowland of Aniya settled by the Aniya pastoralist is also found in the province where the Aniya Oromo predominantly depend on animal husbandry.⁹

II. Climate

The climate on the highland parts of Harärgé is cooler and more moist than the lower areas which surround them. This is mainly due to the greater elevation of the highlands. The great contrast of hot lowlands and cool highlands gives rise to the moderately heavy seasonal precipitation, favorable for vegetation growth, sedentary cultivation and animal husbandry over most of the province. In general, the mean monthly maximum temperature is between 20 – 24⁰c while the mean monthly minimum temperature is around 11⁰c.¹⁰

There are distinct wet and dry seasons. The dry season extends from October to the end of February during which time there is seldom any appreciable amount of rain. In general rainfall in Harärgé, as elsewhere on the Ethiopian highlands, is bimodal. The small rains during March, April and May are highly variable. The big rains that account for most of the rainfall start in June and usually end in September. The big rains are more reliable and it is during this season that farmers get adequate rainfall for their farming operations. But in general most of Harärgé has 600mm or less annual rainfall while this figure reaches as high as 900 mm in the highlands. For

⁹ Clarke H Brooke , “ Settlement of Eastern [Oromo], Harärgé Province,Ethiopia” (PhD Dissertation in Geography:Nebraska,1956),p.294.

¹⁰ Lakew Birke, “ A Credit Study of 100 Members of Alemaya farmers Co-operative Society”, Experiment Station Bulletin No.46.Haile Sillase I University (College of Agriculture, DireDawa ,1966),p.7.;M.E, Quenemoen, “Potential Returns from the Commercial farming Systems in Three areas of Ethiopia” Experiment Station Bulletin No.56.Haile Sillase I University (College of Agriculture, DireDawa ,1968),p.32.

of Harärgé province, the total population of the province was estimated to be 3,278,600. The density of the population was $13/\text{km}^2$ which was less than the national density, i.e. $20/\text{km}^2$. Of all the sub provinces, it was Obbora which had the highest density ($129/\text{km}^2$). The data also indicates the real population was much higher, indicating shortage of arable land as large number of farmers live on a small plot of land. The lowest density was found in Adal and Gara Guracha with $2/\text{km}^2$.²⁰

The 1970 census gives the total population of Harärgé, which by then was separated from Balé, to be 2,440,100. The provincial density was $9.5/\text{km}^2$.²¹ In 1984, the figure rose to 5,518,420 with a density of $13.4/\text{km}^2$.²² This figure increased in 1994 to 6,023,539 with the density over $200/\text{km}^2$. (In some places it was around $400\text{ persons}/\text{km}^2$). The area size of farms ranged from 1ha to 1.5ha.²³ In recent years the region is experiencing a dramatic population explosion. The national population census of 2008 indicates that the former Harärgé province has a total population of 10,995,191 with a high level of ethnic heterogeneity.²⁴

V. Administrative Arrangements

The administrative divisions in Ethiopia have been revised and amended many times. These boundary adjustments and administrative rearrangements were largely informed by political considerations. Harärgé's case was not an exception to this general rule. Present day Harärgé is the result of division and redivisions at different times since Menelik's conquest. Its size has also altered over the course of its history.

²⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. A policy Oriented Study of Land Settlement. Vol.No.2, 1969

²¹ Imperial Ethiopian Government .Central Statistical Office. Results of the National Sample Survey Second Round . (Addis Ababa, January 1974), pp.2,8.

²² Ibid., pp.10-11

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Population Census Commission. Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census. (Addis Ababa, December 2008), pp.69,72,81

Before the Italian occupation, Ethiopia was divided into 42 *awrajas*. In this arrangement Harär was made a separate province while Čärčär was made a ‘model province’ under the administration of successive enlightened rulers like *Ras* Imiru then under *Bajerond* Taklahawaryat and then under *Hakim* Warqenah Eshate.²⁵

During the Italian period, Harärgé became a *governo* (region) administered by a governor. The *awraja teklay gezat* was further subdivided into *wäräda gezat*. Based on the archives consulted, the Italians had sub divided Harärgé into six *commissariato* (*wäräda gezat*) each administered by an Italian commissariato. The *wäräda gezat* were sub divided into districts and sub districts administered by *residenza* and *vice residenza* respectively. The divisions were

1. Harär and its surroundings commissariato: It included Garamulata, Fuññanbira and Bobasa,
2. Jigjiga Commisariato: In the east bordered by British Somaliland, in the west bordered with Harär, in the south along the 9th parallel, in the North bordered by Gildesa
3. Dire Dawa Commisariato: It included the Afar, Issa, and Gurgura areas
4. the Čärčär Commisariato: it included Obbora, the Ahmar mountains and the western border of Arsi
5. Arsi: This included the whole of what was earlier identified as Arsi with its capital at Ticho.
6. Balé: divided into Goba and Ginir.²⁶

In 1942 the first administrative regulation was issued. Decree No. 1 of *Negarit Gazetha* (August 27, 1942) divided the country into *awraja*, *wäräda*, and *mesläne*. In this division Harärgé was

²⁵ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855-1991*. 2d ed (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), pp. 86, 145-146; See also Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*. (London: Faber Limited, 1969), p. 311.

²⁶ National Archive. Folder No. 17-1-1-291-02

made an *awraja gezat* with 6 *wärädas* and 33 *meslänés*. The seat of the *awraja gezat* was Harär while the seat of the *wäräda* administrator, i.e. *abägaz*, was the capital of *wäräda* towns.²⁷ Later this was amended by the 1946 administrative regulation. According to this proclamation, Harärgé was reconstituted as *ṭeklay gezat* (province), the previous *wäräda gezat* were renamed *awraja* (sub province), the *meslänés wäräda* and an additional tier *meketel mesläné* (sub district) was added. Based on this, Harärgé was divided into 9 *awrajas*, 35 *wärädas*, and 64 *meketel wärädas*.²⁸

This change of administrative hierarchies and nomenclatures caused some problems in the literature, causing confusion in studies using different titles for the same unit. The problem is great particularly with *mesläné* and *wäräda*. The number and the boundaries of the divisions continuously changed. This became the source of conflict between *wäräda* and *awraja* administrations at different times. For example, it is not uncommon to find in the archives boundary conflicts between Obbora *Awraja*, Čärčär *Awraja* and Garaguracha *Awraja*. Frequently the elderly and local *balabat* were invited to mediate conflicts between the residents of these units of administration.²⁹

Later in 1965 E.C the number of the *awraja* in Harärgé was raised to 12. The *awrajas* varied tremendously in extent, ranging from 1,351km² of Dire Dawa to 58,816km² of Warder. On the

²⁷ *Negarith Gazeta*. Administrative Decree No. 1 of 1942. For the details of the division into *wäräda* and *mesläné* see for example National archive File No. 63.1.42.11. The Six *wäräda* were Harär, DireDawa, Jiggiga, Garamulata, Obbora-Meta and Čärčär. These in turn were sub divided into *mesläné*. For example Harär Zuria had four *meslänés*: Kombolcha, Fedis, Babile and Fiq; DireDawa had five *meslänés*: DireDawa, Qärsa, Aysha, Jarso and Qočär; Jiggiga had six *meslänés*: Giri, Dägähabur, Däga Hamed, Qorahe, Sosbeni and Täfäri Bär; Garamulata had three *meslänés*: Anniya, Bädäno and Gola; Obbora –Meta had eight *meslänés*: Obi, Miñña, Mäsäla, Čällänqo, Muṭi, Boroda, Gorogutu and Qulubi; Čärčär had seven *meslänés*: Čiro, Bädésa, Gälämso, Guna, Hirna, Burqa and Adal.

²⁸ *Negarith Gazeta*, 5th Year, No.10. Decree No.6 of 1946 administrative proclamation. For details of *wäräda* and *meketel wäräda* see for example National archive File No. 63.1.42.11

²⁹ WeldeMesqal Tariku Memorial Research Center (WMTMRC). File No. 1/561.; National Archive .File No. 17-7-23-08.

basis of their climatic feature the *awrajas* can be broadly divided into two categories: Those inhabited by pastoralists (Adal and Garaguracha and the five *awrajas* of Ogaden Degehabur, Jigjiga, Qäbridehar, Qälafo and Warder). The other category consisting of the smaller *awrajas* was populated mainly by settled farmers, i.e. Čärčär, Dire Dawa, Garamulata, Gursum, Harär and Obbora.³⁰

Balé was part of Harärgé province until 1960. Through the administrative restructuring scheme of 1942, Balé was united with Harärgé at a *warada* level. It was given an *awraja* status in 1946 and remained as such upto 1960.³¹ But it is not clearly established in the consulted sources to reconstruct the possible rationale for its detachment.

The head of the *teklay gezat* or the province was initially called governor general. Subsequently, he came to be known as an *enderassé* (literally “in my stead”), an agent of the emperor upon whom the monarch’s sovereignty was conferred. They were both under the Ministry of Interior.³² According to Markakis only members of the royal family were given the full title of governor general.³³ Markakis’s argument seems plausible when one realizes that Emperor Haile Sillassie bestowed on Prince Mäkonnen Haile Sillassie the title of Mäsfin of Harär –which was translated as the Duke of Harar, thus making the prince a Duchy. The governorate general included Balé from 1933-1957, with interruption during the Italian Interlude. Since 1958 the position of Duke Harär was given to the son of the late Prince Mäkonnen, Prince Wäsän Sägäd Mäkonnen. While the province was actually governed by the *enderassés* (Deputy Governor-

³⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration policy Oriented Study of Land Settlement. Vol.No.2,1969,pp.44-48. For the details of Harärgé’s topography see also Imiru H/Sillassie, “*Kayehut Kāmastawsāw*” (Amharic Version) (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University press,2001E.C), PP.92-97.

³¹ Ketema Mesqala, “The evolution of Land-ownership and Tenancy in Highland Bale : A Case Study of Goba, Sinana and Dodola to 1974.” M.A Thesis (Addis Ababa, Department of History, 2001), p.123.

³² John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of Traditional Polity* (Addis Ababa: Shama Books,2006), p.352.

³³ Ibid.

Generals), appointed by the emperor, the princes enjoyed considerable financial advantages from their hereditary but nominal offices. Based on the archives,³⁴ the names of the governors of Harär are listed below.

Ras Mäkonnen W/Mikeal (1887-1906)

Däjazmach Yilma Mäkonnen(1906-1908)

Däjazmach Balcha Safo (1908-1910)

Ras Täfäri Mäkonnen (1910-1916)

Däjazmach Gäbré Delal (1916-1918)

Däjazmach Imiru Haile Sillasse (1918-1931)

*Däjazmach Gäbrämaria*m Gari(1932-1934)

Däjazmach Näsibu Zamanuel (1934-1936)

Italian Interlude (1936-1941)

General Nasi (1936-1939)

Enrico Cerulli (1939-1940)

³⁴ The list may not be as exhaustive as required since the sources are not much helpful to trace the whole list. Different archival letters found in the National Archive, Wäldämäsqäl Tariku Memorial Research Center and Häräri Regional State Archives are utilized to trace the list of the Deputy Governor Generals (the last four were *enderassés*). The method utilized is to search for the period they stayed in the position by looking at the dates of various letters written during their tenure in office. Besides, the photos of these governors along with the years in office were posted in the private Museum of Abdella Sherif in Harär. *Ras Imiru* discusses that *Lij Iyyasu* deposed *Däjazmach Täfäri* from his governorship of Harärgé in July 1916. *Lij Iyyasu* through his spokesman *Bitewded Hailegiorgis*, announced that *Däjazmach Täfäri* was appointed Governor of Käffa. In his place, *Däjazmach Gäbré* was appointed who stayed in the position for a brief period. He was deposed because he was said to have plotted with some ministers to depose *Ras Täfäri Mäkonnen*, pp.54,87. According to Mahtämä Sillasse, *Däjazmach Gäbré Delal* was from Shäwa and served as commander in chief of the army of Harärgé after the death of *Ras Makonnen*. His horse's name was *Abba Seran*. He died in 1929 E.C in Čärčär. For details see Mahtämä Sillasse Wäldämäsqäl, *Che Belew*, (HIUS, IES, 1961 E.C), P.89.

- Afä Mäsfin Andargachew Mesay (Later *ras*) (1941-1942).
- Tassew Wallellu (1942- 1945).
- Blatta Ayälä Gäbré (1946-1955)
- Däjazmach Kefle Yergeṭu (1956- 1961)
- Lieutenant Colonel Tamrat Yegezu(1962-1965)
- Lieutenant General Käbädä Gäbré (1965-1968)
- Däjazmach Wärkineh W/Amanuel (1969-74)

As can be observed from the list, the local Oromo, Haräri and Somali, were totally excluded from appointment as *enderassé* of the province. Provincial administration remained the monopoly of the Shäwan elite that dominated the center. Recruitment for the position was controlled by the emperor. The system alienated them from administrating their own affairs and forced them to remain under alien administration. The new rulers were different from the majority of the population of the province in terms of religion, ethnic identity, language and above all political culture. That partly explains the frequent friction in the province between the political elites appointed by the center and the population in general. The only high ranking office given to a member of the local Oromo elite was the appointment of *Fitawrari* Ibrahim Ahmed, the *damina* of the Alla clan around Woter, as the advisor of the *enderassé*.³⁵

Besides different Haräri elites have served as a bridge between the central government and the people of Harär. *Haji* Yusuf Berkele was appointed as supreme in the *diwan* and representative of the Haräri

³⁵ Informant: Siraj Kodhele

people during the reign of *Ras Mäkonnen*. *Haji Abdulahi Ali Sediq* was appointed to the same office and was a representative of the Haräri between 1907-1909 E.C. *Qäññazmach Haji Ahmed Aboñ* was appointed to the same post between 1910-1918 E.C. It was claimed that after the Italian occupation, the Haräri were not represented in the administration of the province in the office of the *enderassé*.³⁶

1.1.2 The Human Landscape

Peopling of Harärgé

Harärgé is one of the areas in Ethiopia and the Horn where *Homo-sapiens* used to live probably in open areas and in caves in the pre- historic period. The rock-arts in various areas of this region are the main evidence for the age-old existence of human kind. For decades, scholars have been examining the rock-arts from *Ganda Biftu* (Goda Kataba), Waybar, Ourso, *Goda Rorris*, Saqa Sharifa, *Goda Onjdi*, *Laga Gafra* and *Laga Oda*. Though the arts vary in style and emphasis, most of them depict the practice of hunting and the domestication of animals in the area nearly 7,000 years before the present.³⁷

Written as well as oral sources tell us that there were a number of ethnic groups living in the eastern part of Ethiopia in antiquity and in the medieval age. The province is inhabited by ethnically and culturally diverse population. In addition to a mixture of a relatively local or “indigenous” ethnic and cultural group like the Harla, the region had a significant population of

³⁶ Haräri Regional State Archive .Folder No.1262.Letter Written to Lt Kebede Gebre, *enderassé* of Harär on Hamle 3 1952 E.C by *Garada* Abdurahman Ahmed Aboñ. He indicated that after the Italian conquest the Imperial Government of Ethiopia had totally forgotten the Häräri, as opposed to the special attention given in the pre-war period and then he hinted that was why the Häräri became rebellious and engaged in anti state activities as they simply became victims of foreign influence which was anti Ethiopian central government. Yusuf Ahmed, contends that the father of *Haji* Abdulah, Ali Sediq was the first to take that post even before *Haji* Yusuf Berkhele.

³⁷ Niall Finneran, *The Archaeology of Ethiopia*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp.93-102.; See also Pavel Cervicek and Ulrich Braukamper, “Rock Art Paintings of Laga Gafra.” (Ethiopia, 1973). Jack Harlan, “The Origins of Indigenous African Agriculture” In *the Cambridge History of Africa*. Vol.1. Desmond Clareck (ed). Vol.1. *From Earliest Times to c. 500 BC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), PP.624-657.

later days immigrants due to various socioeconomic and demographic factors. In this section, discussion will be made on the peoples of Harär plateau with significant impact on the historical developments unfolding during 1887-1975 in the region.

I. The Haräri:

The origin of the Haräri is obscure. There are different hypotheses about their origin but the most commonly articulated postulation on their origin is the one that associates them as the remnants of the Harla. Among the Haräri the process of survival and transformation of identities from the earlier Harla identity is common. Oral tradition among the Haräri claims that they are the descendants of the ancient Harla people about whom many legends have been narrated in connection with the ruined houses, mosques and other constructions all over eastern Ethiopia.

Laying much emphasis on traditions, the Haräri people trace their origin to seven main clans. One of these clans is Harla. The remaining were Gasa, Awari, Warger, Gaturi, Adesh and Aboñ.³⁸ On the issue of clans, one circumstantial evidence needs to be added here. In the area of Afambo, in Afar region, on the bank of the lower Awash, informants discussed that Kābir Hamza was a well respected religious scholar who propagated Islam in the region sometime in the distant past. Haräri informants also claim that he was a Haräri religious scholar who went for missionary work to Afar along with his family and remained there. On the other hand, the book written by father and son, Jamaladin and Hashim, discussing the history of the Afar, explicitly indicate that Kebir Hamza belonged to the Harla clan and the clan members in time formed their own identity and came to be commonly called “Kebirtu”.³⁹

³⁸ Informants: Abdusemed Idris, Ayub Abdulahi

³⁹ Jamaladin Ibrahim and Hashim Jamaladin, *Ya Afar (Danakil) Hizb Tarik Arki Minch* (Amharic Publication). (Addis Ababa: Adiss Tirat Printing, 2000 E.C), PP.286,443,673.

Furthermore, there are some striking similarities in the technological standards and even in structural details between the ruined Harla sites like *Ganda Harla* and the contemporary architecture of Harär city and houses.⁴⁰ The early and advanced agricultural techniques of the Haräri were also discussed as one of their continuing ties with the Harla. In fact today the Haräri claim that they have taught the Oromo agricultural techniques and borrowed some cultigens. Based on this evidence, therefore, it could not be a far fetched assumption that the Haräri are probably the last representatives of the Harla.

On the other hand, Azais, Chambard and Huntingford, as cited in Braukamper, suggest that the builders of the gigantic ruins in eastern Ethiopia were a kind of proto-Somali.⁴¹ However, no oral tradition associates the ruined buildings with the claimed proto-Somali people. Rather, the widespread belief that the Harla constructed the stone houses is supported by written sources that testify to the existence of the Harla people in the area during the medieval period.⁴²

The hypothesis that the Harla were Somali is not a credible idea for the obvious reason that medieval written documents refer to both the Harla and the Somali as distinct communities. If the Harla were Somali, there was no reason to identify them in the written documents as distinct communities. Besides, in the *Futuh* it is explicitly discussed that the *Imam* Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim Al Gazi has arranged his army on the left under the leadership of Mattan; the right wing was

⁴⁰ Ulrich Braukamper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia. Collected Essays*. (Verlag Munster, 2004), P.18.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.17.

⁴² Merid W. Aregay, "Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom, 1508-1708, with special reference to the [Oromo] Migration and their Consequences" PhD Dissertation in History. (University of London, 1971), pp.126-127.; *Shihab al-din Ahmed bin Abdal -Qadr bin Salem bin Uthman, Futuh al Habasha (The Conquest of Abyssinia)*. Paul Lester Stenhouse (Trans.), Richard Pankhurst (Ann.) (Addis Ababa: Aster Publishing, 2003). pp.69,80,89.

made of the Harla under the leadership of Mohammed Bin Ali. Had the Harla been Somali there was no reason for the *Imam* to put this ethnic distinction.⁴³

Equally bewildering and obscure is the origin of Harär. What we have at hand is tentative historical accounts and oral traditions which are more in the nature of assumptions and questionable hypotheses. It is obvious that the name Haräri is derived from Härär. This implies the people are named after the place. Referring to the very country of the people, the Arabs also call the natives Haräri. Nowadays, probably due to the significant presence of the Haräri in the Middle East countries, this nomenclature seems to be acceptable among the Haräri. Haräri is evidently the official name of the people. This nomenclature possibly comes into usage as the overall lives of the Haräri have been confined to the walled city.

Nevertheless, there is no clear information on the genesis and origin of the term Harär. Based on the information from oral interview and written documents, before the foundation of Harär there were seven settlement sites surrounding what is now Harär. These seven villages which were organized on kinship bases were *Ascante gey*, *Hassen gey*, *Thun gey*, *Fereqqa gey*, *Harew gey*, *Ruqi gey*, and *Samti gey*. These seven villages eventually resolved their differences and merged for military protection and moved to the place now known as Harär. However, oral tradition does not give us the details on the exact period of their establishment.⁴⁴ But Burton's account used the

⁴³ Paul Lester Stenhouse (Tran.) and Richard Pankhurst (Ann.) *Shihab al-din Ahmed bin Abdal –Qadr bin Salem bin Uthman. Futuh al Habasha (The Conquest of Abyssinia)*, (Addis Ababa: Aster Publishing, 2003), pp.69,80,89.

⁴⁴ Mengistu Asfaw, "The Wall of Harär: An Archaeological and Historical Study." *Paper Presented for the 10th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Paris, 1988.; Informants: Abdusamad Idris, Ramsi Ali, Khalid Hussien. *Ascante gey* is on the Jiggiga road in a place called "berah"; *Hassen gey* is around the present day Hamaresa; *Thun gey* is found to the southwest of Harär at a place called Jini Ella; *Fereqa gey* is to the south of Harär at a place called Burqa; *Harew gey* is to the east somewhere around the present Harewé village; *Ruqi gey* is somewhere on the Dädär road; and *Samti gey* is north of Harär, probably in the present "Samte Nole". Two of these villages - *Hassen gey* and *Harewé gey* - have preserved their historic naming while the names of the rest have

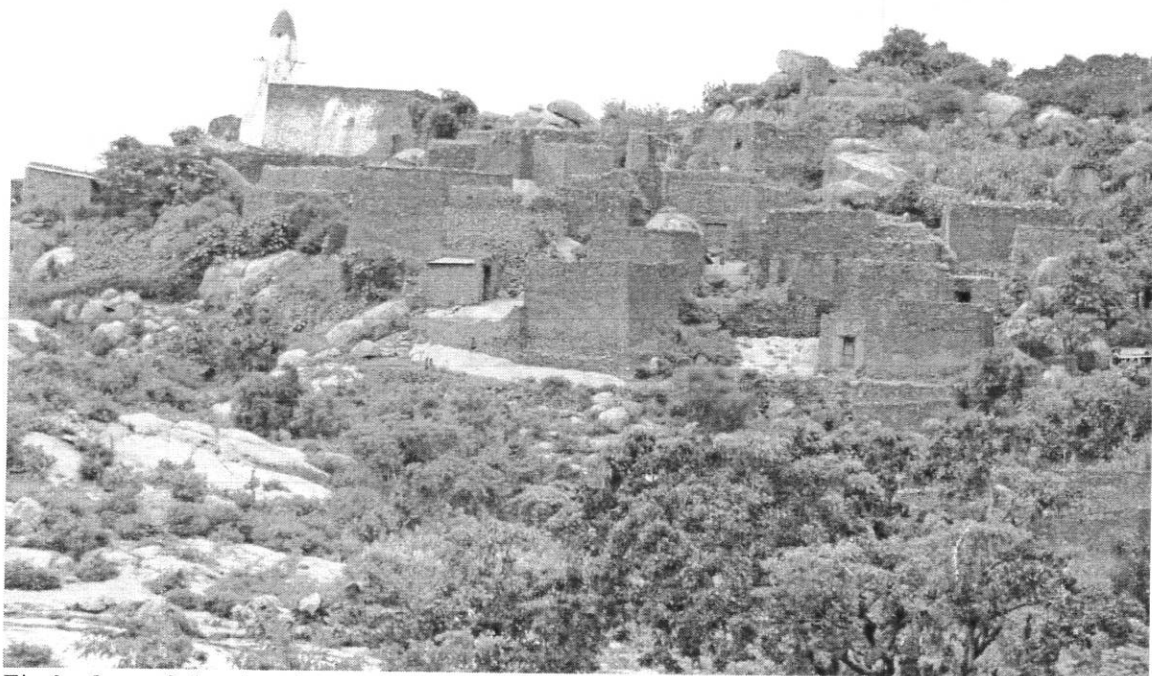


Fig.3. One of the Argoba Villages, Umaradin, West of Hārār.(Photo taken by the author in February 2014). Note that the villages are positioned on the hill where the steep slope surrounded it in all sides.

III. The Somali:

From among the various ethnic groups in Harärgé Plateau the Somali comprise an important minority group. The largest concentration of the Somali are settled at the easterly end of the plain west of Jigjiga town but there are also some who are engaged in commerce and live in urban centers. The most easterly of the Somali sub clan in the highland region are the Gheri-



Fig.3. One of the Argoba Villages, Umaradin, West of Härär.(Photo taken by the author in February 2014). Note that the villages are positioned on the hill where the steep slope surrounded it in all sides.

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Jarso and the Gheri Babilie. They are ethnically mixed Oromo and Somali, practicing agriculture with the help of Oromo farming methods but keeping Somali social institutions.⁶⁵

The other clan of the Somali, the Issa, live further to the east that extends into the dry, arid lands in the coastal parts of the Gulf of Aden. To the south, between Berbera and the foothills of the Jigjiga plain, the land is populated by the Gadabursi. Belonging to the Dir family, both of these clans are camel herders, the Issa in particular inhabiting a strategic position in the chain of communication and transportation that connected the general region of the Horn to control the markets. In the 19th century they operated the import and export trade between the Harärgé highlands and Somali coastal parts by organizing a camel caravan led by the *abban*.⁶⁶

The institution of the *abban* was often supervised by Somali of the Issa clan at Zayla who was the guarantor or guardian responsible for the safety and security of the caravans, the goods and the life of the traders. For a predetermined fee, he arranged camels and men required for the caravan and negotiated the giving of 'gifts' to those whose co-operation might be indispensable for safe passage. Once the goods were loaded, the *abban* became responsible for their delivery at the place where the journey ends, often at the coastal ports or in the markets of the interior. The *abban* institution continued to serve the trade between the coast and the interior until the dawn of the 20th century when much of the traffic was diverted to the Franco- Ethiopian railway.⁶⁷

The pastoral Somali were strategically positioned and benefited from the trade between the coast and the interior by monopolizing the means of transportation. On the eve of the occupation of

⁶⁵ Ezekiel Gebissa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia 1930-1991", (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997), p.53.; I.M Lewis, "The Somali Lineage System and the total Genealogy: A General Introduction to Basic Principles of Somali Political Institutions" Anthropological Research.; See also I.M Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, 2nd ed. (London, 1982), pp.7-14.

⁶⁶ Ezekiel Gebissa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia 1930-1991", (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997), p.54

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Harär by the Egyptians in 1875, the Haräri, the Oromo and the Somali established a modus operandi whereby the Haräri exported the agricultural products of the Oromo using transportation and communication facilitated by the Somali.⁶⁸

IV. The Oromo: Settlement patterns and social organization of the Ittu, Aniya and Afran Qällo.

The Oromo of Harärgé, as indeed elsewhere in Ethiopia, gave their clan names to the area where they settled. Every clan has its own traditionally identified and defined territorial limits. Their settlement pattern was identified by natural boundaries such as rivers and mountains. The Eastern Oromo settlement at the present site can be traced back to between 1530-1540, when the branch of the Barentu moved to the east from south central Ethiopia and occupied the Harär plateau.⁶⁹ In Harärgé, three major Oromo groups were identified. These were the Ittu, Aniya and Afran Qällo. They are collectively identified as Eastern Oromo. According to Oromo tradition they all belong to their distant ancestor, Barentuma (Bari'antu), one of the two great (the other being Borana) moieties in Oromo national myth. The Barentu moiety had five sons: these are Karayu, Dhumuga, Marawa, Humbena and Akichu.⁷⁰

There is a great divergence in the sources with regard to the genealogy of the Eastern Oromo, just as in other Oromo genealogies. In fact the study of the genealogy of all Oromo people in general is not that of a simple genealogy but that of an interwoven people by which all tribes

⁶⁸ Richard Caulk, "Harär Town and its Neighbors in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of African History*, Vol.18, No.3 (1977), pp.369-386. See also Sydney Waldron, "The Political Economy of Haräri Oromo Relations, 1559-1874" (Michigan: African Studies Center, 1984), pp.32.; Mohammed Hassen, "The Relation between Harär and the Surrounding Oromo 1800-1887" BA Thesis. HSIU (Department of History, 1973), pp.15-16.; Ezekiel, p.55.

⁶⁹ Mohammed Hassen, "Menelik's Conquest of Harär, 1887, and its effects on the political organization of the Surrounding Oromos up to 1900" Working Papers on Society and History in Imperial Ethiopia: The Southern Periphery from the 1880s to 1974. (Ed) Donald Donham and Wendy James (Cambridge African Studies Center, 1980), p.229.; See also Ezekiel, p.48.

⁷⁰ Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).; See also Oromiya Culture and Tourism Bureau, *History of the Oromo to the Sixteenth Century*, (Addis Ababa, 2006), pp.137-145.

and groups of tribes had interacted and were transformed constantly through adoption and assimilation.

The Ittu, the branch of the Marawa sub moiety, were predominantly settled in Čärčär. Bahrey mentions both Marawa and Ittu as direct descendants of the Barentu. Marawa had four “sons”: Anna, Uru and Abbati as well as Ittu,⁷¹ who is unanimously believed to be the “son” of Marawa by informants. According to informants, the Ittu settlement starts from the lowlands of Čärčär around Asäbot and the borders of Arsi and extends all the way up to the town of Boroda, traditionally the boundary between Eastern and Western Harärgé.

Generally, the Ittu are composed of ten clans which in turn were divided into two broad categories. These were Mänä Ittu and Mänä Babo. Mänä Ittu are composed of five sub families: Adayo, Gamo, Bayo, Aroji and Wayu. Mänä Babo are composed of four sub clans: Gadula, Elele, Seden and Alega.⁷² Of course there are some minor differences with the names of families and sub divisions collected by the Oromia Culture and Tourism Office. The collection by Huntingford is quite different from the list that I have collected from informants and to some extent from the collection by Oromia Culture and Tourism Office. Thus, here I have used the collection by oral informants and Oromia Culture and Tourism Office. Because the version I got from informants is closer to the collection by Oromia Culture and Tourism Office than the list produced by Huntingford. Huntingford’s list is indicated in map No. 5.

The tenth clan is Qallu, which according to tradition, had its origin in a certain religious man who came to the heartland of Ittu to preach the *Qur’an* and his descendants were identified as

⁷¹ Bahrey, “History of the [Oromo]” in *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593-1646*. Trns and Ed by Beckingham and Huntingford, p.110.; Informants: Umar Ahmed Ali, Haji Mohammed Adem, Shayk Taha Abdella.

⁷² Ibsa Ahmed. “A History of the Ittu Oromo 1880s-1974.” M.A.Thesis (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2007), p.8-10.; Informants: Umar Ahmed Ali, Jemal Abdurahman, Mustafa Adem, Aliyi Mume.

Qallu, a separate sub-clan within the Ittu.⁷³ Another tradition narrates that a certain Shekash (a member of Shekash clan) came from the east to the heartland of the Ittu and lived there by preaching the *Qur'an*. After a long time his descendants were recognized by the clan assembly of the Ittu. Thereafter they were given a separate settlement area and were constituted as the tenth sub clan of the Ittu.⁷⁴

Based on oral sources, Braukamper reached a similar conclusion but differed in that he claimed the Wara Qallu belonged to the Somali ethnic group .He says:

The most active agents of Muslm diffusion were the Wara Qallu (Oromo: priests) who seemed to have first settled among the Alla Oromo. They started founding a new clan there which in the 1880s was still bilingual. Later on they established themselves among other sub groups of the Barentu Oromo as far as the Ittu in Čarčar, but they all preserved the memory of their Somali origin. Wherever they lived in a purely Oromo –Speaking environment they occupied a position as *Shayks* and outstanding representatives of Muslm religion.⁷⁵

All of these traditions have the same conclusion although they differ on the identity of the people who initially settled among the Ittu. They all indicated that the Wara Qallu were originally linked with the clan structure of the Ittu. They imply the Wara Qallu were assimilated in the Oromo clan structure based on the adoption and assimilative culture of the Oromo.

The Afran Qällo are those group of the Humbena Oromo who have settled in what is now East Harärgé starting from Boroda all the way to the plains of Jigjiga. There is also another tradition that makes the Afran Qällo the sons of Barentuma. The Afran Qällo, as their name implies, are

⁷³ Ibsa Ahmed. "A History of the Ittu Oromo 1880s-1974." M.A.Thesis (Addis Ababa; Addis Ababa University, 2007);Informants: Umar Ahmed Ali, Jemal Abdurahman, Mustafa Adem.

⁷⁴ Informants: Mohammed Adem ,Umar Haji, Taha Abdella.

⁷⁵ Ulrich Brakamper,*Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia*. p.111.

Here, it needs to be stressed that the distinction between the adopted and biological Oromo groups has only ritual meaning with no economic, political, cultural or legal significance. One lineage Oromo group can be adopted by another or sub groups of alien peoples or whole ethnic groups can be incorporated and given Oromo identity, even with the status of elderly and pure Oromo. Since the *mogasa* process was undertaken through highly respected ritual ceremonies, accompanied by religious oaths, the newly incorporated groups and their descendants were expected to act to that effect. Hence the new members, who became part of the Oromo, trace their ancestors several generations back to the hypothetical founder of the confederacy. Traditionally, it is believed that making distinction among children, i.e. biological or adopted, is taboo.

The Jarso along with the Hume are strongly influenced by the Somali culture to the extent of counting their genealogy within the Somali clans. Jarso are settled predominantly in Jarso, Gursum and Činakson. Traditions again vary in the number of the sons of Jarso. Jarso is divided into six sub clans: these are Oromo, Welabu, Dāwāro Dhanqa, Sayo and Oga. Each in turn is subdivided into sub families. For example Oga is divided into Wara Botor, Wara Harase, Wara Maru, Wara Heben, Wara Selaw, Wara Deko and Wara Bombe.⁷⁹

As a third son of Daga, Hume is predominantly found to the south of Jarso and north of the Babile in an area near the headwaters of the Fafan and Dakata, on the way to Jigjiga. They are mixed much with Jarso and Ghiri Jarso. Much is not known on their family genealogy. But according to the Oromia Culture and Tourism publication, two traditions are identified. The first divided Hume into two sub families and these are Onaya and Bursub. Each in turn is sub divided into a number of sub families. Here one can clearly identify Bursub as a Somali group implying a

⁷⁹ Informants: Mohammed Dawud, Yusuf Hashif, Yahya Umar, Mohammed Muso.

very strong Somali influence. The second genealogical tree shows Hume as having 12 sub clans.⁸⁰

The third son of Afran Qällo is Babile, which has settled to the south of Härär town. The settlement of Babile includes the present day Erer, and to the south up to Fiqi in Somalia, to the north up to Harär, to the west up to Gursum and to the east is Fädis. There is also a town named after the clan. According to tradition Babile's offspring are divided into two groups, just like the Nole. These are *ilman gudedä*, i.e. biological sons and *ilman bercuma* (those who became Babile clan members through *mogasa*). Thus the first group of *ilman gudedä* consists of Arele and Heban while the second group consists of Hawiya and Gonjebe. On this the publication by Oromia Culture and Tourism Office covering an extensive area from all over Oromia gives different versions; in fact it is difficult to ascertain as genealogical studies are tricky and often intermeshed with fictitious formulations. In addition, beyond its nomenclature this classification has no practical value whatsoever as the members considered themselves as sons of Babile.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Oromiya Culture and Tourism Office.p.266.; See also Ulrich Braumper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia*.p.111.; Informants: Mohammed Dawud,Yusuf Hashif,Yahya Umar,Mohammed Muso.

⁸¹ Ibid.

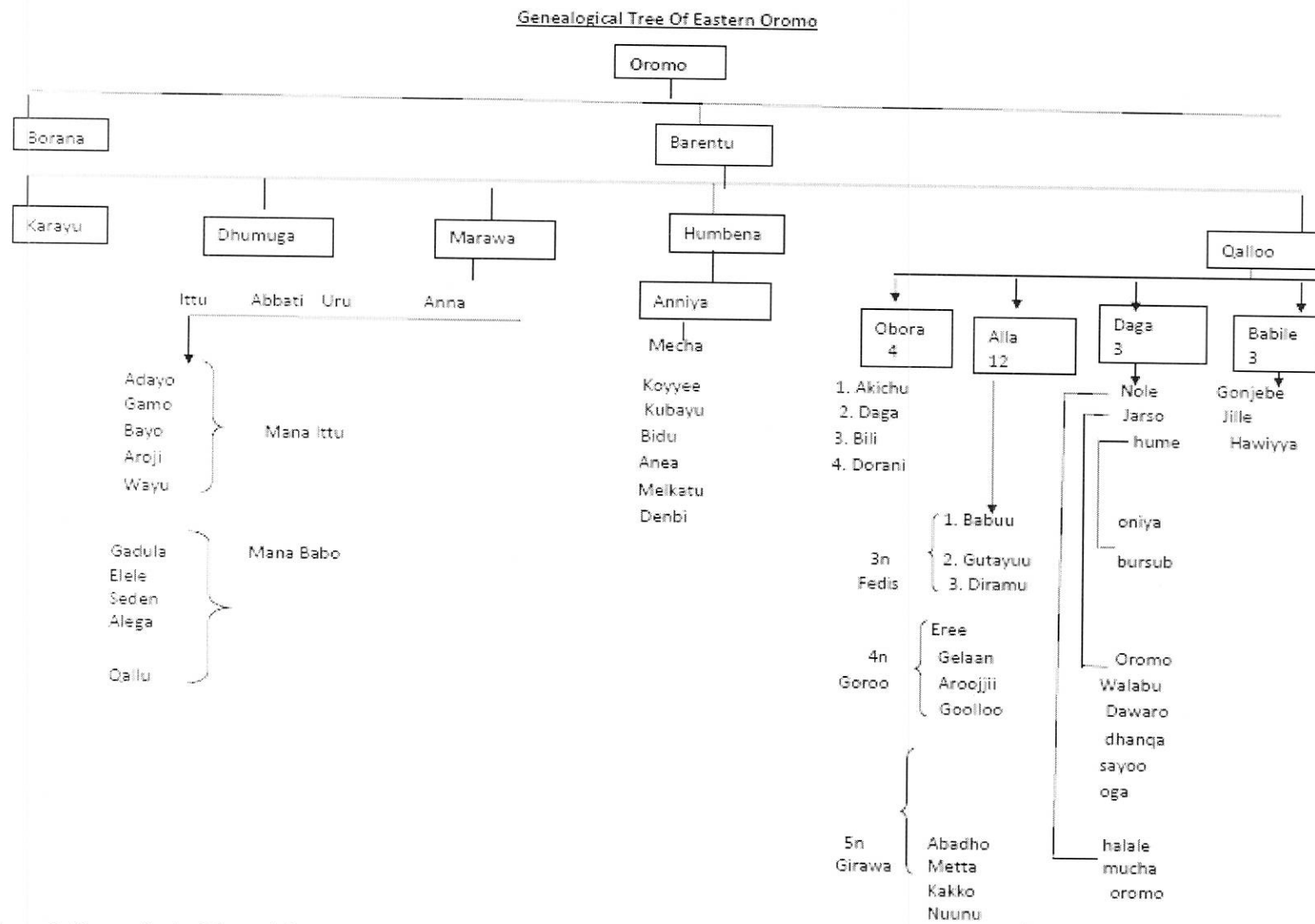


Figure 4: Geneaological Tree of the Eastern Oromo.

The fourth son of Afran Qällo is Alla, considered as the youngest son of Qallo but covering the largest area. Alla territory starts from the town of Čällänqo and covers such areas like Qullubi, Qärsa, Garamulata, Kurfačale, Bädäno, Fädis, parts of Haramaya and Adele. Alla is sub divided into 12 sub clans. These were sub divided into six *ilaman gudedä* and six *ilman barcuma* just as we have seen above for Babile and Nole. These are Abadho, Meta, Nunu, Bubu, Gollo, Eree, Gallan, Diramu, Gutayu, Kaku, Aroji and Abeyi.⁸²

The second son of Humbena among the Harärgé Oromo is Aniya. Although they are believed to have settled in Garamulata, they have also settled in the lowland parts of Boke, the town of Mulu up to the border of Somali region. Their way of life is predominantly pastoral. In general they have settled to the south of the Afran Qällo and the Ittu. Their traditional *Gada* center was Burqa Tirtira. According to the information gathered from oral informants the Aniya are sub divided into seven sub clans: Meča, Koye, Kubayu, Bidu, Ane, Melkatu and Denbi.⁸³ Clark Brook writes about the Aniya that they live in the southern parts of Gara Mulata region extending in the west to the Ramis and in the east a short distance beyond water, Gabelle. They are mainly herders.⁸⁴

The social organization of the Eastern Oromo could approximately be put in ascending order: *wara*, *mänä*, *ganda*, *gosa*, *sabi-lami* and *saba* extending from the nuclear family to a nation. Of these categories, *gosa* is the most popular and universal social organization among the Oromo. It served as the basis for socio economic, political and military organization of the *Raba Dori*. It is

⁸² Oromiya, Culture and Tourism Office.p.263.; Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker, Abdella Ahmed.

⁸³ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Yuya Abdulahi, Musa Ibrahim, Suleyman Ahmed.

⁸⁴ Clarke Brooke, p. 294.

the *gosa* that defends the wellbeing of the members like securing economic resources with respect to land, cattle and others; it is the *gosa* members that pay *diyya* and *gumma*.⁸⁵

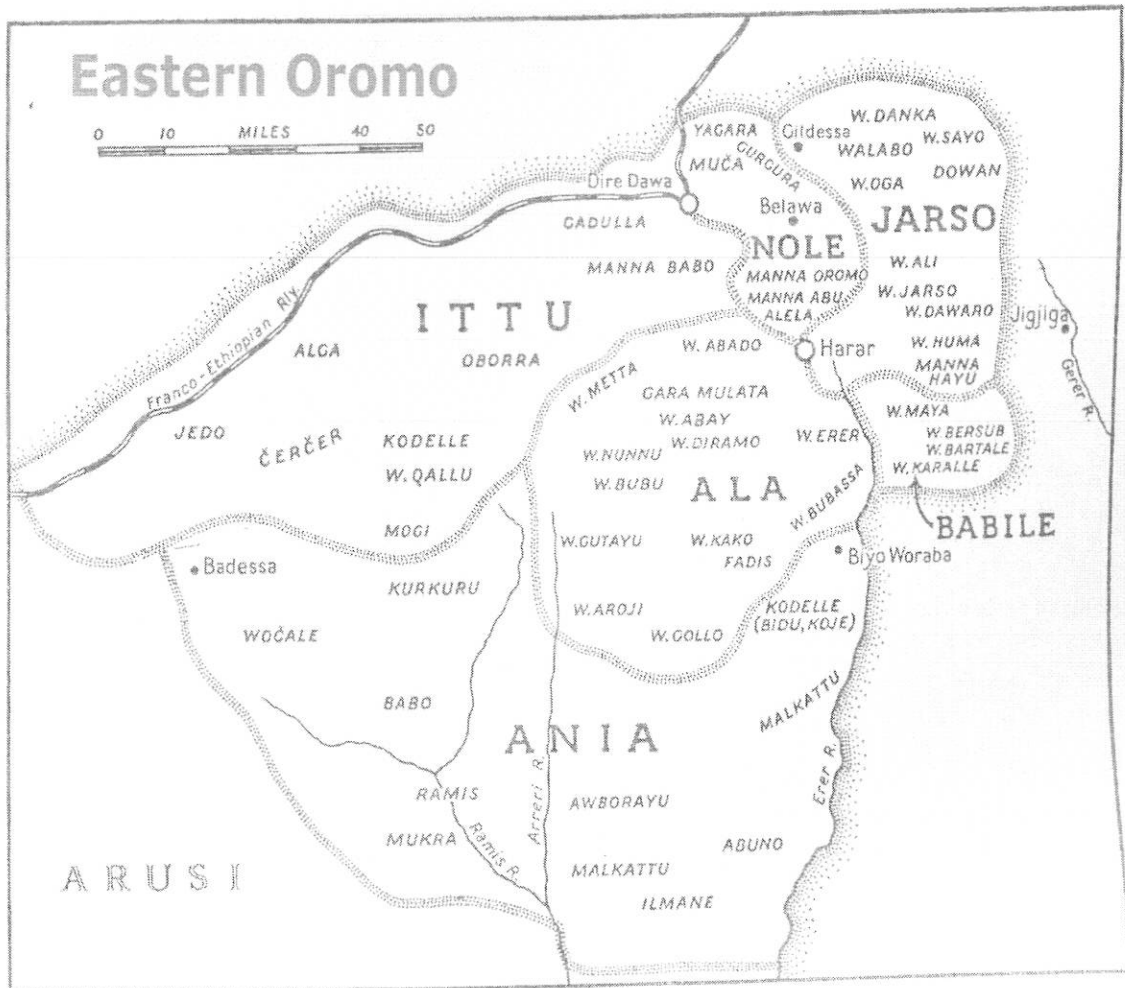


Fig.5 Location map of the settlement of the Oromo of Harärgé. Adapted from G.W.B Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia, the Kingdom of Kafa and Janjaro*.(London,1955)

⁸⁵ Bedri Kebir, "The Afran Qallo Oromo" BA Thesis (Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1995), pp.23-24.; Informants: Mussa Ibrahim, Mohammed Muso, Siraj Kodhele.

Although these settlement sites are identified as the major areas where the Eastern Oromo groups are found in great numbers, they are found scattered in different parts of Harärgé due to different historical factors. For example, the Nole of Afran Qällo are predominantly found in what we conventionally understand today as Eastern Harärgé but they are also found elsewhere in Ethiopia. Nole land is the most densely populated area in Eastern Harärgé. Due to shortage of arable land large groups of Nole families have migrated and settled in Čärčär as far west as Gälämsö, Mächara and Hančar.

Also historically, following the conquest, the burden of the occupation and the *mälkäñña* system forced able men to abandon villages. A good example was Rara Tortora, 10kms south of Bädäno in Garamulata where, following the arrival of the Amhara in the area, the entire sedentary agricultural population abandoned farming and adopted pastoralism, moving to the Ramis valley where malaria took its share of the human toll.

Flight in Harärgé was also associated with escaping the exploitation and harsh treatment of the landlords and their onerous demands. In this regard, the lowland parts of West Harärgé, like Hančäre, Gubaqoricha and Čärčär, were safe havens for those escaping the landlord-tenant production relation. Informants in Garamulata, Dädär, Hirna, Čällänqo remember that numerous families have their relatives in the lowlands of Čärčär who migrated in search of free land, where the Ittu traditionally graze their cattle. Likewise flight into Burqa Tirtira, the country of Aniya, was common in the 1950s and the 1960s when tenants were evicted from their farmlands by the landlord.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Yuya Abdula, Hassen Beker, Suleyman Ahmed

In fact it was not only tenants who retreated to the lowland parts of Harärgé. *Gäbbar* families also escaped the *mälkäñña* exploitation and hardship by retreating to lowlands. This was true in some other parts of southern Ethiopia as well. In areas where the subjugated people were near international boundary the simplest way to escape exploitation was to cross the boundary. The case of the Borana and the Burji, who crossed into Kenya, was well illustrated by McClellan. On the other hand since the Guji and Gedeo did not share international boundary, the only way to escape the *naftäñña* exploitation and arrogance was to retreat into the forests.⁸⁷ Likewise, the pastoral Aniya in the lowland of Burqa Tirtira retreated deep into the forests of the lowlands of Bädäno. In doing so, they made sure that the Amhara settlers and the *mälkäñña* system did not reach them as the settlers always preferred highlands to lowlands which are infested by diseases like malaria. This was a mechanism through which the Oromo denied the settler communities to rob them of vital resources.

V. The Submerged Occupational Groups and Others

These were groups of people who lived on their handcraft skills but were a social minority. The two predominant occupational groups were the *waṭṭa* and the *tumtu*.⁸⁸ They are found in dispersed settlements throughout the agricultural Oromo settlement areas. The *tumtu* produce different kinds of pots made of clay. As compared to the *waṭṭa* their settlements are spread wide in Harärgé plateau and they are numerically superior. They use a simple furnace: oxygen is pumped by foot-operated goatskin bawls through a narrow underground outlet to a hole containing charcoal. With the furnace and simple hammer and chisels, the *tumtu* make and repair agricultural implements and produce household articles such as pots, milk and water jars of

⁸⁷ Charles W McClellan, *State Transformation and National Integration: Gedeo and the Ethiopian Empire, 1895-1935*. (East Lansing: Michigan State University, African Studies Center, 1988), p. 74.

⁸⁸ Clarke Brooke, pp. 73-74.; Informants: Legesse Beqansa, Dhekeba Gameda, Siraj Kodhele, Belete Worqeneh

various sizes used by the sedentary Oromo. In return for these, the *tumtu* demand payment in cash or in kind, mainly grain.⁸⁹

Tumtu women shape and fire earthen pottery, baking utensils, water and milk containers, etc., which are sold to the agricultural households. A red mud is used, pounded in a wooden mortar and mixed with water. The wet earthen is shaped by hand into long bowls which, in the case of open mouthed containers are positioned one over the other from mouth to base and round into the preferred shape. It is then exposed in an open space for days to dry. When fully dry, it is enclosed with new dung and exposed in a wood and dried-dung fire. The high temperature to which the dung is exposed glazes the pottery; it is then removed from the fire. The jar is moderated by boiling milk with the vessel.⁹⁰

Some *tumtu* combine agriculture with their smithery and pottery making. They leased land from the land owners and entered into different kinds of tenancy arrangements to practice agriculture. Informants unanimously agree that these arrangements were largely determined by the landowners and the condition was not favorable for them. They only engaged in agriculture since their income through the production of hand tools was not enough to lead a decent life.⁹¹ The *waṭṭa* produce leather goods. They are famous for their hunting skill and are much feared by other ethnic groups for the supposed magical power popularly attributed to them, a phenomenon common for minority groups all over Africa.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Informants: Legesse Bekansa, Dheqeba Gameda, Siraj Kodhele, Belete Worqeneh

⁹² In Ethiopia since there were different groups of peoples identified as "*Watta*", scholars believe that the word "*waṭṭa*" is a common name for a hunting group of people. But the status of these occupational groups of people is also ambiguous. Part of the problem is whether they were part of the wider society they lived in or belong to different ethnic groups. Among the Arsi there are *waṭṭa* living along lake Zway and Northeast of the province. They claim they belong to the Sidama. Among the Borana Oromo the *waṭṭa* cast hunters are considered as a different

In Harärgé as elsewhere, *waṭṭa* hunt all kinds of animals by using bow and poisoned arrows. Nevertheless, in areas where agriculture is wide-spread, *waṭṭa* must augment their living by selling leather goods and pottery. One group of *waṭṭa* is called “Mussa Darya” and makes pottery only, while another group known as “Howlae” produce both leather and poetry goods. The occupations of the *waṭṭa* and the *tumtu* are considered to be those of a pariah group over much of Africa, and as is commonly the case with such peoples, they may not marry outside of their own group. In fact informants claim that there is cultural taboo among the Oromo to intermarry with these cast groups. The *tumtu* and *waṭṭa* must live in their own villages apart from those of the agricultural Oromo. Yet with regard to their language, religion, physical appearance, costume, housing and other cultural features, there is no big difference with the Oromo in those areas they live, especially with regard to the *tumtu*. What is striking from the narration by informants is that these caste groups who were segregated were actually Oromo, and predominantly Shāwan Oromo.⁹³

When we compare the degree of segregation of these groups by the agricultural Oromo, there is relatively greater tolerance and acceptance of the smiths than the *waṭṭa*. This degree of tolerance can be explained by allowing a place for the smith to work through rent. This may be explained in part by the fact that the *tumtu* are far more numerous than the hunters and leather workers.

VI. The Shekash

Very little is known about the Shekash. Scanty references are found in the archives which can be supported by oral sources. Oral sources claim that the Shekash belong to the Darod Somali and

ethnic group and perform ritual activities such as circumcision of the *Abba Gada*. For details see for example Fredrick C. Gamst, “Male Circumcision” in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol. III, ed. Siedbert Uhlig, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), p. 303-308.

⁹³ Alula Abate “The Growth and Development of Small and Medium Sized Ketema Settlements in the Harär Highlands” p. 738. Informants: Legesse Beqansa, Dhekeba Gameda, Siraj Kodhele, Belete Worqeneh

are distantly related to the mythical founder of the Darod confederacy, *Shaykh* Ismail Jabarti. He was said to have migrated to Somalia from Arabia sometime prior to the 13th Century. They further claim that they belong to the Oromo on their mother's side.⁹⁴ Their present settlement is predominantly in Erer valley to the South of Harär but significant number of the Shekash are found in Ejersa Goro (Jarso). As their primary occupation is trade they are found scattered in the towns of Harärgé such as Jarso, Fuññanbira, Dädär, Čiro, Hirna, DireDawa, Harär, Jigjiga, Gerawa, Kombolcha and others.⁹⁵

Incidentally one of my informants in Dädär, Mohammed Abdulahi, was Shekash and narrates his life experience. Being a minority, in recent decades, they were constantly harassed by the Somali and migrated to Harär where they were positively treated. The archives reveal that the Shekash, just like the Christian brothers, demanded land to which very few of them were hitherto entitled. Even those who were given land entitlement were recognized with a different identity than what they claim to have.⁹⁶ Probably due to this ambivalent identity, the total number of the Shekash was not exactly known hitherto. From one of the letters written by *Shayk* Ibrahim Abdi, himself claiming to be chief of the Shekash, to the *enderassé* of Harär *Awraja* on *Teqemt* 11, 1934 E.C., it is evident that some of the Shekash were practicing agriculture by owning land; some of them were even *garadas*.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Informants: Mustefa Adem, Mohammed Abdullahi

⁹⁵ Informants: Jemal Adurahman, Hassen Bäkär, Mohammed Abdullahi. Interestingly enough, Jarso a small town to the Northeast of Harär and the birth place of emperor Haile Sillase used to be referred in state archives as "Betelhem"

⁹⁶ National Archive, Folder No. 17.2.20. 03.

⁹⁷ Haräri Regional State Archive, Folder No. 1262. Letter written to the then Deputy Governor General of Harär by Shayk Ibrahim Abdi.

VII. The Harla

Probably, no people are more prominent in the public memory in Harärgé than the Harla. Who were the Harla? None of the archaeological works have fully resolved who the Harla were and the language they speak. Harla is the name of a population that is mentioned in Arabic and Ethiopian historical sources since the 14th century. In *al-Muffaddal's* chronicle, they are subject to the king of the Amhara, together with the Damot. In later sources, such as the *chronicle of Amdä Tsion*, the *Futuh al- Habäsha* and *Awsa Chronicle*, they are allied to such Muslim leaders as *Gazi Salih*, *Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim* and the *Imam Muhammed*.⁹⁸

In the *Futuh*, the Harla are one of the three main components of the *Imam's* army, together with the Somali and Malasay. One of the main settlement areas is Zarba where farmers are mentioned explicitly. Zarba also occurs in the *Futuh* as the name of a clan together with other Harla clans such as the Zaman Bara, Barzara, the Yaqula, the Gasar, the Arab Takha and Alqa.⁹⁹ Merid argued that the Harla occupied the southern slopes of the Čärčär highlands and most of the lowlands of Babile. They were engaged primarily in agriculture and to a certain extent in trade.¹⁰⁰

For decades, scholars have collected as well as excavated archaeological evidence from various archaeological sites in the vast Čärčär massif especially at the Harla village near the town of Dire Dawa. Even to the east of Harär, there are ruins of several ancient towns with mosques: Jigjiga, Činaksan, and Nur Abdoche. In the same region, a few kilometers from Činaksan, Därbigar is

⁹⁸ Georgio Banti, "Harla", in *Encyclopedea Aethiopica*, Vol.II.ed. Siedbert Uhlig. (Wiesbaden :Harrassowitz Verlag,2005),p.1034.

⁹⁹ Paul Lester Stenhouse and Richard Pankhurst (trns).*The Conquest of Abyssinia*.(Hollywood:Thsehay Publishers,2003),p.76. ; See also Jamaladin Ibrahim and Hashim Jamaladin ,*Ya Afar (Danakil) Hizb Tarik Arki Minch* (Amharic Publication). (Addis Ababa:Adiss Tirat Printing,2000E.C),PP.286-287.

¹⁰⁰ Merid Wolde Aregay, "Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom,1508-1708, with special reference to the [Oromo]Migration and their Consequences" PhD Dissertation in History. (University of London,1971),pp.42,126,127,134,353.

mentioned as a 'large town' surrounded by walls and characterized by the presence of a very old mosque as well as Muslim burials.¹⁰¹ To the west of Harär, toward the northern lakes of the Rift valley, there are a string of ancient ruined cities, associated with Muslim worship places and burials. Several other ancient towns which are known in oral tradition as works of the Harla were discovered in the Čärčär massif in the 1970s. One example is the site of Khorfa-Kamona, located about ten kilometers to the west of Harär. Besides, there are four other towns located in the immediate surroundings of Doba: Kubi, Addas, Mito, Djugola and Abadir. The megaliths at Doba are confidently attributed to the 8th -12th centuries, according to several radiocarbon dates.¹⁰² From the various local and foreign coins, artifacts, home utensils, manufacturing tools, large mosques, strategic buildings with their enclosures, grave marks, granaries, water wells and other constructions in the villages of Harla near the town of Dire Dawa, we can infer that the Harla, used to be a complex urban society between the 14-16th Centuries with developed system of irrigation agriculture and stone architecture.¹⁰³

In general, as discussed above, the existing knowledge based on oral evidence and meager archaeological works indicate that the Harla were the earliest identifiable population in the Harär plateau. The question that remains unanswered is therefore where did this mighty people disappear? The most common narrative of oral informants is that some supernatural force was responsible while others relate that the 16th century population movement of the Oromo swept away the Harla.¹⁰⁴ It is very doubtful that such an important people that sources refer to as

¹⁰¹ Francois-Xavier, Fauvelle-Aymar and Bertrand Hirsch, "Muslim Historical Spaces in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment." *North East African Studies*. Vol. 11, No.1(2004), p.33.

¹⁰² Ibid. ,p.34

¹⁰³ Ibid.,33.

¹⁰⁴ Informants: Usman Mängäsha, Ibrahim Ararso, Jemal Mohammed.

warriors, builders and merchants vanished without leaving a trace in the period between the 17th and 20th century.

It is also implausible to argue that such mighty and civilized population disappears within a short period. Rather it would be safe to assume that the process of peoples' interaction and integration had in time passed through a phase of transformation and resulted in the formation of a new culture and identity. Supporting this argument, there are some clan names that trace their origin to Harla like Hawasuka among the Karayu Oromo, Harla among the Afar in Assayta and Affambo, Doka and along the banks of the Awash River as well as Somali.¹⁰⁵

VIII. Late Settlers after the conquest of Harär

As one of the major peoples behind the formation of the modern Ethiopian Empire state, a large community who belong mainly to the Amhara ethnic group came to Harärgé as soldiers, camp followers, administrators and settled farmers after the conquest of the province in January 1887.¹⁰⁶ In fact it was not only the Amhara that had participated in the conquest and settled in Harärgé. The Oromo especially from Shäwa province had accompanied the Amhara.¹⁰⁷ But it was the Amhara who made the core of the vanguard forces in Menelik's expansion. After the conquest the soldiers settled on strategically selected mountainous sites; these later evolved into garrison towns such as Gälämso, Dädär, Gerawa etc.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Jamaladin Ibrahim and Hashim Jamaladin ,Ya Afar (Danakil) Hizb Tarik Arki Minch (Amharic Publication). (Addis Ababa:Adiss Tirat Printing,2000E.C),PP.286-287.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Caulk, "The Occupation of Harär :January 1887" (Mimeographed Paper),p.15. See also Mohammed Hassen, "Menelik's Conquest of Härär,1887,and its effects on the political organization of the Surrounding Oromos up to 1900" Working paper on Society and History in Imperial Ethiopia: The Southern Periphery from the 1880s to 1974. (Ed) Donald Donham and Wendy James (Cambridge African Studies Center,1980),pp.227-230.

¹⁰⁷ Informants:Gashaw G/Mesqel, Nigussie G/Medhin, Taye Bedhane, Mohammed Adem.

¹⁰⁸ Mulugeta B/Sillasie, "Gursum: The History of a Garrison Town:1887-1974" Senior Essay .(Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1988).;Mekonnen Tamiru, "The History of a Garrison Town:Gerawa 1889-1974" Senior Essay (Addis Ababa Univrsity, Department of History,1988).;Amenai Mengesha, "A Regional Study

The Amhara forces were divided into distinct regiments. For example, seven regiments were settled in Garamulata these were: *Gondare*, *Warwari*, *Ya Bét Lij*, *Zerzer*, *Barud bét*, *Wuha senqu*, *Čaññe*, *Gira Zäbäñña* and *Qañ Zäbäñña*. These regiments were further divided into *Shambel*. The regiments and *Shambel* had regional basis. The Gondaré regiment was composed of soldiers that came from Gondar. The commander of the regiment, *Däjazmach Abba Shawel Gäbré*, was himself a Gondaré. They were the vanguards, *Batri* or *Yä Ginbar ƴor*. The regiment stayed in Garamulata for three years. It was then sent to Bädäno, some 80 km away, to suppress the revolt of the Aniya Oromo in 1910. Later the regiment split into two- one went to Balé while the other went to Qärsa. *Yä Bet Lij* were mainly composed of soldiers from Märhabeté, North Shäwa and some of them from Wällo. Unlike the Gondaré regiment this was not known for its bravery. They were regarded as “soft” because their peace time duties and their privileges were connected with services in the *gibi*; usually they served as guards of the *Abägaz*. Their commander was *Fitawrari* Agidé Mäkonnen who was appointed by the *Abägaz* of Garamulata, *Däjazmach* Wadajo Jima.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps a different organizational pattern of the regiments without a regional pattern was observed with the regiment of *zerzer ƴor*. This was organized for the first time by *Däjazmach* Waqué, the *Abägaz* of Gararmulata, from 1918-1929. It was a collection of retired soldiers as well

of Legegeba and Eastern Deder Zuria” Senior Essay .(Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1970).; Damirew Dagne, “A Short History of Galamso Town: From Foundation to 1974” Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1988)

¹⁰⁹⁾ Mulugeta B/Sillasie, “Gursum: The History of a Garrison Town:1887-197” Senior Esaay .(Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1988),pp.12-14.; Mäkonnen Tamiru, “The History of Garrison Town:Gerawa 1889-1974” Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1988),pp.1-13

as commanders. They were veterans who had acquired their military reputation in the initial incorporation of Harärgé. Most of the members of this regiment were called *Baläweleta*.¹¹⁰

In subsequent years and decades, these soldier settlers brought their families into the newly incorporated land in search of economic fortunes. The immigration of these populations dramatically changed the population and settlement matrix of Harärgé. Although we do not have an exact figure of the migration of the new settlers we have an estimate made by the Italian and French travelers. In the wake of the incorporation, the famous French traveler Arthur Rimbaud and another French national, Jules Borelli, found an estimated 12, 000 newcomers along with 4,000 men with firearms around the plains of Boroma and Gälämsa, in Čärčär in 1887.¹¹¹ After five decades, in 1938, based on Italian sources, Clarke Brooke indicates that the figure had increased to 300.000, most of them in the highlands.¹¹² Undoubtedly, a large proportion of these people were officials of the government. But the majority of them came to farm, some in thinly settled areas, and others on land previously owned by the Oromo.

The economic base of these soldier settlers was predominantly agriculture. The effect of this immigrant population on Harärgé's environment, land tenure, resource distribution, power realignment and settlement pattern was dramatic and discernible. Extensive land grants were made to these settlers on the previously Oromo settled lands. These land grants had different features which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Conquest and Resistance

¹¹⁰ Mäkonnen Tamiru, "The History of Garrison Town:Gerawa 1889-1974" Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History,1988),pp.11.

¹¹¹ Richard Caulk , "Menelik's Conquest and Local leaders in Harär" Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University,(n.d).In *Social Sciences Miscellaneous*. No.5.p.24.

¹¹² Clarke Brooke, p.63.The figure tells the situation for all parts of Harärgé province under Italian administration. Probably the Great famine after 1892 had its own impact in the rising population of the settlers as peoples were mitigating from the drought affected areas to get relief.

The army of emperor Menelik crossing the Awash faced a stiff resistance from the Ittu Oromo. According to oral informants the first encounter between the Ittu and Menelik's army took place in 1886 at Kora near Bordede. The traditional military leaders of the Ittu organized their army based on clan basis and were led by two famous warriors: Ittisa Roro of Laga Arba, representing the five Ittu houses, and Boru Doda of Asäbot, representing the four Babo houses. They successfully repulsed the Shāwan army through guerilla warfare.¹¹³ For the second time, the Shāwan army under the leadership of Wäldä Gäbreil (better known by his infamous nickname- *Abba Seytan*) attacked the Ittu at Gubaqoricha.

After securing victory they marched westwards avoiding the eastern direction which heads to Čiro through Mi'eso because of the availability of vitally needed water points. Another major military engagement was made at Hula Hardim (Gate of Hardim) in 1886. It was this battle that opened Gälämso for the army of *Ras* Wäldä Gäbriel. Moving through Hardim, the army subsequently occupied Kara Qurqura, Boroma and then Qunne.¹¹⁴ At Qunne the expanding army established its temporary command post, which served as an administrative center until Čiro was established by Täklähawariyat in 1917 E.C. and served as the administrative centre of Čärčär *Awraja*.

Two factors were mentioned by informants for the defeat of the Ittu: the superior military weapons the Shāwans had and the military information the Shāwans got from an Ittu man called Mucee. Mucee was at first famous for his resistance against the Shāwans. But he was captured by Menelik's army in one of the battles and was brought to Addis Ababa where he suffered a lot of torture until he was ultimately forced to provide valuable military information about the

¹¹³ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed Ali, Aliyi Mume,

¹¹⁴ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed Ali, Aliyi Mume,

Ittu.¹¹⁵ By using this information, it was said, the Shāwans were able to subdue the Ittu resistance once and for all. The following couplet by the Ittu illustrates the point:

Amarii Qunne [place] hinbekuu Mucee santuu dadaabenii

Rabbin jazzaa hinbaleesuu Muceen,yogossu dhaqaabenii¹¹⁶

The conquering Amhara forces did not know the terrain and the place [Qunne], where they later established their seat, had it not been for our treacherous man. Mucee, was responsible for guiding them. Divine intervention uncovered the truth thence, claiming Mucee's life.

Once the resistance by the Ittu was broken, the Shāwan army moved into Doba and then to Ṭullo. From Ṭullo they passed into Dādär. At Dādär, they again faced a stiff resistance by the Obbora Oromo at a place called Mudhi Bulle. It is strategically an important place and had been serving as a center of the *Gada* meeting for the Obbora. After heavy casualties on both sides the Obbora were defeated. Informants claim that from the Obbora sub group it was the Akichu that suffered a lot and bore the brunt of the conquest. In explaining the extent of the casualties, they further report that dragging the captured fighters by tying them on mule's leg was a common phenomenon. After the trauma of this punishment the Obbora renamed the place Mudhi Ulle (literally torture square).¹¹⁷ Incidentally, that name has stood the test of time to this day.

Once Dādär was occupied, a military regiment was stationed on the mountain of Obbi, later transformed into the garrison town of Dādär. This army had the responsibility of pacifying the

¹¹⁵ Informants: Aliyi Mume, Teha Abdella, Umar Ahmed Ali

¹¹⁶ Informants: Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji, Aliyi Mume, Täha Abdella, Umar Haji. Incidentally, there is a village named after Mučee and is still recognized after him. It is located 1 mile west of Mi'eso, on the way to Čiro, the zonal capital of western Harärgé.

¹¹⁷ Informants: Sulciman Ahmed, Mohammed Abdullahi, Hassen Beker, Musa Ibrahim

region. But the Shāwan army continued into the east to capture the ancient walled city of Hārär. *Amir* Abdullahi had already moved his army for a pre-emptive attack and the two sides fought a bloody battle in what came to be popularly known as the battle of Čällänqo on 6 January 1887. This was not actually a war between two equal sides as the army of *Amir* Abdullahi was routed within a short period of time.¹¹⁸ The following Oromo verse illustrates the overall picture of the battle, specially the cultural difference between the two armies.

Afaan Oromo

Gloss

Aderen lola kate yomi bishan Buna gese The Aderi [Haräri] decided to fight and

Rushed to Bishan Buna [place]

Amaraa lolla jeete jajaba irra wal gesse they got together at Jajaba [place] to discuss

the battle

Warri Mudhiin rassaassa yom fali dandesse The Amhara had firearms that could not be

repulsed even by magic

Jara laman wali lolle awartii samii gesse Two warriors [Menelik and Abdulahi] fought a

bitter battle

Fardi laman wällolle kan gadii durraa dhessee Two horses fought and the *Amir*'s fled first

¹¹⁸ Caulk, R., "The Occupation of Harär: January 1887" (Mimeographed paper) p.15.; Mohammed Hassen, "Menelik's Conquest of Harär, 1887, and its Effect on the Political Organization of the Surrounding Oromo Upto 1900", *Working Papers on Society and History in Imperial Ethiopia: The Southern Periphery from the 1880s to 1974*. In Donald Donham and Wendy James (eds). (African Studies Center: Cambridge, 1980), p.235. The human loss among the vanquished was variously described by authors. For instance Richard Caulk gives a conservative estimate of 1000 whereas the most exaggerated figure was forwarded by Edward Gleichen who stated that "they were severely defeated with a loss, it is said, of eleven thousand men", p.56. As to the duration of the battle, some sources claim that the battle lasted for only a quarter of an hour. It is difficult to accept such assertions given the fact that the *Amir*'s army had the advantage of acquaintances with the terrain better than the Shāwan army. Moreover, the scale of the casualties suggests a time of more than 15 minutes.

Jamiin dura salataa jarri haredhaan gessee In the good old days Jami (the big mosque
in Harär) used to be a prayer house, now the
newcomers filled it with donkeys

Quxban durraa azana jarrii qessidhaan gessee In the good old days we only hear call for
prayers five times a day, now the priests and
deacons took that role.

Ya rasul Nabi dirmadhu lubuun qenssaa nugessee¹¹⁹ Oh! Allah, we need your divine
intervention before we vanish.

The army mobilized by Amir Abdullahi at Čällänqo was composed of many Oromo warriors one of whom, Bäkär Waré, became very famous for his valor. He was born in Jarso at a specific place called Laga Miṭe and informants remember him by singing a war chant. The battle of Čällänqo signified the incorporation of Harär into the expanding Ethiopian Imperial state. But it did not mean that Harär was pacified. Resistance continued in different parts of the province such as in Anniya. Ras Mäkonnen appointed *Däjazmach* Godé to lead a campaign in the direction of Gursum. *Däjazmach* Godé met sporadic resistance when he advanced to Gursum. A small battle occurred at a place called Elifat near Fuññanbira. Though the Oromo were defeated, they were able to kill the commander. A new commander called *Qaññazmach* Bashah was then appointed to the regiment. His campaign to incorporate Gursum, Jarso, Seqere and the surrounding areas was successful. Then the garrison town of Gursum was established in 1887.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Informants: Aliyi Mume, Umar Haji Ahmed Ali, Teha Abdella, Mohammed Adem

¹²⁰ Mulugeta B/Sillasie, "Gursum: The History of a Garrison Town 1887-197" Senior Essay. (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1988), p.8.

Elsewhere, in the province like in Aniya to the northwest of Harär, the resistance continued for the coming few decades which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

Land Tenure and Land Ownership in Harärgé Province (1887-1975)

Chapter one outlined aspects of the physical and human landscape of Harärgé. The purpose was to trace the agricultural potential of the province, specially the cereal production regime. Harärgé's cereal production potential was ascertained by a number of travelers, one of whom, Sir Thomas Comyn -Platt, described that owing to the excellent climate not only cereals like wheat and barley but also every kind of vegetation were grown.¹ It was this cereal production potential that became the basis later for the surplus extraction by the occupying force in the form of tribute, corvee labor and exorbitant taxation. As to the human landscape, it highlighted the settlement patterns of the pre-Shawan conquest and the reconfigured settlement patterns after the conquest that made agricultural resource exploitation easy for the settlers. It was by suppressing the resistance movements that a new agrarian regime was imposed on the subject population.

This chapter examines the impact of the conquest through the introduction of a new regime of land tenure. After suppressing the resistance by the Ittu, Afran Qällo, the Somali and the Haräri, the new administration arbitrarily redefined the mechanisms through which agricultural resources such as land and labor could readily be acquired. With the Italian interlude serving as a time marker, the central government followed two different policies of extracting agricultural surplus. In the years and decades that followed the conquest, the transition of landed property to private ownership was not a major phenomenon. What the state demanded was the appropriation of surplus through the *mälkäñña* system whereby land and labor was apportioned for the maintenance of the soldiery. Land remained largely in the hands of the central government.

¹ Thomas, Comyn-Platt, *The Abyssinian Storm*. (Jerrold Publishers, 1935), p.76.

Following the restoration of imperial rule after the Italian occupation, Emperor Haile Sillassie began granting land as a freehold to different groups of northern settlers. Through these grants, the emperor legalized the de-facto private ownership rights of the settlers and local *balabats* at the expense of the peasants, who were forced to lose their erstwhile ancestral possession. These land grants, I argue, have paved the way for the later economic domination and social stratification putting the settler communities at the top and the natives at the lower ranks. In the process, a large pool of tenant labor force was created on which the settlers relied to expand their economic opportunities.

This chapter attempts to document these developments by relying largely on archival materials culled from the different centers. Secondary sources were used whenever appropriate. Additionally oral data were also extensively used.

2.1 Indigenous Landholding System

2.1.1 Land Holding among the Haräri

Land tenure refers to the terms and conditions in which land is held, used and transacted. It is essentially a social and political concept that talks about the rights and responsibilities which peoples or institutions exercised on a specific plot of land. It is strictly related to the productive values of the land. In the discussion of land tenure, relations could be approached from two levels: the social and the political levels. The former underlines how descendants of a particular founding father or mother share. It also implies in what ways class, status, and rank relate to each other and are reflected in society. On the other hand the political level discusses the structure. What are the elements of the political structure that relate people to state, what obligations and/or

rights do political authorities have, what are the rights/or obligations of peoples living on the land.

The Emirate of Harär, which passed through two years of political independence between the end of the ten year Egyptian Occupation in 1885 and the Battle of Čällänqo in January 1887 and subsequent incorporation into Menilek's empire, had its own land tenure dynamics. Indeed, the Egyptian occupation of Harär was a landmark in the history of the region because they introduced lasting land reform in Harär proper. Lands were extensively surveyed and their ownership registered. They also introduced systematic record keeping in the areas of land ownership. Accordingly Harär proper seems to have been taxed systematically for the first time under the Egyptian administration. They were said to have introduced two types of tax systems. The first was the *zakat* (1/10) which was collected at harvest time and the second was *arafa*, paid in cash by each cultivator; this was approximately one Maria Theresa dollar paid on the day of the Muslim feast of *arafa*. The other reform introduced by the Egyptians was the land tax which was determined on the quality of the soil varying from eleven *piastres* to six *piastres*. The land tax was paid from the 11,000 gardens surrounding the city. Both the revenue and the land tax were collected by the chiefs with Egyptian support.²

Nevertheless, even before the conquest, land among the Haräri, and apparently all property, was owned privately, especially in the city and its surroundings, i. e. *gáy fagay*, which consisted of

² Mohammed Hassen "The Relation between Harär and the Surrounding Oromo", Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1973), p.29. Piastress was a currency made of silver and bronze introduced by the Egyptians. For details see Ahmed Zekaria., "Haräri Coins: A Preliminary Survey," In *Journal of Ethiopian Studies Vol.XXIV*, (Addis Ababa Institute of Ethiopian Studies,1999),pp.23-46.

both orchards and farmlands belonging to the *ge'usu*. As opposed to the rural areas, these zones were thoroughly surveyed and the properties delimited.³

Individual ownership of immovable property such as land or house was documented officially by the emirate. The owner was given a certificate which acknowledged his ownership and stated the origin and basis of his title to the property. The title was ascertained and the document was approved by the *qadi* (judge). This document which was known as *huggah* was written in Arabic and followed a standard form. It was the official certificate of the owner without which it was difficult to transfer the property.⁴

The main points elucidated by this document were:

- The name of the titleholder of the property and how it came to him/ her (whether through purchase or inheritance);
- The nature of the property, whether house or land with specifications of the type of house or land;
- The location of the property;
- The size of the property in *jerib*;
- The boundaries of the property, with reference to neighbouring farms or houses or rivers or public streets;

³ Yusuf Ahmed, "An Inquiry into Some Aspects of the Economy of Harär and the Records of the Household Economy of the Amirs of Harär (1825-1875)," University College of Addis Ababa, *Ethnological Society Bulletin* No.10.,1960, p.385.

⁴ Ibid.,p.386. Informants: Abdusemed Idris, Ayub Abdulahi.

- If the property was purchased or sold the question of whether the agreement was legally and materially binding is scrutinized;
- The eyewitnesses of the agreement are always stated at the end of the document;
- Seal of the *qadi* and signatures of witnesses.⁵

I have found a document on the Haräri agricultural fields which listed the number of farmlands in three documents translated from Arabic into Amharic. The document which I found and consulted at Abdella Sherif private Museum consisted of only three doors of the town (Erer Ber, Felana Ber and Senga Ber). According to the document, there were 461 *rest* owners in Erer Ber, 510 *rest* owners in Senga Ber and 406 *rest* owners in Felana Ber. Some of the *rest* owners had many *rest* lands being registered as their private property and were found in different doors of the city. For example, Kebir Mohammed Abdulahi had a total of 26 farmlands in three doors indicated above but their size did vary considerably. According to Abdella Sherif, the remaining two doors were not translated from Arabic into Amharic and in any case were not exactly known where they were. The three documents were translated in 1948 by an unknown person authorized by the Ministry of Finance. Probably the government had initiated this in order to regulate taxation which was too variegated for the Haräri farms around the city.⁶

One of the most striking features of these lands was that, unlike the lands in the rest of the sub provinces in Harär, they were accurately measured and owners had title deeds of their properties. All the land measurement was in square meters and 100% of the land was classified as fertile land. These lands were exclusively owned by Haräri absentee landlords and were divided into

⁵ Yusuf Ahmed, p.386.

⁶ I personally got access to read these three precious documents in both Amharic and Arabic versions but I was disallowed by the Museum administrators to photocopy some of the information about the translation.

two: *milki* and *hundene*. *Milki* land was land found within the radius of 7-10kms surrounding the city of Harär. It is an Arabic name similar to *gäbbar* or privately owned land. Its measurement was originally made in *jerib*, an Arabic word and its unit of measurement is 36 by 36 meters. While *hundane* is the land found beyond the walled city, probably within the radius of up to 20kms.⁷ Later on, the areas surrounding the city are organized as *hundané wäräda* paying the tax as the rest of the districts and *awraja*.

During the Italian period, lands in the town and the surrounding area were either confiscated forcefully or legally bought by the Italians from their former owners. Former owners of settler background and Haräri lost their ownership and the property was transferred to the Italians, as the archives indicated. These lands were farm lands and urban residential areas with varying sizes.⁸

After the end of Italian Occupation, the Haräri landlords owning *milki* lands complained that they were forced to pay tax beyond their capacity and wanted to pay tax as per the rate set for the rest of *hundané* lands. In the petitions which the Haräri elders continuously submitted to the central government, they claimed that the *miri* tax, which they were supposed to pay after 1941, was introduced during the times of *Ras Mäkonnen* and they had suffered by paying it. The government officials on their part claimed it was the Haräri themselves who wanted *miri* tax and the complaint was not justifiable.⁹ There is no written evidence describing the meaning of ‘*miri* tax.’ Informants are also not so helpful in discussing it. One can only speculate that the term has

⁷ Haräri Regional State Archive.Folder No. 1262, “Sile Aderewoch” i.e about the Aderes, See also WMTMRC.Folder No.No.2138, File No.2137.

⁸ Haräri Regional State Archive, “Harär Katama Hizboch” Folder No.10290.

⁹ WMTMRC.Folder No.2138, File No.2137.

an Arabic origin as most of the land tenure reforms and taxation systems were influenced by the decade long administration of the Egyptians.

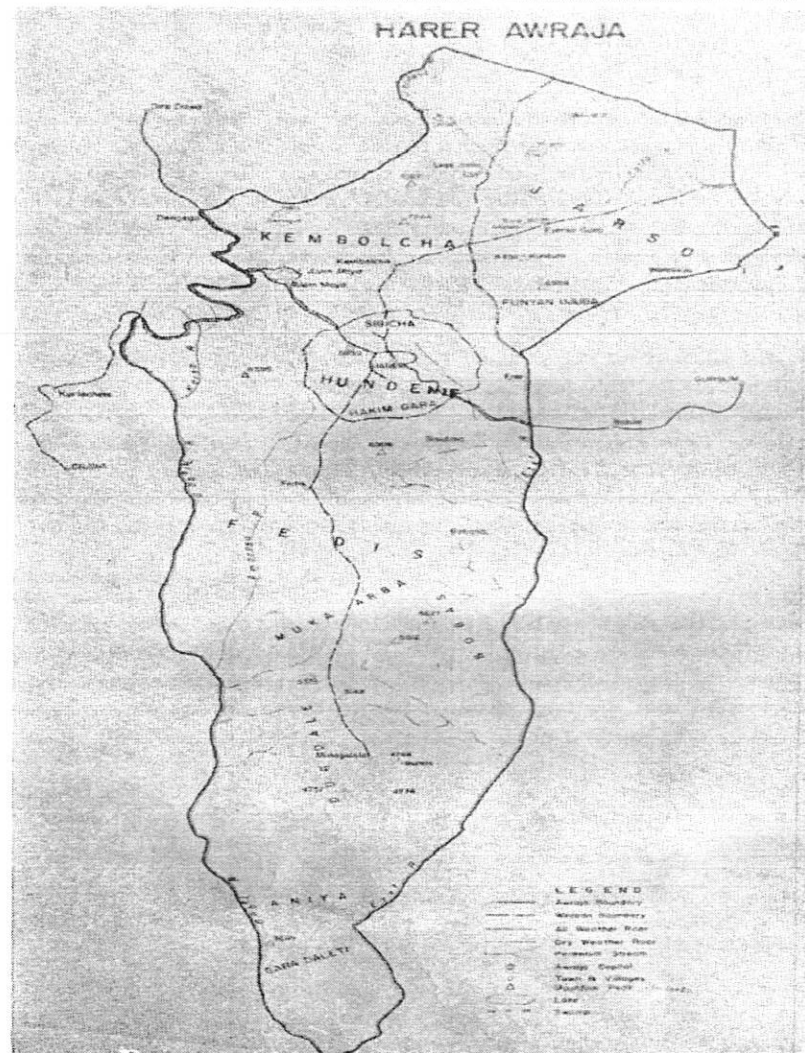


Fig 6. Location of Harar and its surrounding Hundané Wārāda

Source: Demise W/Gebriel, "Land Tenure in Bate" *Experimental Station Bulletin* No.49. Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts., p.4

There is lack of consensus among sources over the origin of the tradition of registration of property among the Haräri. According to Yusuf Ahmed, the Egyptians had surveyed and registered all properties such as houses, farms, and gardens.¹⁰ On the other hand, Ewald Wagner, on the basis of three Arabic documents on the history of Harär traced the practice of selling and buying individual properties during the reign of *Amir* Talha II (R. 1700-1721 A.D). Besides, he discussed that *Amir* Abdushakur (r. 1783-1794), the 11th *amir* of the Ali Ibn Dawud dynasty, reformed the administration of the city by reintroducing the register (*sigil*) and the chancery (*diwan*) in the third year of his reign.¹¹ The *diwan* was particularly responsible for maintaining land records and for judging court cases according to the *shari'a*. In this regard, the system of registration of private property especially land was not a new phenomenon and was not associated with Egyptians. What the Egyptians could have done was to modify and adapt it to the existing circumstances. Therefore, Harär may probably be considered as an emirate where private property was officially recognized before the introduction of imperial rule from Addis Ababa.

In the outer districts of Harär (*gaffa*), the system of land tenure was modified by the *emirate* from that of the city area. This modification was likely to have been adapted to suit political administration and to secure government control over the surrounding Oromo. The *amir* could grant land or estates to those who proved loyal to the *emir* or had rendered some sort of services to the state. Such persons usually were the Oromo clan chiefs, military leaders and religious leaders. With a land grant, a person was promoted to chieftainship if he were not already a chief.

¹⁰ Yusuf Ahmed, p.386. The tradition of record keeping for properties has a longer lineage. Before the Egyptians another document called Tamassuk was issued. This was a copy of a document when immovable properties were divided among the heirs, the share of each heir was recorded on paper and a copy of this paper was given to each inheritor.

¹¹ Ewald Wagner, "Three Arabic Documents on the History of Harär", in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. (Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1974), Vol. XII, No.2., pp.214-218.

But as a rule the beneficiary would be the chief of the locality or clan who had probably already secured large areas of land. In such cases the *amir* simply recognized the position of the chief and might sometimes grant him more land. But in the case of persons raised to a higher rank or persons of importance who were foreign to the locality where they were made chiefs, as happened when a person from the city was appointed chief in the rural districts, then it was the *amir* who appointed them to their new office and granted them land as estate.¹²

Chiefs fall into at least three major ranks –*damina*, *garada* and *malaqa* (the latter two titles in the course of time became also references to the land ownership under their jurisdiction akin to the *gult* right). A *damina* was chief of a clan with authority over several *garada*. The *damina* was the appointee of the *amir* who collects tax and supervises farming under the *amir*'s control. He was also the *amir*'s administrative agent; he administered justice. The *damina* was the most important Oromo official. The *amirs* appointed *damina* from among men who had property, children and wives in the city. However, it is not known whether their wives were Haräri or Oromo. Originally the *damina* had jurisdiction only over blood compensation in line with the traditional Oromo culture. These *damina* were called *boku*. But gradually the *damina* became two types. The second type was the one appointed by the central government to oversee administrative affairs and to mobilize people for different social activities like road construction. There was no specified amount of land granted for the *damina* as for the rest of the lower officials.

Under the *damina* were the *garada*, chief of a village or sub village. Several *garadach*, sometimes five or six, come under one *damina*. One of the major differences between the

¹² Yusuf Ahmed, p.387.; See also Sydney Waldron, "The Political Economy of Haräri –Oromo Relationship, 1559-1874" *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 6 (1/2), pp. 34-35. The Haräri farm lands could be viewed in three concentric circles. The first or the inner circle was surrounding the five gates and was called *géy*. Following it, the circle covered with orchards and gardens was called *géy fugay* while the outer district mainly used for cereal farming was called *gaffa*.

damina and the *garada* was that the *damina*'s authority was based on the clan and its legitimacy lies on the people within that clan but the *garada* was based on the land of the same clan the *damina* controlled. *Malaqa* was a chief of the smallest administrative unit. He was responsible for the control of irrigation water. He was the one who administered community water for irrigation to avoid misunderstanding and mismanagement.

Both *malaqa* and *garada* were given land for their sustenance. A *garada* was granted 600 *jerib* while a *malaqa* was granted 300 *jerib* land. The donations were marked by a ceremony. In the case of the appointment of a *garada*, the performance was called *garadnat maṭalal* which means the *garadship* enveloping, and *daminant maṭalal* which means *daminanat* enveloping when a *damina* was appointed. In return each new appointee gave to the *amir* as payment a certain number of calves.¹³ The payment was a formal acknowledgement that right of allocation of land depended upon the goodwill of the *amir*. Besides, it was a token of loyalty and homage. It seems that it was through these elected Oromo officials that the emirate's political authority was extended at least nominally over the settled Oromo.¹⁴ Later on, with the conquest of Harär by the Shāwan forces, these traditional power bases of elites were upheld and were effectively used by the Shāwans.

As a matter of fact, this system of land ownership and its ceremonial practice continued well into the 20th century and are discussed in detail by *Ras Imiru*.¹⁵ These offices were hereditary,

¹³ Yusuf Ahmed, p.387. The new appointees enveloped three metres of *abujadi* (cloth) on their head. The cloth was given to them from the *diwan* office. For details see Imiru Haila Silassie, *Kayehut Ka mastawisew*, (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2008), p.98. The Amharic equivalent of *maṭalal* was *maṭaqlal* which is also described by *Ras Imiru*.

¹⁴ Mahtemesillase, p.160.; Sydney Waldron, pp.34-35. The origin of these titles is obscure. But it was frequently seen among the Medieval Muslim Sultanates like Hadya. Once it was adopted within the Oromo sociopolitical system replacing the *Raba Dori* (the Afran Qallo socio political institution), the persons who took the office became powerful both politically and economically.

¹⁵ Imiru Haile Sillassie, *Kayähut Kämastawesäw*, (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2008), pp.98-100.

especially *garada* and *malaqa*, passing to the eldest son. However, after the conquest, the tradition of transferring the office and the land to some powerful officials upon the payment of money and gifts in cattle became common. Such cases were regularly recorded in the *diwan* and in the archives. As a result settler communities with certain political or social power would get the title and used it to transfer land in their names. The bearer of the office enjoyed the free service rendered to him by the peasants under his *garadinet* or *malaqinet*.¹⁶ What is not clear from the archives, however, was whether the transfer of the land and office was peaceful or involved coercion. Archives simply state the transfer was made through the agreement of the two sides, which is doubtful.

The office of the *damina* on the other hand was not necessarily hereditary. As opposed to the *garada* and the *malaqa*, the power base of the *damina* was centred on the people and hence for someone to be approved as *damina* he had to get the approval of the clan members. The origin of the term was obscure but was obviously foreign to the Oromo socio-political institution. Once it was adopted within the Oromo sociopolitical system, replacing the *raba dori* (the Afran Qällo socio political institution), the persons who took the office became powerful both politically and economically. These powers reinforced the social position of the *damina*. Since it rested on the *gosa*, the *damina* could mobilize their *gosa* for their own political ends. They married many wives and strengthened their *gosa* position by having more children and hence more spatial coverage of the *gosa* members that could be converted into economic strength by having more land. A good example was *Fitawrari* Mume Orfo of Garamulata. He was made the *damina* of

¹⁶ Haräri Regional State Archive. "Yä Qälad Mazgab" Folder No.6 (Scanned). Some powerful lords such as *Däjazmach* Abashawl had got *garadinet* and *malqanat* from the native holders of these offices in return for protection as patron. In some cases payment of a certain amount of money or cattle was given for the clients as pension i.e. "*Meṭoria*". In some rare cases, informants discussed that, the office and the land was taken by force. A typical case in point was *Fitawrari* Ayälä, the father of *Afenegus* Zäwdé who took land after physically beating the *garada* of Meta clan called Weday Karayu in what is now Čällänqo. But it was not a convincing narration as the amount paid was not too much.

Garamulata while there were *daminas* of the respective clans in the region. He was said to have a good relation with the emperor who had rewarded him with land and title. This factor resulted in relative differentiation among the *damina* both economically and politically.

At the head of the above mentioned chiefs was the *dogiño*- the governor of the outer districts, where the emirate had recently extended its suzerainty. The *dogiño* had to pay ten thalers in return for the appointment. These officials were given *madūriya* within the areas of their jurisdiction to be used as salary. The *dogiño* was responsible only to the *amir* and might be called “the eye of the king.” According to the literature consulted and of course shared by informants, in order to be considered for the office of *dogiño*, it was necessary for the nominee to be a Harāri.¹⁷

The assimilated Oromo titleholders established the political supremacy of the city over its immediate neighbors although the influence of the city administration was not felt beyond fifteen or twenty kilometers from the city. They had got land from the *amirs* in accordance with their title and formed the seeds of an emerging land owning Oromo elite. Hence, in the outer region of the domain of the emirate of Harār, it can be safely argued that the Harāri had established what Waldron has aptly called “a quasi feudal ethnic stratification”¹⁸ whereby the Harāri had controlled the newly emerging Oromo elite surrounding the city.

Once we established the land tenure dynamics in the emirate of Harār, the issue that remains to be addressed is how agriculture was practiced by the Harāri and the Oromo. Agriculture was the primary occupation of Harāri society since ancient times. It is not clearly established in the written documents when the Harāri began agriculture, or from where the knowledge of

¹⁷ Yusuf Ahmed, p.387.

¹⁸ Sydney Waldron, “The Political Economy of Harār –Oromo Relationships, 1559-1874”, p.23.

agriculture was introduced into the city state. But as we have seen in chapter one, the ancient people of Harär plateau, the Harla, have already established a well-developed peasant agricultural society and the Haräri might have adopted the practice from them.

Written documents on the history of agriculture in Harär is scanty. Some evidence can be extracted from the famous 16th century chronicle –*Futuh Al Habasha* by Arab Faqih. He claims “The Imam Ahmed sent one of his administrative officers to the [better off] people of the country to the cattle owners and the farmers, to collect the alms tax from them”.¹⁹ In the 19th century Richard Burton’s description of the rich agricultural potential of Harär plateau is worth considering.²⁰

From the point of view of academic enterprise the earliest account on the subject is Yusuf Ahmed’s translation of an Arabic ethnological description. Even then his account covers the period of three *amirs* from the first quarter of the 19th century to the last quarter of the 19th century. Besides these the most invaluable source of Haräri agricultural history is the information gathered from knowledgeable informants.

Sources indicate that the *amirs* of Harär were active in agricultural activities and they themselves got involved by riding to their fields and inspecting agricultural activities such as ploughing, sowing, weeding and threshing. Some of the fields near the town of Harär were owned by the *amirs* who took part in farming on their own farmsteads. Besides, Yusuf’s translation of the Arabic manuscript demonstrates that the different agricultural products especially cereals were recorded as they were produced from the *amir*’s estates such as Tulla and Nole. The agricultural

¹⁹ Paul Lester and Richard Pankhurst (Tran & Annotation), Shihab al-din Ahmed bin Abdal –Qadr bin Salem bin Uthman. *Futuh al Habasha (The Conquest of Abyssiania)*, (Addis Ababa: Aster Publishing, 2003), p.102.

²⁰ Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa , An Exploration of Harär*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1956) Vols. I and II.

fields and private activities along with the periods and villages where they were produced were also discussed.²¹

On his approach to Harär, during his expedition, Burton found out that Haräri agricultural fields were found both near and far, the latter being cultivated by the Oromo. He describes the approach to Harär from Marar plains as being agricultural and inhabited by the “people of the *kutti*.”²² He goes on to describe an Oromo population of agriculturalists who were fully involved in market exchange with Harär. Here, Burton’s description of “*kutti*” represents the *Qottu* “tiller of the soil”, i.e. the agricultural Oromo.

With the arrival of the Oromo like the Nole, Alla and Babile within the territory of the *amirs* or in its immediate neighbourhood, it is supposed that long acquaintance through living on the *amir*’s territory and lack of a strong centralized state made the Oromo accept the emirate as part of their political structure from whom they received title to their land. Gradually, their increasing involvement in agricultural activities, however, virtually excluded the outlying agricultural production system of the Haräri. The adoption of Haräri agricultural practices by adjacent Oromo was a steady process which derived from both demographic pressure and the growing interdependence with the markets of the city.²³

The adoption by the Oromo of the Haräri agricultural practices and their transformation from autonomous pastoralists to agriculturalists was basically a controlled process and the impulse for this managed conversion can be explained from two perspectives. The first reason for the peasantization of the Oromo could be said to have emanated from the interests of the well-to-do

²¹ Yusuf Ahmed, pp.375-420.

²² Richard Burton, Vol.II, P.155.; Informants: Ayub Abdulahi, Abdusemed Idris, Abdulahi Ararso.

²³ Sydney Waldron, p.35-36.; See also Ezekiel Gebisa, “Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia 1930-1991”, (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997), p.49.

Oromo, chiefly those who had been bestowed upon land and titles under the emirate. The land they were granted was suitable for cultivation whose income could be maximized only through agricultural activities. This transformation of Oromo economy would then be the product of these newly formed Oromo landlords. The second factor was the fact that there were lands under the authority and domain of the *amir* in the outskirts of the city owned by his officers and the ordinary *ge'usu*.²⁴ These officers leased out their lands for the emerging Oromo peasants who were practicing agriculture as a new way of livelihood.

Along the same line, Richard Caulk argues that through a long process of co-option and cultural exchange the Oromo have adopted the Haräri agricultural practices. He asserts that the Haräri today claim that it was their ancestors who taught the Oromo how to farm in addition to converting them to Islam. In fact the town at the same time provided market for the Oromo who supplemented their subsistence economy by trading their agricultural produce.²⁵

Although this assertion is open to debate, in my effort to counter-check this argument of the Haräri role in the economic transformation of the Afran Qällo Oromo, a number of Oromo and Haräri oral informants unanimously asserted that the Oromo, especially the Nole and Alla branches of the Afran Qällo lineage, have adopted agricultural practices and borrowed specific crops from the Haräri.²⁶

Therefore, among the Haräri agriculture had been practiced for a long time, although informants could not remember the exact time. It was also the most important occupation and remained so until the early part of the 20th century, when a great number of *gé'usu* men took up trade.

²⁴ Sydney Waldron, p.36.

²⁵ Richard Caulk, "Harär Town and its Neighbors in the 19th c" *Journal of African History*. Vol.18, No.3., 1977, pp.373.

²⁶ Informants: Abdulqadir Ahmed, Ayub Abdullahi, Mohammed Abdurahman, Ibrahim Ahmed, Ahmed Yuya.

Farming was a virtuous profession and the farmer was considered as the most trustworthy and reliable individual within the community.

In the early 19th century, the Haräri were cultivating their land especially when it was an orchard. They have a long history as wealthy landowners employing Oromo tenant farmers and growing the lucrative crops of *čat* and coffee on some of the most fertile lands in Harär. However, some had begun to lease out their crop fields to the peasants in return for an annual payment in kind. Informants as well as written materials reveal that in addition to lease, there were two other forms of giving out land to tenants. These were *oyna* and *hirta*, arrangements common in pre-conquest Harär. Details will be discussed in chapter three.

2.1.2 Landholding among the Oromo

The case of the Afran Qällo Oromo was discussed above along with the Haräri landownership. It was the emirate of Harär that carefully controlled the social stratification of the Oromo and a gradual evolution of the Oromo socio economic system into a settled way of life. In addition, new developments in land tenure will be discussed later in this chapter. Hence, an attempt will be made to look into the system of landownership among the Ittu.

Landholding among the Ittu

Before the Shäwan conquest, land ownership was communal. On the basis of the different hierarchies of the social division of the Oromo society discussed in chapter one, land belonged to the clan. Communally each clan and sub clan had sovereign right over its territory. Within these territories, all clan members had an equal right to graze. Membership of a clan was a key factor

in accessing resources. There was a boundary between clans. If need be, inter clan grazing was possible with the consent of *Gada* leaders of both sides.²⁷

The Ittu clan had their specific location called *ona*. The *ona* of an Ittu sub-clan was respected by another sub clan. For example when we see the settlement pattern of the Ittu, Adayo and Bayo it was in Boke; the Wayu were in Hančar, Gubaqoricha and Habro; the Aroji were in Darolebu, and all the Babo sub clans were settled starting from Qunne all the way to Boroda. In times of need, sub clan chiefs may agree on the use of resources such as salt water which was abundant in Ittu land and for which *bulcha* tax was paid to the state.²⁸

The Ittu were governed by the *Gada* system, whose laws were ratified and amended every eight years. In the interim every year *Gada* meeting was held at Odda Bultum around Qunne and five representatives from the two Ittu houses were sent to the meeting. The *hayu* of each Ittu house chaired by the reigning *abba boku* discussed the *Gada* laws for any amendments and new problems arising. The *abba boku* approves any legislations and amendments based on majority vote. If there were issues that the meeting failed to reach a consensus on it would be postponed for the next meeting. Based on the laws of the *Gada* system, the *abba burqa* of each Ittu sub clan exercised supreme power over land and as a symbol of his power; he had *medhecha* on his hand.²⁹

Apparently, however, increase in population and their cattle also increased the need for conducive and best pasture lands. Therefore, some clans began to reconsider their former occupation. Sometimes crossing clan borders and attempting to graze one's cattle in the pasture

²⁷ Informants: Umar Ahmed ,Hajji Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji,Jemal Abdurahamn,Salih Adem

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid.*Medhecha* is a strip of skin cut from one end of a sacrificial cattle leg to the other to be worn as wristlet as a marker of the power. Historically, *Medhecha* was an instrumental ceremony in the course of Oromo expansion since the 16th century.

land of another clan defying the established rules invited conflict between different clans. Such conflicts were checked by intra-clan *Gada* leaders.³⁰

On the other hand inter-clan conflict was also common. The most common conflicts over pastoral resources were between the Ittu and the Issa Somali. There is rich archival material on the conflict between the Ittu and the Somali clan of Issa in and around Mi'eso. Oftentimes these raids were accompanied by looting properties from one another at times escalating into blood feuds. One major mechanism to resolve this was state intervention by deploying its military force against the combatants.³¹

The Ittu informants claim that due to pressure from the Issa, thousands of the Ittu fled into the Karayu land in the 1950s where they were welcomed and settled there permanently. Apparently there are Ittu communities living along with the Karayu even to this day.³² After the conquest, Harärgé's fate under the Shäwan army can be evaluated spatially in three geographical spaces especially in relation to land confiscation.

I. Čärčär up to the River Burqa

Here, as indicated earlier, the military resistance of the Ittu Oromo was stiff. In line with Menilek's reaction to the conquered peoples who have waged a war of resistance like the Arsi, land expropriation was total. All lands were confiscated and the former owners were reduced to landless tenant farmers.³³ A somewhat similar description is found in the archives but the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ National archive. Folder No. 17.1.7.18.18.; 17.1.7.15.06.WMTMRC, Folder No.1/561.

³² Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Aliyi Mume, Teha Abdella

³³ Informants: Aliyi Mume, Umar Haji Ahmed Ali, Teha Abdella, Mohammed Adem. *abba burqa* was a very old institution in Čärčär. The etymology of *Abbaburqa* is intimately intertwined with the Oromo term " *burqa*" i.e spring. It is the metaphor of spring water which gushed out of the land that lends to the origin of the *abba burqa*. The *abba burqa* (literally father of the spring, river, and land) was one who was considered as a native of the land he was

archives consulted indicate that the *abba burqa* took some additional land. According to this source, the *abba burqa* as a local *balabat* took one *gasha* of land before *qälad* measurement was imposed. This land was called *burqinet* and was considered as his *mirṭ* or *yä mar märét*, which he was allowed to own as private property after paying five birr for the registration of his land as *rest*.³⁴

This land allocation for the *abba burqa* should not, however, be equated with the *balabat* “*merṭ*” or “*sisso*” in other conquered regions of the south where resistance was said to be relatively mild. In these areas the clan chiefs after the suppression of the resistance took 1/3 of the land while the government took two-thirds. The land which was allocated to the *abba burqa* was supposed to be equal to *sisso*. In actual fact; however, it was much less than that. In the archival document discussed above, it was indicated that Ittu land was not allocated on the basis of *sisso*.³⁵

II. Lands to the South of the Burqa

This area was traditionally an area where the Egyptian conquest had left its own effects on land tenure. Land was measured by the Egyptians with different units. The major units of

designated so. He was the owner of the land and the river. The *abba burqa* selected from among the wise and the well to do of the community. Before The conquest, the office used to be for life. Through time a good many people started to pass their office to the government. The office of *burqa* passes to heirs by inheritance The *abba burqa* was supposed to wear *medhecha* as a sign of his power. For someone to be recognized as *Abba burqa* he had to own the land under his clan settlement. But all the lands under the *abba burqa* were not equal. Some *abba burqa* had more lands than others.

³⁴ National Archive, Folder No. 17.1.7.15.06.; See also Täklähāwariyat “*Yä Čärčär Dänb*” IES, MS 734.; IES, MS-900, IES, MS-901.

³⁵ National Archive, Folder No. 17.1.7.15.06. It discusses that the *abba burqa* was allowed only to have one *gasha* of land from which he paid *asrat* and tax to the government. This was done because the *abba burqa* was not required by the government to join the war campaign whenever the emperor was in battle.

measurement were *shibeta* and *jerib*. *Shibetta* was applied to lands far from the city of Harär while *jerib* is applied to the areas surrounding the city.³⁶

Shibeta is a unit of land measurement exclusively used in Harärgé province but its size varies from farm to farm. In actuality, however, the word *shibeta*, derived from the Arabic word ‘*shibe’at*’, i.e. eating a lot due to a good harvest, denotes more the amount of production than the size of the farm. It differs from district to district and from one sub province to another. *Shibeta* was variously understood as *kuṭer gäbbar*, *rist* or *gäbbarland* and 40 hectares of land was commonly estimated to have an average size of 10 *kuṭre gäbbar* land. Gäbräwäld Engidawork, an authority on Ethiopian land tenure, has the following to say on *shibeta* land:

When the Arabs [Egyptians] entered Harär province they went from farm to farm to estimate the amount of tax that each farmer had to pay. Estimates were based on the size of the stack of grain collected before threshing. When they saw a large stack they called it *shibeta* and a smaller stack was called “*neus*” (half) *shibeta*. In Arabic *shibeta* means satisfied with food. This word is still used today, meaning and from which tax must be paid.³⁷

In general the conquest was found to be harsh for the Oromo surrounding the town of Harär. According to some sources, Menilek’s treatment of the Oromo and the Somali was entirely different from the Haräri. First, the Oromo and the Somali captives of the battle of Čällänqo were mutilated and secondly even those who submitted immediately were not spared from the general plunder. Richard Caulk, citing Fusela described this state of affairs graphically and says “He

³⁶ Yusuf Ahmed, “An Inquiry into Some Aspects of the Economy of Harär and the Records of the Household Economy of the Amirs of Harär (1825-1875)”, *Ethnological society Bulletin* No.10. pp.386-387.

³⁷ Gäbräwäld Engidawärg, “Ethiopia’s Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation” (Trns) Mengesha Gessesse from the book “ Ya Itiyopiya Maretina Gibir Sim”, p.314. The correct translation should be “*nus*”. *Nues* is probably a corruption for the Arabic word “*nus*” for half.

[Menilek] took everything down to dogs and doves.”³⁸ After Menilek’s return to Shäwa the “Gondare” (the soldiers left in Harär under Mäkonnen) intensified the raids, looting, plundering, burning and enslaving captives. Mäkonnen’s biographer, cited in R. Caulk, described the dreadful raids against the Babile, the Jarso and as far as the Giri country near Jigjiga. In some of the military garrisons such as Garamulata, Gursum, Jarso and the Giri, however, the occupation force suffered heavy losses due to the general insurrection of the population, for which Mäkonnen wrecked a terrible vengeance on the Oromo and the Somali.³⁹

Just like Čärčär province, land confiscation was undertaken in this part of Harärgé with vigor. This land confiscation occurred right after the conquest as evidenced by some of the letters consulted in the archives. In different letters found in the manuscript section of the IES, members of the royal family were granted land in different parts of Harärgé in the 1910s and the 1920s. For instance, Empress Mänän was granted 10 *gasha* of land in Dädär and Fädis, the daughter of the regent Täfäri Mäkonnen, Zänäbäwärq, was given two *gasha* of land in Fädis in 1915 E.C. These lands were confiscated from the respective *garada* of the regions. These grants were directly ordered by the regent Täfäri Mäkonnen and such kinds of grants were made to a number of other members and relatives of the royal family.

Curiously enough in one of the letters written on *Meskerem* 19, 1915 E.C. (September 29,1922), *Däjazmach* Imiru was instructed to give one *gasha* of land to the daughter of the regent,

³⁸ Caulk. R, “Menilek’s Conquest and the local leaders in Harär”,Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University,(n.d).In *Social Sciences Miscellanea*. No.5. p.2, citing Fusela,L., (trans) “Dagmawi Menilek,” *Rassegna di studi Ethiopici*, XVIII,1961,P.37.

³⁹ Caulk. R, “Menilek’s Conquest and Local Leaders in Harär” p.7.; For the raids against the Somali see for example H.S.H Cavendish “ Through Somaliland to Lake Rudolf ”, *Geographical Journal* ,Vol.XI ,1898,PP.372-397; and D Smith , “Expedition Through Somaliland to lake Rudolf” *Geographical Journal* ,1896,pp.123-127. See also Mohammed Hassen,1980., P.234.

Yāshimābet. The land was supposed to be taken from *garada* Adem Usman in Babile.⁴⁰ Later on, the common mechanism of land alienation became taking land through pretext of land measurement. Through land measurement an extensive land was taken from the natives and granted to the new settlers in the different parts of Harärgé. Details will be seen later in this chapter.

III. The City of Harär

Contrary to the case of the Oromo, the city of Harär, while falling under Shāwan administration, continued to run its internal affairs with little interference. In fact the town seems to have benefited under the new administration. Security reigned in and around the town, trade routes became safe, commercial activities revived with fresh impetus and Harär became the most important commercial town in the empire. It was indicated that the city of Harär had surrendered without any further resistance after Čällänqo.⁴¹

After entering the walled city in triumph, Menilek was extremely generous to the Haräri in the sense that he forbade wild pillaging, wanton massacres etc which was a common feature in his southern expansion and even the adjoining Oromo.⁴² The question naturally arises then, why did Emperor Menilek spare the city the harsh treatment that he commonly showed against those who made stiff resistance like the Arsi and Wälayta.

⁴⁰ IES,MS -900.Letters written to *Däjazmach* Imiru from different higher officials. The daughter of the emperor by the name Yāshimābet was the first name of Princess Tschay.

⁴¹ Mohammed Hassen, 1980 , P.234.; See also Harold Marcus, p.93.

⁴² Ibid

The literature consulted seems to provide partial explanation. It is indicated that the Haräri were spared because of the indemnity they paid amounting to 75,000 Maria Theresa Thalers.⁴³ There is also a much deeper analysis of the subject when we consult Harold Marcus's *Life and Times of Menilek*. Based on a letter written on June 4, 1886 by Menilek to King Umberto of Italy, Marcus tells us that Menilek informed the latter that "without doubt" he would occupy Harär and requested Umberto's support against any interference. He further remarked that he did not intend to sack and destroy the country, upset religious patterns nor rob the rich but to protect and improve commerce. He further remarked "with the aid of God, I shall do what I have said".⁴⁴

Thus it is highly probable that Menilek was not inclined to destroy one of the ancient urban centers and upset commerce which he in the long run attempted to exploit to its full potential. Moreover, in the face of one of the great powers, Menilek did not want to harshly treat Harär and lose their sympathy in spite of the fact that *Amir* Abdullahi waged resistance at Čällänqo and even earlier in November 1886 around river Mojo (the traditional boundary that separates the Afran Qällo from the Aniya Oromo), the prelude to Čällänqo, and defeated the Shāwan forces. A more sound explanation, a corollary to what Menilek promised in the last quotation, can be sought in the commercial potential of Harär. It is probable that Menilek wanted a safe and stable Harär that could serve as a commercial corridor of the empire to the coast. This stability gave Menilek a rich province which brought him closer to the sea from where he was able to import the huge firearms that made Adwa's victory possible.

Harär was also a rich province in terms of agricultural potential which the emperor could use. The chronicler *Tsähañi Ti'ezaz* Gäbrä Sillassie indicated that when Shāwa was hard hit by the

⁴³ Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p. 235 According to Mohammed the Haräri were able to pay only 27,000 in cash, some in kind the remainder to be paid in the future.

⁴⁴ Harold Marcus, *the Life and Times of Menilek*, (Oxford:Clardon Press,1975), p.90.

great famine, *Ras Mäkonnen* sent from Harär 10,000 cattle, half of which were oxen intended to serve as farm animals to help revive agriculture in Shäwa.⁴⁵

The impact of the conquest on the city with respect to land confiscation was insignificant. Indeed, some land belonging to the *Amir* was expropriated for the sustenance of the system and to be classified as *hudad*, *yä mängest märet*, *madbet*, *waraganu*, *melmel* and *gult* lands. Some Haräri residential houses were also confiscated. These houses were commonly described in archives as *yä dänb bét*.⁴⁶ But Haräri informants prefer to call it as *yä däm bét*⁴⁷, in memory of the Haräri patriots whose blood was shed to defend the city. Apart from these the basic pattern of Haräri landlordism and their relation with the surrounding Oromo tenant labor continued up until the 1974 revolution which took the Haräri lands and redistributed to the tenant cultivators of the Oromo.

2.2 The Imposition of the Mälkäñña System

The battle of Čällänqo was a turning point in the history of Harär province. The province became part of Menilek's expanding empire state. The new administration imposed the notorious *mälkäñña* system on the Oromo.⁴⁸ The *mälkäñña* system reduced the Oromo to the status of *gabbar* and lasted until the Italian invasion.

A large number of settler soldiers moved into Harärgé from the different provinces of northern Ethiopia in search of wealth. They settled often isolated from the local population for security

⁴⁵ Gäbräsillassie Wäldä Aragay (Tschafi Te'ezaz) *Tarika Zaman Za Dagmawi Menilek II Niguse Negest Za Itiyopia* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1959 E.C.), P.195.

⁴⁶ Haräri Regional State Archive. Folder No.1262. Different Letters written in the early 1940s to the Deputy Governor of Harär reclaiming these houses and lands which their ancestors were given.

⁴⁷ Informants: Ayub Abdulahi, Adusemed Idris.

⁴⁸ In some parts of the conquered regions in the south, the system was called *näffäñña gäbbar* system. Here, in Harärgé, although *näffäñña gäbbar* system in all its forms and applications was there, oral informants unanimously called it *mälkäñña*. Apparently some works on Harärgé also use the same term. See for example Mohammed Hassen, 1980.; Täklähawariyat's "*Yä Čärčär Dänb*" also used *mälkäñña* rather than "*näffäñña*"

reasons which were exacerbated by their new settlements as they were found far away from their relatives and home area. Their only means to get control and dominate a much larger population was through control of firearms. Their alliance with the *balabat* class also helped to keep the local people quiescent.⁴⁹ But still the local population had been resisting. Mass rebellion was a less likely possibility as there was an imbalance in armament. The only mass rebellion was the Aniya rebellion in 1911.⁵⁰ But there were other ways which the natives opposed the system such as individual and group flight into lowlands and the forest, expressing hatred and grievance through oral poetry etc. One common song collected from Dādār runs thus:

Afaan Oromo

Gloss

Amarani, Amarani	you people of Amhara
Uffif gangeerra tessani	you yourself ride on your mule
Gifti tessan fardaraa gotanii	as for your consorts on a horse back
Nuraa galaa Shawaan mirazaa kessani ⁵¹	leave us; your home [<i>rest</i>] is Shawa

The two main means of production upon which the northern settlers relied for their survival were land and labor. In the first generation of the post conquest era, the state's policy was to distribute labor and land usage rights but not to confiscate land. Serious land alienation at least as it affected the indigenous population and production patterns especially in the lands to the east of Burqa did not begin until much later.

The system that was imposed in the immediate years of the post conquest period was the *mālkāñña* system. *Mālkāñña* were officials from a settler background who collected tribute and

⁴⁹ Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p. 237. Informants: Umar Ahmed, Siraj Khodele

⁵⁰ Mäkonnen Tamiru, "The History of Garrison Town: Gerawa 1889-1974" Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1988), pp. 23.; Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker.

⁵¹ Informant: Hassen Beker.

monitored labor services due to the state and were responsible for the peace in their area. Indeed, the system was imposed in all conquered regions of the south. Although the system can be discussed in general terms there were variations apparently influenced by the area's pre-existing modes of production and the unique production and reproduction arrangements of individual households. This system (otherwise termed as *näḥḥā-gäbbar* system in other conquered southern provinces like Arsi) guaranteed the settlers' basic subsistence without having to work themselves. The system guaranteed the appropriation from individual households of part or all of the surplus produced either in goods or labor. For the northerners, the system was a kind of shift to individualized tax collection as opposed to mass assessment of the earliest years of occupation.⁵²

The economic system for the maintenance of the soldier was fairly elaborate. Remuneration of the army was of two types: tributes from land and the regular supply of provision. But they did not have a regular payment in the form of salary. They were maintained by allocation of land with certain number of *gäbbar*. Land and *gäbbar* were not given to all soldiers. It was given for the military chiefs though some land was also allotted to civil administrators and church officials. The amount of land and number of *gäbbars* given to the soldier settlers with military chiefs was in accordance with their military ranks.

But sources consulted indicate considerable variations in the amount of remuneration. For reasons of authenticity and clarity, Mähtämäsillase Wäldämäsqäl's discussion of the subject is preferred here. According to him, the *shalaqa* was given between 200-300 *gäbbars* depending on

⁵² Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p.236.; Informants: Siraj Khodele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed Ali.

his closeness to the palace, the *shambel* 70 *gäbbar*s; the *meto aleqa* 40 *gäbbar*; the *hamsa aleqa* 25 *gäbbar*; and the *meketel hamsa aleqa* 15 *gäbbar*.⁵³

Furthermore, Mähtämäsillase claims, these *gäbbar* farmers cultivated the *hudad* under the *mälkäñña* they were apportioned and submitted the product. Those who did not cultivate *hudad* land had a number of obligations. They paid 24 *qunna* of grain and one *gundo* honey. If they had no honey they would pay 4 birr, for three major holidays a total of 6 birr. Other forms of taxes and tributes were levied on the *gäbbar* which were paid in kind or in cash or both and the normal tributes piled upon the *gäbbar* were by no means light ones. They amounted to 6 kilos of honey or 4 Maria Theresa Dollars, 120 kilos of *durra*, 30 kilos of *gesho* (*Rhamus prinordes*) or one dollar and eight *piastres*, looking after one mule or, in lieu of that, payment of three dollars. Ordinary *näftäñña* soldiers were called *qalabtañña*; they received certain amount of grain and money from the *gäbbar* at harvest time. Its amount ranged between 15-17 *qunna* of grain and five Maria Theresa Thalers per year.⁵⁴

According to archives consulted, there were some ordinary soldiers who did not want the provision in the form of grain. So these *qalabtañña* soldiers took a small plot of land from the *gäbbar* and made him cultivate for them, the final produce being entirely taken by the soldier.⁵⁵

Letters in the manuscript section of the IES library clearly show the provision of grain crops for the ordinary soldiers who were instructed to take their share on a monthly basis by personally

⁵³ Mähtämäsillase W/Mäsqäl, *Zikre Nagar*, 1962 E.C, p. 162.

⁵⁴ Ibid. P.161. For the allocation of grain to the ordinary soldiers in Čärčär, see Täklähawariyat, "Yä Čärčär Dänb". He discussed the procedures and the disciplines to be followed by the soldiers higher officials when they took their remuneration on monthly basis from the central administration where food grain is collected i.e. Čiro (Asäbätäfäri). See also Addis Hiwot, *Ethiopia: from Autocracy to Revolution*. Review of African Political Economy (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p.36.

⁵⁵ National Archive. Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.

presenting themselves.⁵⁶ The provision was made available from the government granary called *shuna*, where *asrat* was collected from the *gäbbar* farmers. These granaries were placed in every *awraja* and *wäräda* on strategically selected sites to avoid some natural and human disasters. They were ranked into five categories depending on their grain holding capacity: the first had the capacity of 45 *dawula*, the second 60 *dawula*, the third 75 *dawula*, the fourth 90 *dawula* and the largest had the capacity of holding 105 *dawula* of grain. It was from these granaries that the soldiers were given their monthly provisions.⁵⁷

The largest concentration of *mälkäñña* was found in Čärčär, taking three *gasha* of land in each *abba burqa* territory. The *mälkäñña* lived on the labor of the *gäbbar* and tenants who worked for him. One *gasha* was given to the church as *samon* land. The remaining land was in the hands of the government. Täklähawariyat discussed the living condition of the *mälkäñña* on the one hand and the *gäbbar* and the tenant on the other. Since the *mälkäñña* was imposed on the population temporarily, he had a fear to be transferred to other areas or to lose his position for different reasons. As a result he had to impose heavy burdens on the cultivator to take as much as he could while he was in office. This resulted in strained relations between the two social groups and that was why Täklähawariyat wanted to rectify the situation through administrative measures.⁵⁸

When *yä Čärčär Dänb* was allowed by the emperor to be implemented, *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat uprooted the *mälkäñña* and transferred them to Harär Plateau. Although not an exhaustive list, he mentioned the names of these *mälkäñña* under *Qäññazmach Wažäqu*. The

⁵⁶ IES,MS-900.Letter written to *Däjazmach* Imiru from *Däjazmach* Haile Sillasse No.161.

⁵⁷ IES,MS, “*Yä Čärčär Dänb*” 734.For the unit of measurement like *dawula* ,details will be discussed in the coming chapter

⁵⁸ Täklähawariyat, “*Yä Čärčär Dänb*” IES,MS 734,p.1

salary and their grain provision was said to have been transferred to Harär where some of the big lords were given land and *gäbbar* farmers as a source of labor for them.⁵⁹

The *mälkäñña* had various rights and responsibilities of administering the area under his jurisdiction. He controlled all the *gäbbar* and guaranteed peace and security in his realm. The collection of the *asrat* was his responsibility and he ordered the *gäbbar* to transport the *asrat* to government granaries known in local parlance as *shuna*; discussed above. But the office was subjected to revocation. For instance, the *mälkäñña* could be removed from his office when he failed to participate in *zämächa* or when he quarreled with his fellow *mälkäñña* or with the *abägaz*. His right was also limited to the use of the labor and the produce from the land.⁶⁰

Besides these different forms of tribute and taxes, the *gäbbar* were expected to perform manual labor. These obligatory services included building the house of the governor, milling a certain amount of grain, transporting flour to the *mälkäñña* where he resided, tending the *mälkäñña*'s cattle, cutting firewood and rendering other sundry labor services.⁶¹ There were also occasions that required the *gäbbar* to accompany the *mälkäñña*. An informant from Čällänqo narrated that his father and a number of other *gäbbar* farmers accompanied a *mälkäñña* carrying a sack of Maria Theresa Thalers from Čällänqo, some 55kms to Boroda, where he lived. They travelled on foot while the official rode on a mule's back. After returning home his father was seriously sick because of the travel and the heavy sack he carried all the way.⁶²

Another burden added to the *gäbbar* was *dergo*. In relation to this system of tribute allocation, travel accounts highlighted the burden imposed on the *gäbbar*. Edward Gleichen, while crossing

⁵⁹ IES,MS-901.Letter written to *Aläqa Dästa* from *Däjazmach* Imiru No.32.

⁶⁰ Ibid.Mohammed Hassen,1980, pp.236-238.

⁶¹ Mähtämäsellase,p.162.

⁶² Informant: Yuya Abdullahi.

Ras Mäkonnen's territory heading to Menilek's court, in 1897, claimed that his men were well provided with food. He described one of those occasions in the following words:

...the chief of the district around Warabile arrived to make his bow and to introduce the supplies he was providing for us by Mekonnen's orders. We seated ourselves with due solemnity, and he paraded before us 15 or 20 men and women carrying baskets of wafer-like bread and 'gambos' (jars) of tej and dragging after them various unhappy sheep and goats. This ceremonial took place every place every day as long as we were in Mekonnen's province and during this time we and our men were well supplied with food⁶³



Fig 7. Dergo submission ceremony for travellers in Harärgé province.
Source: Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menilek, 1897* (London: Edward Arnold, 1898), p.75.

⁶³ Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Emperor Menilek, 1897*, p.74.

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⁶³ Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Emperor Menilek, 1897*, p.74.

As if all these were not enough, the *gäbbar* were burdened with the responsibility of fulfilling what was imposed on Čärčär as *madbet*. Čärčär was made one of the *madbet* provisioning the palace with important food items. *Fitwarari* Täklähawariyat received one of the letters in 1920 E.C. from *Däjazmach* Imiru, the then governor of Harärgé. According to this letter the governor of Čärčär had to provide the palace in Addis Ababa with a list of food items and condiments. Obviously, the governor was expected to collect these items from the poor *gäbbar*. Here is one of the letters worth quoting

ይድረስ ለፊታውራሪ ተክለሀዋርያት

ከዚህ ቀደም አዲስ አበባ ለልኡል ማድቤት ከሐረር እንዲወጣ በየአይነቱ ታዞ የነበረውን ያነሰው ተጨምሮ የበዛው ተቀንሶ እንዲመጣ ስለተባለባን ተወገን የሚመጣው ከዚህ ቀጥሎ የተፃፈው ነው።

70 ዳውላ ድልህ የተወቀጠ ጨው ጉብዳቢት 250 ታኒካ ቅቤ ራሱ ስለ 857 ጉንዶ ማር አንዱ ጉንዶ በ7 ብር ሂሳብ 5999 ብር ስለ አስራት ዳውላ ውቅጥ ሽንኩርት አንዱ ዳውላ በ12 ብር ሂሳብ 48 ብር 3 ዳውላ አብሽ ራሱ ይህንን በየዓመቱ እንዲገባ የሚገባባትም ከ1920 ጀምሮ ወሩም 3 ወር ላይ ተከፍሎ ለጥቅምት ልደታ ለየካቲት ልደታ ለሰኔ ልደታ ነው ። በዚህ በተቆረጠው ውስጥ ጨርሶ ያላስገባ ሹም በማናቸውም አይነት በ100 ብር መቀጫ ጨምሮ ያስገባ ብለዋል። የልኡል አልጋ ወራሽ ቃል ነው የሚል በመስከረም 1 የተፃፈ መጥቷልና አንተም ይህንን ከዚህ በላይ ቆርጠን የፃፍንልህን ድርሻህን ከ3 ከፍለህ በዚህ በተቆረጠው ወሮች እያስገባህ በዝያው ለምታስገባበት ወር ደረሰኝ እየተቀበልክ እስከ 15 ቀን ድረስ እየላከህ እንድታሳየኝ ይሁን።⁶⁴

ጥቅምት 18, 1920 ደጃዝማች እምሩ

To: *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat

In the past, various food items used to be sent from Harär to the Imperial *Madbet* [kitchen] of the Heir Apparent, Addis Ababa. We are now instructed to request the following: 70 *dawulla* pepper mixed with salt, 250 *tanika* butter, the value of 857 *gundo* honey, the price of one *gundo* valued with 7 birr that is estimated at 5999 birr, one *dawulla* onion in lieu of *asrat* which is valued at 48 birr, three *dawulla* fenugreek. These should be submitted on a yearly basis in three installments: on *tiqimit* 1, *yekatit* 1, and *sene* 1. We have been instructed by the Heir Apparent by a letter written on *Meskerem* 1, 1920 E.C. to submit on time or otherwise face 100 birr fine. It is therefore mandatory to meet the instruction by submitting the items in demand on time. Upon submission, please, take a receipt and send it to me within 15 days.

⁶⁴ IES,MS-922 “Ya Čärčär Mäzgäb Gilibač”, p.38.

Däjazmach Imiru

October 28, 1927

These various burdens and other similar obligations of the *gäbbar* imposed by the *mälkäñña* was also corroborated by *Ras* Imiru, who had served as the governor of Harärgé in the late 1910s and the 1920s. Confirming the amount of tributes and their burdens, *Ras* Imiru, in his autobiography, further elaborated on the indirect mechanisms of exploitation to which the *gäbbar* were exposed. According to him the collection of tribute and *asrat* had a number of loopholes which presented an additional burden on the farmer and the *gäbbar* had to try and evade these problems through corruption. In some cases the grain collected was also exposed to rain due to the delay in the collection.⁶⁵ Hence it can be argued that the *gäbbar* bore all the suffering of both the process of conquest and the post conquest socio-economic exploitation.

The *mälkäñña* system was so exploitative for the natives that they were often unable to bear the burden. They responded in different ways such as flight to distant places and expressing dismay through oral poetry. It was the Italian conquest that brought a respite and it is to that period and the reforms introduced by the Italians that we now turn.

2.3 The Italian Interlude

After the defeat of the Ethiopian army at the battle of Mayčäw, the Italian army made a swift progress and occupied Addis Ababa on May 5, 1936 under the leadership of Marshal Badoglio. Three days later, on May 8, Rodolfo Graziani occupied Harär. Thus, Italy came to establish her empire which came to be called Italian East Africa or in its Italian rendition *Africa Oreintale*

⁶⁵ Imiru H/Sillasie, *Kayähut Kamästawesäw*, p.103.

Italiana (AOI).⁶⁶ This new empire was formed from a merger of Ethiopia with the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. The reconstituted Italian colonial empire had six major regional divisions one of which was a composite of Harär and the three Eastern provinces largely inhabited by Muslim Oromo, i.e. Balé, Arsi and Eastern Borana. Harär town was the regional capital for this regional division.⁶⁷

There were different kinds of responses to the Italians in Harärgé, the common ones being resistance and collaboration. With regard to collaboration, the Italians were at peace with the local Oromo and the Somali. For instance in Gursum, in collaboration with the Oromo and the Somali, the Italians disarmed the *näḥḥāñña* soldiers and the imperial guards (*Kebur Zäbāñña*). The latter were trained along modern lines by foreign officials in the 1930s. The Oromo and the Somali were armed and were recruited as police force to the Italians. These forces were called *Gogele*.⁶⁸

The Italians established their center of administration not in Gursum but in Fugnānbira. There was a district governor called Tenente Stinico and even today the area around this resident bears the name Stinico *Tārara* (literally Stinico's mountain). There were very few Italians in Gursum: five administrators and two retail traders. The rest of the administrative work was done by the Oromo and the Somali. The Italians built only one building for administration and a road between Fuññānbira and Jigjiga. One factory was set up in Fuññānbira to produce lime. With the

⁶⁶ Alberto Sbacchi *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Asmara: Red Sea Press, 1997), p.208.; See also Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa : Addis Ababa University Press, 2001), p.162.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Mulugeta B/Sillasie, " The History of a Garrison Town 1887-1974" Senior Essay (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1988), p.49.; Informants: Mohammed Seid, Birhanu Mekonnen, Yusuf Hashif, Mohammed Abdulkarim

Italian occupation, the *näffäñña* regiments were dismantled and with it Gursum lost its importance as a garrison center.⁶⁹

Resistance by the *näffäñña* settlers was common in other parts of Harärgé. In Čärčär mountain, the Italians faced seven months of resistance. The two leaders of the resistance were *Däjazmach* Haile Habtewold and Abäbä Dägäfu. After a lengthy resistance, Gälämso was occupied by the Italians in December 1936 and they executed 13 men who had earlier taken part in the resistance. Stories of atrocities that the Italians committed against those who resisted were commonly narrated by informants.⁷⁰

In Dädär, the resistance by Abära Gizaw is still remembered by informants. According to them he took refuge in the valley of Soqa to resist the Italians. While heroically fighting he was killed by the Italians south of Dädär. A certain woman buried him and later a school was dedicated to him in the town after liberation.⁷¹

Perhaps the most widespread resistance by the majority of ethnic Amhara and some Shäwan Oromo was organized in Bädäno. The army was organized in four battalions under the command of *Däjazmach* Gäbré; the other patriotic leaders were *Fitawrari* Agide and *Fitawrari* Be'ida, who had retreated along with his army from Gursum. After a number of military encounters, the leaders realized that they could not withstand the overwhelming Italian army supported by the local community, who remained hostile to the Amhara. Finally, they fled into Balé to join the resistance led by *Däjazmach* Bäyänä Märed, which had been stationed in Goba. But the army of *Däjazmach* Bäyänä had already left Goba before the army led by *Fitawrari* Ba'ida reached. As a

⁶⁹ Ibid. Tenente is not a name of a person. In Italian language it means lieutenant that is probably the reason behind naming the hill after the second name. Had it not been the name of the person, the naming would have been "Tenente terara"

⁷⁰ Informants: Likekahinat Teshome Zewde, Likebirhanat Niguse G/Medhin, Belete Worqinah, Legese Beqansa

⁷¹ Informants: Hassen Beker, Suleiman Ahmed

result, the latter had to return to Harär. But on their way the Italian army inflicted a heavy loss on them, supported by an airstrike around Jerjertu, in Čärčär. The retreating patriot forces finally managed to escape the Italian airstrike and crossed the Wabe river into Balé.

On the return journey from Balé, the majority of the patriotic leaders, led by *Fitawrari* Ba'ida crossed the Ethio-Kenyan border and surrendered to the British authorities. The remaining fighters surrendered to the Italians. They were then brought to Afdem where a huge concentration camp was built by the Italians. The captives were divided into three groups. The first group consisted of military leaders and fighters who were massacred on the spot and were buried in a mass grave. The second category consisted of men with little contribution to the resistance and they were sent to Moqadisho as prisoners. The last group consisted of children and those with no role in the resistance they were allowed to return home. One of my informants, who had accompanied his father throughout the flight, was a teenager at the time and was allowed to return home safely while his father was sentenced to two years imprisonment.⁷²

After pacifying the province, the Italians eliminated many of the features of the old system of land holding. Towards this end, in 1936 they established a land registration office in Harär with the ambitious plan of carrying out land registration in the province. Although this project was by no means completed (advancing little beyond the planning stage), the Italian administration made some important revisions in the land tenure system of the province. They abolished the *mälkäñña* institution. In line with their policy of subduing the Amhara elements and fraternizing

⁷² Informants: Likekahinat Täshome Zäwdé, Liqebirhanat Niguse G/Medhin. The latter was actually an eye witness while he was teenager

with the Muslims, the provincial government abolished the *arafa* tax and the system of *gibir*. No serious effort appeared to have been made to collect *zekka*.⁷³

The Italian administration that was established subsequent to their occupation abolished corvee labor, slavery, various kinds of feudal exaction and other forms of mal-administration. They also introduced a number of development works such as roads, bridges, residential houses, improved the conditions of towns etc. Especially with regard to public works, Harärgé province was given special attention by the Italian colonial government. Improved roads were built from Addis Ababa through Awash and Dire Dawa to Djibouti and from Dire Dawa through Harär to Jigjiga and British Somaliland. Secondary roads and telephone as well as telegraph services were extended to some towns of the province, such as Čiro, Kombolcha, Gerawa, Fiqe, and Fuññanbira. An all weather road connecting with the Harär-Dire Dawa highway was constructed through the central highlands, affording Qärsa, Qulubi and Dädär access to the major communication routes.⁷⁴

In their attempt to create equality and improve the condition of Muslims, they constructed and repaired mosques in different parts of Harärgé. In this regard, informants recall that the Italians repaired the mosque of Uma Koda, near the mosque dedicated to Abdulqadir Al Jilani, located about 15kms west of Harär. The Italians also encouraged the use of Arabic in schools and courts; Haräri and other Muslims were hired by the administration and previously confiscated lands were restored to their original owners or their descendants.⁷⁵ Besides, to deal with Muslim

⁷³ Clarke Brooke, p.179.

⁷⁴ National Archives, Folder No.17.1.7.28.01, See also Clarke Brooke, p.67.

⁷⁵ Informants: Abdusemed Idris, Abdulahi Ararso. For the general Italian Policy on Muslims, Alberto Sbacchi *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941*.; For the Mosque of Uma Koda see Alessandro Gori's entry in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol. 4, "Umma Koda" , PP.1019-1020. Umma Koda was the mother of the Muslim Holyman Abdal- Qadir al Ġilani ,the founder of the Qadryiya Islamic brotherhood. She was commonly known in Harär and its surroundings. In the town of Harär she was also known under the nick name of Ašura Innay

affairs, the Italians re-established the office of *qadi* in each *wäräda* and the *na'iba* in every *mesläne* and *qäbälé* administration.⁷⁶

But their most important and enduring influence lay in the introduction of modern system of agriculture. In their attempt to transform indigenous agriculture in every region (Governorato) a bureau of agriculture was set up. In every province (Commissariato) a director of agriculture was detailed to investigate local conditions and send in monthly reports to concerned authorities both in Addis Ababa and at the ministry in Rome. In Harär region, realizing the interest in the agriculture of the natives, the Italians started to distribute arable lands, as well as sometimes an advance on crops, especially wheat seed, and rural implements.⁷⁷

Moreover to attract and settle a large number of farmers, novel schemes of native co-operation were implemented. At Fädis, 27 Kms to the south west of Harär, large experimental farms were established on a basis of share tenancy (*metayers*) with the native tenants. Hence out of 970 hectares 354 hectares were sharecropped. Just before the big rainy season set in (June- July), the sharecroppers were given, along with carefully selected seeds, tracts of land deep ploughed by tractors and ready for sowing. Three months later the crops were gathered and stored in sheds built for this purpose by the farmers. The cereals invested in sowing operations were replaced and a 50% share was portioned out to the native cultivator. Indeed, the growing habit of building sheds for the purpose of storing surplus produce was in itself a concrete sign of progress,

The origin of the the names Umma Koda are obscure. In Harär, Umma Koda is popularly explained as a deformation of Umma Kude (Grandmother of my liver.Kud)i.e the center of feelings and affection. In Arabic sources Abdalqadir al Gilani's mother is called Umma Al Hayre Fatuma bint Abdallas as -Sawmai.

⁷⁶ National archive, Folder No.17.1.1.291.02

⁷⁷ Ferdinando Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire in the Making*. (London: P.S. King and Sons LMT, Orchard House, 1939), p.29.

because in the past, owing to lack of security nothing would have induced the native to grow more than was strictly necessary for his daily sustenance.⁷⁸

Another major agricultural project by the Italians in Ethiopia was the settlement of Italian farmers. This project was financed by companies to settle small *metayer* or share tenants who were carefully selected by the Migration and Colonization Board (*Commissariato per le Migrazioni e la Colonizzazione*) of the Ministry of Interior to form homogenous nuclei of smallholders drawn from the same regions of Italy.⁷⁹

One of the companies established to settle peasant families from Apulia (South-eastern tip of Italian peninsula) was granted 50,000,000 lire. This financial assistance was extended by the Ministry of Italian Africa. The selected area was Waçu, a vast plain between the towns of Bädessa and Gälämsö. It is situated between 5200 and 7200 feet. The climate and the site are well suited to crop production and mechanization. The company introduced tractors and selected wheat seeds. By using modern agricultural technology the Italians greatly improved grain production.⁸⁰

At this site the Italians built a number of houses to settle their farmers along with their families. According to archival sources a total of 117 rectangular houses were built between Bädessa and Gälämsö. Upon their withdrawal, tractors, and different agricultural machines were left behind and taken by the Ethiopian government but they were not giving their proper services.⁸¹ During field work I observed the remains of these houses.

⁷⁸ Ibid.p.30.

⁷⁹ Ibid.p.48.

⁸⁰ Ibid.pp.48-49.

⁸¹ WMTMRC,Folder 580 File No.41.

Another Italian company at work in Harär province was the Compagnia Etiopica per l'Industria dl Latte (Ethiopian milk company) which was the sister industry for intensive dairy production and the manufacture of dairy products. It established a factory between Lake Adele and Haramaya. On this site cross breeding of local cattle with Italian stock and Ayrshire Friesian and Red Poll stock was undertaken.⁸²

In Adele, similar to Waçu, wheat farming was introduced by taking the fertile land. In fact this farm covered a vast area, including what is now Haramaya University. Informants remember some of the Italian nationals who were involved in wheat production in this area. Tractors were employed for cultivation purpose but local labor was used for different agricultural activities like weeding. The local labor force was paid five kilos of grain per day. Besides, the Italians started coffee plantation in Garamulata, in Mojo valley. But they left the country in 1941 before they could see the final product.⁸³

One area of controversy on the Italian period was land acquisition. Some sources claim that the Italians did not confiscate lands from the natives; they instead returned to the natives lands which were previously expropriated by the Amhara ruling class. According to Clark Brook, *gult* property, the personal holdings of the emperor and his family and all of the land of the Amhara who had fled at the time of the Italian occupation, were seized by the new government. Some of these properties were reserved for the expected influx of Italian immigrants or for experimental farms, but much of it was either sold or given to the Oromo, Somali and the Haräri.⁸⁴

⁸² Ferdinando Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire in the Making*, p.56.

⁸³ Informants: Likekahinat Teshome Zewde, Liqebirhanat Niguse G/Medhin

⁸⁴ Clarke Brooke, p 179.

On the other hand, there are sources which indicate that the Italians did indeed confiscate land that belonged to the royal family, the soldiers who fought against them and the collaborators of the system. But they equally confiscated lands belonging to the ordinary peasantry who for generations had ensured their productivity⁸⁵

In my attempt to examine this matter, I have found out in the archives that lands were taken from both groups. The Italians took properties belonging to the *rest* holders and the royal family. But equally important was the confiscation of land, in rare cases by force, from the natives, especially when the land was found to be valuable. A case in point was the expropriation of land in Adele on the way to Garamulata that belonged to *Damina* Abdule Ibrahim. With the withdrawal of the Italians, the 3rd division of the Ethiopian army took the land of the aforementioned *damina* and the *damina* appealed to the emperor. The case took 5 years of court litigation, with the army claiming that they took the land since the *damina* had already taken compensation from the Italians. On the other hand the plaintiff claimed that he had not taken any compensation.⁸⁶ In my attempt to crosscheck the matter, I found informants in Adele who claimed that *Damina* Abdule lost his land to the Italians, who drove him away from the area and that they did not pay any compensation to the *damina*.⁸⁷

Of course there were lands for which compensation was given when they were confiscated by the Italians. There were also lands restored to the previous owners. However, the Italians had their own objective in doing so. They wanted the expansion of settler agriculture and therefore

⁸⁵ Haile Larebo, *The building of Empire: Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia 1935-1941*. (Trenton:Red Sea Press, 2006),p.243.

⁸⁶ National Archive,Folder No.1.1.12.14.

⁸⁷ Informants: Mume Ahmed ,Ibrahim Abdule, Sani Abdule,Aliyi Yuya.Two of the informants listed here are the sons of the *damina* .According to them the Italians forcefully took away his land and *damina* Abdule did not take any compensation from the Italians.

they themselves were actively engaged in retaking these lands through different mechanisms such as purchasing and the dubious mechanism of transferring the natives' lands to the settlers. The only difference the Italians made was the payment of compensation for the confiscated lands.

The Italian presence in the town of Harär was felt particularly strongly in the area of land administration. There is a document produced by the Italians concerning the purchase of urban houses and the payment of compensation. This document is found in the present Haräri Regional Administrative Office archive. The original was in Italian, but an Amharic translation is attached to it. The document, which has 95 files, tells us that the Italian government bought lands from former *rest* owners in areas where the city was expanding beyond the wall. These areas were present day Shenkor, Timqätä Bahre and AdereTiqo. The Italians apparently aimed at expanding the city for the settlement of their own citizens. Some of the lands were taken through "bequeathing" as the documents tell us, an ambiguous way of taking lands. The documents have a standard format, with details of the name of the property owner who was selling, document number, *hujjah* number, land size bought or sold in square meters, the amount paid in lire, the boundaries and the names of peoples who were witnesses when the registry into *diwan* was made.⁸⁸ These documents are invaluable in understanding the administration of the Italian period in Harär.

2.4 Land Alienation, Redistribution and privatization

In Harärgé, land tenure was so complex a subject that any generalized discussion is reductionist to say the least and invites mistakes. The complexity of land tenure in Harärgé had something to

⁸⁸ Haräri Regional State Archive, "Harär Katama Hizboch" Folder No.10290.

do with the conspicuous change of government within so short period of time. Since the decades before the conquest by Emperor Menilek, there were five successive regimes changing hands in Harärgé: The independent Emirate of Harär, Egyptian occupation, the Ethiopian Imperial state under Emperor Menilek II, the Italian interlude and then the restored Ethiopian state. Each of these regimes left its own legacy on the land tenure dynamics of Harärgé. Therefore, the complexity of Harärgé's land tenure has something to do with its political history of changing governments. Besides this, since the conquest by the Ethiopian Imperial state, the disparity between the policy introduced and the actual implementation on the ground complicated matters on land tenure. Within this long and complex terrain of Harärgé's land tenure the problem of tenancy was a relatively late phenomenon. It was grafted from outside by the Shāwan elite. But to discuss tenancy problems in Harärgé, it is imperative to have a brief look at the land tenure system that prevailed in different parts of the country.

Ethiopian land tenure system could be dichotomized into the northern and southern. The northern system was one in which communal ownership in the form of *rest* was prevalent while the southern system was one where rapid transition to privatization was made after the conquest.⁸⁹

The land tenure system in the south, where Harärgé also belonged, had its own peculiar features which were traceable to the incorporation into the imperial state of Ethiopia. Before the conquest, communal landownership prevailed in Harärgé, for example among the Ittu as

⁸⁹ An exhaustive treatment on Ethiopian land tenure system is well beyond the scope of this work and does not, at any rate warrant doing justice to the subject. For the discussion of Ethiopian land tenure systems there are lots of literature to be consulted. The two major works are Mähtämäsillasié W/Mäsqäl, *Zikre Nagar* (2nd Ed). (Addis Ababa: Tinsae Zagubae Printing Press, 1962 E.C.) and Gäbräwäld Engidawärq, *Ya Itiyopiya Maret Ena Gibir Sim* (Addis Ababa: Tinsae Zagubae Printing Press, 1948 E.C.). See also Dessalegn Rahmato, "Conditions of the Ethiopian Peasantry" Challenge *In NorthEast African Studies* 1970, Pp.25-49.; Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia from Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). Shiferaw Bekele, "The Evolution of Land Tenure in Imperial Era" In *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia*. Shiferaw Bekele (ed).: CODESRIA, 1995.; Joanna Mantel Neiko, *The Role of Land Tenure in the system of Ethiopian Imperial Governemnt in Modern Times*. (Trns) Krzystof Adam Bobinski. (Warszawa, 1980).

discussed earlier in this chapter. This system was abolished by the forces of Emperor Menilek II and in its place a new land tenure system was introduced.

After the conquest, alienation of land belonging to the Oromo cultivators and redistribution of land to Menilek's officials and soldiers was made in many areas of the newly incorporated regions. The state came to enjoy not nominal as in the north but real or absolute title over land confiscated from "rebels", over "unoccupied land" and over "land captured in war." As a result of the right of the sovereign over such areas land was granted to members of the royal family, civil servants, dignitaries, soldiers, chiefs, military or police officers. Subsequent to these grants the indigenous population lost whatever rights they had held traditionally over their former plot and were reduced to the status of landless tenants and led a life close to or similar to serfdom.⁹⁰

Since the emperor or the state began to exercise an absolute right over land that came under government control after Menilek's conquest, grant of land to officials, churches and soldiers spawned a steady increase in tenancy. Transfer of *madäriya* land into *rest* and further land grants was enhanced during the reign of Emperor Haile Sillassie I. This was so particularly after 1941, when land grants were made, among others, to those who could prove that they were part of the resistance to the Italian occupation. The following table demonstrates this condition by giving us the category of people entitled to land grants and the decrees that gave grants a legal basis by showing us how much land they would be granted.

⁹⁰ Informants: Umar Ali, Telenji Beker, Siraj Khodhele, Hassen Beker

Table 1: Government land grant (1942-1956 in Gasha)

No.	Category of Grants	Date of Authorization	Amount granted per person
1	Patriots and exile from Italian Occupation	Hamle 16,1934 E.C (July 1942)	One <i>gasha</i>
2	Pre-war soldiers and public servants	Hamle 16,1936 E.C (July 1944)	One <i>gasha</i>
3	All <i>madäriya</i> holders	Ṭeqemeṭ 23, 1945 E.C (October 1952)	Two <i>gashas</i>
4	Members of Armed Forces and Police	Ṭeqemeṭ 27, 1951 E.C (November 1958)	Two <i>gashas</i>
5	Civil servants	Ṭeqemeṭ 27, 1957 E.C (November 1964)	Two <i>gashas</i>
6	Landless and Unemployed Ethiopians	Ṭeqemeṭ 23, 1945 E.C (October 1952)	One half <i>gasha</i>
7	H.I.M.Special Grants for meritorious services to the government	Article 31 (d) of revised constitution (1955)	Varying amounts

Source: Survey of the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, 1972.

Such land grants were prevalent in the south where already land expropriation had been extensively practiced in the last two decades of the 19th century and in the early 20th century. It

should be emphasized that these land grants were purely based on political not developmental and economic grounds. The grantees enjoyed right over their *rest* as private property⁹¹ and reaped the fruits by leasing it to the landless tenants as well as by forcing these tenants to give them free labor services.

It was presumed that all these land grants were from land in government possession. But there was a great discrepancy between theory and practice. The biggest problem was that the state did not have precise information on the amount and the location of the land at its disposal. It was commented that the grant decrees promised much more than the state could deliver.⁹²

We do not have an exact figure for the total amount of land granted through these orders. But it was established that the bulk of land granted from 1942-1974 went to members of the political and administrative elite. During this period, 1,930,800 hectares of government land were granted nationwide and recorded as either *gäbbar* or *madäriya* tenure. In addition some 2,890,760 hectares of *gäbbar* and *madäriya* land were granted out but not registered. Thus 4,828,560 hectares of land have been granted in the post-Italian period. Of this, some 3,973,320 hectares went to civil servants, military and police officers and other members of the elite, with only 855,240 hectares going to landless or unemployed Ethiopians.⁹³

⁹¹ Tekalign W/Mariyam, "A City and its Hinterland: The Political Economy of land tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa (1887-1974)" PhD Dissertation (Boston University, 1995), p.239. For Privatization of land in the Imperial era see for example Bahru Zewde, "Economic Origins of Absolutist State in Ethiopia (1916-1935)", Reprinted in Bahru Zewde ed., *Society, State and History: Selected Essays* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2008), pp.96-119.

⁹² Ibid, pp.241-242.

⁹³ Cohen and Wentraub, p.61.

Likewise, various government documents and scholarly works give us a rough estimate of 106,304 *gasha* of land being granted between 1935 and 1959⁹⁴. Although, it cannot be taken at face value, the figure, however, shows the general pattern of land grants in the southern provinces. In Harärgé too, which was part of the southern provinces, land grants through the various decrees indicated above had affected the majority of the agricultural population.

In subsequent years of the post-1941 era, land grants grew in pace and scale. But we do not have a consolidated empirical data for Harärgé as we have seen above nationwide. One of the major problems in the archives is to find a periodic registration of these grants by the state and consolidated data for the whole of Harärgé. We have only scanty materials at various periods discussing land grants especially in Čärčär, where land grants were common. Hence, on the basis of the archives, before 1938 E.C, the total land in Harärgé under government holding was 2927 *gasha* (approximately 117,080 hectares) which seems a very conservative figure. The same source also indicates that in 1939 E.C excess land amounting to 120 *gasha* was extracted through another round of *qäläd* measurement. Hence the total amount of government land became 3047 *gasha* (approximately 121,880 hectares). From these land 766 *gasha* was granted in various forms: *rest* (542 *gasha*), *madäriya* (212 *gasha*), as rental (2 and half *gasha*) and for those who were allowed to hold on their previous holding (9 *gasha*).⁹⁵ This small amount of land grants by the state was due to the fact that after the evacuation of the Italians the state did not restore its full power of control over the local community. Gradually when the state apparatus took root the scale of land confiscation drastically rose with parallel growth of landless peasants.

⁹⁴ Hans Watterhall, "Government Land in Ethiopia" Unpublished draft memorandum, MLRA, June 1972),p.48.; Bizuwork Zewde, "The Problem of Tenancy and Tenancy Bills with particular reference to Arsi" MA Thesis (Addis Ababa Univeristy,1992),p.11.

⁹⁵National Archive.Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.

Archival documents vividly demonstrate land alienation from the indigenous population and granting for new claimants. The new land grants were made under various pretexts which the new claimants presented to the local offices. One of these mechanisms was *mānquṭ* (*gebräṭal* in Shāwa) lands in which the indigenous holder was judged to have failed to pay tax. Various letters demonstrate these claims and counterclaims. Here is an example worth quoting by an appellant who was forced to lose his ancestral land under the pretext of *mānquṭ*:

ለክቡር የሐረር ጠ/ግዛት የቤተ-ርስት ሹም
አመልካች ጨሎ ወዳይ መኖሪያ ጨለንቆ ጋራ ጀባ
ስራዬ ግብርና የሆነ

በወበራ [አቦራ] አውራጃ በጨለንቆ ወረዳ ደሚናው አሊ ጢሮ ገራዳው አሁን ሐሰን ሐጂ ጥንት ቦሩ በሬንቶ በሆነው ውስጥ ጋራ ጀባ እሚባል አገር አባቴ ወዳይ በሬንቶ አነድ የገባር መሬት ስለነበረው ለምንግስት ለመልከኛ የሚገባውን ግብር አየገበረ ይዞት ሲኖር ከዚህ አለም በሞት ስለተለየ በአባቴ ምትክ እኔ ልጁ መሬቱን ይገዢ እስከ አምስት መልከኛ ድረስ እየገበርኩበት ስኖር ጠላት ሀገራችንን ስለወረራት እና በሐገር ውስጥ ረሃብ ሆኖ የእለት ምግብ እንኳን አጥቼ ከነቤተሰቦቼ እማልቅ ስለሆኑበት በገራዳው እጅ መሬቴ እንደሆነ የእለት ምግብን አግኝቼ ቤተሰቦቼን ለማዳን ለትንሽ ቀን ሄጄ ስለነበር አሁን ተመልሼ መጥቼ እርስቴ እንድገባ ብል ከህግ መስመር ውጪ እኔን ደካማውን ሽማግሌ ከዚህም በስተቀር ሌላ እርስት የሌለኝ ከአባቴ እስከ እኔ ለመልከኛ ለመንግስት ብዙ ዘመን ስገብርበት የኖርኩትን እርስቴን መንቁጥ ነው በማለት አትግባ ሲሉ ከልክለው መግቢያ አሳጥተው ስላጉላሉኝ ያለመንግስት ተስፋ የሌለኝ ደሐም ለማመልከት ግድ ሆኖብኝ መጥቻለሁ ይህ መሬት እንደተባለው መንቁጥ ሳይሆን የኔ ርስት ለመሆኑ ባባቴ በወዳይ በሬንቶ ስም ተመዝግቦ በአገር ቆጠራው መዝገብ ላይ ስለሚገኝ አስቀርበው ከተመለከቱልኝ በኋላ የእኔ እርስት ለመሆኑ አስረጂ ተሰጥቶኝ እርስቴን እንድገባ መሆኑን በማክበር አመለክታለሁ.⁹⁶

To Harär Province Beterist Office

I, the applicant Cilo Weday, live in Čällänqo, Gara Jaba. My father Weday Berento had one *quṭirgäbbbar* land in Obbora *awraja* under, *Damina* Ali Tiro and *Gerada* Boru Berento (now Hassen Haji). My father used to pay duly the tribute due to *mälkäñña*. Upon his death, I inherited my father and used to live on the same land by fulfilling my commitment to five *mälkäññas*. In the wake of the Italian occupation and the ensuing famine that threatened the very survival of my family, I left the area in search of means to support my family. While I was away, my *rest* land was in the hands of the *garada*. Upon my return I was told [by local officials] that my land was deemed to be *mānquṭ* and prohibited to own my *rest*. This land was not *mānquṭ*; it is found registered in the tax book in the name of my father Weday Berento. I am therefore humbly

⁹⁶ Haräri Regional State Office archive, Folder No.6479, File 49.

requesting your office to cross check the tax registry and endorse my entitlement to the land.

There is strong evidence in the archives that most of the lands confiscated as *mānquṭ* were granted to soldiers and members of the settler communities. For instance in the case of Cilo Waday, quoted above, his land was given to a certain Gulilat W/ Senbet who had served the state as a soldier and was given *madäriya* land in Dädär. Such cases were very common.

Land grants through confiscations were also common features in Harärgé. Again archives demonstrate that people were forced to lose their land for different reasons. The best example was the case of land confiscation by the military in Adele from the local *Damina* Abdule Ibrahim. According to the archival documents, in a series of meetings with the province's deputy general *Däjazmach* Kefle Yergäṭu, B/General Tsige Dibu, commander of the 3rd division and other senior officials, *Damina* Abdule presented his case that the 3rd division had taken his land forcefully and he became landless along with his lower officials and *gäbbar* farmers. It was also indicated that the emperor himself was involved in person by demarcating the land under dispute by the two parties to resolve the matter. The end result was that the appellant lost his ancestral possession and was given a small plot of land on the way to Garamulata while the *gäbbar* farmers under him became landless.⁹⁷

There were nine farmers along with 144 families living under their respective *garadas* who were simply instructed to leave their ancestral land without any prior notification and any wrong doing. One of the applications of the victims representing nine families with 144 family members is worth quoting for it has valuable information on the subject.

⁹⁷National archive.Folder No.1.1.12.14.

ታህሳስ 10 ቀን 1951 ዓ/ም

ግርማ ዊጃን ሆይ

የኢትዮጵያ ብርሃን

እኛ ባሮች የደረሰብንን የመሬት መነቀል ስንጽፍልዎ እዲመልሱልን እግዚአብሔርን አማላጅ ይዘን በፊትዎ ስንወድቅ ተስፋ አለን።

ገባር 1ኛ አመድ አመር እስከ እራሴ 11 ቤተሰብ 2ኛ መሜ አመር እስከ እራሴ 12 ቤተሰብ 3ኛ ሰዓድ ከቢር አመድ እስከ እራሴ 31 ቤተሰብ 4ኛ አመር ሰአድ ከራሴ ጋር 31 ቤተሰብ 5ኛ አደም ዩዬ ከራሴ ጋር 17 ቤተሰብ 6ኛ አመር ኢብራሂም ከራሴ ጋር 11 ቤተሰብ 7ኛ አሊ አብደላ ከራሴ ጋር 15 ቤተሰብ 8ኛ ያቆብ መሜ ከራሴ ጋር 6 ቤተሰብ 9ኛ ሐሰን ቢዮ ከራሴ ጋር 10 ቤተሰብ

ግርማዊ ሆይ እኛ ቁጥራችን ከዚህ በላይ የተመለከተው ባንድ ገራዳ ውስጥ የምንገኝ በሐረር ጠቅላይ ግዛት በጋራ መሥራታ አውራጃ በበደኖ ወረዳ ግዛት ሞጅ ቀበሌ ነን። 11 የገባር መሬት ከያት ከቅድመ አያት ሲወርድ በአትክልት አልምቱን ስንጠቀም ሳለን ከ11 ገባር ውስጥ ኑስ ኑስ ይበቃችኋል ተብለን ከ39 እስከ 50 ዓ/ም ያለውን ውዝፍ ከፈሉ ተብለን ከፍለን ወደፊት እንገባር ብንል አቶ ወልደ ስላሴ ልቀቁ አሉን። ስለዚህ የኢትዮጵያ ብርሃን አቤት ማለት መጨነቅ ደረሰብን

ሌላ ሀገር አናውቅም የያዝነው መሬት ከተወሰደብን ለማን እንደርሳልን የሚቸገሩልን ግርማዊነትዎና እግዚአብሔር ብቻ ናችሁና እርስታችን በእጃችን ሆኖልን ወደፊት በህጉ መሰረት እንድንገባር ወርቃዊ ምህረት እድርገውልን ያለፈ እዳ ስለተከፈለ ወደፊት እንድንገባር ያድርጉልን ስንል ከደረጃ ስር ወድቀን እንለምናለን።⁹⁸

December 19, 1958

Your Majesty,

We, your slaves hereunder write in the name of God the eviction perpetrated against us hoping justice to be served. Amed Umar along with 11 family members; Mume Umar along with 12 family members; Seid Kebir Amed along with 31 family members; mar Seid along with 31 family members; Adem Yuya along with 17 family members; Umar Ibrahim along with 11 family members; Ali Abdella along with 15 family members, Yaqob Mume along with 6 family members and Hassen Biyo along with 10 family members

Your Majesty,

We the aforementioned members of one *garada* were living in Garamulata *awraja*, Bedeno *wäräda* in Mojo *qäbalé*. We have 11 *quter gäbbar* land which we inherited from our fathers. Confined to *Nus* [half] land for each family, we were instructed to leave our ancestral land to a certain *Wäldä Sellasie* while we have paid the land tax from 1939-1951 E.C and even begging to pay the future.

Your Majesty,

⁹⁸ WMTMRC.Folder No. 2135, File No. 2133.

We do not know any country except our birthplace. Where else can we go? For there is no other than our humane emperor and the power of God bestowed upon him we therefore ask your mercy bowing down to install us back on our *rest* land.

It is of interest to note that the post war competition over agricultural resources had reached such a point that victims of dispossession included even groups that were themselves servants of the monarchy and beneficiaries of its largesse at some point in the past. One good example is the story of the descendants of *Gerazmach* Seyoum who had served the state during the times of Emperor Menilek; his children had also served the state in their capacity as soldiers and died during the Italian period as patriots. The claimants, the grandchildren and family members numbering around 72, were forced to lose 6 *gasha* of their land around Xullo (Hirna) in 1942 E.C. to *Fitawrari* Agide by the orders of Tassew Wallelu, the then Deputy Governor General of the province. Later, due to their appeal to the emperor, their land was converted into *béterest*, which in effect meant that the appellants lost possession and became landless.⁹⁹

There was also a pattern claimed by the government that officials, especially *garada*, *malaqa* and *gäbbar* farmers under them were said to have “hidden excess land.” Therefore these individuals were expected to submit the excess land; otherwise legal procedure would follow to take the “excess land”. These lands were later claimed by people, especially members of the settler community, who painstakingly followed the court procedure in order to take the land as *qenqañ*.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ National Archive.Folder No.1.1.06.22.

¹⁰⁰ WMTMRC, Folder No. 7 /561,12/561.The term is applied for the process of searching excess lands.The Amharic dictionary by Dästa Täkläwäld discussed the etymology of the the root word *qänäqänä* i.e searching for;while the term *qäneqañ*, implies the person who is searching for.The Amharic maxim goes “*Lä egzier yä qänäqänä Tsedeq, lä nägus yä qänäqänä wärqe*” i.e he who served God deserves heaven he who served the king deserves wealth.

One other mechanism of land confiscation is worth mentioning. In Čärčär, three appellants claimed that their father had bequeathed 19 *gasha* of land to *Ras* Mäkonnen. On the basis of this, the appellants added that one *gasha* was given for their father and were living on that land for a long time. Now they were forced to lose that land and were pleading for justice from the palace. (See Appendix No.1)

For a better understanding of the land tenure dynamics after 1941, different typologies of land holdings were found in Harärgé. In spite of these variegated names holdings could be studied by dividing them into three broad categories: Private, Church (*Sämon*) and government lands.¹⁰¹

A. Private land: As the name implies this was land owned by peoples in the form of *rest*. The owners of these lands have full right either to sell or give away their land through inheritance. There are many types of holdings under this category some of which are discussed below

Gäbbar land: This was land owned by individual farmers who owned land on *rest* basis. *Gäbbar* land was found throughout Harärgé and could be divided into measured and unmeasured. According to the records of the Ministry of Finance, used for the purpose of assessing tax in 1965, there were a total of 733,059 measured lands in Harärgé. Out of this, 537,084 were *gäbbar* lands, of which 400,906 hectares were classified as fertile (63%), 78,418 hectares as semi-fertile (20%) and 57,760 hectares as poor (17%). Based on the same source the largest amount of measured land was found in Čärčär sub province and most of the land in this section of the sub province was under private ownership. Within Čärčär, the largest area of measured land was found in the sub district of Doba and Hančär. There was of course great

¹⁰¹ For the classification of lands in the broader typologies I have used two authoritative works on the subject Mähtämäsillasié W/Mäsqäl and Gäbräwäd Engida Wäraq.

disparity in the information which was recorded by the branch office of the same ministry in Harär due to different factors.¹⁰²

Similarly the Ministry of Finance had a record for the unmeasured lands in Harärgé. These lands were commonly termed as *quṭirgäbbar* lands. However, this type of ownership was relatively small. Based on the source cited above, there were a total of 65,664 *quṭirgäbbar* holdings, out of which 54,662 (83%) was owned by *gäbbar* farmers while the remaining were found on *madäriya*, *samon*, and government holdings. *Quṭirgäbbar* land was divided into five classes for the purpose of assessing tax.¹⁰³

Of all sub provinces, Harär had the largest number of *quṭirgäbbar* land. Out of the total of 37,832 owners, 13 256 were found in Harär, it was followed by Obbora (13200). A closer look at *quṭirgäbbar* land indicates that 95% of the land owners did not have more than one holding and 25% of them had an average size holding of about 0.5 *quṭirgäbbar* land. The number of owners and the average size of their holdings had an inverse proportion, i.e. as the number of people holding up to one *quṭirgäbbar* increased, the average size per *quṭirgäbbar* decreased.¹⁰⁴

It was observed that there were some land owners (usually large landowners) who owned both measured land in hectares and *quṭirgäbbar* land. The holdings of these people may constitute holdings under two, three or even four categories of *gäbbar*, *madäriya*, *semon* or *rest gult* land. Problems arose when one attempts to categorize owners by types and by units of holdings, for a person might have ten hectares of *sämon* land and ten hectares of *madäriya* or *gäbbar*. In

¹⁰² Silashi W/Tsadiq, "Land Ownership in Harärgé Province" *Experimental Station Bulletin* No.47. Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts ,pp.9-13. Mähtämäsillasié classify *gäbbar* into *mulu gäbbar* and its half, *nus gäbbar* . Measured lands were alternatively called *gäbbar* land or *qalad* land. Besides two classifications which are typical to Harärgé belong to the *gäbbar*: *čisañña* and *iraniya*. We will discuss this in the following chapter.

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Estimation of *quṭirgäbbar* units for purposes of taxation was based on the number of families and animals and the quality of the soil.

addition, further complications were also encountered in some cases where a person's holdings were in different units of measurement such as ten hectares of *sämon* land and ten *quṣṣirgäbbar* or *madäriya* or *rest-gult*. It was almost impossible under this multiplicity of holdings to determine accurately a person's holdings by size. Therefore ownership classification was made by the largest portion of an individual's holdings.

Rest Gult land: A category of land given to a class of nobility who led Menilek's armies in the conquest of the southern provinces and subsequently wielded influential political power. These group of people with meritorious contribution to the state or members of the royal family were rewarded with the grant of *rest-gult* land over vast areas containing large numbers of peasants. Its beneficiaries became proprietors who could bequeath their *rest-gult* to their descendants. They profited from the entire revenue and collected the taxes for their own use. To gain possession of 'rest-gult', the heirs had to obtain the authorization of the government and to present a mule after which the land was transferred to their name. In Harärgé, the most extensive *rest-gult* land was owned by the emperor himself. This personal estate of the royal family was centrally administered by the *beterest*.¹⁰⁵ Details will be given in chapter three.

Gult land: *gult* rights entitled powerful individuals the right to collect tribute from the *gäbbar* on the land. These individuals also exercised certain judicial functions. One of the prominent *gult* holders was *Ras Biru Wäldägäbriel*. His *gult* land was found in Darolebu, the size of a *wäräda* by the same name. According to the archives the amount of land was 250 *gasha* and was secured before the introduction of the *qalad*. The other principal *gult* owner was *Däjazmach Abatabor*, who used to be *abägaz* of Čärčär. His land was in Mächara and amounted to 33 *gasha*;

¹⁰⁵ WMTMRC Folder No.15;File No.20/3;Folder No. 15 File No 11/15;Folder No 15 File no 13/15;Folder No 15 File No 19/15;Folder No.15 File No.6/15.

upon his death, it was inherited by his sons. *Ras* Imiru was given an extensive and fertile tract of land in Boroda which was suitable for coffee. Besides, he had *gult* land in Jerjertu which he rented for foreigners and settled tenants. *Afenigus* Zäwdé Ayälä had *gult* land in Čällänqo and *Däjazmach* Abba Shawl in Qulubi and the surroundings. These were a few examples of those that got over 20 *gashas* of land.¹⁰⁶ Besides, a number of powerful individuals, dignitaries, members of the royal family etc. were granted land in different parts of the province.

Moreover, there were numerous *gult* owners in Čärčär who became a major obstacle for *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat when he wished to introduce his model administration. He claimed they did not pay the government tax and wanted to get them removed from the area.¹⁰⁷ It was also found in archives that the *gult* owners severely mistreated the landless cultivator on their land and the tenants frequently left the *gult* land for other alternative lands. Hence, the Amharic adage: “ምንም ቢመሸብህ ከጉልት መሬት አይታደርም”¹⁰⁸ (However late the day, you should not spend the night on *gult* land).

Gult lands were also found in Harärgé that belonged to the church. These were reserved to the administrators of churches and the high priest; when any of them died or resigned his office the use of the land passed to the successors. Such lands were not transferred to heirs in the case of the *samon märeṭ*. The *gult* land was in effect the only type of land over which the church had

¹⁰⁶ WMTMRC Folder No. 16/92., IES, MS-922. For the land grants and inheritances belonging to *Däjazmach* Abba Shawel, lots of letters are deposited in Haräri regional Archive. For *Afenigus* Zewde Ayele, informants provide vivid account of the extent of the land. His biography deposited at the national archive discussed his meritorious contribution to the state although it does not provide description of his land ownership. Informants claim that *Afenigus* Zewde married the emperor's daughter. According to them he was the most powerful and most feared landlord in Čällänqo and its surroundings. Although it is difficult to accept this claim, in his biography produced upon his death, read during his burial ceremony it is indicated that his wife was “Honorable Aselefech Haile Sillassie”. It is not clear whether the name “Haile Sillassie” implies the emperor or not. As for *Ras* Imiru, he provides in his autobiography his land possession.

¹⁰⁷ Täklähawariyat, pp. 356-363.; See also Imiru Haile Sillassie, P. 97.

¹⁰⁸ WMTMRC Folder No. 1/561.; National Archive. 17.1.7.15.02.

indisputable rights of ownership. In Čärčär the lands that were similar to church *gult* of other provinces were called *walasma*, which were reserved for the upkeep of monasteries.¹⁰⁹

Balabat land: This was land that was given to local elders who proved willing to cooperate with the new political authorities and were appointed *balabbat*, i.e. *burqa* (in Čärčär) and as *garada* and *malaqa* (to the east of Čärčär) as freehold as a reward for their intermediary role. According to archival sources in 1938 E.C there were 548 *damina*, 10865 *garada* and 15061 *malaqa* in the province east of Burqa. If this figure is to be believed, leaving aside the *damina* who were not granted a specific amount of land, the total land granted to the two *rest aleqa* (as they were commonly referred) was 21,730 *gasha* for *garada* and 15,061 *gasha* for the *malaqa*. The same source also indicates that there were 705 *burqa* in Čärčär, which meant 705 *gasha* of land was granted to them.¹¹⁰

B. Church land

Like the other conquered southern provinces, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was introduced into Harärgé along with the army of Emperor Menilek II. According to informants and archival records, the first Ethiopian Orthodox church to be established in Harärgé was Giorgis church in Gubaqoricha in 1878 E.C. Then it was followed by Bäka (1879 E.C.), Hardim (1891 E.C.) and Qunne (1894 E.C.). According to archival sources in 1938 E.C. the total number of the Ethiopian

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. *Walasma* is the name of a muslimized clan from which the Sultanate of Ifat stemmed which ruled from the 13th C -16th C. In Ankober, Ifat, and Menjar regions in Shäwa *Walasma* was the name given to a Muslim who performed the duties of those officials responsible for the collection of tributes much like the *mälkäñña*. It is also the name of land. It is not however, clear from our sources that whether the land belonged to those responsible for the collection of tributes or not. In Harärgé, the monastery of Däbrä Asäbot has a large tract of land as *walasma*

¹¹⁰ National archive. 17.1.7.15.02; See also WMTMRC .Folder No. 2138. File No. 277. Approximately 300 *jerib* is one *gasha*. But the figure that tells the number of local officials should not be taken at face value since their preparation had their own drawbacks. There is an addition or subtraction of the figure as those who collected the data on the spot themselves admitted in the letter when they submitted their report to higher offices.

Orthodox churches established in Harärgé was 76 and it had increased to 96 by 1954 E.C.¹¹¹ Accompanying the soldiers were the priests, deacons and other lower ecclesiastics of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church who expanded the teachings of the religion and the state ideology.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had its own way of classifying the *rest* land and *gult* lands belonging to it. Land given to any of its functionaries (the monks, priests, deacons, teachers, etc.) was called *rim* or *qälad*.) The second type was called *gäbbar märét* or *mälkäññet* and it refers to the land given to administrators of churches or some high ranking priests. The third and last category comprised of lands given to the Church by the nobility and members of the general public from time to time and which had not been classified. All these types were together identified as *rest* and *gult* lands of the church. It is from these lands that the dependents and functionaries of the church were earning their livelihood.¹¹²

There were service men in the church who were employed by the church for specific tasks. They were salaried officials but they were remunerated with *qälad* lands. A crosscheck of oral informants and archives illuminate this fact. In Gursum, a certain *Mä mire* Fantaye was employed as a teacher and tax collector of the church land. But he was given *qälad* lands which he gave out for tenants on the bases of share-cropping arrangement. Such cases were numerous in different parts of Harärgé.¹¹³

One study revealed that in 1955 the Orthodox Church in Harärgé had a total of 3089 *gashas* of measured land and 1182 *gashas* of unmeasured land. From this land it collected a total of 37,916.45 as land tax; 2,092.38 as *asrat* and 36,140.88 as educational tax with a grand total of

¹¹¹ National Archive.17.1.7.30.02.; 63.1.48.03.;17.1.443.08.

¹¹² National Archive.Folder No. 17.1.443.08.

¹¹³ National Archive.Folder No.17.1.443.08; Informants: Zärihun Bäzabih,Birhanu Mekonnen.

156,149.71. Harärgé ranked as the fourth largest tax collector, preceded by the Orthodox churches of Tigray, Shäwa and Wällo.¹¹⁴

Table 2. Church land and the service men within the churches in 1939 E.C.

Awraja	Total No of Churches	NO OF priests	NO OF Gäbbar on the gult of the service men	Gäbbar land in Shibeta	Rest land of Priests in Gasha
Čärčär	41	432	-	-	387
Obbora	9	115	15	52	147
Garamulata	9	100	-	10	90
Harär	5	211	483	997	750
DireDawa	3	50	70	85	22
Gursum	6	73	-	58	65
Jigjiga	3	47	-	-	28
Total		1028	573	1202	1489

Source: National Archive (17.1.7.30.02), compiled by the author.

Besides these grants there were also other lands that belonged to churches and monasteries. In Asäbot monastery 13 *burqa balabat* land was reserved for the clerics and another 13 *burqa* land was reserved for Emperor Haile Sillassie. This was from the total land bequeathed to Asäbot

¹¹⁴ Gabre-Egziabher Degu, "Ownership and Administration of Church Lands in Ethiopia", Paper read on Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform, Addis Ababa, p.250.

gedam by the emperor. In Belbeleti around Hardim 190 *gasha* of land belonging to *Tsehafti T'ezaz Afwerqe* was recorded in the name of Giorgis church.¹¹⁵

From the above table a number of conclusions can be drawn. It was in Western Harärgé that the largest concentration of Orthodox churches was found. The question then naturally arises as to why this was the case. This has something to do with the number and nature of the settlement pattern of the occupying forces. In western Harärgé, including in the rural parts of Čärčär, the settler community came in large numbers. They also settled in every part of Čärčär both in urban and rural areas. Land grant and government service were the two major sources of their livelihood. Wherever the land was granted they settled and wherever they were posted as office clerks they took the post promptly. This community naturally required having the same kind of environment as the one they left behind in every aspect, including their belief system.

Concurrently, settlement of the Amhara had changed the settlement patterns of the province. As the Amhara settled on the highlands, the Oromo retreated to the lowlands. Still to this day the highlands of Gubaqoricha in western Harärgé, in Garamulata, Gälämso, Bädessa, Dädär etc. are the settlement areas of the Amhara while the lowlands were largely settled by the Oromo. One of my key informants in Garamulata explains this fact that the Oromo retreated on the wake of the conquest to the lowlands of Aniya and Burqa Tirtira not only as a result of the expropriation but also as a strategic means to avoid Amhara subjugation. He claims that since the Amhara were not keen to settle in the lowlands the Oromo retreated to these areas as a safe haven though the environment is infested with diseases such as malaria.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ National Archive.Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.

¹¹⁶ Informant: Telenji Beker

The question that matters most is how these lands were administered. For administrative purposes, church lands were divided into two broad divisions: *yä samon märeṭ* and *gult*. *Yä samon märeṭ* are those lands whose use was placed at the disposal of the functionaries of the church by the church itself in lieu of salaries and in appreciation of their services to the church in their respective region. While the ownership title remains with the church, any such functionary can till the land and use it as his own as long as he continued to give his services to the church. The use of the land may pass to the heir of such a functionary. In that event and if the heir was a layman whose services were not useful for the church, the administrator of the respective church can employ a replacement and change the successors by paying the salary. It was a duty of the administrator to see to it that the occupants of the *samon* lands of the church were meeting their obligations.¹¹⁷

Some members of the nobility used to transfer their *gult* lands to the church as the tax payable to the church was low. Some of the landowners too applied for a transfer of their *rest* right to *samon* in order to pay tax at lower rates. These land owners retained the right to sell, assign or dispose of this property at will even after the transfer of land to *samon* was completed. The state on the other hand prohibited the transfer of these landed properties to *samon* land by a letter written in 1937 E.C.¹¹⁸

C. Government Land: Any land that is not included in either private or church land is considered to be in the possession of the government or it is designated as public domain. Lands

¹¹⁷ Gabre-Egziahber Degu, "Ownership and Administration of Church Lands in Ethiopia", Paper read on Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform (Addis Ababa, 1969) pp.246-249.

¹¹⁸ National Archive.Folder No.17.1.443.08.

The *mälkäñña* who were assigned on these lands would receive a certain amount of the produce of the land and labor services from the *gäbbar*. When some of the *mälkäñña* were not interested in collecting tribute in kind, they would take a small amount of land and make the *gäbbar* cultivate for them. There were also *hudad* land during the times of *Ras Mäkonnen* where large and fertile lands were taken as government land for the upkeep of the palace but were cultivated by the *gäbbar*. In the post Italian period, *hudad* land became private land of the landlords and the landlord forced the tenant to work certain days of the week on these lands as a labor requirement.¹²⁰

Menqut lands were land in which due to different factors the original holder disappeared from his land and the land stayed in the hands of the local *balabbat* for at least one year. After one year the government would take that land. *Cafee* lands are those that were specifically set aside by the state for communal use such as grazing. Its ownership belonged to the government. Based on the archives consulted and as indicated earlier, in 1939 in Čärčär, *hudad* land amounted to 3141 *gasha*, *manquṭ* land amounted to 3982 *gasha* and *caffe* land was 5 *gasha*.¹²¹

Apart from these categories of landholding, there were also other systems of holdings which were not used widely. Two of the most common were *milki* and *waqf*. The former was widely found around Harär town as discussed earlier in this chapter. The second category called *waqf* land has the same meaning as church or *sämon* land except that *waqf* was under the administration of mosques. The measurement unit of both *milki* and *waqf* land was known as *jerib*.¹²²

¹²⁰ National Archive.Folder No. 17.1.7.30.02.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² WMTMRC.Folder No. 2135. File No 2133. See also Mähtämäsillase, p. 163.

On all these lands, i.e. privately owned lands, church owned land and government land, there were tenants working under different provisions. It is not however, possible to tell the total number of tenants on these lands. What can be clearly established, however, is that the number of tenants was by far larger on *qälad* lands than the rest of the holdings. The treatment of the tenants by those who leased these respective lands and the amount of rent paid differed from holding to holding. Details of these will be treated in the next chapter.

2.5 The Introduction of the Qalad and the Politics of Land Measurement

Land measurement was introduced in the incorporated regions at different times. One of the major obstacles to introducing it simultaneously was the lack of trained personnel to undertake the measurement. In addition, once it was introduced in one region or province the men on the spot deliberately delayed its implementation. One can question the importance of introducing land measurement. In the political sphere the land measurement and its practice sprang from government's sentient, albeit, subtle desire to restrain the unusually insatiable activities of the political and military elites, who were keen to constantly amass more and more land in the form of *sisso* or *hudad* across the region. Therefore *qälad* could be used by the government as an instrument for regulating elite activities by delineating land as distinct categories such as *gäbbar* land, *balabat siso*, *samon* and *madäriya*.

From the perspective of the state, archives throw useful information on the economic advantages of introducing the *qälad*. The following are explained by archival sources:¹²³

A. The introduction of the *qälad* helped the government to know exactly the amount of land at its disposal. Prior to this, there was no documentation that was made by the government on the

¹²³ National Archive.17.1.7.15.02.

amount and quantity of land. Once the figure is known, at least approximately, it can redistribute the land to the needy and those that the government believed were deserving.

B. It can help find out *tirf* (extra land) from the previous owners. Indeed, a number of archival sources show that the *qālad* measurement revealed some extra land which was kept 'hidden' in the hands of previous owners, often the *garada* and the *burqa*. It is claimed that these lands were owned and used by those who deliberately hid them and the government had lost a lot of money in this way. The discovery of extra or hidden land was often fictitious and *qālad* was introduced so that the extra land was declared and taken over by the government. Frequent disputes between the *qānqañ* and the local *balabat* were heard in courts.¹²⁴ Sometimes of course the *balabats* were found hiding *menquṭ* lands. These are lands in which the *rest* owner would leave the land due to various factors such as inability to pay tax, lack of capital to run agricultural activities etc. In such instances, the *garada* or the *burqa* are entitled to keep the land for one year. When the original owner did not show up, they took the land without getting the land officially registered. It was such land that became the focus of the *qānqañ* and frequent disputes occurred around this. In rare cases also the original owners returned to their farm land and when they requested the requisition of the land they found it too difficult and hence went to courts only to find the litigation exercise futile.

C. With the introductions of *qālad*, it was supposed that one would avoid the disparities in terms of tax payment for the same kind of land. It is clear from the archives that it was common to find cultivators with equal amount of *shibeta* land and *gasha* land paying the same amount of tax. By setting standards based on their fertility, land measurement was expected to avoid dissatisfaction. The anomaly in tax payment was also seen in the literature. For instance in Čärčär and

¹²⁴ WMTMRC, Folder No. 7/561, 12/561.

Garamulata, tax paid by the *abba burqa* or a landlord was 80 birr per *gasha*; whereas tax on the same amount of land, if occupied by 12 *gäbbar* farmers, was 384 birr. There were also cases where lands were claimed to have been lost but still remained in somebody's possession without tax being paid¹²⁵

D. It was also expected that it would lessen the burden on the workers involved in land matters by helping them forecast the amount of money to be collected from different parts of the *awraja*.

E. It would solve recurrent border conflicts and lessen wastage of working hours due to procrastinated litigation.

Peasants also seem to have expected a light tax burden from the measured land and hoped that unofficial means of labor exploitation will be halted. But the underlying motive for land measurement, which was supported by the provincial and district authorities, was to enable them to redefine more systematically the right of access to it in favor of the settler community. In doing so the land measurement aimed at establishing Amhara hegemony by way of centrally directed land distribution. This would transform the erstwhile *mälkäñña-gabbär* system into the landlord-tenant system. This was a practice commonly observed in the conquered southern regions. For instance, in Sidamo, McClellan has indicated that land had been measured before the Italian occupation and, by 1941, the *näffjääñña-gabbär* system had evolved into a landlord-tenant relationship between the *näffjääñña* and the *Gedeo*.¹²⁶

Following the same pattern in Harärgé, land was measured and re-measured many times and after the Italian occupation the full-fledged landlord –tenant relation had evolved from the earlier

¹²⁵ National Archive, Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.; WMTMRC Folder No 2/561.;10/561,12/561. This was attested in Garamulata in one of the letters written by a certain observer. See the details on Appendix No.5.

¹²⁶ McClellan, pp.87-92.

näffäñña system. These actions not only reflected changing local conditions but also implemented new national priorities directed from the center.

Whenever and wherever it took place, land measurement proved to be a potent force in redrawing (though not necessary completely overhauling) traditional terms of access to agricultural resources at one level or another. In Harärgé *qälad* impacted on terms of access to agricultural resources in different ways. First, by interjecting fresh rules, *qälad* enabled a range of social actors to gain access to land in a way qualitatively different from the community based laws that existed in the past. Second, *qälad* reconfigured, intentionally or unintentionally, the relationship between the individual and the land. When purchased by individual farmers at the time of land measurement (as happened in Čärčär in the 1940s and the 1950s) the piece of land could become individual property and its owner and cultivator, a *gäbbar* (tax paying farmer). When conceded to the state's own functionaries the provision often remained temporary as the land itself belonged to the government. Yet despite the attempts at precision and clear boundaries that the land measurements was intended to foster, in practice social actors seized *qälad*'s ambiguities to promote their own interests.¹²⁷

By its nature, *qälad* was a difficult and thankless job; certainly it rankled those who lost possession. It demanded the cooperation of the natives especially the indigenous elites, but since land measurement was time-consuming, *daminas*, *garada*, and *burqas* could not be directly involved though they were expected to win their peoples' acceptance of the policy. Generally,

¹²⁷ Getnet Bekele, "Knowledge, power and a Region: The Making of Ethiopia's South-Central Rift Valley agricultural Environment and Society, 1892-1975" PhD Dissertation (Michigan State University, 2005), pp.6-7.

resident settlers were commissioned to survey an area along with several indigenes who knew the locality.¹²⁸

In Harärgé, it was in the early 20th century that land measurement was introduced. Informants recall that the persons who were the architects of land measurement were *Balambaras Jire* to the East of Burqa and Tadesse Wedere in Čärčär.¹²⁹ It was not clearly established by informants how long these individuals stayed in Harärgé and the amount of land they measured. But they unanimously claim that they were government appointees. After them a number of officials were appointed to supervise the measurement.

Since its introduction, as far as sources could help us trace, land in Harärgé was measured five times: 1912, 1921, 1930 and 1953. According to Mähtämäsillase, in Harärgé *qälad* measurement was implemented with a rope having 150 cubits long. One *qälad* of land equaled 9 x 150 cubits in length and 6 x 150 cubits in width. In Čärčär it was 11 x 150 cubits in length and 7 x 150 cubits in width.¹³⁰ Sometimes this would be increased if the land was considered infertile. Measured land was also referred to in *gasha*. The size of the *gasha* used to be determined by the fertility of the land, with the size of a *gasha* inversely proportional to the fertility of the soil. For example if the land was fertile, its size was 34.4 hectares, if semi fertile 39.8 hectares and if poor 66.6 hectares.¹³¹ The annual tax paid per *gasha* regardless of size was

¹²⁸ Informants: Birhanu Mekonnen, Beyene Yirga. Some of my informants actually took part in the measurement processes and narrate the difficulties involved. WMTMRC.Folder No.1/561. Different letters in the archives also demonstrate the administrative aspects, the fraudulent activities, abuses of offices for personal wealth accumulation of the participants etc.

¹²⁹ National Archive.Folder No.17.1.7.28.01. See also WMTMRC Folder no.2135.File No.2133. Informants: Beyene Yirga, Siraj Khodele, Umar Ahmed Ali. In the archives consulted in Harärgé province high court, *Balambaras Jire* was frequently mentioned as the official who measured lands in Garamulata in the 1940s and the 1950s.

¹³⁰ Mähtämäsillase W/Mäsqäl, p.163.

¹³¹ Sileshi W/Tsadiq, 1966, p.6. In Harärgé, informants frequently use the measurement unit called *qalad* which simply implies measured land. Measured land was called *gasha* or *qalad* land. Conventionally one *gasha* is equal to 1 *qalad*.

equal. The measurement system was thus based on the productivity of the land, the area being of secondary importance. Later on, however, attempts were made to standardize land measurement irrespective of fertility, the new area size of a *gasha* becoming 40 hectares.

Täklähawariyat gave a different unit of measurement called “*meqeyis*”. It was made up of iron chain and lands measured by this unit in Čärčär amounted to 176 *meqeyis*, the length being 16 *meqeyis* and the width 11 *meqeyis*. He discusses that since the rope used to measure land had its own problems, this iron chain averted the problem of subjectivity.¹³² Informants are not clear about the actual meaning of the term.

When land measurement was introduced, in parts of Harärgé to the east of the *burqa* River, it became too difficult to find extra lands as the farmers were already settled on these lands as agriculturalists since the time of Egyptian rule. Due to dense settlement, ceilings were made on the holdings of the *garada* and *malaqa*. Accordingly after redistributing 600 *jerib* for the *garada* and 300 *jerib* for the *malaqa* along with their *qolo* land as private ownership the government took the remaining land. One *gasha* was taken out of every 80 *garada* in Eastern Harärgé. The remaining land was redistributed to its grantee through various pretexts such as *manquṭ* and excess (*terf*) land. Especially *terf* land was found to be abundant as the *garadas* and *malaqas* were restricted only to the amount stated above. The archives attest to a number of such cases.

To mention few examples, *Garada* Hasen Musa in Dädär was found to have an “excess” of 31 *gasha* while he was allowed to have 600 *jerib* or 2 *gasha*; *garada* Uso Ali Shero was found to have approximately 43 *gasha* of “excess”; *malaqa* Ahmed Yusuf was found to have 87 *gasha* of “excess” while he was legally supposed to have 300 *jerib* or one *gasha* of land. Twenty other

¹³² Täklähawariyat, “Yä Čärčär Denb” IES, MS- 734.

garada in Gerawa, Kurfačäle and Bädäno were forced to lose their ancestral land to the state under the pretext of “excess” land in 1947 E.C.¹³³ The fact that these lands were taken from the local chiefs indirectly implies confiscation from the *gäbbar* who were settled on these lands based on their birth right. Once confiscated, there was a long list of settlers waiting for land grants; they were the obvious beneficiaries.

In Čärčär, it was easy to redefine new land entitlement through land measurement and assigning new land holdings to more and more settlers. The *burqa* was allowed to take one *gasha* of land as *rest*. In some rare cases the *burqa* was allowed to purchase one *gasha* of additional land. The remainder was taken by the state which redistributed to its grantees. Here the principle was taking one *gasha* from every 10 *burqa* in Čärčär, taking the sparse population density into consideration.

In Čärčär the major share of land was taken by the *mälkäñña* and their associates in the settler community. Hence of all parts of Harärgé it was in Čärčär that a large number of settlers were found even deep into the rural parts of Čärčär. These processes of transferring land through grants created a large number of landless Oromo farmers who were forcefully converted into tenancy. In addition to measurement, land was classified in terms of perceived fertility which actually meant productivity. Accordingly one *gasha* of land was classified into fertile, semi fertile and poor.¹³⁴

¹³³ WMTMRC.Folder No.12/561.

¹³⁴ Gäbräwäld Engedawärrq, *Yä Itiyopiya Marét Ena Gibir Sim*, pp.41-57.;78-79.;102-103. See also Land Tax Proclamation No.70 of 1944. A Subsequent memo by MOI explained that the status or grade of land (*taf*, *lam-taf* and *lam*) had to be based on production levels. Productivity in turn was determined by standards put in place to measure the tithe. Accordingly, *lam* (developed) referred to the farms of those who paid more than five *dawulas* of grain as tithe; the farms of those who paid 2-5 *dawulas* of grain came under the category of *lam taf* (semi developed); and the rest (paying between ten *qunna* and two *dawulas* of grain for tithe) formed a distinct category called *taf* (undeveloped).

Two points are worth considering in land measurement: the shape and actual size of the measured land and the proportion of *sisso* land. In practice, the shapes of the land were not always equally right angled which formed the basis for defective measurement. But the measurement was more to create the impression that land was measured than a serious inventory of land. Besides, the land measurement was further complicated by the surveyors who abused their responsibility for their own ends. The measurers applied an “eye –measurement” to estimate an expanse of land liberally or conservatively into a number of *gasha* depending on promised or accepted bribes. It was not unusual for a land measured as one *gasha* to become more than two or more later on. On the whole out of the recorded 2,568,640 hectares of land on the tax book of the empire, 3,182, 800 extra hectares were found by the ministry of interior surveying team during 1944-1960.¹³⁵

In the case of Harärgé, for instance, in the sub province of Čärčär, in the district of Darolebu, 9980 hectares when re-measured was found to be 908,840 hectares.¹³⁶ A closer examination of archives gives an indication from this total, the heirs of *Däjazmach* Abatabor were said to have inherited 33 *gasha* of land in Mächara but later when land was re-measured it was claimed that 45 *gasha* was found to be “excess” in Gälämso *wäräda* and had to be handed to the government. Similarly *Ras* Biru W/Gebriel ’s *restgult* land in Darolebu was recorded as 250 *gasha* of land but when it was re-measured 22721 *gasha* of land was taken as ‘excess’.¹³⁷ Likewise in Garamulata, 3333 *gasha* (Approximately 133,320 hectares) of land was found to be “excess” when it was re-measured in 1947 E.C.¹³⁸ This does not mean that this was a total land extracted

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Silashi W/Tsadiq, “Land Ownership in Harärgé Province” *Experimental Station Bulletin* No.47. Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts ,p.7.

¹³⁷ WMTMRC Folder No.1/561 National Archive.FoldeNo.17.1.7.15.06.

¹³⁸ WMTMRC.Folder No.1/561.

through the pretext of “excess”; rather it implies there were still the possibilities for excess lands to be extracted. Subsequently, this inaccurate measurement formed one of the pretexts for Amhara officials to push for the re-measurement of land and bring more land in their possession.

Land Sale

The imperial government was involved in intensive land sales in Čärčär sub-province. This land sale was vividly observed even before the Italian occupation. What made these land sales before the Italian period more common and even legal was the active participation of government officials. There is evidence that *Ras* Imiru bought both the *rest* and *burqinet* land of his father in Hančar. Fitawrari Täklähawariyat himself bought land in Biyo Käräba. These land sales were undertaken by agents of these officials.¹³⁹

After the restoration of imperial power, land sale continued with vigor. The prime objective was to generate as much revenue as possible. Rampant land sale was observed in Čärčär for probably two reasons. One was the apparent fertility of Čärčär and second was the abundant availability of land in government ownership in Čärčär than was the case to the east of Burqa. As a result an extensive amount of government holdings were sold. Individuals who actively took part in the land purchase were rich men who were actually members of the settler community. These bought lands became known as *qäläd* lands on which tenants were settled by the owners with some kind of tenancy arrangements that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. Due to the paucity of comprehensive data for land sale through the period since 1941, we only discuss some fragmentary land sales. For example in 1951 E.C a total of 3093 *gasha*¹⁴⁰ of land (approximately

¹³⁹ IES,MS-922 “Yä Čärčär Mäzgäb Gelebač” Different letters to *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

123,720 hectares) was sold. In subsequent years land sale continued with vigor. The following table roughly indicates land sales in Čärčär sub province in 1955 alone.

Table 3. Land sale in and the corresponding price Čärčär Awraja in early 1940s E.C.

No	Name of the Wäräda	Registered land for sale(in Gasha	Actual land Sold (in Gasha)	Amount sold in Birr	Land granted to claimants (in gasha)	Remaining land
1	Čiro	290	53	15525	100	137
2	Qunne	1641	87	24105	169	1385
3	Habro	449	26	29985	64	359
4	Mäsäla	260	101	69518	42	117
5	Harawača	663	57	22012	37	569
6	Ṭullo	73	12	7650	36	25
7	Doba	222	1	560	121	100
8	Gubaqoricha	370	-	-	92	278
9	Hančar	427	-	-	36	391
	Total	4395	337	169355	697	3361

Source: WMTMRC. **Compiled by the author.**

Those who bought land were the pre-war *qäläd* owners from whom the excess land was taken through land measurement undertaken after the war. These were particularly the northern settlers. This could be traced from the archives which listed the names of individuals who bought lands in Čärčär at different times. From the list it could easily be established that the northern

settlers represented the overwhelming majority. Their ability to appreciate the potential of the land and their command of money resources enabled them to acquire fertile land at the very low prices in Čärčär, where the cash economy was relatively highly developed. The price of the land was sub- divided into three based on their fertility: fertile (*lam*) land fetched between 300-500 birr; semi fertile (*lamtaf*) land 200-300 birr and poor (*taf*) land between 100-200 birr.¹⁴¹

Conclusion

The post war land and fiscal policies of the Ethiopian government had the effect of withdrawing its protection of peasant rights on land ownership. This made landlord control over the means of production in the rural community more pervasive than in the pre-war years. The success of the settlers' land acquisition was predicated primarily on the manipulation of ambiguities surrounding the legal and cultural principles of the land tenure system. The post war state maintained and continued to enforce these principles.

The means and strategies through which land ownership of the settlers increased in the post-war years was also striking. Before the war, the peasantry in Harärgé held their lands under terms clearly defined and officially endorsed by the state. That was because it was the peasantry who paid taxes in the form of goods and services required by the state. It was then in the interest of the state to preserve peasant landownership and protect it from deeper inroads by the political and military elite.

After the restoration of the monarchy, there was stiff competition among the settlers for the possession of fertile land in Harärgé. The monarchy was at the center stage of this competition by sanctioning the land grants. The land grant was the key factor in the dispossession of large

¹⁴¹ WMTMRC Folder No. 1/561. Apparently, this land price was applied even in the pre-Italian period. For details see for example "Yä Čärčär Dänb", IES,MS-734.P.47.

number of owner cultivators by the settler community, as either absentee landowners or resident cultivators.

The land grants that were implemented through a series of proclamations transferred lands from the indigenous cultivators to the settlers in the form of private ownership, though not strictly speaking in the Western sense of privatization of property. More often than not, the land grants were successfully exploited by the political and military elite as they had both the economic and social capital to acquire the grant, which the poor could not afford. Along with the land grants, land measurement was implemented with vigor in Harärgé and this measure deemed a large tract of native lands to be “excess”. One additional feature of the land tenure dynamics that accelerated the political and economic changes in rural Harärgé was land sale. Land was bought by those who had the economic potential and appreciation of the value of land and it was sold by the government for precipitously low price, especially in Čärčär. Those who bought land were, as the sources strongly suggest, members of the settler community.

Hence, the dominance of the settler community over the indigenous cultivators was built primarily on land alienation and land control through various mechanisms. This process of land alienation obviously swelled the ranks of landless farmers and created a large pool of landless peasants that were ready to sell their labor through various forms of tenancy arrangement. Thus, tenancy spread in Harärgé widely from 1941 on. It is to this aspect of rural agrarian relation that we turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Transformation from the Mälikāñña System to Landlord-Tenant Relation

In the previous chapter, we have seen the policy pursued by the imperial state that transferred property rights in the form of land and tribute to the settler community. In the post liberation period the increasing privatization of land solidified the property right of the settlers while the local population was deprived of their right of land ownership. Different mechanisms employed by the state deprived them of the rural producers their access to the key factor of production, i.e. land, in the agrarian economy. The major ones were outright confiscation as land belonging to rebels, especially in Čärčär, and extensive land grants through a series of land grants by the imperial state to those who had given meritorious service. Land measurement was rigorously applied by the state at different times so that land was alienated from the original owners through various pretexts, such as *mānquṭ*. This enabled the state to accumulate more land as state domain. Land sale was also another factor that exacerbated land alienation. As a result of all these measures, the majority of the rural producers became landless on their ancestral land.

In this and the following chapter, we will examine the linkage between landownership and labor control by focusing on the various tenancy arrangements. This is vital as the productive value of land could not be appreciated without the unconditional availability of labor. Since the imposition of Ethiopian imperial rule, the state introduced new rules and strategies to control the productive resources of the agrarian economy, principally land and labor. That was the confiscation of land and forcing the conversion en masse of the population into some form of tenancy. Indeed, the tenant population increased not only through confiscation of land but also through the increase in the agricultural population in rural Harärgé.

For the landlords, both absentee and resident, tenancy arrangements provided the best alternative to reap agricultural produce in the form of rent. On the other hand, for tenants, such arrangements provided a compromise to guarantee their survival by saving their family from being starved. The new arrangement also assured their presence on the land as rightful possessors or claimants and increased their chance of land ownership without actually owning the land in legal terms.

Following the Marxist approach, I will argue that the different forms of tenancy arrangements per se were the key instruments of surplus appropriation by the landlords. Tenants entered into such kind of exploitative relations as a survival strategy since there was no alternative employment opportunity. In this process of surplus appropriation, I will also argue that, the tenant works not for himself, but for someone else. The latter appropriates (essentially by force) everything above what is required for the tenant's bare subsistence and reproduction. Moreover, the wealth so appropriated was not used to lay the foundation for a more productive economy and for the purposes of capital formation. Rather a significant share of the economic surplus accruing to the landowning class was earmarked for conspicuous consumption, maintenance of sumptuous residence, lavish living style, serving as symbols of wealth and status as well as acquisition of a luxurious standard of living for a tiny minority.

The chapter is organized around some major themes. The major ones are the historical roots of tenancy in Harärgé, the various types of tenancy, forms of tenancy arrangements and types of landlords. The chapter is based on diverse sources such as archives, oral sources and secondary literature, both published and unpublished.

3.1 The Genesis and Evolution of Tenancy

The term tenant translates in Amharic into *čisäñña*, derived from *ṭis*. The literal meaning of the term *ṭis* is smoke. It can be assumed that *čisäñña* is a derivative of *ṭis*. The Amharic dictionary by DästaTäkläwäld traces the etymology of the term *čisäññai*. etenant from *ṭis*, i.e. smoke.¹ Here there are different traditions that try to trace the genealogy of the term and its meaning. One of these traditions claims that *ṭis* refers to the homestead where tenants live, which is symbolized by the smoke that it emits. The place on which tenants constructed their homestead belonged to the landlord. Another less plausible tradition applied a metaphor of smoke for *čisäñña*. Just as smoke disappears in the thin air immediately, so was the *čisäñña* evicted at the whim of the landlord and disappeared from the landlord's estate.

It is not exactly known when landlord-tenancy relationship originated in Ethiopian history. The Ethiopian chronicles which have detailed description of the political and military events around the court and about personalities do not say much about this basic issue of landlord-tenancy relationship. Although they are not specific in discussing the conditions of tenants, there are some descriptions in the northern part of Ethiopia by early Portuguese priests about the plight of the agricultural producers of which tenants were also part. Alvarez, the chaplain who accompanied the Portuguese mission to Ethiopia in 1520, suggests that the ordinary people were in a depressed condition which hindered agricultural production. He expressed the view that "... there would be much fruit and more cultivation in the country, if the great men did not ill-treat the people, for they take what they have and the latter are not willing to provide more than they

¹ DästaTäkläwäld, *Addis Yä Amareñña Mäzgäbä Qalat*. (New Amharic Dictionary), (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1970 E.C), P.624.

required and what is necessary for them.”² Another Portuguese priest, Barradas, also ascertains that the peasants paid a fifth of their produce to the landlord and claims that he had tried to plead with the governor on behalf of the peasants.³ According to Pero Paez, during the reign of Sarsa Dengel (1563-1597), the peasants were protesting against the lords and were hiding a considerable proportion of the harvest, thereby increasing their share of the produce. It is interesting to observe that after the king appointed a committee to visit the crop before harvest and assess the yield, it was decided that the share of the lords be 1/5 instead of the commonly accepted tradition of 1/3 of the produce as well as some presents during holidays.⁴

In northern Shäwa, Atsme Giorgis gives as a passing reference to the existence of tenants. He indicates that the governor of Mänz, Negasi Kirstos, redistributed land to the tenants towards the end of 17th century. Probably, Negasi Kirstos took this measure after realizing the plight of the tenants. This redistribution was made after conquering new lands in the area of Yefat and Tarma Bär.⁵

Coming nearer in time, in the 18th century, there are indications of the existence of tenancy at least in the northern parts of Ethiopia. For instance, James Bruce cites the existence of tenancy in Tigray. He claimed that it was a common practice for the landlord to supply seed provided that he received half of the produce. However, he indicated that “ He [the landlord] is a very

² Francisco, Alvarez. *The Prester John of the Indies. A True Relation of the Lands of the Prester John*. vol.II.Eds.C.F.Beckingham and G.W.B.Huntingford. The Hayklut Society (Cambridge university press,1961), p,515.

³ Manoel, Barradas. *A Seventeenth Century Historical and Geographical Account of Tigray, Ethiopia*. Elizabet Filleu (Trans) R.Pankhurst.(ed) Harrassowitz Verlag-Wiesbaden,1996.P.92.

⁴ R. Pankhurst, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*. Monograph in Ethiopian Land Tenure No.3. (Addis Ababa: 1966), p.49.

⁵ BairuTafla (ed, *Asmegiorgis and His wok: History of the [Oromo] and the Kingdom of Shäwa* (Stuttgart,1987),pp.503-505.

indulgent master that does not take another quarter for the risk he has run; so that the quantity that comes to the share of the husbandman is not more than sufficient to afford sustenance for his wretched family.”⁶

On the other hand, the chronicler of emperor Täklä Giorgis (1779-1795) makes a cursory remark that the peasant shared not half of their produce for the landlords as indicated by James Bruce but a fifth (*ammestyya*) of his produce, retaining the remaining four-fifth.⁷ This share of a fifth of the produce was already in practice two centuries earlier as discussed by the Jesuit Pero Paez and cited in Richard Pankhurst.⁸

These descriptions were specific to tenants in the northern part of Ethiopia. But, in fact in the northern provinces in general, which were communal areas; tenancy was not a major feature of landholding and did not affect more than 25% of the rural population. Here, if tenancy occurred it was among the Muslims and artisans, who were excluded from *rest* holding, and the newly formed households with small holdings. Although they described the peasant social group as a whole, there was no doubt that the minority tenants were living in conditions even worse than what was described above.⁹ The condition of tenancy in the north, which was not significant, is instructive in view of the effect of land alienation that occurred in the southern region as discussed in chapter two.

⁶ James Bruce *Travels to discover the Source of the Nile*, Vol.III. (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790),p.124.

⁷ R. Pankhurst, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*, p. 73.

⁸ Ibid.,49.

⁹ Cohen and Weintraub, 1975,pp.50-51.;See also GäbruTarāq, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest. Peasant Revolt in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1991), P.65,77.;See also S Pauswang, *Peasants, Land and Society : A social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*, (Munich ,Kilogne and London: Weltform Verlag,1983),p.25.

On the other hand, in the southern provinces, tenancy became a major phenomenon only after the conquest of the regions by the Shāwan forces. The internal socio economic and social dynamism had not brought about the appearance of private property in land. It was after occupation that private property ownership developed in Harärgé, with the concomitant rise in tenancy. Of course this does not mean that tenancy was not known before in Harärgé. As discussed in chapter two, and as it will be discussed in more detail a little later, private property had already developed in the emirate of Harär long before its incorporation into the imperial state of Ethiopia and small scale landlord-tenancy relationship had already developed between Haräri landlords and Oromo tenants.

There is confusion in the literature between a tenant and a *gäbbar*. Richard Pankhurst seems to succumb to this confusion when he used *čisäñña* and *gäbbar* interchangeably whilst the two are totally different. He stated that “ the *gäbbars* are said to have paid their *balabats* an *erbo* or a quarter of their produce besides various services and were also expected to go to war in times of need and make certain small presents to the governor on feast days.”¹⁰

This description of tenants might have applied in other parts of Ethiopia. But in Harärgé, notwithstanding the confusion that surrounds the term, the *gäbbar* was actually the owner of a *rest* land, however small. On the contrary, those who paid one-fourth of their produce to landlords or *balabats* were only tenants.

Two factors seem to have contributed for the ambiguous position of the *gäbbar*, both associated with the conquest. The first was related to the relationship of different groups claiming land holding rights. Land holding rights in the south were not defined initially in terms of ownership

¹⁰ R Pankhurst, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*, p.142.

but in reciprocal rights and duties associated with the appropriation of tribute from the cultivator. Thus, on a piece of *madäriya* land, the state's rights of tribute were granted to the *madäriya* holder in return for his service to the state. The tribute was paid by the *gäbbars* who worked the land and remained on it as long as they continued to pay tribute. *Madäriya* rights could be transferred from one person to another by the state, while the *gäbbar* continued to cultivate the land and pay the tribute. The second factor was related to the position of the *gäbbar* and his relation with the land which varied in accordance with the nature of the land rights granted by the state to others. If such grants were made as permanent hereditary possession as in the case of *rest*, *rest gult*, *samon*, *balabat merṭ* and various other grants or even purchases, the *gäbbar* apparently metamorphosed into a tenant of the grantee. This was frequently observed in archives consulted at different centers.¹¹

In the case of *madäriya* and *hudad*, the grantee enjoyed only temporary rights, with the state retaining its reversionary right when the grantee was removed from office and the *gäbbar* remained on the land as a dependent of the state. The position of the *gäbbar* settled on such land remained ambiguous until the state transferred land rights to others. It was the policy of making grants entailing permanent possession from state land throughout the reign of Haile Sillassie that reduced many southern *gäbbar* settled on such lands into tenants. This process was accelerated after 1941 as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Also, along with the conquest, the term “*gäbbar*” changed in meaning when applied in the south where the position of the peasant cultivator in these areas was significantly different from that of the northern *gäbbar*. The term denotes in the north the tributary status of the peasant,

¹¹ WMTMRC, Folder No. 1/561.; 7/561.; 12/561.; National Archive, Folder No. 17.1.1.287.02.; 17.1.30.02.; 1.1. 06.22.; 3.1.1.02.

notwithstanding the ownership right over the land. Thus the northern *restäñña* had a secure land right over his land while at the same time he was a tribute-paying *gäbbar*. In the southern provinces, however, the peasant cultivates the land that was confiscated by the state and he had only a use right over the land. He was merely settled on the land belonging to others.¹²

Apparently, confusion over the words *gäbbar* and tenant has developed not only in the literature but also among informants. It seems the confusion was not semantic in nature when one realizes that both implied the onerous labor obligations they were supposed to fulfill both to the state and the landlord. There is both a collective and individualized usage, the latter being the most common form. Informants refer to *gäbbar* and tenant as one and the same by citing the labor demands by the state and the state officials; they for instance allude to the state's insatiable appetite for labor mobilization when *Lij Iyyasu* was imprisoned in Gerawa so that the *gäbbar* were mobilized for different activities to meet the needs of the entourage in prison.¹³ It is only when questions are directed regarding ownership status that informants distinguish between the two.

There is one discernible divergence between oral sources and written documents in characterizing tenants. The written documents refer to the land ownership status of the cultivators to differentiate tenants from other rural producers. Thus, they describe tenants as non landowning cultivators; often the phrase *erbo arash* was used while *gäbbar* were landholding

¹² R Pankhurst, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*, p.174.

¹³ Informants: Siraj Khodele, Telenji Bekere, LiqaBerhanat Nigussie G/Medhin. The last mentioned informant gave details about the prison. Every day a sheep was slaughtered for *Lij Iyyasu* and those who were along with him. *Abba Hana Jima* was in charge of the prison. When I visited the prison, I came across a chain which the visitor explained served to chain *Iyyasu's* hands and legs. An informant actually claimed that the chain was put in the prison when a truck came in Gerawa in early 1970s to distribute food aid, it was trapped in the mud and the chain served to pull it out. Unfortunately it was cut off and was put here; it has no apparent relation with the imprisonment of *Lij Iyyasu* who was chained in fact with a chain made of gold not with an iron chain.

cultivators, however small their possession.¹⁴ A *gäbbar* could be a *čisännña* at the same time while a full-fledged *čisännña* could not be a *gäbbar*. The *čisännña* was an outgrowth of the *gäbbar*. The *čisännña*, especially the proper one, had no legal protection against unfair eviction or other mistreatment by landlords or had no alternative place to reside while the *gäbbar* could go back to his small plot of land.

There is circumstantial evidence supporting the landownership status of the *gäbbar* as a distinguishing factor from the tenant. The *gäbbar* paid tax directly to the government while the latter did not pay tax to the government in his name. The tenant's relation was confined to his landlord and his communication with the government, if at all it existed, was at most indirect. The tenant was not recognized by the government's tax book as the *gäbbar* which implies the ownership status of the *gäbbar*.¹⁵ Otherwise both provided free labor services to respective government officials and the *balerest*, regardless of the amount.

On the other hand, oral sources give due emphasis to the obligations imposed on each land and therefore for rural producers as a major distinguishing factor. As a matter of fact, no land was free from obligation. Every land is tied with some kind of obligation,¹⁶ and the land that tenants

¹⁴ Juanna Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure in the System of Ethiopian Imperial Government in Modern Times*. (Trns) Adam Ribiniski (Krzytetu Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1980), pp.83, 117.; J Cohen and D Weintraub, *Land and Peasants imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to Revolution*, (Assen: Van Gorcum and Co., 1975), pp.50-61.; See also Gäbru Taräq, P.65, 80.; Dessalegn Rahmato, "Conditions of the Ethiopian Peasantry" in *Challenge*, Vol. 10., No.2, (July 1970), pp.25-49.

¹⁵ Harrison, C Dunning, "Land Reform in Ethiopia A Case Study in Non Development" U.C.L.A. Law Review, 18, 1970, pp.271-307. See also Taye Gulilat, "The Tax in Lieu of Tithe and the New Agricultural Income Tax: A preliminary Evaluation" in *Dialogue* Issue No.1 Vol.II, 1968, pp.17-27.; J.C.D. Lawrence and H.S Mann, "FAO Land Policy Project (Ethiopia), Ethiopian Observer, Vol.IX, No.4, 1966, pp.286-336.; Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker, Musa Ibrahim, Umar Ali Tese, Abdulqadir Abdurahman.

¹⁶ Shiferaw Bekele, "The Land Question in the Imperial Era." In *An Economic History of Ethiopia: The Imperial Era, 1941-1975*, Vol. I. Shiferaw Bekele (ed) (CODESRIA, 1995), p.78.; See also Richard Pankhurst, "Some Historical Aspects of Land Tenure in Ethiopia." Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform organized by Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. (Addis Ababa: December 1969), pp.43-44.

were tilling also imposed certain types of obligation; it was likewise for the land operated by *gäbbar* farmers.

Thus, the land operated by tenants and *gäbbar* were tied with certain kinds of obligation while in terms of ownership they belonged to different groups. The land that tenants tilled belonged to landlords, the state, or the church while the land the *gäbbar* operated belonged to them. This implies the major feature of tenancy that differentiated it from *gäbbar* was not the obligation but the status of landownership. And in any case, the obligations imposed on tenants were not directly emanating from the land but due to the personalized relations between tenants and landowners. That helps to define and establish the social status and position of tenants vi-as-vis other rural producers.

Therefore, it could be safe to view tenancy as an institution rather than as a land tenure system. What featured most prominently was not the ownership status of tenants but the living condition, the working conditions and the unequal relations between tenants and landowners. As for the land, all land in Ethiopia ultimately belonged to the state. The state was the putative landowner of the land. By using that power, the state distributed land to potential claimants. The land settled by tenants had also ownership title enjoyed by another, and hence the same land could not have a double ownership title simultaneously, at least legally. Tenants did not have ownership right on land. They worked and lived on the land that belonged to the state, the landlord, church land and other small landowners.

The bill on landlord tenant relation submitted to the parliament in 1963 E.C upholds this view. It defined the tenant (i.e. *čisäñña*) in a broader aspect putting the emphasis on the relational aspect than the ownership status and says “ጭሠኛ ማለት በራሱ እና በበለጠ መካከል ባለው ግንኙነት መሠረት መሬቱን

በግል ስር የሚጠቀም ሠው ነው”¹⁷ i.e. a tenant was a person who on the basis of the relationship established with the *rest* owner cultivates and benefits from the fruits of his labor.

In Oromifaa, tenants were called *ciisi*. Informants provide two traditions for the origin of this nomenclature. The first tradition is the one that supports the hypothesis that the term was probably a derivation from the Amharic *čisāñña*. As evidence they argue that *čisāñña* had no equivalent term in the Oromo language. However; it is not exactly known when it came in use in the Oromo language. The tradition had some resonance when we evaluate the influence of language on society. Language is a repository through which a culture of a society is expressed. Language cannot express the culture of a society that did not exist unless it is borrowed from where it is in existence.

There was no limitation in the use rights of individuals among the Oromo (communal ownership is the common means of land holding among the Eastern Oromo). There was also no internal dynamics that can push individuals to accrue private property like land. In the absence of individual property, and the prevalence of communal ownership of land, there existed no possibility for members of the community to become landless. It was the conquest and incorporation of Oromo territories in the last quarter of the 19th century that opened the way for the creation of landless community members in Harärgé. Along with the new settler community, their cultural traits like language and religion were imported. That is why the term has an Amharic influence. Such an interpretation is thus favored by linguistic evidence. Had tenancy been in existence among the Oromo society before the conquest, the Oromo language would have had its own vocabulary for the term.

¹⁷ The Imperial State of Ethiopia, Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration. “Bä Bälärest Ena *čisāñña* Mākakāl Yalāwen Ginuñinet Lāmāwāsān Yāwāṭa Awaj” (Amharic Draft) “Draft Legislation on Landlord Tenant Relation” (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C.), Chapter one, P.5

However, there were exceptions to this general feature among the Oromo where private property had already developed before the conquest of Emperor Menilek II. A good example was Jimma, where private land ownership had long evolved among the Gibe states before the advent of the imperial state. Here, the term tenant had an equivalent Oromo word called “*qubsisa*”. The *abbalaḥa* (lord of the land) sold and bought land; they also had tenants working on their private lands.¹⁸

The second tradition lies with one of the classifications of *rest* owners in Harärgé. According to informants, there were a group of rural producers called *cissi* who own very small plot of land. According to this tradition the *cissi* came to own their *rest* land through the payment of a certain number of cattle, often between 3 to 5, for the *garada*.¹⁹ Corroborating this fact, Mahtämäsillase discusses in his work that there were seven different hierarchies of rural producers’ before the incorporation of Harärgé. These were, in descending order: *damina*, *garada*, *malaqa*, *gäbbar*, *nus*, *čisäñña* and *ereniya*.²⁰ According to him *čisäñña* was *rest* owner in his own right however small his *rest* possession was. In his words he says “፪ሆኛባለቃውመሬትላይባለርስትሆኖተካፋይማለትነው.”²¹ i.e. a *čisäñña* was one who was a *rest* owner and partakes by residing on his patron’s land.

Traditionally, Harärgé peasants have *rest* lands which were under the protection of the *garada*, the *malaqa* or sometimes under elder brothers. The youngest son may end up working on his relatives’ land or the land belonging to their common ancestor, sharing the produce. But the information by oral informants does not tell us how and why the transformation from a *rest* owner to landless tenant farmer took place. It seems that there was a gradual decrease in the

¹⁸ H.S Lewis, [An Oromo] Monarchy :Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia 1830-1932,(Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press,1965), p.50.

¹⁹ Informants:Telenji Beker,Abdella Miko, Siraj Khodele.

²⁰ Mahtemesillase Waldamasqal, *Zikre Nagar*, 2ed. (Addis Ababa: Birhanena Selam Printing Press,1962 E.C), p.161.

²¹ Ibid.p.162.

holding size of the *cissi* due to the increase in population within a family and the status of tax paying *cissi* might have been the result of pauperization of the *rest* owning peasants, who would then join the rank of the landless who originally was not a tenant. This appears to have been true for all *gäbbar* living on *garadas*' lands, according to evidence from the archives.²² But this tradition too fails to address some lacunae. The most obvious is the origin of the term "*cissi*"; though obviously a pre-conquest usage, as indicated above, informants do not locate the origin of the term.

In any case the conquest had its impact on the spread of tenancy in Harärgé. Since the territorial expansion of the imperial government of Ethiopia by Emperor Menilek II, tenancy spread widely in the southern provinces of the conquered territories in the last quarter of the 19th century. This was a landmark event in the evolution of tenancy. In Harärgé, the high percentage of tenancy was intimately connected with confiscation of native lands by the royal family, the nobility, the soldiers, northern settlers, the local chiefs and other privileged persons through land grant. Other methods of acquiring land were by purchase, through bequeathing which was a dubious way of inheritance, land measurement and re-measurement, taking *mänquṭ* land and, for the local people, through access to *merṭ* land by virtue of being members of a certain clan or by mere association with the *balabat*. Those who could not obtain land by these methods were reduced to tenancy.

It must be noted here that tenancy arrangement was not entirely a new phenomenon that followed the land grant in Harär Plateau. As discussed in chapter two, tenancy arrangement was in existence between Haräri landlords and Oromo farmers before the conquest. In this tenancy-

²² National Archive. Folder No.64, file No.64/1. I came across this file in early season of my data collection process. After some times, the National archive switched to a new documentation and serialization of all the documents as a result when I went back I was not able to trace the document with its old call no.

landlord relation, there were two types of tenancy arrangements: *oyna* and *garbangereb*²³ (the latter *hirta* in Oromifaa).

According to Yusuf Ahmed and evidence from oral informants, *oyna* is the older system and regulated the shares of tenants and landowners on the basis of the division of the farm land that was cultivable. The tenant was given a certain plot of land on which he lived and cultivated for his own while he also cultivated the land reserved for the landowner. It remained in use even in the 1960s, though in modified form. Apparently, *oyna* was similar with labor tenancy as the tenant was required to cultivate the land separately set aside for the landlord just like the *hudad*.

On the other hand *hirta* or *garabangarab* was based on a division of the produce of the whole area. It was in short a sharecropping arrangement on a 50-50 basis between the Haräri landlord and the Oromo tenants.²⁴ The landowner provided land and some agricultural inputs like seeds. It was a later introduction and was often practiced for smaller farms. According to Yusuf Ahmed, *hirta* was much preferred by the landlord to the *oyna* system since the latter had the danger of bringing ownership claim by the respective farmers.²⁵

But a careful investigation of both oral and written sources, especially an investigation of *diwan* letters from the collection in the IES library, provides us strong evidence that both *oyna* and sharecropping might bring such problems. Moreover the documents indicate that under sharecropping arrangement it was not only *hirta* that was in practice but also *erbo* which was of course the predominant arrangement. A plaintiff, Sufian Amir Abdulahi, accused Ismail Mumed and Hassen Mumed claiming that they had been cultivating his father's land in a place called

²³ Yusuf Ahmed, pp.386-387.; Informants: AyubAbdullahi, AbdusemedIdris, MustefaAdem.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Yusuf Ahmed, pp.386-387. Among the Harärgé Oromo *oyna* is *hudad* land and informants claim that *oyna* lands were the most fertile having irrigation water. Even today some informants remember the *oyna* lands in their localities.

Sagicha, to the south of Harär town. On this land the litigants were cultivating both as *erbo* and as labour tenants as agreed by the two parties seasonally which implied that both sharecropping and *oyna* forms of tenancy were applied at different cultivation seasons. The plaintiff further alleged that the agreement was in place even during the days of his father, *Amir* Abdulahi (the original land holder). In *Miyazia* 1916 E.C, however, the plaintiff demanded that the tenants leave his plot, claiming that the tenants were aspiring to have ownership status of his inherited land. Likewise, the same landowner demanded that the three tenants - Bäkär Musa, Abdella Musa and Hajji Alisho - leave his land for they too have caused ownership threat on his *rest* land.²⁶

However, productivity and tenants' active engagement in farming practices appear to be comparatively better under the *oyna* arrangement than under *hirta* . This was because tenants would attempt to increase production of the whole farm as opposed to a tenant working under the *hirta* system, which was to be shared with the landowner on an equal basis. Likewise, tenants actively engaged in protecting the agricultural fields from erosion by making terraces and keeping the fertility of the soil as this would affect both the tenant and the owners under the *oyna* arrangement. Apparently, this landlord tenant relationship had contributed to the relative affluence of the Haräri community until the 1974 revolution. When agrarian reform policies were introduced by the *Därg*, it insisted that land belonged to those who farmed it; Oromo tenants in this case became de facto owners.²⁷

Thus, there existed an Oromo cultivator, directly dependent upon Haräri landowners, before the 1974 revolution. Although it was much limited in scope both spatially and in scale, there was

²⁶ IES,MS-870.

²⁷ Yusuf Ahmed,p.388.; Informants: AyubAbdullahi,Mohammed Abdurahman,Ibrahim Ahmed ,Ahmed Yuya.

therefore, an incipient landlord-tenant relation between the Haräri landlords and Oromo peasants even before the conquest of Harärgé. What made the old landlord-tenant relation different from the post conquest era, therefore, was the scale of the spatial coverage, the nature of tenancy arrangement, and the degree of resource extraction. In the earlier system of surplus extraction, the Haräri controlled their farmlands while the Oromo contributed a share of their labour.

Prior to 1941, tenancy was not a phenomenon that spread far and wide in the province. But there was archival evidence for the existence of the system in the 1910s and the 1920s when the *mälkäñña* system was the predominant system.²⁸ Then, tribute appropriation mostly took the form of tribute than rent, which was the result of a mutation of a full blown tenant's fate in the post 1941 period. By then, the land entitlement of the *balerest* was sanctioned by the state and graduated into a private property, at least by Ethiopian standards.

Otherwise, the earlier forms of tenancy arrangement were commonly found in Harärgé after the conquest. Täklähawariyat in his “*Yä Čärčär Dänb*” tells us one of the reasons that pushed him to produce the draft administrative reform for Čärčär was the unequal and exploitative relation between the *mälkäñña* and the peasant. Among the peasants, the landless *čisäñña* were hard pressed by the officials. He discussed in detail the relations between the *tägaž* (the common term he used for the tenant in the document) and the *rest* owners. He indicated the contract period, the period of termination of the contract, the types of crops to be grown by the tenant, the types of tenancy agreement (share or contract), the relative contribution of farm inputs, the responsibility of the two parties and other details. It is interesting that in this draft document, the tenant was free from giving any kind of gifts like honey and fattened sheep. He was free from any kind of

²⁸ IES,MS-894,IES,MS-922. See also Täklähawariyat Täklämaryam, “*Yä Čärčär Dänb*” IES,MS-734. Incidentally, informants from the settler background often used the term *tägaž* than *čisäñña*.

labour obligation to the landlord and was not required to pay any tax which was due to the state. If he was found paying tax he would be the owner of the land. *Yä Čärčär Dänb* in general implies that there was a landlord-tenant relation during the times of the *mālkāñña* system.²⁹

Therefore, it can be argued that even before the restoration of the imperial rule in the post 1941 period, there had been landlord –tenancy relation along with the *mālkāñña* system. What is questionable however is the scope of the landlord-tenant relation in Harärgé as a whole, which seem not wide- spread at least until the post 1941 era. As compared to Harärgé to the east of Burqa , tenancy was common in Čärčär in the 1910s and the 1920s. But, it was not wide spread enough to characterize the whole production relation of the region. It was only among the leading members of the political and military elite that tenancy featured prominently. The rest of the big landlords and business men who came to have large tracts of land through grants and purchase established landlord-tenancy relation after the restoration of the imperial era. It was this tenancy relation that became rampant in the whole of Harärgé.

3.2 Establishment of the Relationship

According to the draft legislation on tenant–landlord relationship, a tenant-landlord relationship is an economic relationship made between the landowner and anyone who wanted to work on the land and benefit from it. Article 3, sub article 1 and 2 of the draft legislation states that any relationship, real or perceived, written or unwritten, between the two sides could be considered as a landlord-tenant relationship.³⁰ In Harärgé, landlord-tenant relationship was established without any ceremony. Each landlord and tenant reached an individual contract at the start of the

²⁹TäklāhawaryatTäklāmaryam, “Yä Čärčär Dänb” IES,MS-734.

³⁰ The Imperial State of Ethiopia, Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration. “Bä Bälärest Ena *čisāñña* Mākakāl Yalāwen Ginuñinet Lāmāwāsān Yāwāa Awaj” (Amharic Draft) “ Draft Legislation on Landlord -Tenant Relation” (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C), Chapter one, article 3,p.5;Chapter two Article 5,pp.5-6.

agricultural season. This period was set by tradition to be between *Tir* 1 and *Sene* 1 of a given agricultural season. This is a period in which major agricultural activities were performed.³¹ Usually a tenant approached the landlord personally or through relatives to get a piece of cultivable land. He was not expected to fulfill any preconditions set before he was given a piece of land belonging to the landlord. The tenant receives a piece of land from a landlord or normally from his agent or even as a mortgage. Most often, the tenant pays *bärča* as a present in the form of money or in kind to secure land.³² The details will be discussed below.

Upon the tenant's request to farm on a piece of land from a landlord and the latter's consent, the future landlord and tenant did not specifically agree on their respective rights and duties. These were matters governed by local custom. These rights and responsibilities were also clearly stipulated in the draft landlord-tenancy legislation that will be discussed in Chapter Six. What is explicitly and orally agreed upon (written agreements between landlords and tenants are rarely drawn upon) between the parties was the nature of their relations, i.e. what amount and how they share the produce.³³

Supporting this oral nature of landlord-tenancy relationship, the first tenancy bill, a draft tenancy legislation submitted to the parliament on *Tir* 13, 1955 E.C, says that a landlord tenant relation is said to have existed when such a relation was perceived to have existed by tradition.³⁴ It seems

³¹ TäklähawaryatTäklämaryam, "Ya Čärčär Denb" IES,MS-734.p.79.,Informants: Umar Ali Tesse,JemalAbdurahaman,Musa Ibrahim.

³² Informants: Yahya Umar,Mohammed Ibrahim, Siraj Khodele, Telenji Beker . *Bärča* is a common term in Harärgé that designates *čät* chewing ceremony in the after noon. It is not clear when and how a change in meaning from a gift for the landlord to the *čät* chewing ceremonial event took place.

³³ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, SiyoumTesema Umar Ahmed

³⁴ The Imperial State of Ethiopia, Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration. "Bä Bälärest Ena čisäñña Mäkakäl Yaläwen Ginuñinet Lämäwäsän Yäwäja Awaj"(Amharic Draft) " Draft Legislation on Landlord Tenant Relation" (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C), Chapter one, Article 3.

that the draft legislation took such a trajectory because there was no written agreement between them and the landlord can deny the existence of such a relation when asked to formalize the relationship. As can be evidenced by the minutes of the Community Development Committee, a committee in the House of Deputies in charge of investigating the draft legislation, written on *Yekatit 25*, 1965 E.C, article 2 sub article 2 and article 3 sub article 1 of the draft legislation faced opposition from the majority of members of the committee on the ground that the existence of such a relation need to be proven.³⁵

3.2 Types and Forms of Tenancy in Harärgé

Based on the pattern of land occupancy under which tenants operated, tenants in Harärgé could be broadly categorized into two: owner tenants and full-fledged tenants. Owner tenants possessed some land and rented additional land for cultivation. Full-fledged tenants on the other hand did not own any land and leased the entire land they cultivated. It is possible that some households may both lease and rent out land. This may happen because some households, due to fragmentation, inheritance or any other reason, might rent out a parcel of their land which was at an inconvenient distance from the rest of their land and may lease land which was nearer. The existence of such households caused an identification problem since the amount of land rented and owned could not be easily determined.

The amount of land tenants leased in both cases differed and no conclusive empirical data could be found. When we see the general feature, however, the percentage of owner tenants, i.e part tenant -part owner, was greater than landless peasants in Eastern Harärgé beyond the Burqa river while the reverse was true in Čärčär. In Eastern Harärgé, land measurement and land grants to the cultivators was done during the Egyptian period. The Egyptians allocated land to the local

³⁵ Minutes of the Committee for community Development in the House of Deputies. *Yekatit 25*, 1965 EC

balabats –the *garadas* and *malaqa*. Within the *garada* and *malaqa* the local population was allocated *shibeta* land as *rest*. Thus, however small, the natives got their own piece of land that they could bequeath to future generations.³⁶ With the coming of the Shāwans, large scale land alienation was difficult to enforce and hence they employed different mechanisms to take land from the natives. As discussed in chapter two, they confiscated lands and redistributed to the settlers through *mānquf*, purchase and through state take-over of undeveloped lands. Probably the high percentage of rented land and therefore high percentage of full-fledged tenants in Eastern Harārgé was found in Gursum, Dādār and Garamulata.

The percentage of tenants would increase with the increase in the agricultural population whereby families failed to allocate sufficient land to the newborn and the latter would enter into a new tenancy arrangement. The common source of renting land was from those who have excess or those who could not undertake farming themselves. Thus the process of tenantization was under way with new members of the peasant family household joining the agrarian economy. This process became precarious as land fragmentation continued.³⁷

Here, the Chayanovian theory of peasant economy, which he applied in the Russian case, seems pertinent. According to the theory, the consumption unit of the peasant family in relation to the production unit (land and labor) may be an important determinant in the production of excess food to fulfill the family demand. The peasant family responded to the increased shortage of land and the associated consumption requirement of the family by deploying its excess labor into crafts, trades and other extra-agricultural livelihoods to raise the income of the family. Moreover,

³⁶ Some experimental bulletin were published by Haramaya (then Alemaya) College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts that indicate the percentage of full-fledged tenants and part owner, tenants around Haramaya. See for instance, Demisse G/Michael, "Land Tenure in Bate" Experimental Station Bulletin No.49.; Lakew Birke, "A Credit Study of Alemaya Farmers Cooperative Society", Bulletin no.46. Informants: Abduleṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Musso, Telenji Bākār

³⁷ Demisse G/Michael, "Land Tenure in Bate" Experimental Station Bulletin No.49.pp.7-12.

in the face of population density, the family tries to acquire more land and use their leisure time to engage in intensive farming. Therefore, in view of absence of land ownership, or more appropriately in the event of shortages of land, it could only be acquired through rent.³⁸

In western Harärgé, on the other hand, the percentage of full-fledged tenants far exceeds the partial tenants. This has its own historical roots. In Western Harärgé, which principally means Čärčär, there was large scale land alienation from the Ittu and allocation to new settlers. It is in western Harärgé that we observe the brunt of tenancy. Although we do not have empirical data, oral informants and archives attest that a larger number of settler communities are found in Čärčär than in eastern Harärgé. In order to support these settler communities, the imperial state had granted land under different forms of tenure as their basic means of livelihood was cultivation.³⁹

In general, there was no clear cut distinction between landless and landowning tenants. Associated with the landless and landowning peasants were often those small holders sharecropping other small parcels too. The general principle applicable for both Eastern and Western Harärgé was the small size of land held by a part owner, part-rented farmer and his family.

A representative data is not found for the entire province indicating the size of land per farmer. There are some scant and fragmentary data for some areas of Harärgé. For instance, in Bate, an area in a sub district of Haramaya, which was the most densely populated district, a study by Demissie G/Michael revealed that the area of land owned by a farmer was between 0.10 and 10

³⁸ A. V. Chayanov, *on the Theory of Peasant Economy*.(eds) Daniel Thorner,Basil Kerbelay, and R.E.F Smith with a Forward by Thoedor Shanin (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1966),pp.97-111.

³⁹ National Archives, Folder No.17.1..1.287.02.;17.1..30.02.; 1.1. 06.22.; 3.1.1.02.WMTR ,Folder No.1/561.; 7/561.; 12/561.; Informants: Umar Ahmed Ali, JemalAbdurahman, AbdulqadirAbdurahman, Mohammed Adem,MustefaAdem.

.23 hectares with an average of 2.3 hectares per farmer. Through time this figure dramatically decreased as the population increased. As a result, on the eve of the revolution 66% of the holdings of peasant cultivators in the province were less than half a hectare.⁴⁰

The holdings of these farmers were not obviously enough to live on. These farmers could only support their family through alternative means of survival. Moreover, the excess labor force available in the household allowed these farmers to have additional fields.⁴¹ One means of getting the land was thus through rent from the surrounding landlords or farmers who have enough to lease. This resulted in part owned and part rented holdings. The same study indicated above also reveals that out of 60 farmers, owner cultivators were 27 (45%). 22 (36%) were part owner cultivators, part tenants, 8 (13.3%) were part owner-cultivators, part landlord; 2 (3.3%) were part owner- cultivator, part- tenant and part- landlord, while 1(1.7%) was full-fledged tenant.⁴² Although this study does not represent the situation in Harärgé in general, it shows that the existence of such classifications complicated the distinction between tenants who were entirely landless and those who have small holdings but rented some more.

Apparently, the distinction between part tenants and part owners was also commonly found in other provinces in Ethiopia where tenancy was high. In this case, those tenants who were leasing land were doing so probably from other peasants than from landlords and hence tenancy to other peasants was also significant, as Shiferaw has indicated.⁴³ Therefore, the landless were by no means the only candidates for share cropping although they formed a substantial proportion of the tenant households.

⁴⁰ Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1984), p.29.

⁴¹ Demisse G/Michael, "Land Tenure in Bate" Experimental Station Bulletin No.49.p.7.

⁴² Demisse G/Michael, "Land Tenure in Bate" Experimental Station Bulletin No.49.p.16.

⁴³ Shiferaw Bekele, 1995, p.115.

An empirical study mentioned above further indicated that fragmentation was so common that the total area of 136.72 hectares consists of 225 fragments. The size of the fragments varies from 0.02 to 5.6 hectares with an average of 0.61 hectares per fragment. The number of plots owned per farmer varied from 1 to 14 with an average of 3.8 and the majority having 3 plots.⁴⁴ In the absence of any employment opportunity and the custom of inheritance that divided a piece of land equally among all children, the farmer with a small plot of land had to rent additional land from *qälad* owners.

The following table indicates the percentage of owner cultivators, full-fledged tenants and part-owner tenants at the sub province level.

Table 4. Percentage of Holdings by Tenure in Harärgé

No	Awraja	Owned%	Rented %	Part-owned part- rented%	Total%	No of Holdings reported
1	Adal and Issa	36	62	2	100	210
2	Čärčär	9	89	2	100	1,431
3	DireDawa	96	2	2	100	119
4	Garamulata	76	14	10	100	503
5	Harär	89	9	2	100	466

⁴⁴ Demisse,p.7

6	Obbora	79	8	13	100	440
7	Gursum	38	60	2	100	104
	Total	46	49	5	100	3273

Source: Central Statistics Office. Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province,1968.

The table above indicates that tenancy was highest in Čärčär; Gursum and Adal and Issa sub-provinces while it was lowest in Dire Dawa, Harär and Obbora. Garamulata and Obbora were also grouped under those provinces with low level of tenancy. Based on the oral data culled from oral informants, however, tenancy was a phenomenon which was widely spread in Garamulata and Obbora sub provinces.

According to informants, except a few Oromo peasants and local chiefs who belong to the family of *malaqa*, *garada* and *damina*, the overwhelming majority of peasants were landless and cultivated the lands of *qälad* owners as full-fledged tenants. In addition, in an interview held with Tamrat Kebede, who had served in the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, he asserted that when he went to Garamulata for a field survey in the late 1960s, he realized that “75% of the cultivators were tenants belonging to the Oromo and other ethnic groups”. The same account by informants was commonly recorded in Obbora *Awraja*.⁴⁵ This therefore makes the data presented in the table above highly questionable. In fact the data could not be taken as accurate as it also has a temporal limitation. It merely reflected the condition of tenancy at the time the data was collected. It does not present the state of tenancy diachronically. More importantly, the data collectors could only rely on tenants near the *awraja* and *wäräda* towns as sources of information rather than penetrating deep inside the rural *qäbälés*.

⁴⁵ Informants: Tamrat Kebede ,Hassen Beker, Suleiman Ahmed.

Also, as can be observed from the table above, the highest percentage of owned holdings were found in Dire Dawa and Harär *awraja* while the highest percentage of full-fledged rental cultivators were found in Čärčär, followed by Adal and Issa and Gursum *awrajas*. A number of factors account for this state of affairs. In Dire Dawa and Adal and Issa *awrajas*, the climatic condition is hot and is not suitable for agricultural practices and hence was not settled by agricultural communities. It was only the pastoral Somali, Afar and the Ittu that grazed their cattle. In addition, in areas where perennial rivers such as Erer and Gota are found, irrigation water is available and a large tract of *béterest* land was found in these sub provinces like Erer, Gota, Afdem, Shenano, Hurso. These private holdings of the imperial family took advantage of the perennial rivers and established plantation agriculture by using cheap labor that was employed without any farm holding. The details will be treated later in the next chapter.

In Harär *awraja*, the low tenancy rate was attributed to ownership of the Haräri farmlands surrounding Harär town. These farmlands of the Haräri absentee landlords were worked by Oromo tenants. They were registered in the tax books in the name of the Haräri owners who actually paid tax and not in that of the Oromo tenants. Here the tradition of writing and keeping records had benefitted the Haräri a lot since researchers would refer to the tax books to identify ownership status. A number of them reminisced their farms until the 1974 revolution, when the land was taken away and redistributed to the Oromo tenants working on them. In addition, beyond *hundané* districts like Kombolcha, Suqul, Hamaresa, Erer and other rural *qäbälés* surrounding the town, the farm holdings of individual families were small and under the supervision of the *garadas*. The *garadas* had family holdings occupied by their own kinsmen and they rented out some to needy cultivators. When land measurement came, the *garadas* jealously guarded them from being taken by government officials through “*terf*” and “*mänquf*”;

one of the common mechanisms of preserving title holdings was purchasing “*terf*” land so that the land remained among the kinsmen.

On the other hand, the percentage of tenancy was found to be high in the sub provinces indicated above. While the case of Čärčär is widely discussed as an area where large scale northern settlers were found, the case of Gursum which is found to be climatically unfavorable needs to be investigated. Two possible explanations were given by informants. The first was that, like Čärčär, Gursum was an early site for settler soldiers where the followers of *Ras Mäkonnen* were settled and they were given land for their maintenance. Secondly, there was settlement of *kebur zäbäñña* in 1942 following a rebellion by the Somali and the Oromo. Both of these groups were given land and most of them rented their land to the landless and those with shortage of land.⁴⁶

In these sub-provinces in general, there were three broad categories of tenancy: Share tenancy, Contract tenancy and Labor tenancy. In practice many contractual arrangements combined these in different ways at different times depending on available and relative value of access to land (for the tenant) and labor (for the landlord). In the following sub section, these categories and their overall application in rural Harärgé will be treated.

3.2.1 Sharecropping Tenancy

As indicated in the literature reviewed in the introductory part, share tenancy was the most widely spread form of tenancy and the most dominant rental arrangement through which the landlord appropriated surplus. By its nature it demanded a close and comparatively peaceful relationship between the landlord and the tenant and when such a relationship existed, the system

⁴⁶ Informants: Zerihun Bezabih, Wondimu W/Yohannes, Birhanu Mäkonnen, Mohammed Seid.

operated reasonably well. There was no doubt, however, that share tenancies interfered with a tenant's independence and acted as a restraint to improved agricultural production.⁴⁷

Sharecropping had its own variants and the commonest forms of sharecropping arrangements in Ethiopia were *ekul arash*, *erbo arash* and *siso arash*, translated respectively as "Tiller of one-half", "Tiller of one-fourth", and "Tiller of one-third".⁴⁸

In Harärgé, too, share-tenancy dominated the agrarian relation between the landlord and the tenants. Share tenancy linked various markets. Land, labor and credit facilities were the various agricultural inputs that were linked in the transactions of rural farm economy. Accordingly, the landowner contributed the fixed cost, i.e. land, and the tenant contributed the variable cost such as labour, which he jealously guarded, and other agricultural inputs like seeds and plough animals.⁴⁹ Under rare circumstances, some landlords provided farm inputs such as seed, ploughing oxen and credit facilities for their respective tenants. In such situations, the landlord's share would be greater and the amount was calculated from the total production which was due to the landlord during harvest times.

The modus operandi of the traditional system of sharecropping was that the tenant (the actual cultivator) cultivated the land at his own expense and rendered the landlord a fixed proportion of

⁴⁷ KebedeKumsa, "Problems of Agricultural Tenancy in Ethiopia", Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, Department of Land Tenure, (Addis Ababa, 1969), pp.5-11.

⁴⁸ BizuworqZewde, "The Problem of Tenancy and Tenancy Bills with particular reference to Arsi". MA Thesis (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1992), p.72. See also Cohen and Weintraub, p.53.; HailéLarebo, *The Building of an Empire: Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia-1935-1941*. (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2006), p.35.; KeteboAbdiyo, "The Political Economy of Land and Agrarian Development in Arsi 1941-1991" Ph.D dissertation. (Addis Ababa University, 2010), pp.163-167.

⁴⁹ Informants: AskaleWeldeab, BeleteWorqeneh, BeyeneYerga, SiyoumTesema. For the details of the interlinkages of transactions in factors of production in different parts of the world like in Asia, see for example Mamata Swain, "Agricultural Tenancy and Interlinked Transactions I&II: Neoclassical and Marxist Approaches" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 34, No.37.(September 11-17,1999),pp.2657-2659+ 2661-2666.; S.N.S, Cheung, "Private Property Rights and Sharecropping", *Journal of Political Economy* 76:No.6.Novemebr 1968.,pp.1107-1122.

the produce as rent, which could be as much as or even more than the half of the produce. In fact, the rent paid by tenants for the leased land from landlords was considerably high. The situation can however be altered if the landlord was made to share with the tenant at least the cost of the purchased inputs. The output share then usually varied with the share of the cost of production.⁵⁰

The mode of payment and the amount of the rent paid by the tenant to the landlord differed within the sub – provinces and depended on the agreement between the two parties. The 1960 Civil Code of Ethiopia contains a number of provisions with regard to rent. Article 2988 states that rent may consist of any of the following: a fixed sum of money, a fixed amount of produce, a sum of money varying according to the price of agricultural commodities or a fixed share of the crop. Article 2989-91 provides that in share tenancy rent is customarily presumed to be 50% of the produce to be shared in kind, and that in the absence of any prior agreement between landlord and tenant, rent must not exceed 75% of the harvest.⁵¹ This latter provision might appear to set a maximum limit on the rate of rent, but what it actually did is to make this amount the standard rate. On the other hand, the 1963 E.C. draft legislation on landlord-tenancy relation stipulated that the maximum rent to be paid to the landlord was 33%.⁵²

As far as fixing the rate or mode of payment in individual cases is concerned, the law leaves it to custom, or to be worked out by mutual agreement between landlords and tenants. In view of the power asymmetry that existed between the two parties, however, this would give the landlord the advantage of negotiating from strength and determining the rent in his own favour.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The Ethiopian Imperial State, the Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia. Proclamation Number 165 of 1960. (Addis Ababa, 1960), p.496.

⁵² Draft Legislation of Landlord Tenancy Relations, Chapter four, Article 18.p.11. In the same chapter Article 19 Sub article 4, indicates that if the landlord covered some other inputs like labor provision, agricultural inputs, transport service etc., the landlord deducts the cost so covered.

The rates for the different parts of the country did vary and there were no standards set by law; landlords in fact could charge any amount. As noted earlier, the maximum rent in kind set by the civil code was 75% of the produce. However, it appears, according to the survey made by the Ministry of Land Reform also reproduced by Lawrence and Mann in FAO Land Policy Project, in most cases the customary rates varied from 1/3 to 2/3 of the produce. According to this survey, payments varied within this range in Balé (now separated from Harärgé), Gamo-Gofa and Tigray provinces. In Sidamo, Shäwa and Harärgé, rent was nearer to 50%.⁵³ A study made in the 1960s in Čärčär indicated that cash crop farming tenants, especially coffee cultivators, invariably gave up half of their harvest in rent. The same finding was corroborated by informants at *wäräda* levels such as in Doba, Mäsäla and Hirna.⁵⁴

Considering the three common rental arrangements in Ethiopia, two well known types of sharecropping arrangements were established in Harärgé: *erboarash* (tiller of one-fourth) and *ekularash* (tiller of one-half), more commonly known as *hirta* in Harärgé parlance.⁵⁵ While these were the commonest rental arrangements, variations in the sub-provinces on these rental arrangements depended on combinations of inputs, animals, and implements provided by the tenant. The contract agreements were more of personal nature and depended on the relative power of the two sides. No commonly applied rules were found for these arrangements and their applications were left at the discretion of the two parties. But in general as compared to the rest of tenancy arrangements, sharecropping was the most dominant form of tenancy contract in

⁵³ J.C.D. Lawrence and H.S. Mann, "FAO Land Policy Project (Ethiopia)" *Ethiopian Observer*, Vol. IX, No. 4, (1966), pp. 286-336.

⁵⁴ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration Study of Agricultural Disputes in QunneWäräda and ČärčärAwraja Courts, Harär Province, (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969), p. 9.; Informants: Zahara Mohammed, Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed.

⁵⁵ Informants: Siraj Khodele, AskaleWeldeab, Zahara Mohammed, Abdosh Musa, Ahmed Mumed.

Harärgé.⁵⁶ It is plausible to argue that this was so because, due to the precarious existence of tenants, they were not in a position to take the risk of a fixed payment contract either in cash or in kind.

Moreover, sharecropping was more flexible than labour tenancy and contract tenancy. It persisted in the ancient world, and during the medieval period it continued within the feudal mode of production, and more recently, it was common among peasants engaged in petty commodity production and it continued with some modifications in the transition to capitalist mode of production.⁵⁷

The two types of sharecropping common in Harärgé were *erbo* and *hirta*. *Erbo arash* (cultivator of one-fourth):- this type of sharecropping tenancy was found widely in Harärgé. It was a share of the produce in which the tenant took $\frac{3}{4}$ while the landlord took $\frac{1}{4}$ of the agricultural produce. Taking a closer look at input sharing, some patterns emerged. If the landlord provided the seed, an equivalent amount of the seed (often sorghum) was deducted, during harvest, from the total output before the division of the crop took place so that net output was shared afterwards. If, on the other hand, the tenant contributed the seed, the amount was not deducted before the sharing took place. *Erbo* was widely found both in eastern and western parts of Harärgé. In the early days of tenancy arrangement, it was the commonest rental arrangement between landlord and tenants. But, gradually, it was superseded by *hirta* and cash tenancy in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ T.J.Byres, "Historical Perspectives on Sharecropping" In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6. pp.1-38.; R. Pearce, "Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View." In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. (ed.) T.Y Byers. Vol. 6, pp.43-47.

⁵⁸ Informants: Hamza Ali, Haji Mohammed Adem, MumeYuya.

Hirta: this type of crop sharing was one where the tenant and landlord shared the produce in kind on a 50-50 basis. A tenant who cultivated the landlord's land in Harärgé on an equal share basis was commonly termed *hirta* while in other parts of Ethiopia it was termed *ekul arash* in its Amharic rendition. This type of crop sharing was the archetypal sharecropping arrangement which emerged towards the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s when the value of land was on the rise.⁵⁹ In *hirta* the landlord prohibited the tenant from using fresh maize, lest total production and ultimately his share might be reduced. It was commonly but not entirely found in the eastern parts of Burqa river in areas such as Gursum, Kombolcha, Qärsa, Haramaya and Fädīs.⁶⁰ Indeed, most *hirta* farmers were not new tenants but rather were the results of the metamorphosis from *erbo* cultivators due to the rise in the price of land.

There is no empirical evidence to determine the exact figure of tenants working on *hirta* basis and in *erbo* arrangement. If at all it existed, it is not so reliable. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the number of cultivators joining the pool of *hirta* or *erbo* tenant cultivators could vary considerably from year to year, some defaulting due to various reasons while still others joined it anew. But in general in Harärgé a substantial number of share tenants were working under *erbo* arrangement in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s while in the late 1960s and early 1970s, *hirta* was a predominant form of tenancy arrangement.⁶¹

In most cases of crop sharing arrangement, the shares of the produce were not based on the actual contribution of the two parties. The landlord usually contributed the fixed cost and the tenant contributed the variable cost, particularly labour and ploughing oxen. Increases in yield can only be achieved by the increased labour of the tenant and of his family as well as by small

⁵⁹ Informants: Siraj Khodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed Ali Tese

⁶⁰ Informants: Abdukadir Ahmed, Mohammed Abduraman, Birhanu Mäkonnen, Mume Teha

⁶¹ Informants: Siraj Khodele, Askale Weldeab, Telenji Beker, Taye Bedhane, Hassen Beker

capital outlays on some inputs or farm implements. To achieve any increase in yield, therefore the tenant must exert maximum effort. On *ekul arash* basis for example, the tenant gets only half of the increased yield. Therefore the tenant would not have any incentive to add the extra effort required to achieve the maximum yield. As a result the tenant often abstained from investing on the field and refrained from using improved agricultural methods since his share of the produce and the benefits derived might not cover his additional efforts and investments. As an owner farmer or as a fixed rental tenant, however, he would receive the whole of the extra yield resulting from his increased effort.

To illustrate the disadvantage of a 50-50 sharecropping tenant vis-a-vis owner cultivator or fixed rent tenant cultivator, a simple example suffices. If a tenant incurred a total production cost of 1000 birr, he would have to expect a gross return of more than 2000 birr to justify his effort and investment. A return of exactly 2000 birr in this case could cover only his cost and the 50% imbursement to the landlord. By subtracting the 1000 birr for the landlord as his share, the tenant had the remaining 1000 birr investment cost which implied his effort was unrewarding while the landlord who did not partake in the production process benefited a lot. As a result, the tenant would not have any incentive to promote agricultural production by using different agricultural inputs like fertilizers. On the other hand, if the peasant was owner cultivator, by investing 1000 birr the peasant would have been the beneficiary of his effort and the whole profit.

Therefore, share tenancy, i.e. payment of rent in kind as a percentage of the produce, has a built-in bias in favour of the landlord. The harder the peasant works the more the landlord will get which implies the landlord's income in a share tenancy depends on the productive efficiency of the tenants. The tenancy relationship was becoming more rather than less exploitative as the agricultural potential of land was realised.

Besides, rent arrangements have no standards set by law and varied from one part of Harärgé to another and were entirely based on the whim of the landlord.⁶² For instance the burdens imposed on the tenants in Western Harärgé were more severe than the areas to the east of Burqa River. Even within the same locality, it differed from one landlord to another. In all cases, it depended on the personality of the landlord or his agent and their attitude towards the accumulation of wealth.

However, share tenancy system was not always advantageous to the landlord particularly if he was an absentee landlord. When the landlord was not living on the land along with his tenants, he must take often elaborate precaution to check the yield of each crop each cropping season in order to ensure that he received his proper share. These precautions sometimes caused acrimonious relations between landlords and tenants.⁶³ Sometimes it also happened that tenants left their holdings without informing the landlord of their intention to break the contract. Informants discuss that tenants left the holding of the landlord and trekked through the night to elude capture by the landlord if for example they failed to pay the rent. This adversely affected production, continuity of farming and subsequently the income of the landlord.⁶⁴

Neither did employment of an agent improve matters, for the agent through extortionate collections may exacerbate relations between the tenants and their absentee landlords while at the same time cheating the landlord of his rent. Often, the landlord also paid for his agent if the landlord employed an agent, which definitely incurred an additional supervision cost leaving

⁶² Informants: Mohammed Adem, Ahmed Mumed, Hamza Ali, Siyoum Tesema, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Taye Bedhane, Umar Haji, Legese Beqansa

aside the different fringe benefits the agent extracted from the tenants on behalf of the landlord.⁶⁵

These benefits of the agents would be treated in some more detail in chapter five.

In all the tenancy arrangements discussed above, the cultivator either resided on the plot in which case he became *čisāñña* or lived somewhere else and moved back and forth to his agricultural field to cultivate his plot. In the former case the *čisāñña* constructed a small *tukul* on the land of the landlord. In the later case the cultivator did not construct his living residence in the field and was called *ṭāmaj* or *mofār zāmāt*.⁶⁶

Mofār zāmāt generally had no fixed period of contract and maintained his freedom to work elsewhere. It is not exactly clear how *mofār zāmāt* tenants came to emerge in Harärgé. It seems more often than not that *mofār zāmāt* tenants were not necessarily landless. Rather, they were peasants on their own land somewhere nearby but the land they occupied might have been too small to support the family. In some instances, *mofār zāmāt* tenants were engaged in some other activities such as tailoring, carpentry or any other activity and they wanted to engage in agriculture as part-time. One of my informants in Garamulata, Seyoum Tesema, who was *mofār zāmāt*, was a tailor and graphically indicates that while the resident *čisāñña* were the most exploited and subjugated by the arbitrary exactions of the landowning classes or their agents, he enjoyed a freedom which the resident *čisāñña* did not although both of them leased land from the same landlord, *Qaññazmach Gädlägiorgis*.⁶⁷

As compared to resident tenants, *mofār zāmāt* tenants were not prevalent in Harärgé. Yet there was a considerable number of *mofār zāmāt* tenants. This was probably due at least to three

⁶⁵ Informants: Mohammed Abdulkarim, Tellenji Beker, Siraj Khodele, Umar Ahmed Ali

⁶⁶ Informants: Seyoum Tesema, Belete Worqeneh

⁶⁷ Informant: Seyoum Tesema

reasons. The first was most often *mofär zämät* tenants were part time farmers; they cultivated land in addition to the other activities mentioned above. They did not have land due to the social position that was associated with their profession. Secondly, the apparent small size of the farms *mofär zämät* farmers held could not support their family and pushed them to look for additional land. The third factor was a complementary of the above and perhaps more important, the reluctance of the landlords (mainly their agents on the spot) to rent land entirely for resident tenants. Leasing out more land to resident tenants would have a potential problem of depleting the resources of the land by exploiting the grazing capacity of the pasture of the land. This was because both the landlord and the tenant graze their cattle on the same pasture owned by the landlord. It would also result in over-exploitation of resources such as firewood and the agricultural resources and soil nutrients of the land.⁶⁸

The resident *čisāñña* tended his cattle, used firewood, kept the straw and the chaff after the harvest of the crops with a right to graze their cattle on stubble and use other resources of the land. Creating a reasonable balance of resident tenants and *mofär zämät* by discouraging the number of resident tenants and encouraging *mofär zämät* tenants on the land, though difficult, enabled the landlords or their agents to keep the resources of the land from being over exploited.⁶⁹

There were some stated advantages of sharecropping for both the tenant and the landlords. Some of these were its capacity for risk diversification and lower transaction cost or because the subjective opportunity cost of the sharecroppers' labor time was less than the market cost. Risk diversification could be related to uncertainty with output performance, output price, uncertainty

⁶⁸ Informants: Seyoum Tesema, Umar Ahmed Ali, Taye Bedhane, Hamza Ali, Haji Abdulkadir Ahmed

⁶⁹ Informants: Seyoum Tesema, Belete Worqench, Telenji Beker,

with input markets. In general share tenancy represented a mechanism through which risk was shared between the landlord and the tenant in some proportion just as they shared output.⁷⁰

One unique point that is worth mentioning is the question of *sisso*. In the literature that discusses crop sharing in different parts of Ethiopia, *sisso* was indicated as sharing the product on 1/3 basis to the landlord whilst the tenant withholds 2/3 of the produce. This was commonly found in Shäwa, Arsi, Käfa, Illu Ababora etc and the tenant was commonly termed as *sisso arash*.⁷¹

But in Harärgé, *sisso* had a different meaning. Here, *sisso* was a labour service tenants were expected to provide on the *hudad* for the landlord rather than a sharecropping arrangement. Both oral and written evidence supports this argument. Almost all informants are unanimous that tenants were expected to appear on *hudad* lands two-three days a week and work on the *hudad* of the landlord. After the harvest, they did not claim any share of the produce. This was part of the agreement when they took the land from the landlord. Informants indicated that tenants who failed to participate in the *sisso* labour mobilization of the landlord in the week days have to expect the worst treatment by the landlord to the extent of eviction.⁷² An Amharic adage in Harärgé runs: “ሲሶ በጉልበቱ እርሶ በምርቱ”⁷³ i.e. *sisso* is delivered by [your] labour while *erbo* was delivered by sharing the produce.

⁷⁰ J. Martinez Alier, “Sharecropping: Some Illustrations” In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6. pp.94.; R. Pearce, “Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View.” In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. (ed.) T.Y Byers. Vol. 6., p.47.; S.N.S, Cheung, “Private Property Rights and Sharecropping”, *Journal of Political Economy* 76:No.6. Novemebr 1968., p.1122.

⁷¹ See for example different works on this Bizuwork Zewde, p.72. Shiferaw Bekele, Cohen and Wentraub, Mantel Neko, Worqenah Abebe, “Land Tenure and Agricultural History in Käfa, 1941-1974”, M.A Thesis (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 2005), p.68.

⁷² Informants: Askale Weldeab, Zahara Mohammed, Telenji Beker, Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed, Teha Mume

⁷³ Informant: Askale Woldeab

It is claimed that the landlord reserved the best land as his *hudad* (*Kudada* in Harärgé) and often harvested *teff* for his home consumption. In some parts of Harärgé like Qärsa, *hudad* is called *Yäeje erash*, i.e. something that remained in the hands of the landlord for his household consumption. *Yäeje erash* was cultivated so well and prepared for the cultivation of *teff* and other grains for household consumption of the landlord. Sometimes, the landlord took over the land from his tenant if the latter prepared his land well and gave him another land as substitute. In such cases, the landlord freed the tenant from any crop share arrangement for some years.⁷⁴

Täklähawariyat in his autobiography discusses *sisso* and how his tenants work on his land on *sisso* basis. His description fits into what is discussed above as a labour requirement by the tenants for their landlords on top of crop share arrangement. He says:

... መቶ ጥማድ አዘጋጅቼ ዘውትር እያስጠመድኩ ሐርናን በሙሉ ለማሳረስ አቀድኩ፡፡ በሐርናው መሬቴ ላይ ብቻ ከ250 ይበልጥ ጢሰኞች አሉኝ፡፡ በሐርና አጠገብ ሌሎች ርስቶች አሉኝ፡፡ በሁሉም ላይ የሚኖሩት ጢሰኞች ከ300 ይበልጣሉ፡፡ ሢሶ ይሠሩልኛል፡፡ የሢሶ ጉልበታቸው ለመቶ ጥማድ በቂ ነው፡፡ የሚታረስባቸው ወሮች ጥቂቶች ናቸው፡፡ የሚቀረው የሲሶ ጉልበት ለማሳረሚያና ለመከር ይሆናል፡፡⁷⁵

I decided to cultivate the whole of Hirna by using hundred *ፕጠፍ* [12.5 hectares]. On my land at Hirna alone I have about 250 tenants. Around Hirna [Doba and Biyokäraba], I have also *rest* lands. On all of my land I have more than 300 tenants. They work for me *sisso*. Their *sisso labor* is enough for 100 *ፕጠፍ*. The cultivation months are few so the remaining *sisso labor* would serve me for weeding and post harvest activities [emphasis mine].

The tenants in Harärgé hated the tenancy agreement between the landlord and the tenant and the *sisso* obligations it imposed and the landlord who introduced the system and expressed their hatred in the following poem sang on the threshing grounds during harvest.

⁷⁴ Informants: Teha Mume, Askale Woldeab, Zahara Mohammed, Ahmed Mumed, Hamza Ali
⁷⁵ Täklähawariyat Täklämaryam, *Autobiography* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1999 E.C), p.398. Farmers indicated that 8 *ፕጠፍ* is approximately one hectare hence 100 *ፕጠፍ* is approximately 12.5 hectares.

Afaan Oromo	Gloss
Sisso Fetu Karabuma	If You want <i>sisso</i> stay at Biyokaraba [place]
Naxxaa Fetuu hanccarummaa	If you want to cultivate for free go to Hančar
Achinis Amaruma ⁷⁶	But, there too are the Amhara

The poem highlights the harsh labour exploitation imposed on the tenants and the tenant’s denial of their labour. Given the fact that resisting the exploitative system was a limited option, the tenants’ important instrument was denial of their labour which was made effective by flight from patrons’ supervision. Since Harär’s agricultural zone was far from the international boundary the only feasible option for flight was retreat into the lowlands in Čärčär, Hančar, Gubaqoricha, Aniya and into the forests.

3.2.2 Contract Tenancy

This was commonly practiced in Harärgé by landlords who wanted to have a fixed sum of payment in cash or in kind for their land. The agreement was often verbal with the presence of the local official called *aḽbiya dañña* or at times in the presence of the *damina*.⁷⁷ In the case of contract tenancy paid in cash, the tenant pays a fixed rent for the land he leased for a number of years. The tenant in this case bore the full cropping and marketing risk while he also received all the proceeds from his labor. According to informants this type of tenancy was applicable to those who had at least an initial working capital and involved facing a risk and was thus common among tenants who were economically strong. Upon the end of the harvesting season, the tenant

⁷⁶ Informants: Aliyi Mume, Teha Abdella, Salih Adem
⁷⁷ Informants: Siraj Khodele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed

would be expected to pay the agreed amount of the contract in cash. At the end of the contract agreement it was up to the two parties to agree to renew their contract or not.⁷⁸

In the case of contract tenancy that was paid in kind, the tenant agreed to pay a fixed amount of the produce. It was a share of the produce commonly agreed between the tenant and the landlord and the tenant was commonly called *qurṭ arash* (farmer with fixed share).⁷⁹ Under this agreement the landlord leased the land to the tenant on condition that he gave a fixed amount of the produce. The tenants who provided both the management and supervision of the farm agreed to pay to the landlord that fixed amount of the produce per acre. The agreement on *qurṭ arash* could be reached between the tenant and the landlord and the landlord was assured of a fixed income as long as the tenant did not default on his payment.⁸⁰

According to the 1963 E.C tenancy bill, Article 20 Sub articles 2 and Article 21, the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration could decide areas where *qurṭ arash* arrangement was imposed.⁸¹ Based on this a question was raised by the committee members during the discussion to elaborate the areas that required *qurṭ arash*. Accordingly, in the minutes of the discussion by the Community Development Committee produced on *Yekatit 25*, 1965 E.C., Ato Belay Abay, the Minister of Land Reform and Administration, elaborated the matter. This kind of arrangement was made possible when a plot was located in an area of high economic development and there were two reasons for making a *qurṭ arash* area.

The first was in order to benefit the landlord from the increased productive value of his land. If the productivity of the land increased the landlord would expect high return from his developed

⁷⁸ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Siraj Kodhele, Mume Tcha, Hamza Ali

⁷⁹ Ibid:

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Draft Legislation on landlord Tenancy relations, Chapter 4, pp.12-13.

land. By making the agreement on fixed rent both parties would get the proportional increase or decline in production. Secondly, *qurṭ arash* arrangement may give an incentive for the tenant and he could work harder in the expectation that he would be beneficiary of an increased production.⁸²

When asked whether they prefer *qurṭ arash* or not, there were divergent responses by informants. For purposes of comparison, I have presented here the responses of informants from two areas: Qärsa and Garamulata. Ecologically, Qärsa, or more precisely Gända Hogalo, is lowland and rainfall is unpredictable. On the other hand, Garamulata, specifically Gerawa, is a highland area and rainfall is more dependable. Informants in Qärsa claim that tenants did not prefer to engage in *qurṭ arash* arrangement since the area was frequently hit by drought and failed to pay the agreed crop for the landlord. As a result tenants frequently incurred debt to repay the deficit. On the other hand, informants in Garamulata claim that *qurṭ arash* arrangement was preferable for the tenants because, in the first place, the landlord did not impose arbitrary demands in terms of labour. And secondly, since rainfall is reliable agriculture paid off so that after paying the agreed amount they would still have a substantial share.⁸³

But in general, *qurṭ arash* as an arrangement of sharing agricultural produce has one basic defect for the tenants. The agreement lacks a mechanism whereby risk is shared between the tenant and the landlord. Whatever problems occurred, like crop failures due to natural disasters such as rainfall, flood, drought, locust infesting etc., the landlord did not tolerate the loss and expected the agreed amount from the tenant and therefore did not have to take the marketing risk.

⁸² Minutes of the Committee of Community Development in the Chamber of Deputies, on *Yekatit* 25, 1965.

⁸³ Informants : Telenji Beker, Siraj Khodele, Teha Mume, Niguse Anberibir, Askale Weldeab

One common example mentioned on contract tenancy paid in the form of produce was in Qärsa. Most of the landlords in Qärsa preferred to rent their land in return for a share of the produce. After the harvests the tenants had to pay the agreed amount. In case the tenants failed to pay the rent due to different factors such as crop failure, they had to meet the demand by selling their domestic animals. Informants added that the tenant should pay the agreed amount irrespective of the problems such as crop failure that he faced. If need be, he should pay by selling his cattle or by taking credit from wherever available. Any failure of paying the agreed amount was punishable in *wäräda* courts where the landowner presented the case.⁸⁴

Contrary to this practical encounter, the Civil Code and the draft legislation raised above already made a provision for remission of rent in fixed rental tenancies when natural disasters caused a drop in yield of at least half of the normal crop, the amount of remission being left to the discretion of the courts.⁸⁵

A study by the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration in 1969 on agricultural land disputes in Qunne *wäräda* and Čärčär *awraja* cited a case whereby a tenant was liable to pay the 34 *dawulla* he had originally agreed to pay despite the incidence of a general drought in the area which ensued in crop failure. According to this source, the appellant alleged as follows:

Respondent had sued me in the *wäräda* court for failure to pay rent. While not denying that I had cultivated respondent's land, I argued that, nonetheless, I should not pay rent because of crop failure. The *wäräda* court seemed to take the view that I should have so arranged with God that I suffered no crop failure and thus ordered me to pay the rent⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Informants: Teha Mume, Niguse Anberbir, Goshu Dinawo.

⁸⁵ Draft Legislation on Landlord Tenancy Relation, 1963. Chapter 4, Article 25 and 26 ; Civil Code, 1960 article 2998-3000. pp.496-498.

⁸⁶ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration .A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunnewäräda and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province. (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969), p.11. It seems to me the figure was rather an exaggeration. If for example we assume that the tenant's agreement with the landlord was *hirta*, then obviously, he had to produce at least 68 *dawulla* or quintal

When a tenant received a piece of land in contract, the rent was sometimes fixed on the basis of the number of oxen necessary to farm the land within one day. For example, in Boroma the annual rent of a piece of land that could be ploughed by a pair of oxen in one day was three birr. In other cases, the amount of rent is fixed by negotiation between future landlord and tenant.⁸⁷

Contract tenants were commonly found on government land, on lands belonging to the royal family or among landowners who were not interested in engaging themselves in the onerous agricultural activities. On the part of the landlord, this form was commonly observed especially among land owners who rented out small parcels of land and consumed the rent in their own households. It was also observed among families who did not have a working capital to develop their farm by investing on some basic agricultural inputs such as seeds, plough animals, and some implements that can be made at home. It was also a common practice for widowed or divorced female household heads or those who for personal reasons did not want to cultivate to lease their land to those who have shortage of land but with sufficient household labor and capital.⁸⁸

One of the stated advantages of contract tenancy was that it reduced the supervision cost for those who gave the land in contract which at any rate was difficult to calculate. Likewise, it was presumed by tenants that obligations of a purely personal nature pertaining to tenants on *qäläd* lands were not found on contract lands. It was claimed that contract tenants had no other labor obligation as was the case with share tenants or labor tenants. Tenants on contract lands were

(Approximately 6800 kg) to have at least half of his produce for his consumption. If he was an *erboarash* he had to produce more than that because his share was higher than the landlord's share. Then, if a tenant produces such amount of grain (under either of the two arrangements) by using traditional methods, obviously tenancy in particular and agriculture in general was not that much a serious problem.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p.9.

⁸⁸ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Teha Mume, Zerihun Bezabeh, Belete Worqeneh

not as heavily exploited as tenants found on lands such as *qälad* lands. That was one of the reasons that tenants frequently preferred to work on government lands and lands belonging to the royal family through different contract arrangements.⁸⁹ One of the best examples discussed by informants was the case of tenants in Boroma, around Qunne. Here, on the land much of which belonged to the heirs of the late Duke of Harär, for instance, a tenant was not expected to render too many personal services to the landlord.⁹⁰

Table 5. Mode of payment of Rent in Harärgé

<i>Awraja</i>	Supplied with	Mode of Payment and Number of Tenants involved			Total
		Crop	Cash	Crop and cash	
Adal&GaraGuracha	Oxen	—	—	50	50
	No oxen	2400	4000	300	6700
Čärčär	Oxen	500	300	—	800
	No oxen	44000	23870	11240	79110
DireDawa	Oxen	—	—	—	—
	No oxen	200	200	—	400
Garamulata	Oxen	—	—	—	—
	No oxen	2400	8300	—	10700
Harär	Oxen	100	100	—	200
	No oxen	800	800	—	1600

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Informants: Umar Haji, Haji Mohammed Adem, Aliyi Mume, Jemal Abduqadir

Obbora	Oxen	100	100	—	200
	No oxen	2900	4300	100	7300
Gursum	Oxen	—	—	—	—
	No oxen	100	5800	300	6200
Total	Oxen	700	500	50	1250
	No oxen	52800	47270	11940	112010

Source: Central Statistics Office. Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province, 1968.

As indicated in the table above, slightly more tenants operating on leased lands paid their rent in kind. This does not mean that rendering of services was not common. Indeed, tenants provided different kinds of services to the landlords. Services in labor during festivities, like baptism celebrations of the days of any of the patron saints were commonly seen.⁹¹ The problem, however, was to calculate these services in economic terms and give them value so that they were calculated like other payments.

According to the table above, more holdings were paid in cash in the sub provinces of Adal and Garaguracha, Obbora and Gursum. In the overwhelming majority of cases; the landlords did not provide the tenants with oxen or other draft animals. According to informants, tenants with no oxen had a problem in getting land rented but for those with no oxen there were informal markets which were accessed through payment of produce just like share cropping arrangement. The commonest arrangement of renting oxen was 2 *dawula* (approximately 200 kg) of cereals in

⁹¹ Informants: Taye Bedhane, Hamza Ali, Siraj Khodele, Telenji Beker, Askale Weldeab

exchange for one ox.⁹² If the landlord extended his help in the form of oxen, the tenant was expected to return the oxen fattened at the end of the harvesting season.

3.2.3. Labor Tenancy

There were various forms of labor tenancy across the world set up according to the needs and interests of the parties involved in the agreement. In South Africa, a tenant family head would provide his adult sons' labor for six months per year and often his wife's (wives') labor too, in return for which he got a place to build his homestead, arable land for each wife and grazing land for an agreed number of cattle. Sometimes this deal involved low wages being paid to those providing labor for the farmer and higher wages offered for the six months when those family members were not under contractual obligations to provide labor.⁹³

Labor tenancy was also commonly practiced in the Sudan. The irrigated agricultural scheme comprised large consolidated areas such as the Gezira, New Halfa and Rahad and a number of small schemes along the Nile. The project basically consisted of a three way partnership between the central government, a parastatal corporation or board [New Halfa Agricultural Production Corporation (NHAP) for the Halfa scheme] and tenants. Here, tenants working on government land produced different crops, mainly cotton and groundnut, for the international market. This was made possible through the parastatal corporation opening markets for the produce from which tenants were paid their share in the form of wages. It was argued that tenants, who were

⁹² The amount varied from place to place. For instance this amount was commonly applied in BiyoKeraba as reiterated by an informant, AskaleWeldeab. On the other hand in Hirna and Doba the amount was three *dawullaas* related by Hama Ali and Ahmed Mumed.

⁹³ Ruth Hall, "Evaluating Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa". *An Occasional Paper series No.3*, (School of Government, University of Western Cape, 2003), pp.23-24.

given land by the government, were wage earners and were the most exploited “semi – proletarian tenantry” in the three layer partnership.⁹⁴

Here in Ethiopia too, there were different forms of labor tenancy. Like sharecropping, labor tenancy came to exist in Harärgé precisely because of the conquest and subsequent alienation of land from owners. For this reason, labor tenants had informal rights to the land on which they and their forbears had formerly exercised. As established by custom labor tenants resided on farms and had the right to use land on the farm (or another farm of the same owner) for grazing, cultivation purposes or/and as a place for residence and provided labor services in return for access to this land.⁹⁵

Labor tenancy was applied by *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat on his land in Hirna. Informants tell that *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat had hundreds of tenants, some of whom were working as labor tenants, especially before the Italian conquest. For these tenants he provided housing and food. He also provided them a small plot of land that they cultivated for their own. Details of the system of *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat’s handling of labor and other forms of tenancy arrangements on his *qälad* land will be treated in the next chapter.

Another form of labor tenancy commonly observed in Harärgé was seen in Garamulata. Here landowners established “labor farms”. These labor farms were typically cultivated and grazed entirely by the labor tenants; the farm owners had their own agricultural production on these farms. Tenants and their family members were obliged to provide labor on the farms of the *qälad* owners and executed every agricultural activity until harvest time. In return the landlords allotted a piece of land to the tenants. Sometimes they were provided with daily food by the *qälad*

⁹⁴ Gunar, M. Sörbó, *Tenants and Nomads in Eastern Sudan .A Study of Economic Adaptations in the New Halfa Scheme*. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies .(Uppsala :Motala Grafiska AB, 1985),PP.23-53.

⁹⁵ Informants:Amin Musa, Zahara Mohammed, Salih Adem,Abdosh Musa,Liqakahnat TeshomeZewde

owner.⁹⁶ Such tenants also performed other activities like accompanying the landlord to markets and other servant functions. Stahl characterized the relation of these tenants with their landlords as “a master- servant relationship.”⁹⁷

A somewhat different aspect of labor tenancy was observed on the *béterest* lands. On the commercial farms of Erer Gota managed by the *béterest*, the local communities were recruited as wage laborers and performed different farm activities. Two informants who were employees on the farm related that they were employed for 1 birr per day and were given a place to build residential house. Their activities included irrigation of the fields, weeding and other farm activities. One other informant, Amin Musa, was a tractor driver and he was paid higher than the other two. This relative abundance of labor and low wages seem common across the world, especially in poor countries like Ethiopia with large landownership. In such instances, the possibility of sharecropping was greatly reduced, minimizing the incentive to introduce share cropping for the landlord.⁹⁸

On another land of the *béterest*, specifically in Bäka, tenants were given a small plot of land on which they lived by cultivating food crops. In return, the tenants were expected to engage on the coffee fields of the *béterest* land. Here, coffee was abundantly grown not only for home consumption but also for export, the revenue from which was administered by the *béterest*. The labor of the tenants was required for the entire process of coffee production.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Informants: Likekahinat Teshome Zewde, Likebirhanat Niguse, Gebremedhin

⁹⁷ M. Stahl, *Ethiopia: Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development*, (Liber Tryck Stockholm, 1974), p.90.

⁹⁸ Informants: Shafi Usman, Mohammed Ibro, Amin Musa.

⁹⁹ WMTMRC.Folder No.5/561.

3.3 Types of Landlords

The landlord class had a heterogeneous character in terms of ethnic and regional background. Three distinct forms of landlord groups emerged in Harärgé each deriving its claim to property from the state. There were firstly settlers who came with the Shawn army, the majority of whom were Amhara with various regional backgrounds, such as Gondaré, Shāwan, Gojjamé etc. Some of them were members of the traditional landed aristocracy, with family ties to the ruling dynasty. Most of them were absentee landlords having their lands managed by agents (caretakers). Their land holding position was consolidated by their strong attachment to the state and their official position. The best example of this group were *Afänigus* (chief justice) Zäwdé Ayälä who had landholding as large as a *wärädain* what is now Meta *wäräda*, in Čällänqo; Abba Hana (Shibeshi) Jima in Garamulata; *Däjazmach* Abashawel in Čällänqo and Qulubi; *Ras* Imiru in different parts of Harärgé, *Fitawrari* Abba Näbro in Mäsäla, *Qaññazmach* Yirgu in Gälämso and Gursum etc.¹⁰⁰

The second group comprised of the same family and regional background but was settled on their land along with their families. Some of them were office holders at various levels of local administration. Within this category there were also wealthy civil servants who created large holdings for themselves through purchase and/or imperial land grants. Towards the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s when the high fortunes in agricultural investment became apparent, a new group of landowning class joined this group. These were contractors, who had the capital but were not necessarily skilled in modern agriculture, persons who contracted the

¹⁰⁰ Extracted from different archival sources. A discussion with informants also confirms the story except the imprecise information of informants on statistical figures such as the size of lands owned by landlords. Apparently Shibeshi (*Abba* Hana) Jima had an extensive coffee land in Mojo valley as *qäläd* and his sister Alemitu had also *qäläd* land on the road to Gerawa town. Today, the latter's name endured in one of a small town on the main road to Garamulata.

land from a big landowner for a number of years. Some of these landowners operated their farm themselves while others employed agents.¹⁰¹

The third group of landlords belonged to the Oromo ethnic group and other local peoples. They got land through their attachment to the state. The *damina*, *burqa*, *garada* and *malaqa* belonged to this group. Their land sizes differed based on their title and their relative links to the center. Some of the well known *damina* with large tracts of land were Mume Orfo of Garamulata representing the Nunu sub clan of Alla, Alli Shega and Abdi Dermn in Gursum, *Gerazmach* Ahmed Ali Tese in Čiro, Uso Ali Shero and Musa Dadhi in Hirna and Biyo Karaba etc. These landlords had the same ethnic background, religious affiliation and shared the same cultural practices with the local community. This had created the feeling of easing the burden for those who were living on their lands as tenants.¹⁰²

Based on their actual participation in the process of agricultural productivity, these groups of landlords can be broadly categorized into two. These were absentee landlords and cultivator landlords. More absentee landlords were found in Čärčär and Gursum while more resident landlords were found in Harär, Obbora and Garamulata sub provinces. The former rented out the land they owned and did not actively engage in cultivation. Under absentee landlordism, agricultural efficiency was not expected principally because production and investment decisions cannot as a rule be made efficiently. It was natural to expect most of absentee landlords to be higher officials of the state, influential men with strong links with the state.

It is interesting to note that the *damina* and *garada* also hired tenants on their lands and some of them became absentee landlords. The *garada* had 600 *jerib* of land as their hereditary right. Out

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Informants :Siraj Khodele, Umar Ali Tese,

of this, 300 *jerib* was their *qolo maret*, i.e. land that belonged to them as *rest*. Nevertheless, it was obvious that they did not take part in the tedious agricultural activities and some of them even resided in Addis Ababa. According to the *diwan* letters, a certain *Hajji Ahmed* had his *qolo* land in Erer valley, to the south of Harär, where he hired a tenant called Seid Jego on four *shibeta* land. After three years of stay in Addis Ababa, when he went to visit his *rest*, he found that the tenant had planted 20 coffee trees without his permission. He accused the tenant and ultimately evicted him by paying compensation that amounted to only 20 birr.¹⁰³ Such instances were frequently observed in the letters found in the *diwan*.

On the other hand, cultivator landlords rented out a part of their own land and cultivated the rest with the help of family and /or hired labor. Often they were retired civil servants getting the land through inheritance.¹⁰⁴

The holding size of the landlords, both absentee and resident, was a complex matter. One of the reasons for this was the presence of their holdings in different parts of the province. Besides, the tenures of the holdings were also diverse making the proper understanding of the holding size of landlords difficult. It is not uncommon to find the holdings of landlords in Čärčär sub province and other sub provinces. For instance, *Qaññazmach Dästa*, whose holdings was vast in Gerawa , also had additional holdings in Gursum, Čärčär, Torbi, Metedebi and Bibiyo; *Ras Imru* had holdings in Lange, Boroda, Biyokaraba, Hančar, Järjärtu etc.; *Däjazmazch Abashawel* had holdings in Qulubi, Čällänqo, Qärsa, Boroda. The list is far from exhaustive. These scattered holdings of the same person were registered under various tenural arrangements. Some land went into the register as *rest*, others as *gult*, still others in the form of *gäbbar* or *madüriya* land. This

¹⁰³ IES, MS-894.p.4.

¹⁰⁴ Informants: Umar Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahamn, Beker Hassen

had completely made the understanding of the amount of the land under the holdings of landlords a well nigh impossible task. But still in all of these lands it was the tenants who operated.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show that there were different groups of landlords and tenants in rural Harärgé. While tenants could be divided into full-fledged tenants and part owner- part tenants, geographically they were unevenly distributed. Full-fledged tenants were largely found in Čärčär while part owner-part tenants were commonly found in the eastern parts of Harärgé. As to the landlords resident landlords and absentee landlords were found in the whole of Harärgé, with greater percentage of absentee landlordism in Čärčär than in the eastern parts of Harärgé.

In the pre-1941 period, the extraction of tribute through the *gäbbar* system remained the basis of surplus appropriation. In the post 1941 period, however, surplus appropriation was transformed into rent. The landlords appropriated the highest amount of surplus from the tenants through rent. Rent was paid in kind in cash, or in labor or a combination of these. The basic characteristic of this rent appropriation was that it constituted the entire surplus labor of the tenants working with their own and families and owning the means of production other than land; and it was extracted for the use of land by a superior class monopolizing ownership of land.

In this mode of surplus appropriation, sharecropping was one and arguably the most wide spread form of product rent; it was not fixed but varied in proportion to the harvest. The share grew up to the level of the equal produce of tenants as the value of land increased. Shared rent with fixed

¹⁰⁵ Extracted from different archival sources. A discussion with informants also confirms the story except the imprecise data from informants on statistical figures such as the size of lands owned by landlords.

amount and contract tenancy were other forms of rent appropriation. In Harärgé, as a whole, with a history of feudal landed property, sharecropping as a form of rent appropriation, fixed rent in kind and in cash as well as contract tenancy were largely associated with producers operating on the basis of family labor.

The rent so appropriated had its origin in the fact of monopolized property ownership in the form of land. The rent of land was considered as the price paid for the use of land and was naturally a monopoly price. Thus the rent was explicitly seen as the consequence of the existence of landed property. The rent imposed on tenants merely related to variations in the level of soil fertility and the degree of application of capital on the lands tenants were operating. As a result of property differentiation, the land owning group existed in contradiction with the non-landowning, exploited class.

In the following chapter, the discussion of surplus appropriation in the form of rent will be elaborated by focusing on the different lands tenants were farming.

CHAPTER FOUR

Types of Tenant Occupancy and Holding

As indicated in the previous chapter tenancy obligations were imposed on the different types of land tenure tenants were operating. Tenants were working on these lands without enjoying ownership right legally. They were tied to these lands under various forms of tenancy arrangements through which the landlords extracted surplus. Some of these land occupancy on which tenants operated were *qälad märét*, *béterest*, *yä mängest märét*, *samon märét* and other individually owned lands. In this chapter, following the same argument raised in chapter three, I will demonstrate that it was on *qälad* lands that the condition of tenants was the most severe. Here, besides, the high rates of rent which they formally paid for the land, tenants were expected to perform various labor obligations and pay different contributions for “development projects”. It was such kinds of economic exploitation that impoverished tenants and jeopardized their agricultural production.

As there was no incentive to increased production and care of the land, tenants were not interested to produce more. The fact that they did not produce more had its ramification on covering the food requirements of their family and hence brought about recurrent food shortages. The level of impoverishment can be graphically illustrated by the fact that tenants were not able to cover the food requirement of their family even for a single harvest season and were exposed to periodic famines.

I will also argue in this chapter that while *qälad* lands were effectively administered and their fruits effectively exploited by the landlords who themselves or through their agents collected the rental value, government lands were poorly administered. This was in sharp contrast to the great

need of the government for more revenue. This was attributed to different factors, one of which was the low amount of the rental value fixed on the land and the poor controlling mechanism of state officials. The rental value on government land was so low that tenants preferred to rent government land. Similarly, tenants working on government land had the possibility of some political and economic manipulation to their own advantage.

The government's control on such lands was only indirect and at any rate was not effective. It was also open to intrigues and corruption by the local officials, who sought to build up their economic strength by using the office as an instrument. Thus the local officials did not collect the land rent diligently from tenants and the tenants enjoyed greater freedom as opposed to *qälad* lands where the landlords scrupulously collected the rent. On the other hand, the local community could build up their economic power through the contribution of money and rented government land whose rental value was too small and was hence advantageous to cultivators.

4.1 Tenants on *Qälad* Land

The predominant source of land for the tenant farmers in Harärgé was the land that belonged to the landlord, in Harärgé's parlance, *abba qälada* (owner of the *qälad* land). This was a land bought by wealthy individuals from the state; its size varied from place to place but on the average it was 75 acres.¹ On the Ethiopian plateau and in some parts of the central highlands *qälad* as a unit of measurement was called *gasha*; hence the phrase *gasha* land, which simply implied measured land rather than the actual size.

These tenants had no property rights over the land. They were bonded neither to the landlord nor to the land but were linked to the land they cultivated through a variety of sharecropping

¹ Clark H, Brook, "Settlement of Eastern [Oromo], Harärgé Province, Ethiopia" PhD Dissertation in Geography, (Nebraska, 1956), P.178.

arrangements or contract with the land owner. As an agricultural production system, tenant farming involved an arrangement in which landowners contributed their land and often a measure of operating capital and management while the tenants contributed their labor along with at times varying amount of capital and management, depending on the contract; tenants could make payments to the owner either in the form of a fixed portion of the product, in cash or a combination of both.²

But in general the rights the tenants had over the land, the form and measure of the payment varied across Harärgé's rural landscape. The landlords had either bought the land from the government or got it from the government through the various grant decrees discussed in chapter two. But most of them were said to have bought their lands. Many *qälad* owners bought undeveloped lands, which were cleared and developed by tenant labor that was exempted from any kind of obligation including sharecropping for one-two years. One of my key informants, Askale Weldeab, stated that her grandfather, Gälätaw Yedräs, along with his two friends W/Sellase and Täsäma G/Mesqel bought 45 *gasha* of land in Biyokaraba, north of Hirna in 1950s. They brought landless farmers from the surrounding villages, cleared the dense forest and cultivated the virgin land. The tenants were allowed to cultivate the land for one year and thereafter they worked the land under *erbo* sharecropping arrangement.³

Indeed, in Biyokaraba, there were a number of other *qälad* owners such as *Däjazmach* Ahmed Ali Tese, *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat, *Ras* Biru W/ Gäbreil etc. Most of these *qälad* owners leased

² Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Umar Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Siyoun Tässäma. The literature on the relative contribution of sharecropping tenants and landlords is immense and they are in agreement with the informants' information. See for example, R. Pearce, "Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View." In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6, pp.40-69.; S.N.S, Cheung, "Private Property Rights and Sharecropping", *Journal of Political Economy* 76:No.6. Novemebr 1968., p.1122.; On Ethiopia See for example ; M.Stahl, *Ethiopia; Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development*, (Liber Tryck Stockholm, 1974), p.90.

³ Informant: Askale Weldeab.

their land through *erbo* sharecropping arrangement. Besides, a number of other obligations were required in the form of labor from the tenants.

The size of the land of the *qālad* owners differed from one landlord to another; so did the number of tenants working under them. It was only Täklāhawariyat, who gave us the size of his land and number of tenants living under him. He says his land in Hirna was 20 *gasha* with additional plots in Doba and Biyokaraba.⁴ Likewise, in some of the letters he wrote to *Fitawrari* Täklāhawariyat, Ras Imiru indicated the size of his land in some of his *rest* areas. For instance, in a letter written on *Meskerem* 30, 1920, he indicated he had four *gasha* of land in Hančar. Similarly, without indicating the size of the land he appointed the local *damina* Uso Ali Shero to buy land on his behalf in Biyokaraba.⁵ Ras Biru's possession in Darolebu as discussed in chapter two was 250 *gasha* of land which was officially registered; Abatabor had 33 *gasha* of land in Mächara as discussed in chapter two. With the exception of these it was difficult to find out the size of the land from the archives. It was only information from informants that gives us a clue as to the size of the land. But it would not be accurate to discuss the size of the land and the number of tenants based on the data from oral informants since quantitative information tends to fade away from the memory of old people.

In the examples discussed above, the most frequent pattern was for a single large-scale landholder to lease small parcels of land to several tenants who probably owned little or no land or had no other alternative means of production of their own.

Most of the tenancy arrangements on *qāladmārét* were worked based on sharecropping arrangements and of these *erbo arash* mode predominated. The amount of rent tenants were

⁴ Täklāhawariyat, Täklāmaryam, "Ya Hiywote Tarik" *Authobography*, pp.192,380,398.

⁵ IES, MS-922, PP.44 and 76.

expected to pay either in kind or in cash was exorbitantly high (especially in *ekul arash*). In addition to the extractive rental arrangements and labour exploitation to which the tenant was exposed, there were various burdens imposed on tenants that made the exploitation severe. For instance, the tenants had to pay land tax (*asrat*), valued at 1/10 of the produce, in kind that offsets the landlord's legal obligation to pay the tithe. In principle the tax in lieu of tithe was an obligation of the owner rather than the tenant.⁶ Since the landlord paid the tax in money, the tenant had to pay more since the amount of money and the volume in produce did not correspond. Besides, during the collection of *asrat*, a number of inconveniences were created by the tax collectors that took away most of the produce.⁷

In many parts of Harärgé, the terms of tenancy had become so stringent that sharecroppers would undertake to pay the *asrat* themselves. In most cases, however, one tenth of the harvest was first set aside for the tax before the crop was divided between the landowner and the sharecropper. Although the amount of *asrat* was not generally higher this was more pernicious and damaging to the viability and security of the tenant households. This was because landlords in most parts of Harärgé had shifted the whole burden of the *asrat* on to their tenants.⁸

According to Article 2915 of the Civil Code, taxes on the land must be paid by landlords. In actual fact, however, former tenant informants concur that the practice of transferring *asrat* and land tax on to tenants was widespread. The income transfer represented an unjustified reward to the landlord and an unnecessary burden on the tenant for it was basically neither a payment for a

⁶ Land tax proclamation, Proclamation No.70. *Negarith Gazetha*, 4th year No.2 (November 1,1944),See also Harrison, C.Dunning, "Land Reform in Ethiopia: A case Study in Non Development" U.C.L. Law Review 18, 1970,pp.271-307.

⁷ Taye Gulilat, pp.17-27.;Lawrence and Mann FAO Land Policy Project), (Ethiopian Observer. 286, 1966),p.322.; Imiru Haile Silasse ,P.103.

⁸ Imiru Haile Silasse ,P.103.See also Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),p.11. ; Informants: Telenji Bekere, Umar Ahmed, Askale weldeab.

factor service supplied by the landlord, nor a part of the revenue collected by the state because it was appropriated by the landlord. Regarding the tax in lieu of tithe, Taye Gulilat argued that on equity grounds, on revenue grounds and on its economic effect its elimination in 1967 came too late.⁹

Indeed, in Harärgé, in almost all sub provinces, the tenants ended up paying one or both kinds of taxes. The MLRA survey team in Čärčär indicated that certain landlords threatened their tenants with eviction should the tenants be unwilling to pay *asrat*.¹⁰ On the basis of information collected through interview in Garamulata, Dädär, and Čärčär sub provinces, tenants working on *qäladmärét*, *rest-gult* lands, *balabat sisso*, *madäriya*, church lands and other tenures paid *asrat* and land tax to the persons holding ownership rights over the lands.¹¹ The owners either did not pay taxes to the government or if they did, it was only a tiny fraction of the taxes they collected. In relation to this tax defaults by landowners of different tenures a large amount of archival documents are found at WMTMRC.¹² Therefore, it can be argued that despite the great demand for more state revenue, the taxation system had loopholes that were exploited by the rich landlords and the imperial government was unable or was reluctant to rectify such loopholes because it placed higher priority on preserving the political loyalty of the landowners.

Tenants were expected to render various kinds of services to their landlords. The most common types of services were herding, fencing, digging the landlords' granary, delivery of the share of

⁹ Taye Gulilat, pp.17-27.; He further argues that judged on equity grounds it fell short of achieving even a rough justice in allocating the tax burden. On revenue grounds, it was a failure as the income was low, inelastic and its comparative advantage gradually declined. On the economic sphere it functioned more as an obstacle rather than as a motivation to agricultural improvement.

¹⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969), p.11.

¹¹ Ibid.; Informants: Legesse Bekansa, Umar Ali Tese, Hassen Beker, Siraj Khodele, Jemal Abdurahman.

¹² WMTMRC. Folder No. 1/561 Folder No. 10/15.; Folder No. 12/561., Folder No. 1/15.

agricultural produce to the granaries, constructing the landlords' houses and kraals, helping the landlords' household chores during festivities. These services seem to have been customarily accepted as a normal condition of tenancy and practiced by tenants since any failure to execute them would result in eviction from the land.¹³ It is worth to underscore that this form of peasant exploitation, which constituted disguised extra costs for the tenant, was 'abolished by law' in 1934.¹⁴ Besides, in the draft legislation presented to the parliament, a minority of the members of the Community Development Committee in the Chamber of Deputies had strongly opposed the continuation of the services by tenants and sarcastically described the views of the majority in the following words:

ከአብዛኛው የኮሚቴው አባላት የሚነገረው ይህ ህግ ሥራ ላይ ሲውል በህዝቡ መካከል ብጥብጥና ደም መፋሰስ ያመጣል ያሚል ትችት ተነግሯል፡፡ ደም መፍሰስን የሚያስከትለው ያለ ህግ መኖሩ ነው ወይስ ሁለቱ ወገኖች በህግ እንዲገናኙ ሲደረግ ነው? በአጭሩ የግል ጥቅማቸው የተነካ በመሰላቸው የባለርስት ተቆርቋሪዎች ነን ከሚሉት ወገን ቢነገር የሚደንቅ ባለመሆኑ ብዙ ሀተታ አያስፈልገውም፡፡ ይህ ሕግ ባለርስት ጭሰኛን ያለ ውዴታ በግድ ሲያሰራ የነበረውን የጉልበት ስራ ማለት[ም] የባለርስቱን ማሳ የማረም የማጨድና የመውቃት የባለርስቱን ቤት አጥር ማጠርና የመሳሰለውን ስራ ስለሚያስቀር ከላይ ከፍ ብሎ የጠቀሰውን የግል ጥቅም መጉደሉን የሚያስከትልባቸው ሕጉ ደም ያፋስሳል የሚል ቅፅል ስም ቢሰጡት አያስነውርም፡፡¹⁵

As it was reiterated by the majority Committee Members, if this draft legislation was to be implemented, it will create turmoil and social unrest to the extent of bloodshed. Was it to live as an outlaw or to be governed by the rule of law that creates bloodshed? In short, it was not surprising if the draft legislation was opposed by those who claim to represent the landlords whose economic benefit was threatened. This draft legislation would forbade the landlord to use the tenants labor at his whim for ploughing, weeding, harvesting, constructing the landlords' house, making his compound etc. Because of this they gave the legislation an appellation as it was the sources of conflict and havoc.

¹³ Informants: *Leul Ras* Seyoum Mengesga, Askale Weldeab, Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker. For details of Tenants' burdens see Haile Markorios, "The Present System of Land Tenure in Ethiopia" in *Challenge* Vol.10,1970,No.2,pp.4-23.; Dessalegn Rahmato, "The Conditions of the Ethiopian Peasantry" In *Challenge* Vol.10,1970,No.2.,pp. 25-49.

¹⁴ Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa,Haile Silasse University press,1968),p.177.

¹⁵ Minutes of the Committee for community Development in the House of Deputes. Yekatit 25, 1965 EC

However, it was widely practiced in Harärgé right up to the end of the old regime. It was such unwarranted services which reduced the tenants' productivity or efficiency in farming. Due to these services, the tenant's input of time and labor was taken away from his farm.

Tenants were also exposed to extra payments. They paid fees to landlords both to obtain land and to keep it beyond one harvest season. In Harärgé, this practice was called *bärča* and was paid both in cash and in kind.¹⁶ If the payment was in cash it considerably varied from *wärädä* to *wärädä* or even within the same locality. The common range was between 5 birr to 40 birr in Čärčär and up to 50 birr in Hirna.¹⁷ *Bärča* could also be paid in kind such as honey, butter or even fattened goat, sheep and other valuables if the piece of land in demand was fertile and hence competition was presumed to be high. Normally *bärča* was paid to obtain the future possession and continuation of the contract of a piece of land already under cultivation and therefore served as a means of guaranteeing continued tenure and not incurring the disfavour of the landlord. *Bärča* was therefore, paid to obtain as well as to renew expired tenancy.¹⁸

But it was also paid in some instances by another tenant in a bid to gain the land already in possession of a tenant. In this instance, landlords granted tenancy to new applicants or renewed the contract for the already working tenant on the basis of the highest offer of *bärča*. Hence, a tenant who had improved the productivity of his land through additional investments to get better

¹⁶ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa : Department of Land Tenure, 1969),p.10. There is no relationship between *bärča* as a gift to landlords and *bärča* as a *čat* ceremony. Currently, *bärča* is a chat ceremony in which relatives and friends chew *čat* in group often in the afternoon. It is not exactly known when this change in meaning occurred. But it seems more probable that it is commonly associated with the growth of the culture of *čat* chewing in social gathering where chewers shared a bundle of chat from their possession.

¹⁷ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Mohammed Adem, Telenji Beker, Mohammed Musso.

¹⁸ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),p.10.; See also Dessalegn Rahmato, "The Conditions of the Ethiopian Peasantry" In *Challenge*,pp.25-49. Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Yahya, Telenji Beker, Siarj Khodhele.

production would ultimately end up inviting powerful competitors for the land and would most likely lose his developed field or end up paying higher *bärča*. For the landlord it was a means of extending greater control over tenants because landlords granted tenancy rights on the basis of the highest offer of *bärča*¹⁹

It should be emphasised that while the landlord took a substantial amount of the tenant’s produce and labour, the former’s contribution in agricultural activities was strictly limited to providing land. Landlords did not invest in introducing new technology of agricultural production. Lamenting the landlord’s inactive role in agricultural practices tenants in Čärčär expressed their frustration through the following powerful verse while weeding sorghum in front of the landlord who was sitting under the shed of the tree and inspecting the hardworking tenants. It runs:

Afaan OromoGloss

Kasaa ke addii lallii kiyaa guracha illali	You are drinking hujja [traditional tea] mixed with milk while mine is without milk
Uffif gadissa Tessa addu kessa nalalli	You are sitting under the shed of a tree while I am working in the sun
Adugnan nu madhumti akiraa boru illalli ²⁰	Earthly life is short lived, think of the hereafter where we belong equally

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Informant: Mustefa Jemal. *Hujja*, mixed with milk is traditionally a prestigious drink and is a sign of property differentiation in the form of cattle among the Oromo in Harärgé. While drinking tea without milk is a sign of impoverishment that a family has no source of milk.

It was on *qäläd* lands that tenants lacked protection from arbitrary and sudden eviction. Landlords have full power to evict their tenants though tradition militated against it. In Kombolcha one of my informants related that although landlords threatened to evict their tenants, the local clan tie was so cohesive that the landlord would face a total ostracism and hence would be forced to reverse his decision to evict tenants.²¹ Although the clan tie was strong among the Afran Qällo, his assertion seems to depend on flimsy evidence and needs further corroboration as the power of the landlords often derived not from the local community but from the locus of power in the province.

There was also forceful collection from the tenants of money or produce by the landlords in collaboration with *wäräda* officials. The money collected was supposed to be for the construction of schools, health centres, roads and other infrastructure, services that were supposed to be provided by the state. This was commonly observed in Čärčär sub province. According to archival evidence, four tenants (Hassen Bulle, Abdella Yesuf, Ismail Abdella and Abdi Ibro) working on land belonging to a landowner called *Gerazmach* Asrat and five tenants (Hassen Umar, Abdella Usman, Ibro Beshir, Nura Bolele and Adem Weday) working on land belonging to the landlord *Gerazmach* Ayälä were forced to contribute money without indicating the reason for contribution, the amount of which they were not consulted on and at any rate was beyond their means. When the contribution was to be paid in kind, it was indicated in the report that though tenants were not willing to pay it, they were supposed to pay five *qunna* every year. Failing to pay the required amount, the report indicated, they were forced to stay in prison for four days by the instruction of Mäsäla *wäräda* administrator.²²

²¹ Informant: Mohammed Abdurahman.

²² National Archive. Folder No. 17.1.7.28.01.

The same archival source described the report of the supervising team that went from the provincial office to Čärčär *Awraja*. According to the report all the *wäräda* officials in Čärčär *Awraja* which they visited, were said to have gone to villages to collect the money that all rural producers had pledged to a self-help association. In the process of collecting money tenants said they did not have any money and were forced into imprisonment.²³

These exactions were completely illegal and no measures were taken by the government to protect tenants from these arbitrary exactions. In fact, receipts were not issued for those who paid the contribution. In the same archive, it was indicated that a total sum of 36,418 birr was deposited in Čärčär sub province treasury office in the name of a Self Help Association established among the Ittu by *Fitawrari* Ahmed Ali Tese.²⁴ But there was no indication that the promised development infrastructure was constructed for the people.

Of course contributions in money for local projects like road buildings by peasant were rampant during the imperial regime although this money was all too often embezzled by corrupt government officials. Such contributions were commonly indicated in the daily Amharic *Addis Zämän*. The issue of *Miyazia* 17, 1963, reports, for example, that the people of Bethelhem [Jarso] contributed a total of 9428 birr for the construction of an all-weather road that connected the town of Jarso and Kombolcha. Similarly, on *Hidar* 21, 1965 in Garamulata a total sum of 3832 birr was collected for the construction of the road between Adele and Gerawa towns. Another report on *Hedar* 22, 1965 indicates that in Čärčär, Adal and Garaguracha *Awraja*, the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

public was said to have contributed a total sum of 2488 birr for the expansion of classrooms in Mi'eso school.²⁵

While all these mistreatments of tenants by the landlords were practiced with impunity, there were a few individuals who treated their tenants humanely. Information from informants is replete with evidence reciting names of the landlords who were harsh in treating their tenants and those who were more magnanimous for tenants. The following two quotations from informants illustrated this contrasting experience. The first is from Garamulata where an informant Telenji Beker described the nature and extent of harassment and abuse tenants faced from the landlord. The second example was from an informant, Zerihun Bezabih, in Gursum where the landlord treated his tenants kindly. The latter's narration was supported by another informant, working for the same landlord.

Case 1.

I used to cultivate the land leased from *Qaññazmach* Dästa on *erbo* basis. We have no written agreement. He demanded *sisso* labor of his tenants to work his *hudad* land two days per week. During periods of peak cultivation activities such as ploughing, sowing, weeding and harvesting, he demanded four days per week. Often we performed these activities by mobilizing our children. Besides, we implemented different agricultural tasks such as digging irrigation channels, preparing the threshing grounds and carrying produce to granaries. Any person who refused to work on *hudad* or due to different factors failed to meet this labor requirement was subjected to eviction. Since he lived in Harär, after the end of each harvest season, we were instructed by his agent on the spot to transport grain for his home consumption all the way to Harär by using donkeys. This delivery of grains was arranged in such a way that every four month we made the same journey on foot which took two days travel from Gerawa. As if this was not enough, we were in great anxiety during the months of January and February since eviction of tenants often occurred at that time. So we were supposed to deliver certain amount of honey, butter or if the land was fertile to attract potential competitor, we should give fattened sheep to stay at least for one harvest season.²⁶

²⁵ Addis Zämän, *Miyazya* 17, 1963, *Hedar* 21, 1965 and *Hedar* 22, 1965. Jarso was named in the official news paper as Betelhem. This was also attested in the state archives found in Harär.

²⁶ Informant: Telenji Beker. This quotation is the translation of the informant's account in Oromiffa

Case 2. I used to cultivate one and half hectares of the land leased from *Mämeré* Fantaye on *erbo* basis. There was no written agreement between me and *Mämeré* Fantaye, we simply agreed orally without putting the limits of the agreement in terms of years. The landlord did not dictate to me what to cultivate, I even did not consult him on what I wanted to cultivate except when I wanted to grow groundnut, which was a lucrative cash crop in Gursum. I was at liberty to make any agricultural decision. When I cultivated maize he did not prohibit me from using some fresh seeds. There was no labor requirement he imposed on all of his tenants. To my knowledge, I did not hear any person being evicted by *Mämeré* Fantaye. Sometimes when we faced food shortage, he generously helped us and saved our family from general famine. When the Land to the Tiller proclamation was announced he simply told me that I should no more share the fruits of my labor with him. I was so struck by his humbleness and after the land became mine I used to give him one quintal of *teff* every year of my own free will.²⁷

4.2. Tenants on *Béterest* Land

The royal estate labeled as *béterest* had evolved as an island complete with its own administration and security force. The *béterest* carved out a large tract of land distributed throughout the province from different sources. In terms of size, the *béterest* evolved as the largest family owned *rest* in Harärgé. The farm was also different in the manner in which it was administered and run. As opposed to their individually owned *rest*, *béterest* came under a well organized administrative hierarchy. There were administrators, treasurers and other lower ranking officials. Different officials were appointed to administer the *béterest*. From 1939 E.C to 1941 E.C *Ato Bizuneh W/Mariam* and after 1941 E.C. *Balambaras Gebremedhin Gosa* were in the position. The latter was replaced by *Blata Degu Yimer* in 1947 E.C who in turn was replaced by *Blata Zäläqä Negatu* in the 1950s.²⁸ The main office was found in Erer, some 60kms to the north of Dire Dawa where there was a guest house which the emperor visited every year in July.

²⁷ Informants: Zerihun Bezabih. This is the translation of the informant's account in Amharic. Incidentally another informant Yuya Ibrahim narrated the nature of the landlord similarly in Oromiffa.

²⁸ WMTMRC.Folder No.13/15.; Folde No.16/92.; 15/138.; National Archive Folder No. 3-1-01-02.

Table 6. The location of *béterest* land, the amount and how it was acquired.

NO.	Place where the <i>Béterest</i> land is located	Amount in <i>Gasha</i>	Remark
1	Asäbot	1562	Bequeathed on Miyazia 15, 1917 E.C to regent Täfäri by three local Abba burqa: Fujjiso Roba, Garba Ittisa and Boru Roba. This was sanctioned by Abune Mathewos and from this some <i>gasha</i> of land was given to Asäbot Sillasse monastery.
2	Erer Gota	60	Established as a farm estate by regent Täfäri Mäkonnen in 1927, under the advice of the Italian Pastoreli. Later the son of Emperor Haile Sillase I inherited it before it was given to Haile Sillase I Prize Trust.
3	Bäka	136	In 1888 E.C <i>Ras</i> Mäkonnen bought it from Emperor Menelik with a price of 100 senadir weapon. Twelve persons were mentioned in the archives as eye witnesses of the event. Later it was transferred to regent Täfäri Mäkonnen.
4	Afdem and Shenano	1500	Bequeathed from the local <i>balabat</i> Weday Tusso for <i>Ras</i> Mäkonnen. In 1904 E.C the land was transferred to Täfäri Mäkonnen.

5	Hula Qunne	32	Bequeathed by <i>Ras</i> Mäkonnen to Täfäri Mäkonnen in 1888 E.C
6	Boke	600	Secured in 1920 E.C. It was bequeathed by Abba Burqa Boke Qiltu to empress Menen. On behalf of the Empress, <i>Girazmach</i> Shefaw completed the transfer to the <i>béterest</i> .
7	Harär (Adere)	5	Formerly belonging to a certain priest Abba Gäbrehiwot but bequeathed to Prince Mäkonnen. It was claimed that around 5000 people have settled on this land. It served as <i>waraganu</i> land but later, it was carved out as <i>béterest</i> land.
8	Mojo (in Garamulata)	5	Bequeathed by <i>Qaññazmach</i> Gädlä Giorgis to emperor Haile Sillasie I.
9	Giri, Babile	215	Bequeathed by the local clan leaders to emperor Haile Sillasie I.
10	Boroma	113	<i>Ras</i> Mekonnen bought from the <i>burqa</i> and bequeathed to <i>Lij</i> Yilma and Täfäri Mäkonnen. Later with the death of <i>Lij</i> Yilma, the land was transferred to <i>béterest</i> of Haile Sillase I.
11	Dädär (Etege Meda)	2	Bequeathed by <i>Fitawrari</i> Märsha to Empress Mänän

12	Hurso	400	It was bequeathed to the emperor by local <i>balabats</i> like Haji Yusuf and was transferred to <i>Wälasma</i> tenure ²⁹ in 1904 E.C
	Total	4630	

Source: Compiled by the author from the archives consulted in WMTMRC and National Archive.

While the above table is illustrative of the general picture, some additional points are worth making. In the first place the size of the *béterest* land was not limited to the ones listed above. In a number of sub provinces and *wäräda* levels the *béterest* land were found but were not indicated in the table because the available sources gave contradictory figures. For example, *Wäyzäro* Teseme was said to have bequeathed five *gasha* of land in *Dädär Awraja*. Here, it was not the same land mentioned in the table under *Dädär Awraja* but in another *wäräda*, i.e. Werji. At the same time in another letter it was indicated that the size of the land was only 1 *gasha*. Similarly, in *Gälämsö Wäyzäro* Teseme was said to have bequeathed 1 *gasha* of land to the *béterest* while in another letter of the same source it says half *gasha*.³⁰ There was also land which the *béterest* claimed to have got through bequeathing while the original owners were claiming they did not bequeath. A case in point was the daughter of Abatabor, Geṭenesh had 33 *gasha* of land in *Mächara*. The *béterest* claims it secured the land through bequeathing while the daughter of

²⁹ *Wälasma* lands were lands stipulated for the upkeep of monasteries in Harärgé just like church *gults* were allotted for church lands.

³⁰ WMTMRC, Folder No.138, File NO.7.

Abatabor claimed the land belonged to her family.³¹ Such sorts of claims and counterclaims were common and make determining the exact figure of the *béterest* land difficult.

The second feature of the *béterest* land was that the great majority of the land that belonged to the *béterest* was found in Čärčär, Dire Dawa and Adal and Issa sub- provinces that belonged to Emperor Haile Silasse I. In these areas there was a total of 4403 *gasha* (Approximately 176,120 hectares) of land. The remaining 227 *gasha* of *béterest* land were found in Harär, Garamulata, Gursum and Obbora sub provinces. There were perennial rivers that drain in the region especially Erer and Gota. Plantation agriculture was intensified along these river banks.

Thirdly, there were frequent cases of bequeathing land to the emperor and his family which apparently became the most common mode through which the *béterest* land was acquired. It would be misleading to assume that people simply gave their land to someone whom they were not close to or not worthy of something. It all has to do with power. When individuals or a group of people were threatened by some other powerful individual or institution it is natural for those who were threatened by the powerful to seek protection. By doing so they might lose a considerable proportion of their land but still kept some amount of it. In a system where individuals exercise considerable influence and law and order was not securely established, it is natural for the powerless to seek protection from patrons.

It was exactly for this reason that a number of people bequeathed their land to the powerful, in this case the emperor. *Wäyzäro* Teseme, the wife of *Däjazmach* Beru Hailemariam, who was a big landlord, bequeathed some portion of her land in Dädär and Habro *awraja* to emperor Haile Sillassie to avoid potential loss of her land to powerful opponents who also claimed a share of

³¹ Ibid., Folder No.92,File No.16.

their father's land as discussed earlier. The case of *Qaññazmach* Gädle Giorgis in Mojo valley, Garamulata was similar. Likewise the pastoralists in Babile bequeathed their land in the hope of getting protection from the emperor as they described in their appeal letter.³²

On the other hand the *béterest* failed to execute its responsibility. One of the responsibilities as an institution that administered such a large tract of land and enormous productive activities, the *béterest* failed to pay the tax for many years. Accordingly, it was accused of withholding a huge amount of government tax due on it. In between 1940-1956 E.C. a total of 800,000 birr was expected from all its holdings.³³

The three types of tenancy arrangements - crop sharing, contract tenancy and labor tenancy - were commonly observed in the *béterest* lands. In *däga* and *wäynadäga* zones where agricultural practices were mainly rain fed, crop sharing arrangement was a common phenomenon. Accordingly in the outskirts of Dädär town there was Empress Mänän's holding called *Etege Meda* and the holding that belonged to Prince Mäkonnen. On these lands tenants were working in *erbo* and shared the produce with the *béterest* appointee. In Garamulata, around Mojo river, land bequeathed by *Qaññazmach* Gädlä Giorgis to the emperor was given to tenants on the basis of *hirta* since the land was suitable for crop production. In some parts of hula qunne, Afdem, Kora and Shenano crop sharing arrangement was common, with tenants cultivating varieties of

³² WMTMRC, Folder No.88.;File No.40.; Folder No.10/15.*Däjazmach* Biru Hailemariam was one of the few well known veteran soldiers who came to Harär with Ras Mäkonnen and was better known in Harär as *Fitawrari* Biratu.He married *wäyzäro* Sehin and died due to pneumonia. It was not clear in sources when he married *wäyzäro* Teseme.For details see, Täklähawariyat Täklämaryam Authobiography, p.219.

³³ WMTMRC Folder No. 10/15.

sorghum on *erbo* basis.³⁴ In the case of Bäka, coffee was the main crop tended by tenants' labor; in return they were given a separate land of their own to live on.³⁵

Small scale farmers also cultivated the *béterest* land on contract basis. In Mi'eso, in the sub *wäräda* of Mulu 538 tenants leased land on cash basis and cultivated *béterest* land. Similarly, in Čärčär in the sub *wäräda* of Lalo 58 tenants leased land.³⁶ There were also contract tenants in Dädär and Gälämsö *Awrajas*. Like contract tenants on government land, the *béterest* had produced, a written agreement that tenants should sign upon leasing land. The price of the rent was relatively higher than the price on government land. For example, a certain Abäbä Ezineh leased one *gasha* of land in werji *wäräda*, Dädär *Awraja* in 1965 E.C. The contract tenant was expected to pay 350 birr per annum and the contract would be applicable for five years.³⁷ In another agreement that would last for two years, a certain Bushra Yusuf leased half *gasha* of land in Čafe Aneni, Habro *Awraja* . During the tenancy term the tenant was expected to pay 180 birr land rent per annum.³⁸ (For details of the agreement see Appendix No.3.)

An agricultural concession owned by two Germans, Dr. Estrable and M. Winchester, agreed to undertake mechanized agriculture in Bäka on contract basis. Accordingly in 1943 E.C., the *béterest* agreed to give 100 *gasha* of land and different movable and immovable properties to the German company. The two parties had agreed for a 60 years contract subject to renewal after 30 years if the two sides agreed. The company agreed to undertake large scale agricultural mechanization producing both cash crops such as coffee and cereals. Furthermore the company pledged not to evict the tenants who were working on Bäka *béterest* land. Instead, the company

³⁴ WMTMRC Folder No. 2088, File No.225. Folder No.19/15.

³⁵ WMTMRC. 5/561

³⁶ National Archive, Folder No.2.1.71.02.

³⁷ WMTMRC,Folder No. 138,File No.7.

³⁸ Ibid.

would train tenants to acquire better agricultural techniques and collect the rent on behalf of the *béterest*.³⁹ But due to unknown factors the company stopped its activities. Archival documents indicate that the company had faced financial difficulties right from the start and failed to collect the required rent from the tenants.

When we evaluate the condition of tenants on *béterest* land, they were relatively in a better condition as compared to tenants on the *qālad* lands. For instance one of the *béterest* holdings in Obbora was affected by the crop failure that had occurred in the whole of Harärgé in 1965/66 harvest season. Then tenants on the *béterest* land claimed that they were in severe food shortage and some of their relatives had already left the area. Since their survival was based on cultivation they demanded seed crop for the coming plowing season; otherwise their fate was similar to their relatives. The *béterest* considered their request positively (See Appendix No.2).

Moreover, payment of rent on *béterest* land was not as such heavy and there were no extra services demanded in the form of labor. Besides, eviction was relatively rare, except the case of the Asäbot commercial farm that will be discussed a little later.

4.3. Tenants on Government Land

It was also possible for the landless to lease land from the government that had acquired it through various mechanisms such as applying its reversionary right. A good number of peasants were forced to evacuate their private farmlands under the principle of *menquṭ*. Once the farmer returned his land to the state, he had no right over it. His only chance was to work as tenant. The government leased out *hudad* and *menquṭ* lands to rural community members or urban residents interested in cultivation. Contract lands were commonly found in the sub provinces of Čärčär,

³⁹ WMTMRC.5/561.

Gursum, Obbora and Garamulata. Often the procedure was to publicize the intention of the government through the respective local administration offices for individuals to participate in the bid.⁴⁰

People who leased land from the government were not only peasants but also salaried civil servants working in different government offices. Probably this was the case because the leasees might want to supplement their income. But it was not clear whether these civil servants worked the land themselves or sublet the land to cultivators who might not have the necessary initial capital. From the archives, the higher provincial officers complained about *wäräda* officials leasing out land to civil servants who did not pay the required rent on time and hence left a large sum of government revenue uncollected. They further claimed that the civil servants did not actually take part in the agricultural activity; they rather sublet the land to cultivators as they themselves did not have the time.⁴¹ Thus the process of tenantization was multiplied.

The collection of land rent was a major problem on government lands leased to cultivators. According to the regulation, the *wäräda* treasury office was responsible for collecting the rent but failed to fulfill its obligations. Based on archival evidence, one can establish that the government lost a total of 250,608.15 birr from land rent from the sub provinces in between 1940-1949 E.C. This amount did not include Čärčär sub province as the officials claimed the data for Čärčär was not submitted to the province on time. Details of the amount of this uncollected sum of money over a decade are indicated in the table below.

⁴⁰ WMTMRC .Folder No.5/561.

⁴¹ WMTMRC Folder No. 1/561.; Folder No. 5/561

Table 7. Government Land Rent that remained uncollected in the sub provinces (1940s)

No	Name of the sub province/district	Rent not paid up to Maskaram 1,1949 E.C	Rent paid between Maskaram 1-Nahase 30 1949 E.C	Rent transferred to 1950 E.C
1	Kombolcha <i>Wäräda</i>	45,802.75	10,801.75	35,001.10
2	Fadis <i>Wäräda</i>	32,776.25	10,664.51	22,111.74
3	Jarso <i>Wäräda</i>	4,719.00	112.00	4,607.00
4	Dire Dawa <i>Awraja</i>	3,571.00	2,002.84	1,568.16
5	Ogaden <i>Awraja</i>	51,172.30	10,647.30	40,525.00
6	Garamulata <i>Awraja</i>	123,828.55	2,470.80	121,357.75
7	Obbora <i>Awraja</i>	34,487.50	13,470.80	21,016.70
8	Adal and Issa <i>Awraja</i>	1,829.50	1,233.50	596.00
9	Gursum <i>Awraja</i>	18,713.10	14,888.40	3,824.70
	Total	316,900.05	66,291.00	250,608.15

Source: WMTMRC.Folder No.1/561

As the table indicates, rent defaults on government land were a common practice, unlike *qälad* lands where the landowner or his agent scrupulously collected. These were seen in all the sub provinces but most seriously in Garamulata, Ogaden (surrounding the town of Jigjiga) and Harär (specially Kombolcha). Various reasons were forwarded for the failure of the *wäräda* officials. Archival material indicates that in some of the sub provinces like Ogaden, the leasees were themselves government officials. A case in point was a certain *meslené* Dessalegn Tegegn who

had leased seven *gasha* of land but did not pay rent for a long time. The same source cites that a number of other individuals belonging to the establishment were responsible for the failure.⁴²

In addition, lack of clear cut contract agreement between the renter and the leasee was a major obstacle. As a result in 1950 a written contract agreement was prepared to be signed between the two parties. The contract agreement had a total of seventeen articles divided into 13 chapters. The format of the contract contained the rights and responsibilities of the two sides. On behalf of the government the *wäräda* treasury official was supposed to sign the agreement (See Appendix No.4)

One interesting aspect of the government's contract document was its prescription of the types of crops allowed to be grown on the land leased. Perhaps, influenced more by the verbal agreement between the *qälad* owner and the tenant in need of land, the government dictated to the would-be tenants to grow only seasonal crops. Perennial crops such as *čat*, coffee, lemon, Orange etc. were not allowed to be cultivated on government land. It is interesting to notice here that while the government failed to establish formal rules and regulations governing landlord tenant relations on other holdings such as private holdings, it established a written contract agreement to govern tenants on its land. It was on the *qälad* lands that dispute between tenants and landlords were frequent; it was also on these holdings that tenants had to endure lots of extortionate demands. The contract agreement was established long before the draft legislation governing landlord tenant relationship was submitted to the parliament. This was clear indication that the government paid little attention to the mass of the tenant population suffering under the few landholding groups.

⁴² WMTMRC.Folder No.5/561.

In other parts of the sub-provinces the bid to rent government land had its own peculiar features some of which are worth discussing. In Gursum the local Oromo and Somali deliberately boycotted participating in the bid. Their justification was that they were forbidden to cultivate the undeveloped land claiming it belonged to the government. They also requested the government for grants but all their efforts failed. In this circumstance the government would find few bidders, mostly a few settlers having connection with the establishment, and it would then stop renting it.⁴³

According to archival sources a total of 2300 *shibeta* land was ready for contract in 1953. Since the number of Amhara settlers who could engage in farming was not comparable to the total land available for rent, a few Amhara settlers rented to cultivate but the local officials found it uneconomical and stopped renting out large tracts of land since those who rented had primitive agricultural techniques and the land would thus be not profitable which ultimately might make them fail to pay the rent.⁴⁴

Another interesting aspect of contract on government land was the case of Obbora's bid process. An Amhara settler complained in a letter written to higher officials that the Muslim Oromo were conspiring to dominate the bid by presenting higher prices for every single plot of land. He further elaborated that the Oromo were organized on their clan basis and were contributing money to that end so that the Amhara settlers were in danger of losing any land to be rented unless measures were taken to curb the danger.⁴⁵ This same tendency of transferring land to the Oromo was also indicated in Čärčär. In one of the archives, discussing the disagreement between the administrator of Čärčär *Awraja*, Māshāsha Zāwāldé, and his subordinates in 1940 E.C., the

⁴³ WMTMRC. Folder No.1/561

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ WMTMRC Folder No.1/561.

latter accused *Ato* Mäshäsha of promising to grant land only for the Oromo and excluding the Amhara from getting land either through purchase or by any other means.⁴⁶

Confirming the same fear is one of the reports by *Endarassé* of the province, *Blata Ayälä Gäbré* on *Miyazia* 18, 1938 E.C. It was written to concerned higher officials to bring an early solution to the problem as the delay would have potentially dangerous implications. An extract from the report is quoted here for the important message it delivers:

እስላሞች ወይንም [እርሞዎች]
አማራ በመካከላቸው ገብቶ መሬት እንዲያርስ በፍፁም የማይፈቅዱ ሆነው ጠንክረው ሥለሚከራከሩ አገሩ የእስላም ነው እስከማሰኘት ተደርሷልና በደንብ ያልተወሰኑ መሬቶች እንዲመደቡ ተደርጎ ትርፍ ሲገኝ አማራ ጣልቃ እየገባ እንዲሰባጠር ካልሆነ በተቀር ወደፊት የሚያስቸግር ሁኔታ መፍጠሩ ያስጋልና ቢታሰብበት መልካም ነው።⁴⁷

Since the Muslim Oromo stubbornly oppose the settlement of the Amhara in their midst and to live by cultivating the soil, it is commonly assumed that the land solely belonged to them. Therefore, it is vital to reconsider the allocation of land, especially those lands which were not properly demarcated, so that they are allocated to the Amhara and they are settled amidst the Muslim Oromo. Otherwise, this would create a difficult situation in the future.

This could be considered as one of the major examples of economic resistance the Oromo waged against the system. As is discussed in chapter two the economic destitution suffered by the Oromo since the conquest through the *mälkäñña* system and subsequent alienation of land had broad political and social ramifications. Though there was gradual atrophy of the Oromo socio-economic system under the new regime, this was evidence of the resilience of the Oromo socio-economic and cultural institutions. They took every opportunity to organize along clan levels and other cultural institutions so that they could resist any further impoverishment by asserting their holdings on the land which was their major means of survival.

⁴⁶ National Archive, Folder No. 17.1.7.28.01.
⁴⁷ National Archive, Folder No. 64/1. The report was titled “Yä Harär *Awraja* Gezat Yager Astedader Ena Tsetita Atebabek Guday” “Harar *Awraja* Administrative and Security Affairs” See footnote no.22 in chapter three

The other feature of rented government land was the low price [as compared to *qälad* land] tenants were asked to pay. In fact the price differed from *wäräda* to *wäräda* and according to the fertility of the soil. For instance in Fädis 16 *shibeta* of land was rented out for 20 birr; in Garamulata this was rented for 50 birr per annum. Similarly one *shibeta* was rented for 1.25 cents in the 1950s in Ogaden. In order to rectify the anomalies in renting prices, the provincial administration tried to fix a new rate of renting through the help of local notables and elders which was not, however, successful.⁴⁸

Along the same line, tenants who had the chance to rent government land or sub let from government employees were relatively in a better condition. The amount of rent which was a heavy burden for tenants on *qälad* lands was not seen here. Moreover, other obligations and services required by the *qälad* owner were absent.

There is also strategic consideration for tenants to prefer government lands. Tenants hoped that the government might eventually grant them the land for which they have a latent claim as it had been the property of their forefathers. Moreover, most tenants, particularly after the *Teqmet* 23, 1945 E.C. Imperial order, appealed to the concerned government offices at different levels. The decree entitled every landless Ethiopian citizen to a half *gasha* of land. Based on this a certain Seid Amin, a putative journalist from Bädäno, exhaustively discussed the problems of tenants in his locality and tried to justify his land claim for the population in Bädäno based on the proclamation. According to him tenants in this part of Harärgé frequently quarreled with the landlords on different matters, they did not have grazing lands for their cattle and therefore they were forced to sell their cattle at a precipitously low price, and the frequency of delinquency was associated with landlessness. (For details see Appendix No.5)

⁴⁸ WMTMRC Folder No.5/561.

Besides tenants presented different petitions to the ministries of Interior and Agriculture and later to the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. For instance in 1951 E.C., upon learning of the proclamation, 537 landless peasants from Obbora sub province appealed to the Ministry of Interior for a grant of half a gasha of land based on the proclamation. Similarly 86 landless peasants in Garamulata sub province appealed to the same Ministry.⁴⁹ The ministry had allowed the grant without following up its implementation. Such appeal letters were numerous in the archives and we do not find a consolidated number of appellants in the province. However, the administrative procedures and the bureaucratic hurdle they had to pass were so strenuous that the tenants could not afford both in terms of finance and communication skill to pursue their request up to its end. In any case the archives are also not so much helpful to follow up the case. Indeed, the burden of tenants continued unabated. Informants who were cognizant of the event claim that the grant did not materialize.

As to leasing government land, it was not easy for an ordinary tenant to do so. It was not only the lack of the initial economic strength required from the tenant, but information and communication on the subject that matters most. Besides, literacy was a crucial factor. Whenever the districts announced the bid through notices, which was rare, the majority of the Oromo remained unaware of the notice and in any case were not able to read it due to the high illiteracy rate. Informants relate that government offices were occupied by the Amhara. It was therefore within their easy reach to rent government land. The officials in charge of the activities could also facilitate the process for their ethnic kin either through bribes or through arrangements by relatives.⁵⁰ We do not have empirical data that indicate the ethnic background of the tenants on

⁴⁹ WMTMRC Folder No.1/561.

⁵⁰ Informants: Hassen Bäkär, Umar Ali, Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Bäkär

government lands, but based on the discussion above and a cross check with archives; it appears that the Amhara would not directly rent government land to the Oromo.⁵¹

The common mode of payment on government land was cash. Towards the beginning of the 1950s an attempt was made to make the mode of payment in kind and *erbo* was assumed to be the common mode of rental payment but it was not realized.⁵²

4.4 Tenants on *Samon* Land

Churches could also possibly rent land as *samon* land could be leased out to tenants who paid part of their produce towards the maintenance of priests.⁵³ In fact the rental arrangement of *samon* lands normally required more lands which the churches could afford and rich churches preferred it because it freed the servicemen from agricultural works. As for the security of tenants, cultivators on church *gult* were not different from tenants working on others' lands such as *qälad* lands. The *gult* owners demanded from their tenants what other landlords did from their tenants and used their labor at whim.⁵⁴ But tenants on church land probably felt more secure than those who leased land from other landlords. Except for the church itself no one had a right to claim such land and church contracts could therefore be longer term arrangements not subject to revocation by other claims.⁵⁵

The amount of rent paid to the church was not also that much onerous and there was no security problem; as long as the tenants fulfilled their obligations they were not threatened with eviction. But there were rare and exceptional cases where tenants were evicted from *samon* lands. A case

⁵¹ WMTMRC, Folder No.1/561.; Informants: Hassen Bäkär, Umar Ali, Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Bäkär

⁵² WMTMRC, Folder No.1/561.

⁵³ Pauswang, Land, *Society and Peasants. A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*, pp.25-26.; See also Haile Markorios, "The Present System of Land Tenure in Ethiopia" in *Challenge* Vol.10, 1970, No.2, pp.4-23.

⁵⁴ Informants: Taye Bedhane, Wondimu W/Yohannes, Legese Beqansa, Zerihun Bezabeh

⁵⁵ Ibid.

in point involved a certain *Mämeré* Belaineh, the administrator of the land for the church of St Michael in Bädéssa. He was responsible for the eviction of a number of tenants in 1943 E.C.; one of them was Musa Dera. Archives indicate that after the eviction of local peasants the land was granted to the church servants and other peasants who cultivated the *samon* land as tenants.⁵⁶

A large number of tenants on *samon* lands were found in Gursum sub province and Čärčär sub province, especially in Hirna *Wäräda*.⁵⁷ Besides, there were tenants on *wälasma* lands. According to archives consulted in the IES collection, *wälasma* lands were granted to individuals including females and the grantee in turn rented the land for tenants. The rent and other responsibilities of tenants were similar with other tenants on *samon* land.⁵⁸

4.5 Tenants on *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat's Land

In different sources, both written and oral, Täklähawariyat was considered as one of the few enlightened Ethiopians of the time. He was one among the early intellectuals of what Bahru has dubbed "pioneers of Change."⁵⁹ He was a Russian educated and a radical intellectual and is remembered for introducing some of the most progressive reforms in the country. One of these was his model government on Čärčär which is mentioned in chapter two. His major objective, as he also discussed in his autobiography, was to abolish the *mälkañña* institution altogether in the early 1920s. To that effect, Täklähawariyat wanted to convert all uncultivated land to freehold, against the backdrop of the old practice whereby the *mälkañña* controlled the land which they exchanged for corvee labor and tribute. One of his methods was to transfer all the *mälkañña*

⁵⁶ Harär Province High court, Civil case, No.32/65.

⁵⁷ National Archive, Folder No.17.1.443.08.; Informants: Wondimu W/Yohannes, Taye Bedhane, Legese Beqansa, Hamza Ali

⁵⁸ IES,MS-922,P.68.

⁵⁹ Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia. The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002).

from Čärčär to the East of Burqa river where they were given pension, the tenants thus being freed from all obligations except to the state. He also reorganized the administration of the sub province into ten districts.⁶⁰

Perhaps one of the most radical reforms Täklähawariyat attempted was to stop the payment of *asrat* and introduce fixed tax. The objective was to increase government revenue by imposing tax on the agricultural population once the *mālkāñña*, who were not paying government tax, were removed from Čärčär. Accordingly, the tax rate of Čärčär was divided into four classes: the first class was to pay 20 birr, second class 15 birr, third class 10 birr and the fourth 5 birr.⁶¹ In explaining how he came to realize the burden of *asrat* he narrated in his autobiography one of his encounters around Garamulata where a local Oromo farmer was robbed of all his produce on threshing ground by the government’s tax assessors. The account is worth quoting:

“ይኸው ወሰዱት፤ እህሌን ሁሉንም ወሰዱት ልጆቼን ምን አበላቸዋለሁ? . . . እኔሳርስ፤ ሳርም፤ ስኮተኩት፤ ሳመርት አንድ ሰው እንኳ ለእርዳታ አልመጣልኝም፡፡ አሁን ምርቱን ለማፈስ ተሰብስበው መጡ፡፡ ወይኔ ጠፋሁ! ልጆቼን ምን አበላቸዋለሁ”⁶²

Look! They have taken all the fruits of my labor. What can I feed my children Nobody came to assist me while I was ploughing, weeding, furrowing and harvesting. Now they came to take my grain. Oh! What can I feed my children?

As a result of his reform the government revenue dramatically increased. However, the Italian occupation reversed the reforms and the pre-war situation prevailed in Čärčär. Partly as a result of generous government land grants to the patriots, dignitaries and members of the royal family, partly through purchase of huge tracts of land the pre-war land owners and the associated social groups became the dominant owners in Čärčär.

⁶⁰ Täklähawariyat Täklämariam, Authobiography, pp.357-366.

⁶¹ Ibid.p.363.

⁶² Ibid.,p.362.

Hence, tenancy became the prevailing feature in Čärčär. Täklähawariyat himself claims that he too had tenants. Discussing how he obtained land, in his autobiography he describes that he had bought a very fertile land in Hirna from *Däjazmach* Täfäri (later Emperor Haile Sillassie I) in 1914 E.C. The amount of land bought was 20 *gasha*. According to him Täfäri Mäkonnen secured that land through inheritance from his father. Prior to the transfer to him the *mälkañña* were settled on it. Later on he extended his holdings by purchasing lands in Biyokaraba and Doba *wärädas*.⁶³

On his land tenants were working under different arrangements at different times. The number of tenants working his land was more than 300 as indicated earlier. Before the war there were tenants working on his land as labor tenants who were provided food and housing accommodation. There were also some tenants working on *erbo* basis. Besides there were laborers who were employed for different activities like tending cattle, milking, grinding cereals, performing different household chores etc. All were given food and lodging. For the latter purpose, he constructed many houses on his *rest* and gave these houses to his tenants.

During my field survey the houses he constructed were still standing and those who are still living in these houses are first generation tenant descendants along with their children. After the war he contracted the land in cash for tenants.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid.pp.193,378.398.

⁶⁴ Informants: Abdosh Musa, Hamid Umar, Salih Adem.



Fig 8. A partial view of Rectangular Houses built by *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat for his tenants, Hirna (Photo taken by the author in August 2014).

Täklähawariyat was remembered as a very generous landlord who always helped tenants as much as he could. Informants, some of whom were working under him stated that he had been helping them by providing milk, food, clothing and others. They remembered times when famine was so severe and they were given grain which he had accumulated for several years in pits. Regarding this, Täklähawariyat himself discussed in his autobiography that there was a very severe famine in the region so that he distributed grain from his granary amounting to 8,000 quintals not only to his tenants but also to tenants of other landlords around Hirna.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Täklähawariyat Täklämaryam, Autobiography, p.398.

4. 5 Mechanization and eviction of tenants

Commercial agriculture in Harärgé was a rare undertaking. This was particularly so in Eastern Harärgé beyond the Burqa River. The major problem was the population density and the resultant small and fragmented holdings. According to Demisse over half of the farmers in and around Haramaya district, where density was high, have their lands registered in the names of village chiefs (*garadas*) and relatives. Only one fifth of the farmers had their lands registered in their own names.⁶⁶ This situation had implication for achieving land consolidation since clear titles are required before transfers can be made. The purchase of large blocks of land was not feasible as it required a huge amount of money. Thus, notwithstanding the potential, there was little commercial farming in the area.

The condition was different in Čärčär and Adal and Garaguracha where a few commercial farms were started towards the end of the 1960s. But prior to the 1960s, there was an earlier experiment in commercial agriculture. The antecedent was set in Erer farm. Erer farm was one of the several model farms established in the early decades of the 20th century by the Ethiopian and foreign concessionaries consisting of 1000 hectares. Erer farm was established in 1927 and run by an Italian adventurer Pastorelli who by 1931 had developed about 100 hectares.⁶⁷

Administratively, the farm was under the ownership of the *béterest* and was managed by the appointees of the *béterest* as discussed above. The labor for the farm was provided by the surrounding communities who were paid wages. Except for their dwelling, the farm laborers were not provided land to practice agriculture. Different kinds of crops were grown on this land.

⁶⁶ Demisses Gebremicheal, pp.7-12.

⁶⁷ Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935*, p.208.

Maize and sorghum were the two leading cereals. But orange and other fruits were also important products of the Erer farm.⁶⁸

Besides there were some foreigners who took contract land from *rest* owners and ventured in commercial agriculture though on a small scale. The archives refer to foreigners who leased Ras Imiru's land in Jerjertu, in Čärčär in 1919 E.C.⁶⁹ But they do not show in detail who these foreigners were or the amount of land they leased and the types of crops they were growing. Another case was that of the Germans discussed earlier who took concessions in Bäka on *béterest* land.

Towards the end of the 1960s, a number of contractors rented land from the *béterest* and started commercial agriculture. The key figures of this new development were entrepreneurs who were not actually trained in modern agricultural techniques or had the know-how. They came to invest in agriculture because they had the money. Some of these personalities were Keflé Bori, Tākabä Därebé, Lägässä Tsadiqu, Adem Siyo and two brothers Zäläqä and Girma Mängäsha.⁷⁰ We do not have data that indicates the amount of land and the price they contracted it for. The land which was cultivated belonged to the *bétersit* and it was claimed to be the property of *Le'elt* Tānaññéwärq who administered the land through her agent called Shefäraw Berhanu, who was also the vice administrator of Asäbot *Wäräda*.⁷¹

The Amharic daily newspaper *Addis Zämän*, gave coverage for the expansion of private commercial farming in the country and in 1971 a total of 1719 tractors were found in the country. Harärgé was ranked as the province with the fifth largest number of private commercial

⁶⁸ Informants: Amin Musa and Mohammed Ibro.

⁶⁹ IES, MS-922.

⁷⁰ Informants: Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Jemal Abdurahman, Umar Ali Tese.

⁷¹ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

farmers, preceded by Shāwa, Eritrea, Begemder, and Wällo in that order. These commercial farmers were allowed to use duty free petroleum starting from 1957/58 by the instruction of the emperor. From 1958 on, however, the parliament approved the use of duty free petroleum in order to encourage the expansion of commercial agriculture.⁷²

In Harärgé, as indicated above, a number of commercial farmers were already engaged in commercial agriculture. Of these the contractor with the largest land and the largest number of tractors was Tākabä Därebé. Earlier Tākabä was one of the administrators of the *béterest* land but due to disagreement he was removed from his post. Later he turned his attention to running his private business and engaged in commercial agriculture. Tekabe was said to have seven tractors and farmed the area in what is now Asäbot, Bordädé, and Kora. The major crops cultivated on these commercial farms were sorghum, maize, haricot bean, and to some extent sunflower. Since the area was semi-arid, in order to avoid the danger of depending on rain, they were said to have got underground water by the help of drilling machine which the *béterest* readily made available through rent.⁷³

One of my informants, who used to be a tractor driver on Lägäsä Tsadiqu's commercial farm, reminisced that when the contractors came with their tractors they bulldozed the thatch-roofed *tukuls* of the tenants. The tenants were forced to leave their native area and migrated to Arsi and the nearby lowlands of Hančar and Gubaqoricha. Those who chose not to migrate were hired as seasonal agricultural laborers when their labor was required for weeding, serving as guards, clearing new lands and other small scale activities.⁷⁴ The price of labor was so cheap that

⁷² *Addis Zämān, Yakatit* 17, 1963.

⁷³ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

⁷⁴ Informant: Jemal Abdurahman, brother of Abdulqadir Abdurahman

laborers were employed for 50 cents per day. One other informant, who had grown up in Asäbot and was an eye witness, narrated the impact of the eviction in the following words:

In 1963 E.C, tractor farming was introduced by investors who came from Addis Ababa. The exact place was Nanewa, just on the way to Mi'eso, from Asäbot. Since the investors needed large tracts of land, they rented land from the *béterest* and forced the tenants who were living on the land to vacate their residence. Tenants who have cleared the land and made it cultivable were told to evacuate without any prior notification. When they resisted their eviction, police force was deployed beating some and putting others in jail. Soon they bulldozed their houses. Between 100 -120 houses were demolished. The tenants retreated deep into the forest and settled around Kora. Since Kora was infested with malarial mosquito, there happened the largest human tragedy I ever witnessed in my life as most of the evicted died from malaria. We have friends who were learning with us at *Le'elt Tänaññewärq* Elementary school in Asäbot. These children of the victims quit their education as they went to take care of their parents. That event decided their fate as they failed to resume their education. Some of them we have never met ever since.⁷⁵

Another area where commercial agriculture took some shape was in Jigjiga. An informant in Jigjiga claims that a certain Tädässä Mulaté rented land from the emperor and cultivated sorghum. He was said to have had five tractors and was the richest person in the town. Every season the farm employed laborers on a daily basis for some agricultural activities such as weeding.⁷⁶ But there was no large scale eviction of farmers as the land was grazing land. Due to the shrinkage of grazing land, the Somali pastoralists frequently caused problems on the farm to the extent of intentionally letting in their flocks or herds and causing damage to the crops on the field.

Conclusion

This chapter has established that tenants were working on different lands through different rental arrangements. With regard to the occupancy of tenants, they were found in *qälad* lands,

⁷⁵ Informant: Abdulqadir Abdurahaman. This is the translation of his account in Oromiffa

⁷⁶ Informant: Debebe Hailé

government lands, *béterest* land and *samon* land. But the largest concentration of tenants was found on *qälad* lands. Tenants found on these different lands were economically the most exploited group of rural producers. A comparison of their level of exploitation could be a difficult exercise, but if one hazards a guess it could be logical to conclude that tenants on *qälad* lands were the most exploited in terms of the obligations imposed on them by their respective landlords, the heavy weight of the rent, the insecurity of their tenure, with eviction very high. However, there were few exceptions from this general rule. One of the best indications was the condition of tenants living on Täklähawariat's land and some other few *qälad* owners who did not impose heavy burdens on their tenants. In addition to these minority groups, tenants working on *samon* lands and government lands were relatively in a better condition.

The economic domination and subordination of the landed class extended to the non-economic sphere through extra-economic coercions. There were different mechanisms through which the extra economic power of the landlord manifested itself against the tenants. This exacerbated the exploitation of the tenants. It is to these aspects of landlord-tenant relations that we turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Landlord-Tenant Agrarian Relationship:

The Dependency Web (1941-1975)

In the preceding two chapters, I have tried to demonstrate surplus appropriation in the form of rent (labor, produce and cash) from tenants by the landowning class. Different mechanisms of rent appropriation that facilitated the flow of resources were also discussed. Along with the mechanisms, the occupancy of tenants that indicated the proportion of tenants was also assessed. Tenants on *qäläd* lands were found to be predominant while the condition of their exploitation was found to be severe. On the other hand, tenants on government lands and *samon* lands fared relatively better.

To regularize and give a legal and firm basis of resource flow the landlord required some kind of agreement with the tenant. On the other hand, to have at least a usufruct right and stay on the land and support his family, the tenant needed some kind of agreement that established him on the plot he cultivated. This required that the two social groups have a certain kind of relation and agreement to mobilize and exploit the agrarian resources.

In this chapter, therefore, I will stress on the nature of landlord tenant agrarian relations that accelerated the flow of resources from the subordinate class to the dominant class. It should be emphasized that the landlord-tenant relationship did not focus solely on the economic aspects. Rather the relationship had a wider scope and encompassed a labor relationship, credit relationship, welfare relationship, market relationship, loyalty relationship etc. The relation superseded the purely economic aspect to a non economic coercive power and superior social

relations that sanctioned the landlords' authority and validated the sharecroppers' dependency. Without a proper understanding of these power relations, it would be difficult to capture the whole gamut of the hardship tenants were exposed to. It is also hardly possible to disentangle any of them and a proper understanding of these entire relationships offer a better insight into the lives of tenants. In this chapter, I will argue that in all these relationships the tenant was a client who became subservient to and dependent on his landlord. Any kind of agrarian relation they had was not based on equal basis and the bargaining power of the landlords was much higher than that of the tenants by virtue of their control over land and the agreements they entered into necessarily reflected this power imbalance.

In order to capture the tenet of the argument, the chapter is organized around certain thematic issues that indicate the dependence relationship. Some of these were the nature of the agreement between the two, patterns of crop sharing arrangement, insecurity of tenants, labor mobilization, and tenants' indebtedness. The bulk of the discussion focuses on the various forms of sharecropping arrangement. This is partly because, the overwhelming majority of tenancy relations and arrangements in Harärgé were crop sharing arrangement and perhaps as a result the sources available showed a natural predilection to it.

5.1 Nature and Contents of Tenancy Agreement

A plethora of scholarly literature discusses sharecropping in different parts of the world. In it, due emphasis is given by scholars to the nature of the relationship between landlords and sharecropping tenants. Neoclassical works popularized the relationship as an equal relationship between the tenant and the landlord, i.e. that the tenant and the landlord made their agreement on

equal basis, provided equal inputs, took equal risks and received equal share of the output.¹ On the other hand Marxist works indicated that the relationship between the two was far more complex, often far from equitable, the tenant being in an inferior position and extremely vulnerable to the demands of the landlord.²

On the basis of the information gathered from oral informants from rural Harärgé, we can establish two contradictory views on the relation between the two social groups. While there are a few oral informants who claim that the two sides agreed on equal terms,³ the majority of informants believe that the relationship was not equal and there was always an asymmetry of power relation between the two.⁴ The evidence presented by oral informants indicates that there were particular features of the relationship between tenant and landlord which was characterized by dependency. The sharecropping tenant was extremely vulnerable to the infinite demands of the landlord. These unequal relations were expressed at critical points during the agricultural production cycle. The demands of landlords and actions of the tenants centered on these and they

1. Mamata Swain, "Agricultural Tenancy and Interlinked Transactions I: Neoclassical and Marxist Approaches", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.34., No.37 (September 11-17), pp.2657-2666.; Mamata Swain, "Agricultural Tenancy and Interlinked Transactions II: Neoclassical and Marxist Approaches", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.34, No. 38 (September, 18-24, 1999), pp.2752-2758. For further discussion of the subject see, A Marshall, *Principles of Economics* 8thed. (Newyork and London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), pp.637-659.

² Adrienne Cooper, "Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal, 1930-1950: The Dependency Web and its Implications" in *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6, pp.232-261.; On Ethiopia; the discussion by Micheal Stahl indicates this unbalanced relationship. See also Pearce, R. "Sharecropping: Towards a Marxist View." In *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6 (London: Frank cass and Company Limited, 1983), pp.55-56.; AmitBhaduri, "A Study in Agricultural Backwardness under Semi-Feudalism", in *The Economic Journal*, Vol.83, No.329, (March 1973), pp.120-137.; M.Stahl, *Ethiopia : Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development*, (Liber Tryck Stockholm, 1974), pp.90-91. See also GeneEllis, "Man or Machine; Beast or Burden. A Case Study of Agricultural Mechanization in Ada District, Ethiopia" Ph.D. dissertation (Michigan State University, 1972), H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964), pp.1-7.

³ Informants: Zerihun Bezabih, Berhanu Mäkonnen, AskaleWeldeab, Wondimu W/Yohannes.

⁴ Informants: Zegeye Asfaw, Tamrat Kebede, *Leul Ras* Mängäsha Seyoum, Ahmed Mume, Hamza Ali, Teha Mumed, Telenji Beker, Umar Ali, Jemal Abdurahamn, Siraj Kodhele.

triggered a high sense of grievance among tenant and informants suggest that there was no sense of inherent fairness or justice in the existing landlord-tenant relationship.⁵

Supporting the evidence presented by the majority of informants are the minutes of the Community Development Committee of the House of Deputies that investigated the draft tenancy legislation. The committee that was discussing the draft legislation on landlord tenant relation submitted to Parliament was split: the minority was in support of the approval of the legislation while the majority, seven in number, disapproved of the legislation. The minority members, five in number, were Haileyesus Gobäna, representing Yäjjū (he was the secretary of the committee); Qaññāw Qeṭachew, representing southern Addis Ababa; Sintayehu Geda, representing Dire Dawa; Ayänāw Wäldāmariam, representing the peoples of Mocha in Illu-Ababora and Dästa Tasfa Giorgis, representing the peoples of Tse'da in Eritrea. They argued that the relationship between the landlord and the tenant was unequal.⁶ Reflecting on the power imbalance of the landlord and tenants when they entered into an agricultural tenancy relation, the minority argued that the landlord dictated the terms of the agreement by virtue of his control over the land. In the minutes of the meeting of the Committee, dated *Yekatit* 25, 1965 E.C, this minority group expressed their position in the following words:

...በመሰረቱ በባለርስቱና በጭሰኛው መካከል የሚደረገው ውል በሁለቱ ስምምነት መሠረት የሚመሰረት ነው። ሆኖም በባለርስቱና በጭሰኛው መካከል ምን ዓይነት ስምምነት እንዳለ እስቲ ራሳችንን እንጠይቅ? ጭሰኛው ከባለርስቱ ጋር ውል ሲፈራረም አራሱን ዝቅ አድርጎ ስለሚቆጥር ባለርስቱን ቢያስቀይመው መሄጃ ሥላሌለው ባለርስቱ የሚለውን በግዴታ መቀበል አለበት። ሥምምነቱ ህጋዊ ሊሆን የሚችለው ሁለቱም ወገኖች በእኩል ደረጃ ቢገኙ ነበር። በእኛ አገር ግን

⁵ Informants: Telenji Beker, Umar Ali, Jemal Abdurahamn, Siraj Kodhele

⁶ Minutes of the Committee for Community Development in the House of Deputies. *Yekatit* 25, 1965 E.C. The majority seven members of the committee were: Täsfaye Legese (Chair of the Committee), Abäbä Berhane, Tsige Bogale, Ato Admasu Alaba, Qaññāzmach Abdissa Mosa, Getachew Wäldāmikael and Tadässä Adamu.

ጭሰኛው በዝቅተኛ ደረጃ እንደሚገኝ ስለሚታወቅ ከጠንካራውና ከከበርቱል ባለርስት ሀይል ጋራ ሲመዘዘን ውል በሚያደርግበት ጊዜ ሥምምነቱን ያለአንዳች ተፅኖ ተዋዋለ ማለት አዳጋች ነው።⁷

Basically the contract between landlords and tenants should be made with the agreement of both. But let us ask ourselves what kind of agreement was there between the two? In making agreement with the landlord, the tenant was always in an inferior position and because he had fear of eviction if he disappoints the landlord, he had to accept what the landlord dictated in their contract agreement. If the agreement was to be accepted as really binding the two sides should have signed it on an equal basis. In our country, however, since the tenant was in an inferior position when compared with the powerful landlord, it is difficult to say that the former had made agreement with the latter without any influence or on equal footing.

The sign of subordination and the asymmetric relations between landlords and tenants in Harärgé started with the nature and contents of the agreement. This has remained throughout the agrarian cycle a fundamental source of dissatisfaction and discontent among tenants. The nature of the share contract agreement was informal, temporary and verbal. Gene Ellis in his research in Ada'a also indicated that the same kind of relationship existed in Bishoftu and added that these verbal agreements were subject to the will of the landlord.⁸

In fact, this has been a common practice in different parts of the agrarian economy in the world. For instance, in India Cooper indicated that unrecorded lease of tenants with a continuous threat of eviction gave the landlord considerable economic influence over his tenants. Even when the landlord did not exercise this power, the latent threat of reaffirming the tenant's position of inferiority and subordination persisted each year when the agreement had to be renewed.⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gene Ellis, "Man or Machine; Beast or Burden. A Case Study of Agricultural Mechanization in Ada District, Ethiopia" Ph.D. dissertation. (Michigan State University, 1972), p. 114.

⁹ Adrienne Cooper, "Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal, 1930-1950: The Dependency Web and its Implications" in *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*. Library of Peasant Studies. ed. T.Y Byers. Vol. 6, p. 241.; See also M.A Taslim, "Allocative Efficiency of Crop share Cultivation: Interpreting the Empirical Evidence", *The Pakistani Development Review*. 28:3 (Autumn 1989), pp. 248.

We do not have reliable empirical data that can demonstrate the number, percentage and the nature of tenancy agreements. In fact that would be an impossible task for a study which is qualitative and historical in nature and because it is difficult to conduct an empirical survey on such a large scale like the province of Harärgé. But there is a survey report by the Central Statistics Office on Harärgé province in 1969 that indicates that the majority (77%) of tenants had verbal agreements while only 4 % had written agreements. The study also revealed that the remaining 19% have contract agreement with their landlords but did not specify the type of the contract agreement. Of these agreements, only 15 % had a fixed time for their contract and most of them had only a one year contract.¹⁰ Although the data could not be taken at face value, in the absence of any empirical data, it can throw some light on the nature of the contract agreements.

Regarding the details of the contents of the agreement there is no reliable data that indicate the types of crops to be grown, the rights and responsibilities of the two parties, the amount of rent to be paid by the tenant, the relative contribution of the two parties on agricultural inputs and other details. These were left to tradition and custom. The only evidence on the nature of contract agreement that discusses these matters is obtained from oral informants for tenants working on *qälad* lands¹¹ while the contract documents produced for tenants working on government and *béterest* lands are already discussed in chapter four. The details are indicated in appendix Nos. 3 and 4.

An extensive interview of informants throughout Harärgé rural villages can throw light on this aspect of landlord tenancy relationship. The overwhelming majority of former tenant informants relate that tenancy agreements had been predominantly verbal. Very few of them admitted that

¹⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Central Statistics Office. Report of a Survey of Harärgé Province, National Sample Survey Report No.12. (Addis Ababa, November, 1968), p.47.

¹¹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Umar Ahmed, Hamza Ali, Askale Weldeab

they had written tenancy agreements. This group of tenants further claimed that the agreements did not specify the number of years. This was true also for those tenants with written agreement. Customarily, the duration of tenancy agreement was for only one year.¹²

In reality, however, in many areas of Harärgé, sharecroppers continued to cultivate the same landholding for consecutive years, even for generations, by transferring tenancy to children. But this was mainly because the landlords demanded tenants to renew their contract every year, often at the end of every harvesting season; informants also acknowledged that this did not imply tenants were secure on their holdings.¹³

This annual renewal of tenancy agreement has its own inbuilt bias in favor of the landlords. Many of the former tenants claimed that they were indeed in great fear at the end of each harvesting season and they had to appear on their landlord's house with *bärča*¹⁴. It was on the basis of the amount of the *bärča* submitted that the tenant could get the renewal of his tenancy. If on the other hand a new competitor came with a higher *bärča* payment the tenant in the holding was more likely to be forced to terminate his tenancy. Due to this apparent threat of failure to renew the contract, tenants were forced to take various complementary methods to maximize their advantages. The most obvious was to pay high amount of *bärča* in kind. The other was for the tenant to aim for the extraction of a high rate of surplus at the risk of environmental degradation and maximizing dependency.¹⁵

Making the tenant insecure was the basic pillar of the landlords' power over tenants. Some argue that insecurity of tenure can be beneficial since the landlords can evict the tenant if the land was

¹² Informants: Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Umar Ahmed, Hamza Ali, Hassen Beker

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

not being cultivated properly and employ another tenant in order to get the most out of their land. For example, M.A Taslim, in a study in Bangladesh argues that due to the real threat of losing tenancy as a result of its perceived inefficiency, as judged by their masters, crop share tenants perform better. Tenants who lost their land due to poor performance of crop share land would more likely lose not only the current income from the land but were also more likely at a disadvantage to gain another contract on crop share basis. Landlords were distrustful of tenants who were evicted by another landlord due to poor performance or dishonesty and therefore did not offer tenancy to such cultivators. Thus the high cost of losing tenancy induced tenants to cultivate their plot with a degree of efficiency that can satisfy the landlord.¹⁶

However, this analysis ignores the other aspect of the relationship: the tenant's dependency on the landlord which was reaffirmed annually. Insecurity of tenure, therefore, underscored the landlord's control over a decisive means of production, i.e. the land. Moreover, the tenants' survival on their rented plots was not ensured only by their better performance on the field and high productivity but rather by a number of factors like other tenants' competition with the submission of better *bārča*.

There is some disagreement among informants on the length of advance notice required for terminating tenancy. Some tenants claimed that a notice of about two to five months at harvest time was prescribed by tradition or custom for terminating the tenancy by either party.¹⁷ On the other hand some tenants state that the notice was required at harvest time if the landowner wanted to evict but the tenant was not required to give any notice to the landlord. He can quit

¹⁶ M.A Taslim, "Allocative Efficiency of Crop share Cultivation: Interpreting the Empirical Evidence", *The Pakistani Development Review*. 28:3 (Autumn 1989), pp.233-250

¹⁷ Informants: Mussa Ibrahim, Mohammed Abdulmalik, Siyoum Tässäma, Telenji Bäkär

whenever he liked.¹⁸ But there is a consensus among informants that the most common time for the termination of tenancy agreement, whether written or verbal, was during January when the harvesting and sharing of crops took place. The time would also be too early for the preparation of the soil for the new cultivation season. This is also confirmed by *Yä Čärčär Dänb*.¹⁹

In the agreement between the landlords and the tenants it was the former who decided the number of tenants to be under his supervision. Apparently, tenants were not allowed to rent land from several landlords and cultivate as they wish so that a tenant who had rented some land from a given landlord could not rent out any additional land from another landlord within the community.²⁰ In fact it was a well-known fact that each tenant was identified by his patron. Probably, one might expect that such freedom would lead to a very efficient cultivation of crop share land. But it basically violated one's freedom of movement. Sometimes, a given tenant might have disagreed with his patron and might be evicted; it became too difficult for the victim to rent land in the same locality as the landlord had the ability to influence the community claiming the evicted tenant was not a good farmer.²¹

On the other hand landlords could lease out their lands to many tenants; as a result a landlord might have many tenants while the amount of land rented to each tenant was too small. This was deliberately made on the assumption that on a small plot of land the tenant ensured his efficiency as he had no other option than to augment production. Too often, the landlords attempted to avoid the possibility of renting land to tenants who might cultivate the land inefficiently by selecting those from the pool of potential tenants who might be regarded as "good farmers" or

¹⁸ Informants: Jamal Abdurahman, Sulyman Ahmed, Umar Haji, Hamza Ali

¹⁹ Täklähäwariyat Täklämariyam, "*Yä Čärčär Dänb*", IES ,MS-734.

²⁰ Informants: Siyoum Tessema, Telenji Beker ,Hassen Beker.

²¹ Informant: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Telenji Beker, Ahmed Mume, Yuya Abdulla.

those who have already established a reputation of being good and reliable tenants. In order to qualify as good farmer, a prospective tenant must have been engaged in farming for a while so that his farming abilities can be determined. He should also be from the same locality where the landlord's land was found.²²

In addition, the potential tenant must also possess the inputs necessary for cultivation. Two such inputs which were of paramount importance in the tenancy market in Harärgé were oxen and family labor. It would be difficult for the tenant to get land from the landlord without oxen and sufficient family labor force. The main reason for the landlord in attaching such importance to the possession of these inputs is the nonexistence or difficulty of securing these inputs in the relevant markets. Moreover, a family with a larger pool of family labor would have a better chance of producing more as compared to those with relatively low amount of family labor.²³

5.2. Decision Making on Agrarian Issues

At certain stages of the annual agrarian cycle, the sharecropper consulted the landlord or the landlord demanded the right to make certain decisions regarding crop production. The sowing stage was crucial. Often it was the landlord who decided what crop is to be grown. The overwhelming majority of informants concur that the landlord instructed tenants to grow only food crops, which can be collected within the annual cropping season. The landlord prohibited the growing of long term crops for reasons which will be discussed a little later. Cereals like sorghum, maize, wheat, *teff*, leguminous plants, potato, sweet potato etc. were grown on the fields.²⁴

²² Ibid.

²³ Informants: Telenji Beker, Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

With regard to the decision as to which cereal crops to grow informants claim that they were free to cultivate any crop they wanted and therefore preferred to grow sorghum for it has various advantages. But they wanted to intercrop different cereals like maize which the landlord was not willing to grant or often the two sides needed to have an additional agreement on the sharing of



Fig.9 Intercropping- *čat* with sorghum around Damota,Haramaya (Photo taken by the author, June 2014) the newly intercropped cereal. Their decision for intercropping was due to the

²⁴ Informants: Telenji Beker, Siyoum Tessema,Siraj Kodhele, Musa Ibrahim,umar Ahmed

shortage of land. They often intercrop sorghum with maize or potato. Currently, the most commonly applied and economically viable technique of intercropping is sorghum with *čat*.

By applying intercropping, tenants tried to diversify the type of crops they produced. By cultivating maize and potato, which have a shorter gestation period, they mitigated food shortages faced by their family in the summer season, when tenant families were often running out of food.²⁵

While tenants were free to cultivate any kind of cereals, this latitude was not observed when we come to long term cash crops such as *čat*, coffee, orange etc. In Čärčär, this rule forbidding tenants to grow long term crops, unless in consultation with the landlord, was clearly discussed in *yä Čärčär Dänb*. Planting long term crops was allowed only after tenants got permission from the landlords; otherwise it was forbidden. This was in sharp contrast with the condition of tenancy in some parts of the world. For instance, V.S Vyas, in a study of four villages of central Gujarat, India, indicated that landlords were in favor of planting cash crops, in this case tobacco, while tenants were interested in food crops. He further indicates that landlords wanted a higher economic return since tobacco fetched higher market prices and also averted the risk of pilfering, common in food grain by tenants. On the other hand tenants wanted to secure food for their family and to use the byproducts as fodder for animals.²⁶

In Harärgé, the reason for the prohibition of cash crops was not mentioned by landlords. But a crosscheck of oral and archival data suggests a number of factors. One of the possible reasons was the difficulty of clearing such areas if the owner should require the land for cultivation of

²⁵ Informants: Yuya Abdulla, Musa Ibrahim, Mohammed Dawud, Yahya umar.

²⁶ V.S.Vyas, "Tenancy in Dynamic Setting" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.5, No.26, (June, 27, 1970), p.78.

cereals. Moreover, as discussed by informants, there was a general tendency for tenants who planted tree crops and stayed for long on the landlord's land to ultimately claim ownership right.²⁷ For these reasons landlords strictly prohibited the planting of tree crops on their lands.

It was also a real threat for the landlord if the tenant grew tree crops, the landlord was expected to pay compensation for the tenant when their agreement terminated. Often the compensation required was quite costly for the landlords, sometimes even as much as the value of the land. One of the letters written by *Ras Imiru to Fitawrari Täklähāwariyat* illustrates this point vividly.

It reads:

ይድረስ ከፊታውራሪ ተከለሀዋርያት. . . ጅልቦ ያለውን መሬቱን እኔም ብስራው ለሰውም ባከራየው አሁን ቀድሞ አትክልት ከተከለው ሰው በቀር ወደፊት የኔም ሹም ቢሆን ያለ እህል በቀር የኔን ወረቀት ሳይቀበል አትክልት እንዳይተክል፡፡አትክልት እንዳይተክል ከልክያለሁና አንተም ይህንኑ ቃል ለወረዳ ሹም አስታውቀህ ወረቀቱን ሳይቀበል ማንም ሰው መከልከልን እንዲያስታውቅ እንዲያደርግና ካሁንም በፊት የተከሉ ተጽፎ ይታወቅና ይቀመጥልኝ ከዚህም በላላ ያለኔ ወረቀት ፈቃድ ሳይቀበል ተክሎ ቢገኝ ያለ ዋጋ ይቀርባልና ይህንኑም ወዳንተ መፃፊ፡፡ ጀርጀርቱ ያለውን መሬቱን ለፈረንጅ ባከራየው አንዳንድ ሠዎች እደህና እደህና ሥፍራ አትክልት ተክለው ኖሮ ግምቱን ሠጥቶ ለማስለቀቅ ዋጋው እየበዛ ለመክፈል ሥላስቸገረ ነው፡፡²⁸

To: *Fitawrari* Täklähāwariyat

. . . My land in Jilbo, whether I myself worked on it or rented to others, except those who have already planted tree crops, I have prohibited any one doing the same without my official permission. I therefore inform you to enforce the same including those who have planted earlier to formally sign a written agreement. Any one planting hereafter without my official permission would lose all his fruits without any compensation. I am doing this because earlier I have given my land in Jerjertu [in Čärčär] on contract for foreigners, I found some people who have planted tree crops earlier on some plots, it became too expensive to pay compensation and evict them.

In some rare cases landlords managed to get their tenants to grow coffee in such a way that in the case of terminating the tenancy agreement the two parties agreed traditionally for the amount of compensation to be paid. Informants stated that there were a few powerful landlords in

²⁷ Informants: Siyoum Tessema, Mussa Ibrahim, Mohammed Dawud,

²⁸ IES-MS. 922 "A copy of Čärčär document" Letter written by *Däjazmach Imiru to Fitawrari* Täklähāwariyat, *Meskerem* 18, 1919 E.C.

Garamulata, Čällänqo and Čärčär who had good personal relations with the emperor and allowed their tenants to grow cash crops. When they did so, it was made on the following pre-conditions and agreements

A. If the landlord wanted the land for other purposes, the tenant should leave the plot with compensation set by local elders or by *aṭbiyadañña*

B. They were required to renew their contract every year²⁹

Once the tenants agreed to these terms, the crop sharing arrangement differed from any cereal crop production. In this case, the prevailing arrangement was sharing of the produce equally. Sometimes, tenants undertook to pay specified sum of money per *čat* and coffee tree. In a study of landlord tenant dispute on agricultural land in Qunne *wäräda* this sharing of the produce of *čat* and coffee equally was also found to be a common arrangement between the two parties.³⁰ In any case arrangements of this sort were common at the beginning of landlord-tenant relationship.

There were also cases where some landlords forced their tenants to cultivate coffee on the lands belonging to the landlords. This was labor service commonly identified as *sisso* by the tenants on the *hudad* of the landlord and the produce was entirely appropriated by the latter. Abba Hana (Shibeshi) Jima in Mojo river, Garamulata; *Afänigus* (chief of justice) Zäwdé Ayälä in Čällänqo; Abba Nābro in Mäsäla, all these *qäläd* owners were cultivating coffee using the free labor service of their respective tenants and reaped the profit for themselves.³¹

²⁹ Informants: Siyoum Tässma, Yuya Ibrahim, Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed

³⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969), p.9.

³¹ Informants: Ahmed Mumed, Hamza Ali, Umar Ahmed, Siyoum Tessema, Yuya Ibrahim.

On the other hand, one of the former tenant informants in Gursum, Ahmed Siyo Abdi, claims that groundnut had better economic return than cultivating cereals. Almost all the product was sold for a higher price to merchants for processing into oil. But the landlords did not allow tenants to cultivate it on their lands.³² My informant does not explain why landlords prohibited groundnut since groundnut is not a perennial crop and therefore can be harvested within one harvest season. There was no economic rationale for landlords to prohibit planting this cash crop since it did not have the danger of bringing ownership claims or compensation as discussed above for other annual crops.

The other major decision made by landlords related to harvesting. Harvesting time and place was decided by the landlords. Apparently, the landlords established one threshing ground (*uda* in Harärgé) for all of their tenants, often closer to the landlord's compound. This was irrespective of the distance of a tenant's plot from the established threshing floor. No tenant was allowed to make a separate threshing ground on his own. According to informants all tenants of a landlord were required to appear on the threshing ground so that within a specified period all activities including the sharing of the outputs and transporting the grain including the landlord's share was completed.³³

Here, on the threshing ground, the harvested crop was divided into shares as per the agreement, often verbal. Sharing took place using traditional measures with differing sizes. The most common were *darota*, *qarawa* and *quna*. These units of measurement were approximate rather than precise and were not so helpful to know the exact amount of the produce. *Darota* is approximately a capacity of 64 pounds (approximately 30kg), *qarawa* is 32 pounds of grain

³² Informant: Ahmed Siyo

³³ Informants: Yahya Umar, Mohammed Abdulmalik, Musa Ibrahim, Yuya Ibrahim

(approximately 15kg) and *quna* is 11 pounds (approximately 5kg). Apparently there was a regional variation of these measuring units, especially in their holding size and names of the instruments. For instance, in Čärčär, Täklähawariat tried to establish standard names and approximate holding size of these measuring units. Accordingly, one *dawula* was equal to ten *qarawa*; one *qarawa* was equal to two *quna* and one *quna* was equal to ten *sugunda*.³⁴ These measuring units were locally produced handcraft goods by using different grasses in the locality but they did not have a standard unit of measurement.

Since the measurement was imprecise and open to manipulation, it aggravated the exploitation. Since the landlord or his agent was on the spot during the sharing process along with his employed personal guards, it was possible that the tenant was under pressure by the landlord or agents of the landlord and did not get the stipulated amount. One of my informants in Čällänqo, Mume Yuya, claims that:

Although we have agreed to cultivate the landlord's land on *erbo* basis, during harvest time, the agent of *Afänigus Zewde*, *Ato Tässäma* comes on the *uda* (threshing ground) along with his assistants who measure the harvest for both of us. While sharing, although the agreement was to give *erbo*, in actuality, the landlord's agent and assistants measured unequally by using various techniques for each *darota*, in effect taking a higher share than $\frac{1}{4}$. Since we were under pressure by both the agent and the assistants who glorify the generosity of the landlord by allowing us live on his land, we did not object the inequality of sharing. It was unfortunate for us that we could not resist the injustice done against us.³⁵

This illustrated how the tenants were not able to bargain from a position of strength by objecting to the unfair treatment.

³⁴ K.C Devis , Ahmed Mohammed and W.A.Wayt, "Farm Organization, Terre and Galmo Villages, Harar Province", Experimental Station Bulletin No.42, (October 1965), p.9.;The measuring units are discussed in various archival materials some of these indicate their appropriate size. See for example "Yä Čärčär Denb" IES-MS 734.,IES-MS 887.Besides information from oral informants helps to calculate their size .Often informants give the size in pounds so it appears easy to convert it into kg.

³⁵ Informant: Mume Yuya.This is a translation of the informant's account in Afaan Oromo.

As narrated by informants, there were instances when threshing might have been prolonged due to the tight schedules landlords have or due to the fact that the landlords might not be around during harvesting. Therefore tenants were forced to delay the threshing while the crop was collected on the threshing grounds until the landlord returned and made his physical presence on harvesting. But in the meantime, unexpected heavy rain, rodents or other factors could cause damage on the harvest, reducing the amount of the produce.³⁶

5.3 Patterns of Input and Crop Sharing

In chapter three I have tried to discuss the types of crop sharing arrangements made between the tenant and landlord. The common forms of crop sharing arrangements were *erbo* and *hirta*. A variety of factors affected crop sharing contract. Theoretically one of the factors was the degree of input sharing or working capital. While the tenant providing labor, plough animals and seed, received half to three –fourth of the produce, the remaining half or one-fourth was taken by the landlord who contributed only land. The latter's share could increase as his contribution of the inputs increased. The share of the landlord could also vary according to the quality of the land. Landlords who rented fertile lands would have a higher share of the produce than those who rented relatively poor and marginal lands as they were the ones who could fix the amount they expected from their field. Tenants on such lands suffered a lot as landlords wanted to derive as much profit as possible at the expense of the tenants.³⁷

Taking a closer look at crop sharing, however, some patterns emerged that vividly illustrated the asymmetry of power relations between the two sides. For instance in contributing agricultural input, the landlord provided only land while the tenant provided seed, farm implements, draught

³⁶ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Mohammed Abdulmalik, Telenji Beker, Umar Ahmed.

³⁷ AssefaDula, "Land Tenure in Čärčär Province", in *Ethiopia Observer*, XXII (2), 1961, pp.137-139.

animals and most importantly his labor. If the crop sharing arrangement was *hirta*, considering that each input should attract its due reward the landlord was expected to collect the reward that came from the land he rented, i.e. only the value of one of the four factors of production. But since the share contract agreement was dictated by the landlord, the division of the crop took place on a 50-50 basis.³⁸ This implies that the land was valued at 50% of the agricultural cost of production whilst the combined cost of labor, seed and farm implements including draught animals together were valued at 50%.

There was another scenario within the *hirta* arrangement, i.e. if the landlord provided the seed. In such instance, an equivalent amount of the seed (often sorghum) was deducted from the total output before sharing took place between the two parties.³⁹ There were also extreme cases as discussed by informants in Gursum in which interest was calculated on the seed that was borrowed by tenants and deducted by landlords.⁴⁰ Contrary to this, the tenant had no right to deduct the seed for the upcoming cropping season. With regard to this the Civil Code of 1960, in Article 2990, sub article 3, stipulates that before sharing the tenant reserves the right to retain the seed necessary for the coming cropping season. These instances demonstrated an asymmetry in the share contract and the actual share of the crop specified in the contract was theoretical rather than practical.

In this relation of sharecropping arrangement, the balance was one-sided in favor of the landlord and little or no protection was given to the tenant. Of course a variety of sharing arrangements, including 50:50 and one- fourth to the landlord did not seem to follow any regular pattern based on the provision of the factors of production listed above. In practice, the division of output

³⁸ Informants: Umar Ahmed, Jemal Abdurahman, Hassen Beker

³⁹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

⁴⁰ Informants: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Yahya Umar

became almost irrelevant when one realized that the landlord was at the center of the decision-making process in the contract.

In relation to the highly skewed nature of the division of the produce and a number of other dues dictated by the landlord, Lambton's characterization of the Persian crop sharing contract appears pertinent here:

In addition to the share of the crop which goes to the landlord...there are also a number of dues deducted from the crop...only after all the various dues have been taken into account can an accurate estimate be made of the share of the crop remaining to the peasant. In general, it would appear that in those areas where the peasant receives a larger share of the crop under the crop-sharing agreement he has to pay heavier due under other heads, while in those areas where his share is smaller the extra levies made on him are fewer.⁴¹

According to Lambton's description, the dues or the marks of personal servitude were numerous, a phenomenon which was commonly observed in Harärgé. They included obligation to transport the landlord's share from the threshing floor to his granary after harvest, various labor services, payments and gifts during holidays etc.⁴² Thus, one can safely assume that the surplus appropriated *in toto* by the landlord from the sharecropping tenant, via both rental share and 'dues', was so heavy as to drive the tenant family to the barest minimum level of survival as a cultivating unit.

It is clear that although sharecropping implied equal status –sharing inputs and sharing output - it always concealed a high rate of exploitation. Although the contract agreement between the tenant and the landlord was sharing the produce on a half-half basis, in the case of *hirta*, for instance, this was only an ideological disguise for equity while in reality the tenant was often deprived of even a half share because of deductions for seed and other inputs. Where the tenant

⁴¹ Anne K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London: Buttler and Tanner Ltd, 1991), p.308.

⁴² Informants: Telenji Beker, Teha Mume, Mohammed Adem, Musa Ibrahim, Ahmed Mume

was able to retain a larger share of the crop, this was because a half share on such poor land would have still been barely adequate for subsistence. In all cases the landlords maximized their surplus appropriation.⁴³ The share contracts were historically determined, reflecting the origins of the pattern of sharecropping and the unequal power relationship between sharecropper and the landlord.

What the sharecropper received after deduction of the landlord's half share and his previous debts to him would hardly keep body and soul together up to the coming harvest season. In order to feed his family properly, the tenant had to look for supplementary sources of income. Thus, tenants supplemented their income by retailing some goods like homemade utensils or engaging in carpentry and as blacksmith, etc. One of my informants in Čällänqo narrated his experience in retail trading in salt bar, clothes and other commodities, traveling long distances when cultivation season was out and he was not busy on his plot.⁴⁴

On the other hand the landlord made large profit from the contracts he entered with many tenants on his land. He also had other ways to augment his own income since he had a share of the produce from many tenants. He was in a better position even when crop failure happened to some of his tenants since he might have other tenants who were not affected.⁴⁵ The alleged justice and fair division of output was therefore a share contract that maintained the landlord in affluence and the tenant in destitution.

5.4 Insecurity of Tenure

The burdens imposed on the tenants by extractive rental arrangements were aggravated by tenure insecurity. The fact that there were so many landless peasants in the rural landscape due to

⁴³ Informants: Teha Mumed, Yahya Umar, Mohammed Adem

⁴⁴ Informant: Musa Ibrahim

⁴⁵ Informants: Yahya Umar, Mohammed Dawud,

population pressure increased the demand for land and drastically reduced the tenants' ability to strike an equitable bargain with the landlord. Insecurity of tenure emphasized the landlord's control over an essential factor of production, i.e. land. It enabled the landlord to pressurize the tenants.

Security of tenure for the tenant was an indispensable requirement for the stability of cultivation, development of the land and improved production. If security of tenure was not guaranteed tenants were not encouraged to farm economically valuable long term crops or to invest in their land.⁴⁶ This inhibited the transformation of tenants into petty commodity producers, i.e. peasant cultivators who can generate part of their agricultural income by producing agricultural commodities for the market.⁴⁷

Insecurity of tenure was not only an economic but also a social predicament. It could stall partaking in communal activities, discourage improvements in living conditions, erode peasant confidence and stifle individual initiative and human dignity. In short, it induced hopelessness on peasants and drove tenants to engage in different criminal activities.⁴⁸

As reported by informants and discussed in chapter three, there were instances where the tenant had to pay an initial fee for the contract right and make irregular gifts to the landowner to augment his security of tenure. The landlord had the potential of employing tenants by evicting the already existing one as there was a large pool of labor reserve looking for land. Even a relative of an evicted tenant may take the place. Trying to obtain a piece of land already

⁴⁶ H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964),p.14.

⁴⁷ Sara Berry, "The Food Crisis and Agrarian Change in Africa: A review Essay" In *African Studies Association African Studies Review* Vol.27, No.2 ,(June,1984),pp.59-112.

⁴⁸ H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964), p.14. See also appendix no.5 a private letter written by a certain Seid Amin describing the case in Bādāno where tenants engaged in killings, uprooting vegetables on fields etc.

possessed by a tenant by paying *bärča* to the landlord was not a socially condemned act despite the ill-feeling it generated between the tenants concerned. Thus the landlord was within his rights to receive *bärča* and evict the tenant who had developed his land in preference to a newcomer with a better payment of *bärča*.⁴⁹

The draft legislation of landlord tenancy relation had proposed some measures to improve security of tenants. One of these reforms was a change from unwritten agreements to written and registered agreements.⁵⁰ This was basically aimed at boosting the tenants' security. In backward agricultural countries like Ethiopia, where tradition militated against new ideas and where the illiteracy rate of tenants was high, the negotiating power of tenants was feeble. Thus, introducing written contract agreements did not improve matters. Along the same line, continued reliance on written agreements, at the expense of making oral agreements, will contribute to the tenants' insecurity of tenure as the tenants would have no clear understanding of what was incorporated in the terms of the agreement. As a result change from unwritten to written tenancy contracts brought both complications and risks.⁵¹

There is no data that tells the number of evicted tenant cultivators in Harärgé. In fact this was true at the national level as well. The experience in some parts of Africa was relatively better. In South Africa, for instance, there was a national body called Department of Land Administration (DLA). This department monitored a program that regularly registers the number of both legally and illegally evicted farm workers at national level. It also followed up cases of tenants who

⁴⁹ Informants: Yahya Umar, Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Umar Ahmed, Mohammed Abdulmalik, Hamza Ali

⁵⁰ H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964), p.15.

⁵¹ Ibid. Informants also narrate that there was no factor that can induce tenants to prefer written agreements as opposed to unwritten agreements. Tenants were not able to read what was inserted in the agreement and after all the legal system did not support them if they wanted to appear in courts by using the written agreements whenever they were violated.

were on the verge of being evicted along with the causes of their evictions or any harassment that might be committed by landlords.⁵²

In Ethiopia and in Harärgé in particular, only informants can give information about the evicted farmers when they knew full well where the victims had gone. This was particularly the case when informants were relatives or neighbors of the victims. Irrespective of the law stipulated in the civil code and the draft legislation, which in any case was not implemented, eviction of tenants was a very common phenomenon in Harärgé and could be considered as one of the major factors for tenants' insecurity. On the basis of oral information, we can establish different factors for the eviction of tenants.

The most commonly stated reason was disagreement between the tenant and the landlord. This in turn occurred due to various factors. For instance, the landlord might have instructed the tenant to give free labor services which was not stated in their agreement; when the tenant refused his fate was eviction. The other was the competition among tenants themselves. Whenever a given land was considered as fertile by a tenant looking for land, he presented a better *bärčä* for the landlord so that the tenant who had been working on the land would be evicted unless he provided the same or a higher amount of *bärčä*.

Theft was another factor. Some tenants would like to have a better share of their own produce above what was stipulated in the contract or to benefit themselves contrary to the contract agreement with the landlord. To achieve this, they would engage in pilfering some amount of the

⁵² Ruth Hall, "Evaluating Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa". *An Occasional Paper series No.3*, (School of Government, University of Western Cape, 2003), pp.5-9.

collected crop before threshing. If discovered by the landlord, who often had a wide network of informers in the villages, the tenant would be evicted.⁵³

Curiously enough there were cases when the tenant was subjected to eviction if he had some property in the form of cattle. The landlord, especially his agent, believed that cattle had the potential of depleting the pasture of the land through grazing. Therefore, the landlord or his agent wanted to reduce the number of cattle in the possession of tenants, forcing the tenant to do so or leave the plot.⁵⁴

Besides, there were legally accepted reasons for landlords to evict tenants. One of these was when tenants refused to pay the rent as per the agreement. Informants narrate that this was not as such a serious factor to swell the rank of the evicted as tenants were fearful of the consequences of default in rent payment. Tenants often paid the rent as per the agreement. In any case, since the sharing took place on the threshing ground, there was no serious problem of rent default.⁵⁵ Rent default became common towards the end of the old regime when tenants sensed the changing political climate. For example, informants in Qärsa suggested that tenants belonging to *Balambaras* Täyqachew refused to pay his share and conflicts occurred between him and tenants.⁵⁶ Besides, as archives amply demonstrate and as is discussed in chapter four, rent default was a common phenomenon by tenants who were found on government and *réstegult* lands.

The other legitimate reason for eviction was when tenants failed to properly handle the fertility of the land. Cognizant of their insecurity of holdings many tenants were not interested to use cow dung and other natural fertilizers to keep the fertility of the soil. In some cases, their effort to

⁵³ Informants: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Yahya Umar, Umar Ahmed, Mohammed Adm.

⁵⁴ Informants: Telenji Beker, Abdella Miko, Siyoum Tessema.

⁵⁵ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Ahmed Mumed,

⁵⁶ Informants: Teha Mumed, Niguse Anberbir, Goshu Dinawo

apply fertilizers on the soil would end up inviting competitors and the payment of more *bärča* for the landlords. Thus, tenants refrained from applying fertilizers which put them in conflict with the landlord and ultimately triggered their eviction.⁵⁷

The eviction of tenants took place against the background of the strong attachment of tenants, indeed all peasants, to their locality. As discussed by Chodak, African peasants were people who lived in the same village community from generation to generation. Any compulsion to change their birth place and residence and to live amidst other often alien communities was an almost traumatic experience. Sons and daughters were also expected to stay in the community of their origin or in their vicinity and to continue the community's life.⁵⁸

Although we cannot tell the number of evicted tenants in Harärgé, it can be established that there were frequent evictions of tenants on *qälad* lands under the supervision of agents rather than by the landlords themselves. This was because agents tended to maximize their own benefit which could be achieved only through coercion of tenants and through intimidating tenants with eviction. It was the agent who demanded more payment by way of *bärča* for renewal of tenancy agreements; it was for the agent that tenants performed manual work and provided free labor services. Probably it was once a year when an absentee landlord visited his farm that agents mobilized tenants to contribute a gift for the landlord so that he would not return empty-handed.⁵⁹

On the other hand, since land was meaningless without labor, some liberal landlords supervising their lands did not impose such harsh demands on their tenants so that the tenants enjoyed longer

⁵⁷ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Jemal Abdurahman, Mohammed Abdulmalik

⁵⁸ Szymon Chodak, "The Birth of an African Peasantry" in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.5, No.3 (1971), p.344.

⁵⁹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Siraj Khodele, Ahmäd Mumed.

tenancy. But since the overwhelming majority of the landlords' lands were supervised by agents there were frequent evictions of tenants. According to informants most of the evicted tenants went to Aniya, the lowlands of Čärčär and some even went to Balé.⁶⁰

In some cases, beside eviction, harassment of tenants was related by informants. This consisted of imposition by the landlord or his agent of conditions on the tenant in order to force him to abandon a rental contract. Such a strategy was often sought because it avoided costly legal procedures and expenses as well as potential problems with eviction.⁶¹ Harassment took various forms, such as beating, setting fire on the grass-roofed homestead of tenants, prohibition of collecting firewood from the *qäläd* land, prohibition of tending cattle etc. With regard to beating, Mohammed Mussa, an informant, related that he was beaten by *Ato* Tässäma, the agent of *Afänigus* Zäwdé Ayälä, because he took ripe corn for home consumption; this was forbidden before the *erbo* share was taken by the landlord. The victim retaliated by beating the agent only to find his father being evicted from the land. It was after a lengthy negotiation by elders and payment of compensation that Musa Ibrahim was re-installed on another infertile holding.⁶² Likewise, in Qärsa, *Balambaras* Täyqachew beat one of his tenants just because he had crossed through the *hudad* land cultivated by himself and his colleagues.⁶³

Harassment by burning the tenant's homestead was also common. The landlord could burn the house of the tenant and force him to leave his land for a slight misunderstanding created between

⁶⁰ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Yuya Abdulla, Hamza Ali, Hassen Beker

⁶¹ Informants: Hassen Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurhman, Umar Ahmed

⁶² Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Mohammed Musa, son of the former.

⁶³ Informant: Teha Mumed

them. This kind of harassment was commonly observed in Garamulata as related by informants.⁶⁴

But it needs to be emphasized that there was varying degree of security of tenants depending on the personality of the landlords, and their relationship with tenants. Tenants who were working on small scale landlords' holdings were relatively more secure than those farming for big landlords. Because small scale landlords often resided within the locality where the tenants lived, they participated in agricultural activities and cooperated with their tenants who cultivated their additional lands. In some cases they shared a common language and cultural tradition and they might also be blood relations. The fact that owners themselves took part in the daily toils of agricultural work made them sympathetic to the problems of the tenants. In such cases eviction rarely occurred. When eviction occurred it was only after the elders of the village have found that the tenant in question was mishandling the farming plot or had committed serious mistakes. Besides, there were landlords like *Fitawrari Täklähawariat* who were not harsh in handling their tenants. In such cases there were no eviction cases as reiterated by informants.⁶⁵

5.5 Mobilization and exploitation of labor

The power of the landlord over his tenants by virtue of his control over land enabled him to demand use of the labor of the tenant's family. Corvee labor was common although it was formally prohibited by law in 1934.⁶⁶ The tenant worked for the landlord for specified number of days without payment, receiving perhaps only a day's meal. The work was often stipulated as two days per week and was usually at peak periods of agricultural activities such as sowing,

⁶⁴ Informants: Telenji Beker, Abdella Miko

⁶⁵ Informants: Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed, Askale Weldeab, Taye Bedhane

⁶⁶ Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sillasie University press, 1968), p. 177.

ploughing, harvesting or making terraces on the landlord's field, digging irrigation channels, preparing the threshing grounds, carrying agricultural produce to markets, making granaries for harvested crops, bringing firewood, planting and weeding out coffee plantations, picking coffee grains etc. Sometimes the tenant might also be required to accompany the landlord while travelling.⁶⁷

These were implicit obligations on the part of the tenants to avoid eviction and the landlord considered the services as his right or else he could get rid of tenant and without any problem replaces him with a new tenant. On the part of the tenants, because of the landlords' special power, they were submissive and were unjustly exploited. Since they did not have guarantee, the tenants did not dare refuse to work for the landlords. Therefore labor services were one of the mechanisms through which tenants mitigated eviction which was exercised by landlords at whim.⁶⁸

Besides these, the labor of the tenants' families was used by the landlord and these extended beyond purely economic tasks. A number of informants explain that they had worked for their landlords during social occasions such as marriages, celebrations of the days of some patron saints, holidays or funerals. Especially, the labor of women as will be discussed in chapter seven was an important facet of labor exploitation by the landlords.⁶⁹

Labor exploitation also extended to the children of the tenants. Children's labor was required to look after cattle and goats belonging to the landlords. This labor exploitation of the children of tenants is illustrated by the following couplet by informants in Hirna:

⁶⁷ Informants: Yahya Umar, Taye Bedhane, Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Yahya Umar, AbdellaMiko

Afaan Oromo

Gloss

Okolan Farda bitte addi camarrata'aa the lame [landlord] bought and rides a white horse

Ilmi tokof dhalatee tokoffii chayaa ittita'a⁷⁰ A son born to the tenant was laboring for the
landlord

The labor services given by the tenant and his family members for the landlord and his household were completely in contradiction with the tenancy bill of 1963. The bill in its article 15 sub articles 2 and 3 indicated that except for the agricultural rent agreed upon between the tenant and the landlord to be paid either in cash or in kind, the landlord was not entitled to any services and indirect payments by way of gifts such as *bārca*. It further indicates that, if the landlord was found violating this article, he was forced to pay back to the tenant two fold of what he had received.⁷¹ However, this was not observed by the landlord who exercised supreme power over the tenants. In fact no legal procedure was established to follow up the implementation of this act.

5.6 Tenant indebtedness

Indebtedness of tenants was an integral facet of the dependency relationship. Tenants were often forced into debt because their income from cultivation after the landlord had deducted his share in produce and the dues was scarcely adequate to sustain the family. Sometimes tenants could have plans to expand their agricultural activities. The non availability or inadequacy of the necessary credit or capital might pose a critical obstacle in their agricultural activities.

⁷⁰ Informants: Abdosh Musa, Hamid Umar, Salih Adem.

⁷¹ Draft Legislation on Landlord Tenancy Relation, 1963 E.C. Chapter 3, Article 15.

Debts were incurred both in cash and in kind in the rural parts of Harärgé province for a variety of reasons. Debts in kind were incurred for seeding, celebration of religious holidays, feeding the family in times of shortage etc. The amount of the debt could also vary from a small amount to 100kgs of grain. Likewise the debts in cash were incurred for different purposes as will be discussed a little later.⁷² The following table indicates the types of loans, the purposes and the average amount in rural Harärgé in 1969.

Table no 8. Purpose and Average Amount of Loans

No	Purpose of loans	Loans		Average amount of loans in Eth.birr
		Number	%	Ethiopian birr
1	Purchase of food	672	61	38.06
2	Purchase of seeds	26	3	40.92
3	Payment of taxes	94	9	42.18
4	Purchase of clothes	69	6	27.62
5	Purchase of cattle	31	3	80.06
6	For ceremony	98	9	55.98
7	Medical services	29	3	64.38
8	For trading	5	-	190.00
9	Construction (Housing)	14	1	98.42
10	Others	54	5	68.1
11	Not stated	4	-	101.25

Source: Central Statistics Office, Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province. National Sample Survey Report No.12, (Addis Ababa, 1968), p.35.

⁷² Informants: Abdulatif Ahmäd, Musa Ibrahim, The list of the types of tenant indebtedness is found in the CSA Report in its Survey report of Central Statistics Office, Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province. National Sample Survey Report No.12,(Addis Ababa, 1968),p.35.

As can be observed in the table above, the largest number of loans was extended to tenants for the purchase of food. This was probably a manifestation of the shortage of food tenant families faced within the annual agrarian cycle even though they themselves were producers of food grain. This was due to the high level of surplus appropriation by landlords that took a good amount of their produce in the form of rent.

Rents could also be viewed from the point of view of the types taken and the modes of repayment. In general debts were taken in cash, in crops and other forms. The modes of repayments have also the same pattern. While rents taken in the form of cash form the overwhelming majority, the form of cash repayments also outnumbered other repayment forms. Based on the CSA report, the following table indicates this fact.

Table No 9. Types and Mode of Payment of Loans.

Type of Loans	Mode of Payments							
	Cash		Crop		Other (in kind)		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Cash	778	72	14	1	12	1	804	74
Crop	122	11	136	12	10	1	268	24
Other	8	1	-	-	6	1	14	2
Total	908	84	150	13	28	3	1086	100

Source: Central Statistics Office, Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province. National Sample Survey Report No.12,(Addis Ababa,1968),p.36.

Loans were available for tenants from two general sources: institutional and non institutional. The former consisted of cooperatives and development banks while the latter included credit with high interest rate obtained from individuals such as landlords, merchants, friends, or relatives. Credit associations were not widespread in Harärgé. This lack of financial institutions not only forced the population in the countryside to depend on unofficial sources of credit but also became a serious obstacle to mobilize savings from domestic sources. Therefore banking services and credit associations remained ineffective both as sources of rural credit and for mobilizing domestic resources for investment purposes in agriculture.⁷³

The only credit cooperative society I came across was the Haramaya Farmers Cooperative Association. This credit society had a total membership of hundred farmers who produced vegetables and *čat* for local market. According to a study made on this association, out of the total members of the association, 57 were owner operators, 41 were part owners and part tenant while only 2 were pure tenants. Since ownership of land was the basic factor that enabled farmers to get access to credit facilities, the overwhelming majority were in a position to get credit facilities although their holding size was very small. The average holding size of the farmers was three hectares. Hence, this implies the function of the credit society was still limited only to *rest* owners, relegating tenants to the margins when it came to getting credit facilities.⁷⁴

The draft legislation on landlord –tenancy relation had also attempted to extend credit for tenants through the tenancy agreement they entered with the landlord. According to Article 13 sub article 2 and 3, of the 1963 draft legislation, by using the tenancy agreement as collateral, the

⁷³ Shiferaw Jamo, "An Overview of the Economy, 1941-1974", in *Economic History of Ethiopia, The Imperial Era 1941-1974*, Vol.1. in Shiferaw Bekele (ed) ,p.40.

⁷⁴ Lakew Birke, "A Credit Study of Alemaya Farmers Co-operative Society", *Experimental station Bulletin*, No.46.(1965), pp.9-25.

tenant could take loans to invest on agricultural activities and the loans to be extended was only through organizations which were allowed by the government to extend such credit facilities.⁷⁵ However, this was one of the intended reforms that faced stiff resistance in the Chamber of Deputies during the discussion as it was indicated in the minutes of the Community Development Committee. The majority members of the committee objected to this provision on the ground that it violated the private property right of citizens.⁷⁶ In any case the attempted reform in this regard did not materialize as the draft legislation itself was stifled in the parliament.

But the most commonly stated sources of credit for tenants were their landlords. Of course there were also some businessmen who extended loans with high interest. But since the landlords were their principal creditors, debt bondage reinforced the dependency relationship of tenants and landlords. This phenomenon was also common in other parts of the world. For instance in India Bhaduri argues that the indebtedness of tenants to their landlords was an obstacle to tenants' progress as landlords opposed any kind of innovation which would increase the earning capacity of their tenants as this would remove the bases of their control (through debt bondage) and ability to maximize the extraction of surplus labor.⁷⁷ Also for sharecroppers their contract was not considered as adequate security for loans and their only source of credit was their landlords.⁷⁸

Based on the time taken for repayment, loans could be categorized into two. These are annual production and consumption loans and emergency or life cycle loans. The latter were cited repeatedly as the major causes of peasant indebtedness since marriages, construction, births and

⁷⁵ Draft Legislation on Landlord Tenancy Relation, 1963 E.C . Chapter 2, Article 13.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the Committee of Social Affairs in the Chamber of Deputies, on *Yekatit* 25, 1965 E.C.

⁷⁷ Amit Bhaduri, "A Study in Agricultural Backwardness under Semi-Feudalism", in *The Economic Journal*, Vol.83, No.329, (March 1973), pp.120-137

⁷⁸ Shiferaw Jamo, p.40. Informants: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Siraj Kodhele, Abdulfatif Ahmed

deaths involved lump sum loans for one occasion with high rate of compound interest. These were impossible to repay for years. The former types of loans were specific to the tenant family and consisted of loans for consumption and advances in kind for seeds, payments for medical services, clothes and animals. Moreover, loans to the tenant family for grain for food were taken several months before the new harvest when the tenant families had exhausted their food stocks.

Theoretically, tenants were free to move from locality to locality and thus change their landlords. But in practice debts tended to tie tenants to their landlords. Tenants were indebted to their landlords and there was a downward spiral of pauperization in between 1941-1975 in which indebtedness became a mechanism for downward mobility. In this process if the tenant was a sharecropper, sharecropping was a stage between landholding and landlessness.⁷⁹

When the crop was harvested the landlord as a creditor charged a 50% rate of interest and deducted the total amount from the tenants' share at the threshing floor. The tenant suffered from this system in two ways. Firstly the usurious and exorbitant interest rate, i.e. 50% was made on such informal source of credit so that debt remained a heavy burden for the tenants. Secondly the tenant suffered from the annual price cycles. The grain was borrowed at a time when the price of cereal crops was high and charged at the cash value of the current price. Repayment was made when prices were always low at harvesting time, but the cash equivalent of the loan, not the quantity of the loan, was paid. Through perpetual indebtedness the tenant was forced to lose a substantial portion of his share after the harvest as repayment of past debt with interest. This reduced his actual available balance of the harvest well below his legal share of the harvest. This did not often leave the tenant with enough food to survive from the current harvest season to the next and the serious problem of survival can only be overcome by borrowing for consumption.

⁷⁹ Informants: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

This perpetuated the indebtedness of the tenant based on the regular requirements of consumption for his family. The tenant had to pay the debt with 50% rate of interest that was commonly charged. In case the tenant failed to repay the loan, it was carried forward to the next harvest season. In this way a vicious dependence web was created between tenants and landlords to whom tenants would work in perpetuity surrendering their bargaining power, if any, to the landlord.⁸⁰

One of my key informants Yahya Umar remembers how the landlord, Ashagre Qonjile in Seqere, Jarso, collected the debt and forced tenants to remain completely dependent on him. He says:

the landlord has a special notebook on which he listed the names of his sharecropping tenants along with the amount of the grain debited. After threshing he calls names and instructs them to repay the loans along with the 50% interest rate. If the tenants defaulted the entire debt and submitted some amount, the landlord refused to take and transferred the debts along with the interest rate for the coming harvest season. This way we had nowhere to go and worked for him year after year.⁸¹

Borrowing from the landlords is open to many abuses and tenants indebted to their landlords were always in a poor position to resist the demands of their landlords for increased rents or services. They had to accept whatever terms and conditions were imposed on them to get the resources they needed. Being on the margin of subsistence the tenants were in need of the loans for production. Seeds for sowing were frequently provided by the landlord and considered as an advance to cultivators to be repaid at harvest time.⁸²

Another form of loans that exacerbated the economic impoverishment of tenants was renting farm animals. Bullocks required for cultivation were loaned in various forms. A landlord could supply oxen and the tenant used the animal for cultivation while at the same time bearing the

⁸⁰ Informants: Yahya Umar, Teha Mumed, Hassen Beker, Musa Ibrahim

⁸¹ Informant: Yahya Umar. This account is a translation of the informant from Afaan Oromo

⁸² Informants: Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed, Yuya Ibrahim, Teha Mumed

costs of feeding and fattening the animal to return it at the end of the contract agreement. Besides this, informants claim that there was an informal market of farm animals for starting tenants.⁸³ According to informants, this informal market rented farm oxen in such a way that a single ox rented by the tenant from those who have excess was worth two *dawullas* (approximately 200kg) of any cereal crop the tenant cultivated. If the tenant rented two oxen it became four *dawullas*.⁸⁴

But there was also a horizontal relationship of tenants in securing oxen in a market which was too informal and in any case beyond the economic capacity of tenants. This was borrowing of oxen between two tenants and working in turn counted by days. This was called *māqānajo*. In *māqānajo*, two tenant households contributed one ox each and worked for equal number of days until the ploughing activity was completed. *Māqānajo* saved a newly starting tenant household from entering an exorbitant and vicious debt cycle that can aggravate his impoverishment.⁸⁵

Another form of indebtedness which bedeviled the rank and file of tenants was *wäläd-agäd*. It was a condition when cultivators were unable to pay off their loans and were forced to lose their farm land. They lost their land rights which had been security for loans to money lenders. *Wäläd-agäd* was a situation when independent peasants turn into tenants upon their failure to repay the loans they borrowed from landlords or money lenders. Indebted cultivators continued to lose their land rights and became sharecroppers. In *wäläd-agäd* the size of the land indebted was highly variable and related not to the amount of the loan but rather to the debtor's ability to repay. The lowest limit of *wäläd-agäd* was one year or one harvest season since the lender

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Telenji Beker, Yahya Umar. Of courses this amount differed from *warada* to *warada* depending on the agricultural productivity of the area under consideration and the presence or absence of grazing grounds for cattle rearing. For instance in Hirna, Mäsäla and BiyoKeraba, informants claim that the rent for a single ox was 3 *dawulla*. This implies a tenant may again lose all his labor effort and the subsistence of his household was at stake.

⁸⁵ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Siyoum Tesema, Zerihun Bezabih, Belete Worqeneh

benefited from the produce of the land. But there was no uppermost limit of the agreement. And the agreement stayed in force until the cultivator repaid the loan he took.⁸⁶

Some of these cultivators, although they disposed of their basic means of production, retained their animals and ploughs. On the other hand the big landlords and money lenders might expand their cultivation by taking the peasants' lands and the formerly abandoned marginal lands because of the newly available capital and labor. Thus the proportion of land under independent cultivation and the proportion of independent cultivators declined while the proportion of sharecropping tenants and the ratio of land cultivated through sharecropping increased.⁸⁷

Wäläd-agäd can be considered as a process of differentiation among cultivators. It indicates a downward mobility of cultivators who lost their rights to land and became tenants, often on the same holdings. Some of these cultivators, although dispossessed, retained their animals and farm instruments. Their money lending landlords provided at most the seed. The land they were dispossessed of would remain in the hands of the landlords or the money lender until the money was repaid along with the interest.⁸⁸

It is difficult to find out the number of peasants who lost their lands and the amount of land taken over through *wäläd-agäd*. But based on the information obtained from informants I collated land alienation through *wäläd-agäd* was extremely common and was more widely spread around Haramaya and Kombolcha than any other districts in Harärgé. One of my informants from Adele, Dhaqaba Gameda, was a money lender who lent money to some

⁸⁶ For a better treatment of *Walad Agäd*, see TekalegnWeldemariam, "A City and its Hinterland: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa (1887-1974)" Ph Dissertation (Boston University, 1995), pp. 312-318.

⁸⁷ Ibid.; Informants: Mohammed Abdulmalik, Dheqeba Gameda

⁸⁸ Ibid.

cultivators and took their land as *wäläd-agäd*. He further explained that as a weaver he went to Harärgé from Shäwa, with little money. As most of the cultivators were not able to repay the loan he took their land and expanded his agricultural activity on the land until the revolution erupted and took away the land along with some tractors that he had bought.⁸⁹

5.7 Tenants and the Market

Tenants were integrated into the market at least in two ways: either as direct sellers or through their landlord as producers. It is natural that a subsistent household was forced to sell a part of its produce in order to obtain cash to buy basic necessities such as salt, cloth and kerosene or for life cycle expenditures such as marriage, crisis management, purchases such as medicines or to repay cash debts.⁹⁰ The produce of tenants, however, did not represent an excess of production over consumption.

Chodak, in his *The Birth of an African Peasantry*, discussed that peasants in Africa were engaged in what is sometimes termed as a dual economy of production. They produce for the direct consumption of their own household as well as for the purpose of obtaining vital goods in the market like kerosene, salt, soap, cloth etc., which they were not able to produce themselves. His discussion directly applied to the condition of the tenants in Harärgé and their involvement in the market. He says:

⁸⁹ Informant: Dheqeba Gameda. In the archives of former Harärgé province high court, a number of litigations are found but are far from being exhaustive. For example *Mämere* Täshome W/Medhin got a quarter of *gasha* land in *wäläd-agäd* from Bäläté Mulatu in Quni for 15 years upon the payment of 1250 birr; in Gursum, *Ato* Bälätä G/Mikael rented a quarter of *gasha* land in *wäläd-agäd* from Kädo Delal for 10 year upon the payment of 364 birr per annum; in Habro *Wäyzäro* Abäbä Zannuel gave her quarter of *gasha* land in *wäläd-agäd* for *Ato* Awlachew Tadesse for ten years upon the payment of 1000 birr; in Dädär Wäru Geté took a quarter of *gasha* land from Hassen Adem in *wäläd-agäd* for three years with 350 birr per year.

⁹⁰ Central Statistics Office, Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province. National Sample Survey Report No.12,(Addis Ababa,1968),p.35.

The peasants' time spent on the productive activities is divided into time in which he produces objects for self-consumption, and time during which he produces commodities to be sold on the market. The peasant produces for himself and his family most of the things and the food that they need in everyday life. Yet he has a burning desire for more, for products that could be obtained only through the medium of the market. He has to sell in order to buy, and as a result of repetitive engagements in such activities he becomes part of a system which exists because of continuously ongoing interdependent market exchanges.⁹¹

In this dual economy of tenants there were two markets for the crops: one at harvesting time when prices were low but when tenants were forced to sell because of the pressure to repay cash debts and pay for other items; the other during the period before the harvest season when the same tenants were buyers or borrowers of grain at high prices.⁹² The tenant was forced to sell at harvest time; he lacked holding power due to the deficiency in economic strength to hold on to his product and therefore was forced to sell some of the produce to meet the urgent household needs and debt repayment. Due to the severe household demands the tenant was unable to wait until prices rose in the months after the harvest. In the meantime, tenants were affected by price fluctuation and hence became victims of the market.⁹³

In the dual economy, the commercial network was created between the rural producers and the urban consumers whereby the latter appropriated surplus from the former. The price was beyond the control of the peasants in general and therefore what they received for their produce (both grain and cattle) was very low; so that in order to cover their debts in cash along with the exorbitant interest rate tenants had to sell a large amount of grain. Perhaps this was due to the

⁹¹ Szymon Chodak, p.330. Wolf also distinguishes peasants from farmers in that the former were subsistence oriented and produce for home consumption. Their involvement in the market was only for sale within the context of an assured production for subsistence. His unlimited involvement in the market threatens his hold on the sources of livelihood. On the other hand farmers entered the market fully, and look for maximum returns and favor more profitable products. For details see, Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. XVIII-IX.

⁹² Siegfried Pauswang, *Peasants, Land and Society: A social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia*, pp.58-59.; Informants: Teha Mumed, Dawud Abdulahi Mohammed Abdulmalik, Abdulqadir Abdurahman

⁹³ Ibid.

fact that money was too expensive to obtain. Some better off tenants sold their cattle, goats and sheep.⁹⁴ In addition, there is evidence that the poor nature of transport facilities hindered peasants including tenants from getting their due share from their agricultural product.⁹⁵

In fact prices of agricultural commodities varied considerably for different reasons. One of the major factors for price disparity was the period of marketing. Grain crops brought to the market during the harvest season were cheap as there was product overflow in the market. Price also differed based on the market centers. In some of the big towns like Harär, Dire Dawa, Čiro and Jigjiga, grain crops were relatively expensive as compared to the small towns like Qärsa, Hirna, Kombolcha, Haramaya, Bädéssa etc. Thus, tenants near the big market centers were relatively better paid for their produce than those found in small markets and smaller towns. This logic of market price also applied to some extent to the cattle market, except that cattle are relatively cheaper in pastoralist areas than in agrarian areas.⁹⁶

Other factors that determined the price of agricultural commodities were the qualities of the produce brought to the market and the cereal types which were in high demand for home consumption. For instance, *teff* had relatively better price than sorghum and the price also increased along with the quality.⁹⁷ There are lots of data collected by different authorities that tell the relative price of commodities. One of these, found in the National Archives, gives the price of these commodities including cattle in Harär town in 1938 E.C and is indicated in the table below.

⁹⁴ Clarke Brook, p.264. Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Teha Mume, Dawud Abdulahi, Mohammed Abdurahman.

⁹⁵ Ibid.; National Archive, Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.

⁹⁶ "Harärgé Under Drought: A Survey of the Effects of Drought Upon Human Nutrition in Harärgé Province", (1974), pp.55-65.; Informants: Dawud Ararso, Abdulatif Ahmed.

⁹⁷ "Harärgé Under Drought :A Survey of the Effects of Drought Upon Human Nutrition in Harärgé Province", (1974), pp.55-65.; Informants: Teha Mume, Hamza Ali, Abdulatif Ahmed

Table No 10. Items and relative price in Harär market, (1938 E.C.)

Se. No.	Item	Unit price (in Ethiopian Birr)
1	Fattened bull	Between 65-70
2	Fattened sheep	Between 10-12
3	Fattened goat	Between 7-10
4	100 kg of sorghum	Between 10-18
5	100 kg of teff	Between 18-20
6	Butter (In <i>tanika</i>)	Between 35-39
7	Honey (In <i>Gundo</i>)	Between 40-42

Source: National Archive folder no.64, file no. 4

Another source that discusses the sale of sorghum harvested on *béterest* land in 1948 E.C. indicates that 100 kg of sorghum was sold at a price between 10.50- 13.50 birr depending on the quality and the timing of the sorghum. Other sources indicate that in 1948 alone, the *béterest* sold a total of 4000 quintals (400,000kg) of sorghum from Bäka and Asäbot lands.⁹⁸ This was produced by tenant labor through *erbo* and *hirta* arrangements. The figures imply that if tenants were to repay their loans and purchase commodities vital for their day to day household needs by selling their harvested crops, they would have to sell a substantial amount of their produce. That would also jeopardize their basic need in food supply.

⁹⁸ WMTMRC,Folder No.14/15.This document narrates the litigation between the defendant Tākabä Därebé and the plaintiff Seyoum Dässaläññ who accused the former claiming that he sold sorghum belonging to the *béterest* to his relatives and his business friends . The 35 page long charge discussed not only the sale of grain to relatives and friends but also the sale of land belonging to the *béterest* along with the prices for each. On the other hand the accused replied that he sold the specified amount of sorghum through official bid that considered the prevailing market price of the time. When we see the time sold it was in the months of April, May and June which appears that the grain had fetched the market price of the timing.

The government acted against the interest of tenants by depressing prices and by reducing their incomes through excessive taxation. While low level of food price and therefore low income was a predominant feature among the tenants, the situation in other parts of Africa, especially in post-independence Africa, had a different feature. There was actually a rise in the price of food commodity especially in urban areas. Sara Berry analyzed the different factors for this. One obvious factor was the fact that output in African agriculture had actually declined. There was also a proliferation of illegal or parallel market for food crops.⁹⁹

The physical accessibility of markets was also crucial in setting prices and covering the transport cost of commodities. As to the landlords, the market was their household. Informants discuss that the granaries of the landlords were located in the compound of their residence. When they were ready to sell their grain, merchants flocked to their households and bought cereals wholesale. They have no extra cost related to labor, which tenants had to incur (for example taking sorghum out of the pits) and there was no transport cost incurred by the landlords. One good example of this was *Balambaras Tāyiqachew* in Qārsa. The landlord had a number of granaries in his compound. When the price of grain was on the rise, wholesalers from Dire Dawa flocked to his home and they bought sorghum from the granaries.¹⁰⁰

5.8 Relation with the *Wakil* (Agents)

In Harārgé, there were a number of absentee landlords who were strangers to the area where they owned land and managed their land by proxy. In the area where they have land they must employ local representatives who look after their economic interests. Therefore their relation with the tenants was indirect and impersonal. The local representatives of the landlord were employees

⁹⁹ Sara S. Berry, "The Food Crisis and Agrarian Change in Africa :A Review Essay." In *African Studies Review* Vol.27, No.2, (June, 1984), p.62.

¹⁰⁰ Informants: TehaMume, Niguse Anberbir, Goshu Dinawo

whose job security was dependent on ensuring that the tenants paid the rent punctually. Their responsibility ranged from overseeing the routines of farm activities to controlling the activities of the tenants on the farm. *Wakils* (caretakers) were delegated with complete authority that included hiring and evicting the tenants. This in effect meant the landlord did not have to deal with the tenants. The landlord delegated his agent in front of the *atbiyadañña*.¹⁰¹

The agents were actually employed by the landlords based on various criteria. Since his fitness to the job was measured by his capability to guard the interests of his employer, he could not be flexible on matters of tenant exploitation. Indeed, in most of the cases, informants implied that the agents were strangers themselves in the villages they supervised and were thus not accustomed to the local traditions and ways of life.¹⁰² In such cases, it is not farfetched to assume that the landlords' superiority was built into the tenancy relationships and was utilized to satisfy the landowner's economic interests without paying attention to the needs of the tenants. The landowners were only interested in the economic gains they could collect from the land and their local agents were their instruments.

As a result of this structural power arrangement, the tenants who were working for these absentee landlords were extremely hard pressed and were exposed to the secondary level of exploitation by the agents. According to former tenant informants who were working under the agents of the absentee landlords, they did not frequently meet the real landlords physically. It was the agent who monitored all their activities including labor mobilization on his own lands given out by the landlords for his maintenance. They further claim that eviction cases were very high and misunderstandings and friction were frequent on lands supervised by agents who

¹⁰¹ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed, Jemal Abdulkadir, Siraj Kodhele

¹⁰² Ibid.

always tried to maximize their own interests and imposed additional burdens on tenants. The amount of *bärča* paid on such lands was exorbitantly high since the agents have to benefit out of that. The agents prohibited the tenants from grazing their cattle on uncultivated lands; they prohibited them from collecting firewood in the nearby unutilized land belonging to the landlord. In some cases, informal payment for cattle rearing and collecting firewood were imposed on tenants by the agents. In short, more than what the landlord benefited indirectly from his land, it was the agent who extracted that benefit by imposing extra burdens on tenants.¹⁰³

As far as the remuneration of the agents were concerned, they might be salaried or given a plot of land to live on, the size of which varied, or sometimes a combination of both. But they were not supposed to pay *erbo* or *asrat* tax. There was also another unnoticed economic benefit of the agents (*wakil*). Since they were on the land of the landlord along with the free labor force of the tenants, they mobilized the tenants under their supervision for different farm activities in the form of traditional institutions of cooperative labor, i.e. *guza*, the details of which will be discussed in chapter seven. Since agents were the de facto landlords, tenants would have no option other than fulfilling the demand. Thus agents of big landlords who had many tenants were obviously the greatest beneficiary as they mobilized an enormous amount of unpaid labor in the organization of production on relatively big farms.¹⁰⁴

The agents also grazed their cattle on the same land; for the purpose of tending his cattle the tenant's children were mobilized to do the same job they were doing for the family. There was no cost of production incurred by the agent. Gradually, agents in their own right became the richest group of the rural community by purchasing land and accumulating a private fortune.

¹⁰³ Informants: Telenji Beker, Yahya Umar, Ahmed Mumed, Belete Worqeneh, Musa Ibrahim

¹⁰⁴ Informants: Yisoum Täsäma, Telenji Bäkär, Umar Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele, Askale Weldeab

Since being agent to absentee landlords was a potential source of accumulating wealth, the agents amassed a huge amount of wealth which could be considered as a base for the rural differentiation of wealth between the rural community and the agent.¹⁰⁵ Informants recount that some of the agents became both economically and politically powerful. A good example was Berhanu Shiferaw, who was the vice administrator of Asäbot *wäräda* and the agent of *Le'elt* Tänaññewärq in the same region. He was said to have amassed a wealth in the form of cash, many quintals of grain annually and cattle numbering in the hundreds.¹⁰⁶

Viewed from the point of view of the social composition of the agents, for the big landlords, almost all agents were their relatives, their ethnic kin or in very rare cases, the local *balabats* (*damina*, *garada*, *malaqa*, and *ababurqa*). A good example of the latter was *Qaññazmach* Hassen, a *damina*, and an administrator of Obbora *Awraja* until the eruption of the revolution. He served as the agent of the *béterest* of *Etege* Menen in Dädär and was said to have a strong attachment to the royal family due to his contribution in this regard. Along the way he used the same office as a source of wealth in the form of land accumulation and agricultural resources in the form of cattle and annual grain production by mobilizing unpaid labor. He enjoyed considerable royal support whenever he faced fierce local opposition, especially in the 1960s.¹⁰⁷

The wealth so accrued by the agents was invested not in the rural areas where they were generated but in nearby towns. They served as the source of socio economic differentiation and widened the rural urban divide. By using the wealth, the agents diversified their occupation in both rural and urban areas. They invested part of their wealth in urban areas such as in trade and transport while still engaging in the gainful agricultural practices in rural areas. However, this

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed.

¹⁰⁷ Informants: Hassen Beker, Sulieman Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele

circulatory migration and occupational diversification between rural and urban areas did not last long. Ultimately the agents based their living in the surrounding urban centers like Dire Dawa and Härär. The most successful, however, ended up settling in the capital, Addis Ababa.¹⁰⁸

There was a non economic relation between the landlord and the agent. A good example was the agent of *Ras* Imiru on his *rest* land in Boroda. The agent, *Ato* Gäbräyäs Engeda, had served the landowner in his capacity diligently for long years. Later *Ras* Imiru was said to have facilitated the educational opportunity abroad for the eldest son of the agent, Yarägal, who in turn made it possible for his family to enjoy the same kind of opportunity. These kinds of educational investments by extracting surplus from rural areas were a common feature of the ruling class and widened the social gap with the tenants.¹⁰⁹ Such opportunities were inconceivable for the poor tenant families.

Conclusion

In rural Harärgé, ownership of land was the sole source of power and influence for the landlords. The direct corollary of this was that landlord- tenant relationships were dictated by the landlords. When looked in retrospect, the conditions of tenancy were a prerequisite for the power and wealth of the landlords. The relationship implied surplus appropriation and had inbuilt contradictions. The economic and non economic relations between the two social groups were dictated by the power and influence of the landlords, the consequences of which were often to make tenants indifferent to innovation. When tenants were apathetic to innovation, it resulted in the decline of agricultural productivity which affected the peasants themselves and made their food security precarious.

¹⁰⁸ Informants: Abduletif Ahmed, Umar Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Siraj Kodhele

¹⁰⁹ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele

The terms of their relations were highly skewed in favor of the landlords and reflected the unequal power relation of the two. Tenants became subordinated to the landowning class and subject to all sorts of surplus extraction through high rents. They were exposed to unwarranted upward revision of rent, they were required to fulfill different obligations in the form of labor mobilization, and this was dramatically aggravated by the tenure insecurity through the evictions which were exercised at whim by the landlords. Tenants were also exposed to the demands of agents in different forms that heightened the flow of surplus from tenants to the exploiting class; they were exposed to exorbitantly high interest rate for the credit facilities given by landlords. Lastly, the tenants were at the mercy of the highly irregular markets whose prices were skewed against the commodities of tenants.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the burdens and exploitations discussed in this chapter are not valid for all tenants. There were considerable differences between the sub provinces and even at district levels. Besides, in specific cases, the relations between landlords and tenants varied from close cooperation and readiness to help each other to extreme exploitation. But the situation presented in this chapter applied to the majority of cases.

CHAPTER SIX

Landlord-Tenant Disputes (1941 -1975)

In chapter five, the asymmetric power relation between landlords and tenants and the inbuilt biases towards landlords in resource exploitation mechanisms was documented. We have seen that the power imbalance started with the establishment of the relation between the two social groups and continued all through the production process and the sharing of the produce. In all of these stages, the tenants were the underdog as they were not the owners of the basic means of production. But this does not mean that tenants were resigned to their position and there was a smooth relation between the two. There were deep rooted disputes and contradictions which at times erupted into physical confrontations that required the intervention of the state apparatus and local elders.

It is to this aspect of landlord tenant disputes that we turn in this chapter. The chapter is subdivided into three major thematic areas. The first deals with the rights and duties of the two social groups. This can help us understand where the established order was violated. The second and the central part of the chapter deals with the causes and nature of disputes and how the established courts at different levels handled the cases. The third part of the chapter treats the traditional dispute-resolving mechanisms by local elders and *aḥbiyadañña*.

Revolving around these major themes the chapter argues that tenants were the worst affected rural social groups. The court system did not have adequate trained manpower, the delivery of justice was not fast, thereby forcing tenants to waste their precious labor time, the medium of language through which justice was delivered was not intelligible to the majority of tenant

applicants and above all the justice system was very corrupt and drained extra resources from tenants in the form of gifts to judges and other officials of the court.

6.1. Rights and Duties of Landlords and Tenants

The tenants in Harärgé did not have a proper understanding of their rights and obligations. The insulation of tenants among themselves, their low level of awareness which in turn was the result of high level of illiteracy rate, lack of access to media, the absence of civil society that might educate and organize peasants in general and tenants in particular on their rights and responsibilities placed tenants at a disadvantage when it came to understanding of the subject. This in turn militated against their having a strong bargaining power vis-à-vis the landlords. As a result tenants were in a subordinate position whenever they made agreement with the landlords as discussed in chapter five. This power imbalance was also realized by the minority committee members of the House of Deputies who were discussing the tenancy bill submitted to parliament. (See details in chapter five.)

While the government was aware of the existence of widespread verbal agreements regulating landlord-tenancy relation, it did not do much to create awareness of the mutual rights and obligations of the two parties. In the absence of the proper understanding of their respective rights and duties it was simply tradition and custom that governed the activities and relations of these social groups. It was only belatedly that the government tried to legislate the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords.

In this regard the earliest legal document that tried to describe the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants was the 1960 Civil Code. Of course, the Civil Code treated agricultural tenancy between tenants and landlords as a simple contractual relationship. There were articles

that dealt with the rights and responsibilities of the tenants and landlords. Later on when the first draft legislation regulating landlord tenant relations was submitted to the parliament in 1955 E.C. (1963), emphasis was given to this important aspect of rural production relation and the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants was discussed in detail. In 1963 E.C. (1970) the second draft legislation was submitted to the Community Development Committee in the House of Deputies which again was not ratified. Finally, the 3rd tenancy bill was submitted to Parliament in 1964 E.C. (1972) and it had the same fate as its predecessors. The 3rd draft legislation has eleven chapters and sixty articles that discussed the different aspect of landlord-tenancy relations.¹

Therefore, based on the Civil Code, the draft landlord-tenancy legislation and the custom on which they are based, it can be established that tenants and landlords had their own respective rights and responsibilities. In this sub section, these two documents (though the draft legislations did not see the light of the day) will be used. A crosscheck of these documents will also be made with evidence from oral informants.

¹ According to *Ato Zegeye Asfaw* and *Tamrat Kebede*, the landlord tenancy legislation was first drafted by a committee under the Ministry of National Community Development led by *Ato Tamrat Yigezu*. The first bill was submitted to the parliament on Tir 13, 1955 (January 22, 1963). The second bill was submitted to the parliament for discussion on *Hidar* 24, 1963 E.C (December 4, 1970). They further claimed that there was external influence from SIDA, World Bank and other international donor agencies on the Ethiopian government for the passage of the legislation. When the second draft bill was submitted to the parliament the Ministry of Land Reform evolved as a separate Ministry first led by *Fitawrari Abebe Gäbré* then *Ato Mulatu Debebe* later succeeded by *Ato Belay Abay*. The third tenancy bill was tabled in the parliament for discussion on Sene 2, 1964 E.C (June 10, 1972). The draft legislation was presented before the parliament by *Abära Jämbäré*, Minister of State in the office of Prime Minister, succeeding *Seyoum Haregot*. *Ato Belay Abay* ordered by the Prime Minister was present for briefings and answering questions forwarded by the deputies on some issues. Along with the Minister *Ato Zägäyé* was also present before the parliament serving in his capacity as policy director and chief of the office for landlord-tenancy relation. For details of the three draft tenancy bills see, *Bezuwork Zewde*, "The Problem of Tenancy and Tenancy Bills with Particular Reference to Arsi" MA Thesis. (Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 1992). Details of the parliamentary debates of the deputies on the draft bill were reported by the Amharic daily *Addis Zämān* in its various issues.

According to Article 2900 of the Civil Code and the draft legislation (chapter three, article 8), the landlord, upon the conclusion of the agreement, had a responsibility of delivering the land to the tenant in a state fit for farming. The tenant had the right to be protected by the landlord from any claimant on the land. Moreover, the landlord should allow the tenant unhindered use of the land for the period of tenancy.² In addition, in cases where the tenant had no residence and was a full-fledged tenant he had the right to construct a hut on the land he was cultivating. But upon the termination of the tenancy agreement due to disagreement or any other reason, the tenant was expected to leave the residence. During his stay, however, the landlord should not cause undue inconvenience.³ Contrary to these provisions, nonetheless, the landlord in Harärgé always demanded extra labor from the tenants thereby upsetting the normal agricultural activities and unsettling the lives of the tenants.⁴

One of the responsibilities of the tenants was that they should develop the land so rented through proper agricultural methods. In line with this the tenant was allowed to cultivate any crop he wanted through an agricultural technique and method of his own choice; he could also rear cattle. But since the objective of the proclamation was to encourage agricultural development, the tenant was prohibited from using the land he rented for non-agricultural activities. On the other hand, the tenant could also discuss his method with the landlord and he can implement the method the landlord suggested if the two agreed.⁵

² Civil code, Article ,2900.; The civil code was drafted by Professor Rene David of the University of Paris.;“Draft Legislation on Landlord-Tenancy Relations”, (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C),chapter three, Article 8

³Civil code, Article ,2911.; “Draft Legislation on Landlord-Tenancy Relations”, (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C), chapter three, Article 9 , for the discussion of the construction of houses and the differences between resident tenants and non resident tenants the discussion by informants: Telenji Bäkär,SiyoumTässäma, Musa Ibrahim is vital

⁴ Informants: Telenji Beker ,Musa Ibrahim, Yahya Umar

⁵ Civil code 2977,2978,298.; “Draft Legislation on landlord-Tenancy Relations”, (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C),Chapter 1,Article 4.;Chapter 3 Article 10,11 and 14,Sub Article, 1

While this was the case in theory, former tenant informants reminisce that the agents of the landlords did not allow the grazing of tenants' cattle on pasture of the landlords and did not allow them to collect firewood. In order to access these resources the tenants were expected to make separate arrangements. Probably, the additional agreement required tenants to render additional services to the agents.⁶

The tenant was responsible for cultivating the land so rented personally. This meant that the tenant and the members of his household would undertake the agricultural activity themselves. He was not allowed to sublet it to other tenants. If he failed to personally cultivate his holding, he would cease to meet the legal definition of a tenant and would be in default of his lease. But if the tenant suffered from serious ailment and was not able to undertake his agricultural activities, without abrogating the tenancy agreement, he could delegate his relatives or others to continue the agricultural activities. He can also be involved in traditionally known farmers' cooperative works such as *däbo* and *wäñfāl* to augment the productivity of the labor.⁷

The tenant can grow long term tree crops such as coffee, *čät*, orange and other crops or any other activity that can improve the productivity of the holding. In case such activities hampered productivity for a short period of time, the tenant had the right to ask for a reduction or temporary suspension of the rent.⁸ In practice, however, in Harärgé, tenants were not allowed to grow perennial crops for reasons discussed in chapter five.

With permission from their respective landlords tenants could also get loans by using their tenancy agreement as collateral. But this was made possible only through government

⁶ Informants: Seyuom Tessema, Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele.

⁷ "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", (Addis Ababa, 1963 E.C), chapter 3 article 12 (sub articles 1,2 and 3)

⁸ "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter 1,Article 4

organizations such as banks working with agricultural credit cooperatives. One of the major requirements of these credit cooperatives was property such as land from credit takers as a precondition to grant loans.⁹ In view of these, tenants were not the beneficiaries of the credit services.

Tenants can also transfer their tenancy agreement to a third party.¹⁰ Here it should be clear that transferring the tenancy agreement and subleasing were two different things. While those who got the tenancy agreement transferred to them would replace the tenant and directly agree with the landlord, those who rented the holding from the tenant have no direct relation with the landlord as his agreement was with the tenant.

In an agricultural season when the productivity of crops dropped, tenants had the right to withhold the meager product for the upkeep of the family. If the landlord also had the same shortfall, the two could share the available product and the landlord could postpone the rent to the next harvest season. But the amount would not bear any interest.¹¹

One of the most widely discussed subjects in the rights and duties of the two social groups was the issue of eviction. It was commonly believed that premature termination of agricultural tenancy was harmful to the continuity of cultivation. Where the possibility of easy eviction exists, a tenant will hesitate to invest in his farm even though the term of his tenancy was a long one. For this reason Ethiopia, just like other countries, legislated in some detail concerning the rights of parties to terminate tenancy before the expiry of the agreed period. The provision of the civil code on this may be summarized as follows:

⁹ "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter 3,Article 13 (Sub articles 2 and 3)

¹⁰ Civil code, Article no. 2913.; "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter 3,Article 13 (Sub article 1)

¹¹ Civil code, Article no. 2992,2993.; "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter 3,Article 16 (Sub articles 1,2 and 3)

The landlord had the right to terminate the tenancy agreement on the following conditions:

- A. If the tenant failed to fulfill his obligations as per his agreement with the landlord
- B. If the tenant defaulted on his rent
- C. If the tenant or his family was seriously ill
- D. If ownership of the land changed, the new owner can evict without assigning reasons (provided notice is given within three months of the change of ownership and provided the rights has been specifically reserved to the new owner in the agreement)¹².

In fact in the period under discussion, informants do not remember cases of eviction caused solely by change of landlords.¹³ Thus eviction was caused by other factors. One of the commonly stated factors for the eviction of tenants as discussed by informants was the disagreement between the tenant and the landlord or the agent (if the landlord was absentee). Probably one of the common causes under this category was tenant's pilfering of the crops produced and the landlord's sensing of the mischief done by the tenant.¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of the reasons for tenant eviction see chapter five.

The tenant also had the right to terminate the agreement on the following conditions:

- A. In cases of long term tenancies without giving any reasons (provided four years of notice is given)
- B. If the landlord failed to fulfill his obligations
- C. If the landlord died (provided a six month notice was given)

¹² Civil code, Article no. 2931,2979,2996,3007,3011.

¹³ Informants: Jemal Abdurahman,Taye Bedhane, Tamene Urgessa, Hassen Beker

¹⁴ Informant: Askale Weldeab,Siyoun Tessema,Zerihun Bezabih,Belete Worqneh

D. If the tenant or his family was seriously ill.¹⁵

Mann and Lawrence of FAO as well as rural institute officers recommended that the tenant should enjoy unlimited right to terminate the contract at any time on condition that he gave the required notification to the landlord. On the other hand, they recommended that the landlord's rights to renounce the tenancy agreement should be limited to failure of the tenant to fulfill his farm duties, particularly as regards the suitable farming and care of the land as well as default on payment of his rent.¹⁶

In practice, however, landlords could evict their tenants on any pretext and at any time before the latter have sown their plot with seeds or even after sowing (though the latter was rare according to informants). They may thus evict their tenants after the latter had farmed or even harrowed their plots. They may also evict their tenants any time after harvest.¹⁷ This was in contradiction with the provisions in the draft legislation and the draft administration document, i.e. *Yä Čärčär Dānb* which set the time for eviction between January and February which were not the months of intensive agricultural activities, thus ensuring undisturbed agricultural cycle.¹⁸ This clearly indicates tenants were insecure in their holdings.

Some scholars argue that in Ethiopia, eviction was not a major problem in rural areas as tenants continued to cultivate their plots of land for a long period of time.¹⁹ However, this does not imply that tenants were protected by custom or by law against unnecessary eviction by the

¹⁵ Civil Code, Article no. 2930, 3005, 3008, 3009, 3010.

¹⁶ H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964), pp.19-20.

¹⁷ Informants: Mohammed Abdulkarim, Jemal Abdurahman, Mohammed Adem, Musa Ibrahim

¹⁸ "Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter one, Article 4 (sub article 3 and 4) *Yä Čärčär Denb*, IES, MS-734.

¹⁹ Shiferaw Bekele, "The Evolution of Land Tenure in Imperial Era" In *an Economic History of Modern Ethiopia*. Shiferaw Bekele(ed). (CODESRIA book series, 1995)

landlords. In fact, tenants remained on the same plot of land for generations probably due to the traditional attitude towards tenancy in Ethiopia and the absence of alternative means of livelihood, the latent threat of eviction that induced the tenant to accept terms and conditions which he would not otherwise willingly accept. In addition, tenants might cultivate the same plot for generations but there were mechanisms put in place by landlords like forcing tenants to renew their tenancy agreement every year.

Mann and Lawrence proposed some mechanisms that can mitigate the effects of insecurity and associated problems. According to them, insecurity can be countered in a number of ways but in particular by insistence on written agreements, stipulation of minimum periods of tenancies, provision of rights of renewal for tenants' rights and for heirs to inherit tenancies, restrictions of the transfer of land let to tenants and compensation for improvements.²⁰ The Civil Code and the draft legislation for landlord-tenant relations also had provisions governing some of these matters,²¹ although these provisions were not implemented.

The other aspect of the rights and obligations that tied the two was the question of compensation to be paid upon the eviction of tenants. The landlord was expected to pay compensation for evicting his tenants.²² In Harärgé, it is worth reiterating that the landlord generally paid no compensation for evicting his tenant even where the tenant made improvements on the land. In order to evade payment of compensation for the tenants' effort on the landlords' land the latter resorted to different mechanisms. In most of the documents presented to the Harärgé province high court by tenants for compensation they made for the *čat* and coffee they had planted,

²⁰ H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, "Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia" FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964), pp.1,6,11,14,17

²¹ Civil code, Article no. 3004,3006,3015-3018, "Draft legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations", Chapter two article 6.

²² Civil Code, Article no. 3011-3018.

landlords argued the tenants did not pay the required land rent for many years. Often they calculated the compensation required by tenants taking into account the number of years rent was not paid.²³

An improvement on the land was to the obvious advantage of a landlord not only because the land might have been more developed but also because this fact creates an extra source of income for him. A tenant could improve his land in many ways, for example by digging drainage ditches, by planting trees to reduce erosion, planting perennial crops or hedges or by applying traditional means of fertilizers.²⁴ Under normal circumstances, improvements made to the land by tenants usually become the property of the landlord when the tenant leaves the land. Because there were no legal steps taken to ensure that the tenant received adequate compensation for such improvements, tenants were not motivated to undertake such development activities on the lands they rented. In consequence agricultural production was adversely affected and the productive value of the land was not improved.

This can be partly ascertained by the declining grain crop production in Harärgé in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s as different official government documents indicated. The civil code provided that whatever the reason for the termination of the agreement, the tenant was entitled to compensation for any improvement made by his labor or at his expense. The compensation due was equal to the increase in the rental value of the land for nine years resulting from the

²³ Harärgé Province High court, File No. 148/59 E.C. Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Dheqeba Gameda.

²⁴ Civil Code, Article no.2983-2985.; "Draft Legislation on Landlord-tenancy Relations", Chapter three article 14 Sub articles 1 and 2.

improvements.²⁵ This was a satisfactory provision but there is unfortunately no evidence in Harärgé for the implementation of this provision.

Based on the information gathered from oral informants, landlords did not pay any kind of compensation for their tenants whatever the reason for the termination of the contract. This was quite common.²⁶ There was however, an exception for tenants who planted tree crops on *qälad* land based on prior agreement. According to one of my informants in Garamulata, who used to be a *mofär zämät* tenant, planting coffee, *čät* and other tree crops was prohibited by the landlords. If the two had agreed in front of elders, when their tenancy agreement was terminated prematurely there would be a compensation ratified by a council of elders. Accordingly, a compensation for a single tree of coffee in the 1960s was five birr and the corresponding figure for a *čät* tree was 2.50 birr.²⁷

A documentary investigation of the subject around Harär town in the 1960s indicated that while the payment for coffee tree was the same with Garamulata, the payment for *čät* tree varied from 5 birr to 1 birr depending on the maturity of the plant. A well grown *čät* tree with abundant fresh shrubs to be collected was valued with the highest amount while a small *čät* plant still not giving produce was calculated with 1 birr for compensation.²⁸ But whenever these cases were presented to courts they were not implemented for various factors

²⁵ Civil Code, Article no 3016-3018.

²⁶ Informants: Telenji Beker, Mohammed Musa, Musa Ibrahim, Yahya Umar

²⁷ Informant: Siyoum Tessema

²⁸ Harärgé Province High Court, File No.72/52 E.C .Litigation between three brothers Abdela ,Mumed, and Hassen Weday on one hand and Momina Amed on the other.; Harärgé Province High Court, File No.79/52 E.C Litigation between litigant Usman Jami and defender Dawud Abdulahi on the payment of compensation for coffee tree and *čät* tree destroyed by e defender in Kombolcha. Harärgé Province High Court, File No.148/59 E.C Litigation between a tenant applicant Usman Umar and his landlord *Hajji* Ali Zikeh on eviction and hence the payment of compensation for *čät* and coffee trees surrounding Harär town.

There is another right of the landlord which conversely was the duty of tenants. Landlords have the right to collect the land rent (either in cash or in kind as per their agreement) due on tenants and other benefits allowed in the proclamation. The tenant should also pay any kind of loans along with its interest rate.²⁹ But there was an obligation which was frequently violated by the landlord in Harärgé. If rent was payable in kind and if the tenant was economically unable to cover the farming expenses such as seeds and farm implements, the landlord must advance the expenses to the tenant without interest and recover the advance from the produce of the next season.³⁰ True, the landlords in Harärgé advanced loans to their tenants, but none of them made these services available without a 50% interest rate.

In as far as tenant labor was the principal source of agricultural productivity; it is quite obvious that the continuity of the agricultural activities required a smooth landlord tenant relationship. Any violations of these rights and duties and subsequent disagreement resulted in disputes between the two. This in turn might have caused the decline or even the collapse of agricultural produce. In the following sub section I will focus on the factors that resulted in the surfacing of conflict between the two social groups.

6.2 Causes of Landlord –Tenant Disputes and the Role of Courts

It is true that land in Ethiopia was the cause for frequent disputes and continuous litigation that could hamper agricultural productivity. Commenting on land litigation, Dunning has the following to say: “prevalence of land litigation ... was the inevitable consequence of other factors such as inadequacy of land records. But land litigation was an activity valued for its own

²⁹ Civil code 2988,2989,2990.2991.; “Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations”, Chapter three article 15 sub article 1.

³⁰ Civil code Article 2982, “Draft Legislation on Landlord –Tenancy Relations”, Chapter Three Article 19, and Sub article 4.

sake. A farmer can raise his status more easily through litigation than through agriculture. Litigation can therefore be regarded as an independent factor possibly inhibiting agricultural development.”³¹

This was true in Harärgé where the social and political contradictions related to tenancy system were aggravated in the 1950s and the 1960s. This was important in historical studies because for the tenants agriculture was a political, economic and social undertaking. Indeed, owning a piece of land and growing food on it mattered a great deal to tenants and independent farmers alike not only because their livelihood depended on it but also because their political and social standing emanated from it as well.

Whenever tenants faced land litigation of any sort one of their possible avenues of seeking justice was approaching courts established at various levels. But the role of courts in dealing with agricultural land disputes and tenancy disputes were severely hampered by the inadequacies of the courts in terms of manpower and infrastructure. Mann and Lawrence also indicated that the role of courts in resolving tenancy disputes was insignificant and in any case it was impossible to obtain an accurate idea of the amount, types and/or the effects of litigations arising from tenancy disputes.³²

The case of Harärgé province was not an exception. An investigation of the archives shows that in 1937 E.C. there were only one provincial court, nine *wäräda* courts and twenty eight *qäbälé* level courts, i.e. a total of 38 courts in the whole of Harärgé. In addition to these there were

³¹ Harrison C, Dunning, “Land Reform in Ethiopia: A case Study in Non Development”, *U.C.L.A Law Review* (1970), p.299.

³² H.S Mann and J.C.D Lawrence, “Tenancy Reform in Ethiopia” FAO Land Policy Project, Ethiopia, (Addis Ababa, 1964),pp.1-3.

eleven *na'iba* (Muslim) courts at *wäräda* and *qäbälé* levels.³³ These courts were meant to handle all civil and criminal matters and matters pertaining to land disputes in the province in general. The archives show that it was not only the inadequacy of the courts that mattered in delivering justice to the rural masses. What made the matter worse was the low level of professional competence of the judges employed in the courts, to the extent of a number of them being non-literate.

In addition, the rural masses who had land dispute cases had to make a long journey to attend court cases several times without any prospect of getting justice. Procrastination of the cases was also a common phenomenon. A careful investigation of court cases of the former Harärgé province high court showed that tenants wasted a number of years in litigation at various levels for a single land dispute. For instance, one case took a peasant eleven years and ultimately resulted in loss of his *rest* land. An average of six years of procrastination was a common phenomenon. The most commonly stated reasons for delays were absence of judges, the courts' rules for the calling of witnesses and presentation of supporting documents, and appeals.³⁴ Although it is difficult to establish the exact time wasted by tenants in litigation, there is fragmentary evidence in the archives that indicate the time wasted by cultivators due to court cases.³⁵

There were peasants and tenants who spent five and six years visiting courts for land related disputes. There were also cases which took more than ten years as witnessed in former Harärgé provincial archives. Some of them were in fact unsuccessful and spent considerable amount of

³³ National Archive, Folder No.17.1.7.30.02

³⁴ Harärgé province high court. File No.68/52 E.C., 71/52 E.C., 74/52 E.C., 75/52 E.C.,83/52 E.C.97/52 E.C.64/53 E.C.,77/58 E.C.,144/59 E.C,126/59 E.C.,148/59 E.C.,20/60 E.C.,30/65 E.C.

³⁵ Ibid.; WMTMRC 1/561. Report written from Čärčär *Awraja* Government land Administration office to the Ministry of Government property and Mines, *Meskerem* 23,1952 E.C.

their time in courts. It would not therefore be far-fetched to assume that tenants wasted a considerable amount of their productive agricultural labor time due to land litigation and related factors.

Informants indicate that tenants were the most affected in land litigation. If tenants had some kind of disagreement with their landlords, it was obvious that the landlords could bribe the officials at various levels and the decision ultimately favored them. Judges and administrators also supported the landlords due to the cultural affinity and common class interest.³⁶

A study of an agricultural land dispute required data that documented matters related with the litigation over a long period of time. But due to the political reasons raised in the introductory chapter, such data are not available in sub-provinces like Čärčär. Dependency on fragments of data located at various archival centers used in this work could thus only report the general condition of court cases rather than going into details.

The issues discussed in some of the archives like the National Archive and Library Agency and Wäldämäsqäl Tariku Memorial Research Center are also not very useful to understand such matters. They were not of much help in giving details of the cases that were resolved in courts at the *awraja* levels. For instance one source indicates the number of civil and criminal cases resolved by labeling all the cases as “*rest* cases”. It does not identify the number of cases registered in specific dispute categories such as landlord tenant relations, trespass, default of rent payment, sales, boundary, inheritance etc. The number of civil and criminal cases resolved at *awraja* courts of the province in 1936 E.C. is shown in Table No. 11:

³⁶ Informants: Umar Ahmed, Jemal Abdurahman, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Teha Mume.

Table No. 11 Number of Civil and Criminal Cases resolved in Harär Provincial court, (1936 E.C).

No.	Name of Awraja/wäräda court	No of civil cases	No of criminal cases	Total
1	Adal&Issa	197	278	475
2	Härär	158	630	788
3	DireDawa	206	1131	1337
4	Obbora	204	268	472
5	Čärčär	770	736	1506
6	Garamulata	67	145	212
7	Gursum	147	177	324
8	Total	1749	3365	5114

Source: National Archive: Folder No. 17.1.7.30.02.

Contrary to these, the archives of the former Harärgé province high court now deposited in East Harärgé zone of Oromia region in Harär town are found to be useful for a better understanding of the different land disputes. While the archives are not systematically catalogued for research purposes, they have a wealth of information that can help categorize the various land disputes into certain categories such as disputes on *rest* land, boundary disputes, inheritance, purchase, priority of ownership etc. Disputes between landlords and tenants were the largest category and had different features such as disagreement over payments of rent, eviction, compensation and

harassment.³⁷ These details of court cases coupled with oral information and some case studies have been useful sources to understand land disputes in the province.

One of the early attempts to investigate agricultural land related disputes was made by the Department of Land Reform under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, towards the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, although it was never followed up by scholars or any government organ in subsequent decades.³⁸ This was a case study of Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts. Of course the value of the study was diminished by its spatial and temporal limits. The court cases investigated in this study were largely limited to disputes related to lands and agricultural relations in present day western Harärgé and that in only one *wäräda* and the *awraja* court for the period of only one year. It should also be noted that all land related disputes were not brought before courts as some of the cases were resolved by local elders, thus making the data incomplete. In other words, it does not show the wider spatial distribution of the court case for the whole of Harärgé and for the time period we are dealing with.

Yet the land related cases handled by Qunne *Wäräda* court and Čärčär *Awraja* court provided a window to begin to understand the nature and magnitude of the landlord tenant disputes in the province. This, along with the information recounted by informants of their own personal experience, shed light on the significance of the landlord-tenancy disputes and the mechanisms of handling them.

³⁷ Different court documents in Harärgé Province see for example Harärgé High Court, Civil and Criminal cases, File No.79/52 E.C. ; for compensation and eviction see File No.71/52 E.C between the litigant Momina Amed who accused the three brothers Abdella Mumed and Hassen Weday working on her land in Fedis.; For payments of rent and eviction see file no.126/59. E.C.dispute between TäsämaWäldägiorgis and Mihiret Kelelew.

³⁸ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).

Based on Qunne and Čärčär courts, the pilot study mentioned above sought to investigate the nature and intensity of the disputes between landlords and tenants in the respective *wäräda* and *awraja* and how the provincial court handled them. According to this study, the civil cases filed in the Qunne *wäräda* and Čärčär *awraja* courts during the period between *Tahisas* 1, 1958 E.C and *Hidar* 30, 1959 revealed that from the total number of 729 civil disputes, around 268 (or 36.76%) were recorded as agricultural land disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* court. From these total, disputes based on landlord tenant relations was the highest, with 212 (79.1%). Disputes on ownership right was 18 (6.72%); trespass was 14(5.22%); inheritance was 3 (1.12%); sales and donation was 2 (0.75%); boundary issue was 1 (0.37%) and other unstated causes accounted for 18 (6.72%).³⁹

Based on the same study, in Čärčär *Awraja*, out of 200 civil disputes, 45 (12%) were agricultural land disputes. When broken down into specifics, disputes based on landlord tenant relations accounted for 6 (13.33%), ownership was 12 (26.67%), inheritance was 15 (33.33%), sales and donation was 1 (2.22%), boundary was 7 (15.56%) and miscellaneous cases accounted for 4 (8.89%).⁴⁰ Based on this data, one may be tempted to conclude that land dispute cases and in particular landlord tenant disputes were insignificant at *awraja* court level. Although it is not possible to give the percentage, these categories of land disputes were also commonly found in Harärgé to the east of Burqa.

³⁹ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).pp.6-7

⁴⁰ Ibid.pp.7-9.see also Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute"*Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform*.organized by Ministry of Land Reform and Administration.(Addis Ababa:December 1969), p.216.

Agricultural land disputes can be classified into three categories: Civil case, criminal cases and government land grant cases.⁴¹ Since criminal cases related with land were not treated in any of the documents, only civil cases and government land cases are treated in this study.

6.2.1 Civil Cases

As discussed above, disputes based on landlord-tenant relationships in Qunne *Wäräda* court constituted 79.1% of the total number of agricultural land disputes filed between 1958-59 E.C. This is a case in which a large number of the land disputes arose in the *wäräda* court. In the case of Čärčär *Awraja* the parallel figure was 6 (13.3%).⁴² This implies tenants had relatively easier access to *wäräda* courts than the more distant *awraja* courts, more distant not only in geographical terms but also the social and political sense.

The major factors that spurred disputes between landlords and tenants were rent default (which was the highest in both the *wäräda* and *awraja* courts), collecting crops without prior field assessment, failure to handle farms properly, appeals for eviction and compensation for eviction. Landlords filed the first three cases while tenants filed the last.

I. Failure to pay Rent

These kinds of disputes occurred when the lessee was purportedly unable to pay the land rent to the landowner. There were at least three different scenarios in which this kind of dispute arose. The first surfaced when the leasee failed to pay rent and there were evidently no “extenuating” circumstances. In other words, disputes of this sort were caused as a result of the reluctance or

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. “A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province”. (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).pp.6-7

the incapacity of the tenant to pay the rent he had agreed to when he was put in charge of the land. As a result disputes of such nature were resolved to the benefit of the landlord. The tenant's failure to pay rent was not associated with any lawfully explanatory grounds but purely seen as his failure to discharge his duty.⁴³

The second type of disagreement on the payment of rent emanated when the tenant had defaulted on the payment of rent like the first case but had 'extenuating' conditions. In other words, the apparent question in this case was whether payment of such rent was rendered impossible owing to circumstances beyond his control, i.e. acts of nature such as drought, flood, pestilence, locust infestation etc.⁴⁴

It is to be stressed that the terms of the civil code and the draft landlord tenancy legislation stipulated that tenants might be exempted from executing their responsibility to pay rent whenever natural disasters such as those listed above affected crop production. The provision in fact applied only in cases where the payment was in the form of cash.⁴⁵ Obviously, the consequences of this stipulation had the effect of excluding share tenants from benefitting from this rule. In view of the fact that a great majority of tenants were share tenants, one wonders whether precluding share tenants from this provision of Civil Code was an oversight or whether it was meant as a mechanism of stimulating tenants to switch to other types of tenancy. At any rate in Harärgé, tenants working on *qälad* lands whenever they faced crop failure were not

⁴³ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.11.;Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.219.For specific examples, see for example Harärgé Province High court. File No.149/59 E.C dispute between the landowner Tirunesh Gebreyes and Ahmed Abdella.

⁴⁴ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.12.;Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute",pp.219-220.

⁴⁵ Civil Code, Article No.2988.

exempted from the payment of the rent. There is plenty of evidence from oral informants on how tenants who lost their crops (especially those who were cultivating under *qurt* i.e. fixed arrangement) paid the rent by selling their cattle.⁴⁶

The third type of disputes in relation to failure to pay rent involved cases where tenants did not even have a proper landlord-tenant relationship. This was the commonest type of court cases as witnessed in the archives of the former Harärgé province high court. In this type of disputes, what the tenant usually did was to produce in court the person on whose authority he was possessing the leased land and then it was up to this latter person and the applicant to justify their claim to the land.⁴⁷

Failure of payment of rent was also commonly witnessed in the cases of tenants beyond the Burqa river. A documentary investigation of landlord tenant disputes in the former Harärgé province high court amply demonstrates that failure to pay land rent was the largest source of dispute between tenants and landlords. Most often, when the case was presented by the landlords to the court tenants totally denied the presence of landlord tenant relations, claiming that the land belonged to their ancestors and that they had inherited it as *rest*. The court ultimately ruled that the land dispute should first be settled before the dispute for the payment of rent.⁴⁸

On the other hand, tenants who had settled on *béterest* land and were found guilty of default in rent payment acknowledged the presence of landlord tenant relations and pledged to pay the rent. This could be explained by the fact that whenever the *béterest* rented out land for tenants they often forced them to agree to written contracts with detailed descriptions of rights and

⁴⁶ Informants: Teha Mume, Niguse Anberbir,

⁴⁷ Ibid., Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.220., See also Harärgé Province High Court, File No.71/52 E.C.

⁴⁸ See for example Harärgé Province high court File No.126/59 E.C. Dispute between Tessema Woldagiorgis and Meheret Kelelew.; File No.149/59 E.C., File No.57/60 E.C.

responsibilities of both parties. Tenants were also bound to present a guarantor who was responsible in case tenants failed to execute their responsibilities. The best example was the case of a contract tenant in Jerjertu, Harawača, in which a tenant, Hira Adem, and his guarantor, Adem Ahmed, were accused in 1953 E.C of failure to pay an estimated amount of over 4483 birr for the land they rented from the *béterest* belonging to Empress Manan.⁴⁹ Similarly, Deboč Ali and his guarantor Gosa Abbte were accused for their failure to pay the 1950- 1951 rent amounting to 3521 birr. According to the contract, they were allowed to plant coffee in addition to cultivating cereal crops and use the produce for their own.⁵⁰

II. Collection of crops without assessment

Based on information from oral informants, occasionally, tenants and landlords agreed to share the produce after a process of assessment called *gemet* which took place before harvesting. The share of absentee landlords was generally assured by their agents who were living on the land. However, it was rare for tenants to reap the harvest without prior assessment of the crop. Most often those who were in charge of assessing were senior local residents who were designated by both tenants and landlords or their agents on the spot. Occasionally, however, only the landlord nominated the assessors and their number varied from place to place.⁵¹

This assessment of produce before harvest was common in cases of share tenancy, the amount being fixed by elders after the assessment. In such instances the landlord or his agent, suspecting

⁴⁹ Harärgé Province, high court. File No.63/53 E.C.

⁵⁰ Ibid file no.64/53 E.C.

⁵¹ Alem-Ante Gebresillase, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute",pp.220-221.Informants: Umar Hajji Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman.

some kind of mischief, refused to accept what the tenant offered. Instead, he demanded what he regarded to be his appropriate share and took the matter to court.⁵²

After proving the alleged pilfering, courts resolved such matters by ordering the tenant to pay the landlord's appropriate share of the crops collected as opposed to local custom. The local elders could decide retroactively for payment of the unpaid share of the landlord. In this connection it is worth noting that the proposed draft proclamation on agricultural tenancy relationship had not made any provision obliging the tenant to inform the landlord about the date for the beginning of the harvest. Such provision, however, was already there in the civil code.⁵³

In some cases, landlords refused to accept their share of produce even if they did not have an agreement with their tenants for prior assessment of the field. This was the case when landlords believed that their tenants had done some mischief when presenting the share of the landlords. One typical example was the case of a certain *Mämere* Endäshaw Kasaye in Bädäno. On his *qälad* land he had fifteen tenants and for the 1959 and 1960 E.C they presented a small amount of the share in cash as per their agreement and the landlord refused to accept the share and instead preferred to take the matter to court. But because he was accused by the church of mishandling of church property and his *qälad* land was under the protection of the law, the court ruled out the appeal against his tenants.⁵⁴

III. Mismanagement of Farm

Disagreement between landlords and tenants arising from mishandling of holdings occurred when tenants were unable to take appropriate care of their leased plots and as a result there was

⁵² Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.221.;Informants: Umar Hajji Ahmed, AbdulkadirAbdurahman,SirajKodhele.

⁵³ Civil code.Article 2990, 2994.

⁵⁴ Harärgé Province high court .File No.99/53 E.C

production shortfall. Informants pointed out various forms of such failure. Some tenants were careless about their plot and did not use manure on their fields or did not apply better techniques of farming. But, according to some informants, all these had to do with lack of security of the tenants. For example if they invested their labor to improve the productivity of the land by using natural fertilizers such as manure, or if they constructed terraces on the land they rented they were not sure of their long term use of the land so that they refrained from investing their labor, time and finance on such productive activities. There were also cases where tenants carelessly left their herds on the crop fields and this resulted in significant reduction of the produce.⁵⁵

In cases where the landlord suspected mishandling of a farm what he usually did was to either collect what was submitted to him as his share and insist on the payment of the remainder at a later date or refuse to accept what the tenant offered him and demand what he considered to be his fair share had a proper supervision of the arable land been implemented.⁵⁶

IV. Appeal for eviction and compensation

According to the sample survey mentioned earlier, the total percentage of suits filed for eviction instituted by the landlords made up scarcely 1% of the total number of disputes between landlords and tenants. Likewise, petitions to get payments for improvements made on the land by the tenant consisted of only 0.9% of the total number of tenancy cases.⁵⁷ In fact this figure was very small and does not represent the cases to the East of Burqa River where there were quite a

⁵⁵ Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", pp.221-222.

⁵⁶ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),P.20 .

⁵⁷ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Kuni *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),P. 21.;Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.222.

number of cases were found in the archives of the former Harärgé province.⁵⁸ But still this did not mean that tenants had enough legal protection on their holdings. Indeed, the opposite was true. As discussed in chapter four, one of the great obstacles to enhancing agricultural productivity in Ethiopia was the widespread insecurity of tenure in many parts of the country.

The sample survey therefore did not reflect the reality on the ground. It should be borne in mind that the survey reported cases in which tenants or landlords brought the case to the courts. There were numerous cases which were not brought to the courts. Tenants would not have the financial strength to pursue court cases. At any rate, there was a widespread assumption shared even by tenants that the landlord had the right sanctioned by custom to evict his tenants at will and on any pretext. Even the Civil Code lent backing to this by declaring that a contract of lease should expire at the end of the period fixed in the contract.⁵⁹ Under such conditions sanctioned by tradition and backed by law, it was a foregone conclusion that tenants would lose their case in courts. Therefore, rather than resorting to courts or if they did so when they suspected that they would lose the case, they opted for different avenues to get solution for their problems, most often approaching local elders to mediate.⁶⁰

Nevertheless whenever tenants improved the productivity of the land through different improvements, for instance by planting perennial crops like *čat* (*Cataedulis*), *coffee* (*Coffea abyssinica*), etc. the situation was a mixed one. Based on oral interviews, it was found out that some landlords gave compensation for these crops; still others did not pay any compensation

⁵⁸ For specific cases see for example court hearings in Harärgé Province high court, file no.71/52 E.C, the case between Abdula Hassen and Mumed Weday against Momina Amed.; Harärgé Province High Court. File No.148/59 E.C.

⁵⁹ Civil Code Article 2931-2979, 3003, 3007.

⁶⁰ There are lots of court hearings. One specific example is Harärgé province High court .File No. 148/59 E.C Informants: Umar Hajji Ahmed, Hassen Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Abdulatif Ahmed.

after evicting their tenants.⁶¹ On the other hand archives provide strong evidence that there were a few landlords who compensated their tenants for permanent crops when they left the farm. One of these documents was discussed in chapter three, and it indicated that the tenant had planted 20 coffee trees on the land of a certain *Hajji Ahmed* near the town of Harär. When the landlord returned from Addis Ababa, after three years' stay he discovered that the tenant had planted coffee tree on his land and demanded his eviction. The tenant was paid 20 birr for his trees and left the land.⁶²

The question of whether the amount of compensation paid for the effort tenants made on the farm was enough or not was a difficult matter to settle. But the working principle on the compensation for developments made on their lands was the claim that the landlords demanded, at least theoretically, a prior agreement when tenants wanted to plant permanent crops. In *Yä Čärčär Dänb*, Täklähäwariyat discussed that if the tenant wanted to plant permanent crops, he should first get permission from the landlord and agree on the mechanisms of rent payment set by the landlords.⁶³ This meant that, if the tenant was found planting permanent crops without prior agreement, he was not legally entitled for compensation, leaving aside the amount to be paid.

On the other hand, there were cases where the payment of compensation was handled by traditional mechanisms through the intervention of elders. Informants narrate that in the case of tenants who claimed compensation from the landlord, there were amounts fixed by custom, as discussed earlier in the case of Garamulata.

⁶¹ Informants: Siyoum Tessema, Teha Mume Ahmed Mumed, Hamza Ali

⁶² IES-MS-894.

⁶³ *Yä Čärčär Dänb*, IES, MS-734

Lastly, from a study of the civil code and the draft legislation for regulating landlord tenant relationship, there were cases where the landlords were entitled to evict tenants. These were cases where the landlord wanted the land for large scale investment. This was also the case in Asäbot when tenants on *béterest* land were forced to leave the land without any compensation for the introduction of mechanized agriculture by contract farmers.⁶⁴

There were also other vital areas in which disputes involving agricultural land arose in connection with ownership, inheritance, trespass, and boundary. Such cases were handled by courts at different levels. Also these cases were presented in the form of appeal to the Ministry of Interior.⁶⁵ However, most of these cases were not directly related with tenants and have hence deliberately been excluded from discussion.

Perhaps a few words on the issue of ownership. Of all land questions, nothing was as difficult as ownership and entailed as endless litigation as proving title to land – titles which in many cases went back to several decades, if not centuries. Ownership to land could be acquired through diverse ways, including inter-alia, inheritance, donation, purchase, bequeathing and contract of sale.⁶⁶ All of these mechanisms of acquiring land were in practice in Harärgé to various degrees.

Another dispute of ownership based on inheritance was between individuals and the *béterest*. The daughter of *Däjazmach* Abatabor, Geṭenäsh, inherited 33 *gasha* of land in Mächara. In the meantime the chief of the *béterest* land, Birhanesillasie Abaire, intervened claiming the right of inheritance belonged to the *béterest* through bequeathing. In the end, the provincial court ruled

⁶⁴ Informants: Abdulqadir Abdurahamn, Jemal Abdurahman

⁶⁵ There are lots of court cases handled by the former Harärgé Province High Court. See for example Harärgé Province High court. File No.83/52 E.C.

⁶⁶ Harärgé province High court. File No.19/59 E.C

that Geṭenesh Abatabor was the legal owner of her father's land along with the rest of her brothers.⁶⁷

6.2.2 Government land Cases

These were cases that arose from claims on government land. These various disputes involving government land have been classified under the following headings: Lease, *qenqāna*, *madāriya* land, priority of request, grant of the same land to two applicants and grant of land developed by someone to a different applicant.⁶⁸

I. Disputes based on the lease of Government land

Renting government lands was the source of a large number of disputes in Harārgé. According to a study mentioned frequently in Qunne and Čärčär, this category of disagreement made up 34% of the total number of disputes in Čärčär *Awraja*. These disputes were at least of two types. The first kind consisted of cases where the provincial administration, based on the appeal of claimants in need of land, granted land which was already under the ownership of a lessee possessing the land under a contract agreement, or where the *wärāda* and *awraja* treasury offices rented out the same plot of land to another lessee before the first lease agreement has expired or terminated.⁶⁹ In such cases, the lessees argued that the claimants had no rights to the land, and in effect, ended the contract before the termination of the period set in the agreement.

⁶⁷ WMTMRC Folder No.16/19

⁶⁸ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wärāda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).Pp.64-70. See also Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute" pp.226-233.

⁶⁹ Ibid.A number of cases are also found in the archives of Harär provinces high court. See for instance, File No.35/65E.C.An applicant *Wäyzäro* AlemZewde Worku appealed to the high court her agricultural activity on the land she leased in Fädīs was being disturbed by Usman Waday who claimed the land belonged to him.

Indeed, such disputes on lease was also commonly observed on *béterest* land when the *béterest* handed a plot of land with a new lease agreement to a new applicant before an earlier lease agreement had expired or without officially terminating the contract. One such case is quoted hereunder.

በሐረር ጠቅላይ ግዛት በ[አ] ቦራ አውራጃ ውስጥ ከወይዘሮ ከበቡሽ ደስታ ወራሾች ላይ በጠቅላላው አምስት ጋሻ መሬት በኮንትራት ተከራይቼ ይገኘው ነበር።ከዚህ ውስጥ አንድ ጋሻ በወርጂ ወረዳ ግዛት የሚገኘው ግን የወይዘሮ ትሰሜ አባይርጋ ለቤተርስት ስላወረሱት እኔ ከላይ እንደጠቀስኩት ከአምስቱ ጋሻ በቅድሚያ እስከ 1964 አ.ም. ተኮናትሬ ይገዢ ብዙ ንብረት አስፍሬ ኪራዩን ባለማቋረጥ እየከፈልኩ የያዝኩት እኔ እያለሁ መሬቱ እኔ ሳልጠየቅና በምን ሑናቴ መያዜ ሳይረጋገጥ በላዩ ላይ ለሌላ ለአቶ አበበ እዝነሐ ለተባለው እንዳስረክብ ቤተርስት ደብዳቤ ፅፎልኛል።

ስለዚህ እኔ ለቤተርስት ይህ መሬት መሰጠቱን ያከራዩኝ ሰዎች ስላልገለፁልኝ በጠቅላላው ለተወሰነው ጊዜ አኮናተኛኝ እንጂ ይህን ባውቅ ኖሮ መጥቼ አስፈላጊውን ውለታ ማድረግ በተገባኝ ነበር እኔ ግን በጠቅላላው አምስት ጋሻ የተኮናተርኩ ስለሆነ ይኸው ታውቆ የተሳፈልኝ ትዕዛዝ ተነስቶልኝ እንደሌለው ሁሉ ኮንትራቱ በኔው ስም እንዲፀና እንዲፃፍልኝ ስል በማክበር እለምናለሁ።⁷⁰

አመልካች ከበደ ሲዳ

In Obbora sub province of Harärgé, I have leased five *gasha* of land from the heirs of Kābābush Dāsta on contract basis. From this, one *gasha* in Wergī *Wārāda* was said to have been bequeathed by *Wāyzāro* Tesāme Abayirga for the *béterest*. On the land I have leased I invested my money, labor, and time and regularly paid the rent .In the meantime without my knowledge and consultation on the management of the land .I was instructed to handover the land to a certain Abābā Ezineh who was said to have been given a new contract. I was not informed by lessor that the land was given to the *béterest* which I could have renewed the contract with the *béterest*. I am therefore asking the *béterest* to acknowledge my contract agreement I signed earlier for five years.

Applicant Kebede Sida

Similar disputes and petitions are found in the manuscript collection of the IES. For instance, a certain *Fitawrari* Wäldeamanuel appealed to *Ras* Imiru in 1917 E.C. that he was given 34 *gasha*

⁷⁰ WMTMRC Folder No.7, File No. 138.Letter of application written by Kebede Sida to the Head Office of *béterest* on *Nehase*, 5,1961 E.C.

of land in Tıbiro, Čärčär with lease agreement, but in the meantime, *Gerazmach* Shefaw, director of Čärčär *Awraja*, took away 6 *gasha* of land and gave it to other recipients.⁷¹

Other types of disputes that arose combined different cases like priority of request, ownership and grant of land developed by someone. The government rented land to an applicant, which the lessee might have taken his time, money and energy to develop during the currency of the agreement and in the meantime the lessee bought the land but a local official might intervene claiming the right of owning the land. The appellants in this case demanded priority of lease from the government and subsequent ownership of the land through purchase. Such cases were frequently found in the archives. One of the appeal letters written to the ministry of interior by Kebir Adem and Hamid Dadhi appears pertinent to the subject and is quoted at length hereunder.

ህዳር 7, 1949 ዓ.ም

ለክቡር ያገር ግዛት ሚኒስቴር

ክቡር ሆይ አመልካች 1ኛ ከቢር አደም ቦሩ 2ኛ ሆሚድ ዳዲ አድራሻችን በጨርጨር አውራጃ ቁኒ ወረዳ ግዛት ኩሎ ቀበሌ ለተከበረው መስሪያ ቤት የምናመለክተው በቁኒ ወረዳ ግዛት በኤልፋታ ቀበሌ በቀኝዝማች በላቸው ይርጉ ቡርቅነት ውስጥ 2 ጋሻ የመንግስት ጠፍ መሬት ተከራካሪና ተፋላሚ የሌለበትን በ1942 ዓ.ም. ከመንግስት ንብረት ተከራይተን በሳር እና በእንጨት እስከ 1946 ዓ.ም. የደንቡን የኪራይ ገንዘብ ስንከፍልበት ቆይተን በ1947 ዓ.ም. የዚህ ወረዳ ግዛት የመንግስት መሬቶች ሲሸጡ እኛም በኪራይ ስም የያዝነውን መሬት የቡርቃው ወኪላ አቶ መኩሪያ ይፍሩ እመሬቱ ላይ በተገኙበት አስገምተው በጨረታ ገዝተን ስመርስቱን በስማችን አዛውረን ጠፉን አቅንተን አንድ ሺህ አምስት መቶ እግር ቡና ተከለንበታል፡፡አባቡርቃውም ቀኛ ዝማች በላቸው ይርጉም መሬቱ በቀላድ ተለክቶ ስንረከብ መሬቴ ነው ብለው ያልጠየቁትን አሁን በ 1949 ዓ.ም. ይህንኑ መሬት በ1928 ዓ.ም. ግርማዊነታቸው ሰጥተውኛል ሲሉ በጨርጨር አውራጃ ግዛት ፅ/ቤት ከሰውን ማስረጃ ባልተጨበጠበት ነገር በህግ ገዝተን አቅንተን የያዝነውን መሬት ከነአላባው ተይዞብናል፡፡ ይህ ሲሆን ተሰጥቶኛል ላሉት ማስረጃ ሊያቀርቡ ለ6 ወር ቀጠሮ ተሰጥቷቸው ሄደዋል፡፡ አሁን ለክቡርነትዎ የምናመለክተው

ሀ. ተሰጥቶኛል ከሚሉበት ዘመን ጀምሮ አንድ ቀን ያልያዙትን መሬት

ለ. ስንከራየውም ሆነ ስንገዛ ራሳቸው እና ወኪላቸው ቆመው አጋዝተው የፈረሙበትን

⁷¹ IES,MS-900,No.55. *Fitawrari* Täklähāwariyat also indicated *Gerazmach* Shefaw was the director of Čärčär and later appointed as agent of the rest gult of the emperor in Čärčär as. He was considered as the most powerful power wielder as *Fitawrari* also indicated and was one who always created problem in his daily administrative affair of the sub province. For details see Autobiography.

ሐ. እኛ ከዚህ መሬት በስተቀር ሌላ መተዳደሪያ የሌለን ሰዎች መሬታችን መያዙ አግባብ አይደለምና የክብርነትዎ ትዕዛዝ ለክቡር የአውራጃው ግዛት ፅ/ቤት ተላልፎልን መሬታችን እንዲለቀቅልን በማክበር እናመለክታለን፡፡⁷²

November 16, 1956

To Ministry of Interior

We, Kebir Adem Boru and Hamid Dadi ,living in Čärčär *Awraja*, Qunne *Wäräda*, Kuloqäbälé , apply to the honorable office, that we have rented 2 *gasha* of government land under the Burqa, *Qäññazmach* BälachäwYergu in 1942 E.C. and have been paying the necessary rent of the land till 1946 E.C. In 1947 E.C. We have bought the same land from the government through bid in the presence of the agent of the *burqa Ato* MäkuriyaYefru. Since then, we have got the land registered in our own names as *rest* and planted 1500 coffee trees.

In 1949 E.C however, *Qäññazmach* Bälachäw claimed that he was given the same land by the emperor in 1928 E.C and he accused us in Čärčär *Awraja* administration office and as a result our land along with the property on the land was seized. In the meantime he was given 6 months time to file evidence for his grant from the emperor. We are therefore applying to the honored office:

- A. The applicant did not own the land he claimed he was given by the emperor
- B. He along within his agent were present and actually signed on the documents when we first rented and then bought the land
- C. Except our *rest* land we do not have any other property on which we support our dependents. It was not lawful to seize our land and property and therefore we kindly request your good office to let the *awraja* administration be instructed to release our property

This piece of evidence is vital since it throws some light on the evolution of contract tenancy from the government land into ownership of land through purchase. In the process, dispute occurred between two unequal powers in local politics. The local power dynamics featured prominently, in which local officials by dint of their official position tried to usurp the property that the poor rural cultivators had secured by using their own labor and small capital outlay. However, the archives do not allow us follow the matter to its conclusion due to their fragmentary nature. We are also at a disadvantage to investigate the case of the accused who claimed priority of occupation due to grant from the emperor.

⁷² WMTMRC Folder No.33903,File No.33932.

There were also disputes that arose between individuals caused by lease but often the litigants complicated the dispute by claiming their lease agreement was not from *rest* holders but from the government. Often local elders were invited by courts from the two sides to resolve the matter in consultation with the two parties.

II. Disputes Based on Qenqāna

Although land was measured and re-measured in Harärgé several times, the exact size of government and individual holdings was far from known with any degree of accuracy. This apparent knowledge gap on the size of lands invited a number of land hungry individuals who could locate land supposed to be beyond one's legitimate holding or lands which were not owned. These individuals were called *qānqañ*. They applied for a grant of government land and presented an evidence that a person unlawfully and without the knowledge of the government was in the possession of land that rightfully belongs to the government.⁷³

Historically the concept of *qānqañ* owes its origin to the loss and destruction of certain land records during the Italian occupation. Thus taking advantage of the situation and the loss and destruction of land records, certain persons in the province took into their possession lands that previously belonged to the government.⁷⁴ After liberation, individuals in need of land but with knowledge about the presence of lands in the possession of *daminas*, *garadas*, *burqas* and *malaqas* reported to government offices at various levels and the cases were handled by courts.⁷⁵

⁷³ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).pp.69-70. ; See also Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.227-229.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ WMTMRC, Folder Nos. 7/561, 12/561.

Even though it appeared that most disagreements around *qānqāñ*, had historical roots, there were other factors that caused the emergence of this type of dispute. One of these was the lack of care and dedication by government bureaucrats at the lower echelon in measuring correctly the land to be granted to the claimant.⁷⁶ Leaving aside cases heard on courts, there were instances in the different parts of the province where the claimant discovered that the land exceeded a *gasha* and sued to transfer the extra land to the defendant by sale and bring the size of the land he possessed to the one *gasha* prescribed by law. The defendant then filed the case by revealing to the government that the claimant possessed more than one *gasha* of land, at the same time appealing that the extra land be ceded to him. The plaintiff also claimed the land as he had invested on the land.⁷⁷

The post 1941 period witnessed lots of appeal letters by war veterans and former *mālkāñña* in Čärčär and Garaguracha *Awarjas* with requests to the government to get ownership of the excess lands under their possession. An investigation of the archives also shows that the government let most of the *mālkāñña* buy the extra lands under their possession.⁷⁸

III. Disputes Based on *madäriya* Land

As discussed in chapter two *madäriya* land was government land given to government employees in place of salary or as a pension without title to the land passing to the grantee. Later under government land grants, one *gasha* of *madäriya* land could be converted into *rest* on

⁷⁶ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).pp.69-70. ; See also Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", p.228. On the processes of *qānqāna* in the province, see the attached appendix no.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ WMTMRC, Folder NO 1/561, 5/561.

payment of a one birr registration fee to the *wäräda* treasury.⁷⁹ Pursuant to this proclamation several holdings were converted into *rest*. However, since only a *gasha* of land was allowed to be changed into *rest*, there still remained other *gashas* of land under the *madäriya* system. This condition caused some of the disputes associated with the institution of *madäriya*. If all *madäriya* holdings had been converted into *rest*, or if the heirs of a deceased *madäriya* holder were not required to render the services called for by the institution of *madäriya*, these disputes may never have arisen. Every heir would have had an equal right to a share of the *madäriya* land.⁸⁰

But since not all *madäriya* holdings were converted into *rest* and since among the heirs of a deceased *madäriya* holder, some may have in line with earlier practices, performed government services or hired someone to do that job for them while the other heirs may have not. The dispute often arose around the claim that *madäriya* holding should go only to the persons who have discharged their functions. Those of the heirs who may have not rendered such services argued that the *madäriya* holdings have been converted into *rest* and should therefore be treated as forming part of the deceased's inheritance to be governed by the rules of succession.⁸¹

IV. Disputes based on the priority of requests

Such disputes commonly involved government lands. The disputes were of two types: the first type of disputes involved cases where one of the two or more appellants for a piece of land

⁷⁹ Proclamation No.221 of 1956. In the archives different appeals letters and the forms prepared for that purpose were found that demand the conversion of half of *madäriya* land to *rist*.

⁸⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969), pp.80-82.; See also Alem-Ante Gebresillasie, "Legal Aspects of Agricultural Land Dispute", pp.229-230.

⁸¹ Ibid.

argued that, at a certain point in time, his request preceded any other application.⁸² The other type of disputes arose in cases where lessees on government land requested the government to consider their stay on the land on lease terms as an entitlement to a grant. In other words, they claimed that even if they might have made no written application to the government, they ought to be treated as applicants and be considered for the grant of some of the land they may presently be possessing on lease in preference to persons who may have applied for the grant after the expiry of the lease.⁸³ In all requests concerning precedence of ownership, disagreement was easily resolved by making reference to the dates of the applications of all parties to a dispute.

However, disputes on the priority of request were sometimes complicated by the involvement of institutions, especially the church. In the archives consulted in Harär high court, the church took a land that belonged to an individual who had inherited land from his father and had stayed for more than 20 years and benefited from the land by settling tenants on *erbo* basis. In the meantime the church took the *rest* land of the appellant and the latter was given a substitute in another place. As it turned out, the new land had already a *rest* holder who refused to give up his legal possession. Therefore the appellant reverted to the original *rest* land that he lost to the church on the basis of priority of occupation; but he ultimately lost to the more powerful opponent.⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid., For specific cases see for example, Harärgé Province high court hearing between appellant Wäldämariam Dhuguma who indicted Yohannes Salbator, Alemayehu Endeshaw and Salbator Wudiye, File No.77/58 E.C. In this document, the Catholic mission was forced to lose its excess land in Hančar, Čärčär *Awraja* and was rented for the appellant. But in the meantime, the three members of the Catholic mission claimed excess land they have already rented from the government.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Harär Province High court, Civil case, File No.No.32/65 E.C .

V. Disputes over Irrigation Water

There were officials in charge of distributing irrigation water equitably for the peasants. Often these water resources were considered as communal and therefore peasants had the right to access this irrigation water according to established rules. These officials who controlled this orderly and periodic distribution of water were the *malaqa*.⁸⁵ In some cases disagreement on the fair distribution of this resource created dispute among the village members and the cases were presented to the *diwan* in Harär. There were lots of applications in the *diwan* letters in the IES collection which indicate that, after investigating the matter, the *diwan* officials instructed the *malaqa* to adjudicate according to established principles. Sometimes the verdict was passed depending on the severity of effects of the shortage of water on the farms. In such cases, the *diwan* officials sent witnesses to investigate which fields were severely affected by shortage of water and based on that priority the *malaqa* were instructed to solve the problem.⁸⁶

The provision of irrigation facilities protected the farmers from erratic rainfall and increased the possibility to produce surplus grain and thus offset the effect of poor harvest. In addition it increased the opportunity for growing cash crops. But sometimes the problem of irrigation water became so severe that local officials were unable to solve it and higher officials would have to intervene. There were frequent cases of harvest failure due to poor rainfall and lack of irrigation facilities.⁸⁷

Irrigation water as a source of conflict among cultivators was widely evident in the archives. In Dire Dawa and at a place nearby called Hulul (23kms to the west) a local *garada*, Adem Yusuf

⁸⁵ IES, MS-864,P.214.;IES,MS-919,PP.324-325.

⁸⁶ IES, MS-864,P.214.;IES,MS-919,PP.324-325.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

and other nine *garadas* had a serious claim on the spring water. These *garadas* had a total of around 255 tenants working under them. The *garada* claimed he had the largest number of tenants (around 62) and therefore should have a higher share of the water resource. Due to this, conflict escalated until the *awraja* officials intervened to resolve the conflict with an equitable redistribution indicating the number of days the *garadas* should irrigate their fields.⁸⁸

The problem of accessing irrigation water for tenants was also commonly discussed in some of the existing literature. According to Ezekiel, before the 1975 land reform, landlords were in possession of the irrigable fields and sold water to peasants from their storage basins (*kure*). In Kombolcha for example they charged for a single watering of a field between 25- 30 birr depending on the size of one's plot.⁸⁹ Likewise, in Biyokaraba, a former landlord informant narrated that tenants covered the cost of irrigation. In some cases, when the water was to be transported through the canal to farmsteads far away rent was paid for the land through which the canal passed.⁹⁰ Hence in areas where irrigation water was accessible, the cost of irrigation was fully covered by tenants. This was obviously an additional economic burden tenants had to bear if they wanted to have continuous productivity of their field.

There were also other miscellaneous disputes between tenants and landlords which were frequently mentioned in the archives, such as boundary disputes, disputes arising out of the grant of the same piece of land to two applicants, disputes based on the grant of developed land to an applicant, disputes based on trespass etc.⁹¹

⁸⁸ National Archive, File Number 17.1.7.17.02.

⁸⁹ Ezekiel Gebisa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia, C.1930-1991." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997, p.220.

⁹⁰ Informant: Askale Weldeab.

⁹¹ For boundary dispute WMTMRC Folder No.1/561.; for disputes on the grant of developed land to an applicant WMTMRC Folder No.33903, File No.33932.

6.3 Other Mechanisms of settling Landlord-Tenant Disputes

6.3.1 Settlement of Dispute through local Elders

As in other parts of Ethiopia, in Harärgé the local elders tried to resolve land related disputes through the consent of the two parties. Although they lacked coercive power to enforce their verdict they had a time-tested sanction with them, i.e. ostracism. Ostracism was a common means of social control, whose effectiveness as a sanction rested on the importance of group membership. As an instrument of social control, elders often applied ostracism by causing a discontinuation of normal relations with the delinquent member of the group. Among other things they declined to involve and solve cases whenever such a party faced any social or land related disputes.⁹²

Through time, however, local elders also started applying force in their decisions. For instance in Bädessa, Qunne *wäräda*'s administrative capital, the practice of recording the decisions along with the responsibility of each party to adhere to the decisions was a familiar practice. This normally occurred in cases referred to the elders by the court. The terms of the agreement by the local elders along with the written undertaking of the parties was presented to the court, which would then validate it and conclude the case.⁹³

It is apparent that if one of the parties fell short of implementing the terms of the agreement, he /she may be accountable for failure to respect the responsibilities legally accepted before

⁹² Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),p.56. Informants: Siraj Kodhele,Umar Ahmed, Mohammed Adayo.

⁹³ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969),pp.56. There are a number of cases which were resolved by elders and approved by the Provincial Court. See for example Harärgé Province High Court. File No.148/59 E.C. ; A land dispute between two sisters, Zäwdé and Yergu Zärgaw on inheritance; File No. 74/52 E.C.

a court or to the sanction set in the undertaking. Thus the decisions of the elders, endorsed by the courts, had an element of legal force.⁹⁴

Local elders met to see a case either because the aggrieved individual appealed to them to investigate the matter and the alleged offender agreed, or the elders themselves asked the two sides to let them see the matter, or a court in which the case has been filed proposed an alternative resolution to the two parties. The number of local elders varied from area to area and also depending on the cases they were handling. Generally, their number ranged from 2 to 15.⁹⁵ According to informants in different parts of Harärgé the local elders examined the matter under the shade of a tree. This was partly due to the legacy of the traditional Oromo *Gada* system which handled all matters arising from community under the shade of a tree and partly because of the perceived danger and suspicion of partiality if they reviewed the case in the home of one of the parties.⁹⁶

A cross check of oral sources with written evidence shows that local elders have been handling land related disputes that arose between landlords and tenants. Some of the commonest disputes were boundary disputes, eviction of tenants by landlords or by their agents, failure to pay rent, Disputes based on trespass, disputes on inheritance and others.

I. Boundary Disputes:- In most cases, these kinds of disputes were frequently resolved by a jury of elders including a government official called *burqa* (if the case was within Čärčär), who knew the boundaries of the plots under their jurisdiction very well. If the case was outside Čärčär, *garada* or *damina* handled the boundary disputes. In disputes involving government

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.57.

⁹⁶ Informants: Mohammed Adem,Umar Haji,Siraj Kodhele, Mohammed Abdurahman

land, a *damina*, *burqa* or *garada* was instructed with the guidance of the local government official selected by the *wäräda* governor to examine and settle it with the local elders of their choice.⁹⁷ These government officials were supposed to know the boundaries of all the lands in their jurisdiction. When a dispute involving boundaries was submitted to local elders for settlement, the group of elders examined the plots of land involved together with the parties to the disagreement and, with the guidance of the *burqa*, decided whether boundaries were trespassed. If boundary marks were destroyed, symbols marking a new boundary were made.⁹⁸

II. Eviction by agents or owners:- This was a second type of dispute that local elders usually resolved. In this case the tenant appealed to local elders to mediate on his behalf and dissuade his landlord or the landlord's agent from evicting him. It might happen that the tenant had sown his field with crops and wishes to stay on the land until at least harvest time. The cause of difference between the parties is then examined by the elders and the tenant reinstituted.⁹⁹ An eye witness account was given by Tāha Mume in Qärsa that a tenant was evicted by *Balambaras* Tāyqachew after the tenants had sown his field with sorghum. Only the intervention of local elders had saved him from eviction.¹⁰⁰

III. Failure to pay Rent:- There were disputes that often arose between landlords and tenants when tenants defaulted on payment of land rent as per the agreement. Since most tenants were

⁹⁷ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.58.; Informants: Mohammed Adem, Umar, Hajji Ahmed, Sulieman Ahmed. A study of the court documents of the former Harär province High court amply demonstrated that in the whole of Harärgé, when ever boundary disputes arose, the first thing the court decides was let the boundary under dispute be investigated in the presence of local elders from both sides.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.58.

¹⁰⁰ Informant: Teha Mume

reluctant or unable to give the landlord his share of the year's harvest on time and the latter failed to ask for it until well after the harvest season, when the tenant was in a poor economic condition, it was a common experience for tenants to appeal for an extension of the delivery of the landlord's share. In such instances landlords rejected any request of extension and threatened the tenants with legal action and immediate eviction.¹⁰¹

A solution for such kind of crisis might come when the tenant or the landlord or both took the case to local elders for a peaceful resolution. The local elders know full well the financial situation of the tenant and could therefore propose a fair solution. For instance, the landlord might be persuaded to spare the tenant from eviction and even propose reduction of rent. In a worst case scenario, the tenant might be forced to sell some of his cattle to discharge his duty in exchange for which the landlord might consent to renounce his threat to evict.¹⁰²

Such cases are recorded in the archives of former Harärgé province. One instance is the dispute between Usman Umar and Haji Ahmed Zikeh in Hundäné *Wäräda* surrounding Harär town. The cause of the conflict between the two was default of rent payment. The landowner, *Haji Ahmed Zikeh*, had rented his land to Usman Umar and his three brothers. While his brothers were paying the rent regularly Usman Umar defaulted to pay for years which moved the landowner to evict him. Upon eviction, Usman Umar brought the case to the court claiming compensation amounting to 2000 birr for the coffee and *čat* trees he had planted. He further claimed that he had got permission for the planting of these cash crops. After repeated appearances in Harär high court, the two sides agreed to resolve the dispute based on the decisions of the elders, five in number, who were elected by both sides. Both sides have benefited by following this course of

¹⁰¹ Informants: Taye Bedhane, Umar Hajji, Belete Workinah, Beker Hassen

¹⁰² Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.59.

action. According to the decision by elders, the landlord was freed from the payment of the compensation which was estimated to be too expensive while the tenant was relieved from the threat of eviction.¹⁰³

6.3.2. Settlement of Disputes through *Aṭbiyadañña*

Aṭbiyadañña, (neighborhood judge) was introduced into the legal system in 1947.¹⁰⁴ The *balabats* were empowered within their area of jurisdiction to run courts and adjudicate land related disputes. In a circular sent to all the governorate generals on *Meskerem* 23, 1959, the ministry of justice stated that *aṭbiyadañña* courts were not meant to exercise the powers and fulfill the duties of ordinary courts. Their purpose was to act as mediation and arbitration bodies, functions which they can still exercise under the civil procedure code if and when appointed by the parties.¹⁰⁵

Based on these directives, it was understood that if parties to a dispute agreed to settle their disputes through the *aṭbiyadañña*, the decisions will be binding like the decisions of the ordinary courts. Most cases brought before the *aṭbiyadañña* appear to be civil cases and involved disputes between landlords and tenants on the payment of rent.¹⁰⁶ Other cases involved claims of

¹⁰³ Harärgé Province High Court. File No.148/59 E.C. In some cases disputes based on inheritance were also resolved by elders. See for example, Harärgé Province, High court, File No.74/52 when two sisters brought the case of inherited *rest* land from their father to the high court, and elders were selected from the sides and resolved the dispute.

¹⁰⁴ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969).p.60.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. For detail discussion of *Aṭbiyadañña* see TekalignWoldemariam "A City and its Hinterland: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa (1887-1974)" Ph D Dissertation. (Boston University, 1995),pp.336-337.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

money, land and claims on destruction of crops and grass by herds of cattle. There were frequent cases of appeals by cultivators whose farms were destroyed by cattle.¹⁰⁷

In addition to their de-facto judicial functions, *aṭbiyadaññas* exercised administrative functions. They executed the orders of *wäräda* governors or superior government authorities and the courts with the assistance of subordinate officials like the *burqa*. They also assisted in the collection of taxes.¹⁰⁸

Aṭbiyadaññas were elected from among landowners and *balabats* by the local residents by majority vote and with approval of the *wäräda* governor and the ministry of justice. In some localities the *aṭbiyadañña* had the *burqa* (*čiqashum* in Shäwa) under them. The number of *abbaburqa* varied from locality to locality.¹⁰⁹ In terms of remuneration, the *aṭbiyadañña* were salaried officials but more than their salary it was their office which became their chief means of wealth accumulation. As a result most of the *aṭbiyadañña* transformed themselves economically and were considered as distinct social groups in the rural landscape of Harärgé.¹¹⁰

Although the proclamation prescribed criteria for the election of *aṭbiyadañña*, the minutes dated *Ginbot* 29, 1955 E., describing the meeting called by the vice deputy governor of the province held in Harär, indicated that the *aṭbiyadañña* were not elected as per the prescribed guidelines.¹¹¹ Most of them did not have the required educational qualification. In some worst case scenarios they did not even write and read Amharic properly. According to these minutes, the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.61. See also IES, MS-864, No. 76, 194, 212.

¹⁰⁸ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969). pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁹ Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration. "A Study of Agricultural Land Disputes in Qunne *Wäräda* and Čärčär *Awraja* courts, Harär Province". (Addis Ababa, Department of Land Tenure, 1969). p. 61.

¹¹⁰ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Umar Hajji, Abdulkadir Abdurahman, Mohammed Adem.

¹¹¹ National Archive, Folder No. 17.1.7.16.06

representatives of Čärčär, Dädär, Garamulata, Gursum, Adal and Garaguracha held the view that the office of *aṭbiyadañña* had done more harm than good to the people. Based on the report of the *awraja* representatives, the province made an investigation by consulting the elderly and finally realized that the *aṭbiyadañña* had negatively affected people's lives. Therefore it proposed that the institution should be abolished and another institution be established in its place. The reasons for this decision are listed here under.¹¹²

1. They forced the people under their jurisdiction to provide free labor on their farm at different seasons of farm activities like ploughing, weeding, harvesting etc.
2. They were completely incapable of delivering justice to the communities
3. They had been collecting money from both the accused and the litigant under different pretexts without any receipts being issued.¹¹³

Viewed from the composition of the population, these *awrajas* had the highest concentration of sedentary population and the highest percentage of tenant population. Correspondingly, the plight of tenants in these sub provinces was high and therefore it is logical to see the rejection of the institution of *aṭbiyadañña*.

Conclusion

The civil code was the earliest legal document to regulate landlord-tenant relations. Following the civil code, the draft landlord tenancy legislation was discussed extensively by the Community Development Committee of the house of deputies but the senate intervened to abort it before its ratification. Looked in retrospect, both documents were not radical enough to tackle

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

the country's most pressing agrarian problem and hence the fundamental problem of the agrarian economy persisted.

Especially, the draft landlord-tenancy legislation did not deal with the fundamental question of landownership and land distribution to the landless producers. It attempted only to regulate landlord tenant relationship and limit maximum rent to guarantee tenants security over their holdings at least for a legally recognized period and to free them from arbitrary eviction as well as consider compensation in the event of premature tenancy termination.

One of the weaknesses of the draft legislation was that, while the government attempted to regulate the relation between the two social groups, it did not attempt to grant ownership right even to tenants working on government lands. The group that sympathized and represented the big landlords rightly claimed the government should first address the problem of tenants working on its land before legislating the rights of the tenants.

As a result, contrary to the expected peaceful and harmonious agrarian relation between the producers and the non producing consumer class, contradictions and disputes became the order of the day. The state tried to resolve the disputes through its court systems established at different administrative levels. However, the courts were not equipped with adequate and trained personnel. Besides, they were not free from corruption which increased the flow of resources from the tenants to the landlords and their allies in the upper echelons of society. This flow of resources was closely tied with nepotism which undermined the legal position of tenants.

Since the legal system required the mobilization of a lot of resources (money, time and social capital) tenants who lacked these vital resources were disadvantaged. The institution of *aṭhiyadañña* was not a solution except for reducing the cost of transport the tenants incurred

when they attended *wäräda*, *awraja* and at times provincial courts. It was only by having recourse to local elders that tenants tackled their disputes with their landlords with relative ease. This was the easiest and most efficient solution in terms of cost and time.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Society, Culture and Tenancy

In the preceding chapter I discussed the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords along with the court system that was established at various levels in the province to handle disputes between tenants and landlords. It is argued the courts were ineffective to administer landlord tenancy disputes fairly and freely. Landlords evicted their tenants whenever it pleased them. When tenants brought the case to courts for compensation for unfair treatment, the courts were found to be corrupt and biased in favor of the landlords. In general tenants' quest for justice was thwarted by the prevalent system which robbed the cultivators of all their security, property and power.

By continuing the discussion in power imbalance raised in the last two chapters, this chapter takes the subject into the social inequalities witnessed between tenants and the landlords in the province. It is the argument of this chapter that the same system that subordinated tenants in the landlord-tenancy relationships and legal system has also accelerated the social gap between tenants and landlords. The social distance reflected in class terms, ethnic identity, religious affiliation, educational opportunities, etc. by its own soured the relation between the two social groups and became the source of frequent disagreement between the two. The social contradiction and the uneasy relationship in turn made agricultural practices less effective.

This argument helps to widen our understanding on another dimension of the imbalance of the relationship between the two social groups. By doing so it reflects another facet of surplus appropriation by the landlords from the tenants.

7.1 Class Identity of Tenants and Landlords

Harärgé's rural society could be viewed in class terms.¹ The class structure of rural Harärgé was characterized by the separation of society into two distinct classes-the propertied and the propertyless. The propertied class was composed of the aristocracy, the large landowning class (both absentee and resident) and the petty or local gentry. On the other hand the propertyless class comprised the broad mass of the peasantry which included a heterogeneous group of rural cultivators, of which tenants were part. The propertied class owned the means of production as a basic means of defining its relations vis-à-vis the propertyless social groups. It also monopolized the local political structure of the state and exacted tributes and rent (in cash, in kind and in labor) from the non propertied class.

Of course both classes were not homogenous and their internal diversity is a subject of discussion. The propertied class comprised the big landlords, who were granted land by the different imperial orders at different times. Some of them have blood relations with the imperial

¹ Class is one of the few concepts so controversial and very much debated by social scientists in Africa. Most African intellectuals and politicians held the view that the concept is not applicable in Africa or if at all it existed its significance was minimal. Emmanuel Wallerstein on the other hand argues the concept is applicable for contemporary African realities. For the analysis of class conflict in contemporary Africa and its application, See Emmanuel Wallerstein "Class and Class conflict in Contemporary Africa" *Canadian Journal of African Studies* .Vol.7.No.3,(1973),pp.375-380. Especial Issue: Social Stratification in Africa. pp. 375-380. For detailed discussion of a class of African peasants see for example, Szymon Chodak, "The Birth of An African Peasantry" *Canadian Journal of African Studies*.Vo.5, N.3 (1971), pp. 327-347. Here, at least two major criteria are applied to classify social groups belonging to the same class: one is a body of people with ownership of the means of production. Hobsbawm called it "class in itself" and secondly their relation with other class again termed by Hobsbawm as "class for itself-a class conscious of itself as such". For details see E.J Hobsbawm, "Peasants and Politics", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*.Vol.1 No.1 (1973), pp. 3-22. Taking the first criteria into consideration there were a group of peasants in Harärgé with small landholdings. But the general picture is that the majority of cultivators lack ownership of the means of production of their own hence fulfilling the criterion for a class. The second criterion is also applicable for the whole of rural cultivators in Harärgé since Peasants were subordinate to other class such as the landlords. This can also be seen with T. Shanin's approach of the peasantry. According to him, the peasantry was viewed as the suppressed and exploited producer of pre-capitalist society. His approach reinforces powerlessness and productivity as the essential features of the peasantry. For details see T. Shanin, "Peasantry: Delineation of a Sociological Concept and a Field of Study", *European Journal of Sociology*.Vol.12,No.2 1971),pp.289-300.

family.²The big landlords and their relatives have controlled the instruments of state apparatus³ that controlled and facilitated the extraction of surplus from the rural mass.

The other members of the propertied class were the local gentry like the *damina*, *garada*, *malaqa* and *burqa*. They were granted land by the state for their services in their respective regions. Their chief services were facilitating the collection of state tax, maintenance of law and order and the mobilization of labor for community activities such as road construction. They were important tools in assisting the extraction of surplus from their kinsmen.⁴

As a class of the propertyless, the peasants were made of diverse social groups. Just like the propertied class, they were not homogenous. Their heterogeneity was reflected in the ownership status of land and the size of land they possessed. There were peasants with small plots of land, landless peasants, rural laborers and artisans. What they shared in common was their subordinate position vis-à-vis the propertied class.⁵

² Informants: *LeulRas* Mengesha Seyoum, Siraj Kodhele, Teha Mume ,Abdulaṭif, Umar Ahmed, Zerihun Bezabeh, Askale Weldeab. Different archives discuss the list, the role of these local elites and their rewards from the system. See for example National archive, Folder No. 17.1.7.15.02., 17.1.7.15.06., 17.1.7.30.02.

³ The concept of state apparatus is associated with the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. The Marxist classics considered the state as a repressive state apparatus. In order to advance the theory of the State it is indispensable to take into account the distinction between *state power* and *state apparatus*. Althusser discussed this dichotomy. Hence the distinction between ideological state apparatus and the repressive state apparatus. The Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which functions by violence contains the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. On the other hand the Ideological State Apparatus which functions by consent consists of the religious institutions, educational institutions, the family, the legal systems, political institutions, communication, cultural domination etc. Although the discussion was applied mostly for capitalist societies, the state apparatus was also functional in pre-capitalist social formations, as in the feudal mode of production which can also be applied in Ethiopia. The Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, discussed this dichotomy in terms of political society and civil society for repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus respectively.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker, Umar Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Abdurahman.

Among the rural poor in general there was a conventional hierarchy of status. In descending order the hierarchy is often listed as smallholder peasant family, tenant and wage laborers which comprised artisans.⁶ These were not of course mutually exclusive categories, since it was common to find cultivators who concurrently owned some land and farmed additional land as tenants as well as wage laborers who have a plot of their own. Yet throughout the province this category had a social reality reflected in preferences and in status in the villages in spite of the fact that the categories could and did overlap noticeably in terms of income.⁷ For example, marginal small holders were often poorer than tenants who could rent large plots; marginal tenants in turn were often poorer than wage workers.

There was a perceptible heterogeneity in the tenant social group. As discussed in chapter three, pure tenants were the predominant majority in Čärčär while owner tenants were the majority in Eastern parts of Harärgé. Besides these, there were tenant holdings operated by some salaried civil servants.⁸ This kind of occupational combination was possible only in the vicinity of small, often *wäräda* towns because it was easy to switch from one occupation to another and two or more jobs could be operated in rotation as some activities were more of seasonal nature than others, for instance agriculture.

The class position of both the propertied and the propertyless was implicitly but differently understood by society in general. The propertied class was accorded high social prestige and

⁶ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, AbdulqadirAbdurahman, HassenBeker. Teodor Shanin termed these groups and a number of other rural social groups as "analytically marginal groups" These included agricultural laborers, craftsmen, free armed peasantry and pastoral tribal people.P.297.

⁷ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Hassen Beker,Mohammed Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed.

⁸ Ibid. Some archives have also demonstrated the civil servants renting land from government and working as cash tenants. See for example WMTMRC,Folder No. Folder No.1/561.:Harärgé Province High Court File No.77/58 E.C.In this file an applicant Woldemariyam Duguma, a civil servant, complained that he rented land from the government and was cultivating as cash tenant. In the meantime others came and claimed the land. There were also cases where civil servants leased land from the *héterest*.See for example WMTMRC Folder No.8 File No.8.

status while the propertyless was accorded less social status and prestige. This social status was largely measured by the ownership or lack of ownership of land. Accordingly the ownership and control of land was the basis of rural power and carried prestige and respect. In short land was the source not only of food, but also of wealth in disposable food surplus, and wealth was the source of social influence and political power.

The landowner had a social position far above the tenant. Similarly, ownership of land accorded even peasants of small holdings, social value and respect which were not accorded to tenants. Whenever there were disputes in the villages, it was the landowners, however small their possessions, who were called upon to settle disputes. Landowners could get the release on bail of those who were imprisoned for different reasons. They were informal authorities of the local community. On the other hand the tenants' position in the society was not accorded any social value.⁹

Some landlords were accepted by the community to the extent that they acted as patrons of their tenants and poor peasants. Patron client relationship is often a vertical exchange relationship that is characterized by a substantial degree of reciprocity. In this case the landlords used their surplus to provide subsistence insurance to their clients in the form of grain on loan in return for the labor and support of the tenants. Informants indicated the case of *Fitawrari* Gädlägiorgis in Garamulata and *Däjazmach* Abashawel Gäbré in Čällänqo who established an array of social arrangements so that the poor tenants were invited to have food and drinks. They were charitable to the village community and invested on some social institutions.¹⁰

⁹ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Abdulañif Ahmed, Mohammed Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed

¹⁰ Informants: Tekle G/ Tsadik, Yuya Abdulla, Mohammed Musa. They discussed in particular that *Däjazmach* Abashawul had a monthly feast in which the poor in general were invited for the *gibir* and food was distributed

In his study of South East Asian villages, James Scott indicated this practice of redistributing basic means of survival and generosity as a common feature of most pre-capitalist societies which had a certain redistributive effect and were disguised forms of insurance by the landlords. According to him these social arrangements were not radically egalitarian. Rather they imply only that all were entitled to a living out of the resources within the village and that living was attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy. In this system the poor rural villagers, especially tenants, held a set of concrete role expectations about the legitimate use of the economic power of the landlords and their role in taking care of the less fortunate. Any failure of landlords to extend charity or generosity provoked resentment.¹¹

Viewed from the above perspective, often it was the economic status of the small scale producers that attracted scholars to compare tenants and small scale owning operators, without taking into consideration the social dimension of the ownership of land. For instance, Dessalegn presents the difference between small scale owner cultivators and landless tenants in the following words.

While it is true that the small-holding owner was more secure in his holdings than the tenant, who was subject to eviction at any time, the difference was not an absolute one but one of degree.... As far as income and economic well being was concerned, the difference between the two was not significant in qualitative terms. Both peasants were subsistence producers; they both employed the same traditional methods of cultivation, and the same primitive tools.¹²

This comparison between small scale cultivators and landless peasants gives precedence to the economic status and income by overlooking ownership of the means of production which plays a

freely. Probably due to that *Däjazmach* Abashawul was so famous and informants even to this day describe his generous character and considered him as father of the poor in general.

¹¹ James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy and the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp.41-43.

¹² Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*. (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Upsala, 1984),p.24.

decisive role in surplus extraction as well as the social impact of small-scale producers lacking ownership status of land.

However, just like the economic status, the social inequality and status difference in ownership of land had an important place in the lives of the cultivators of rural Harärgé community. Due to lack of ownership status the tenant was in an inferior social position and was unstable as he constantly felt a sense of insecurity. The small-scale land owner on the other hand possessed in his own hands the means of his security, however small the plot might be. For instance in discussing the advantage of owning one's own holding in south East Asia, as the core of subsistence security, James Scott has the following to say.

The key advantage of the smallholder was that he possessed, in his own hands, the means of his subsistence. This access to subsistence, unlike that of most tenants, is not as contingent on the good will of another man. Although he may not do quite so well as a large-scale tenant in a given season, his claim to the product of the land he holds is far stronger and therefore his subsistence is generally more secure. 'The value of owning land lies in the owner's immunity from involuntary loss of land or its product.' Actual title, then, assumes significance *only* in so far as it symbolizes a *more secure* access to the means of subsistence.¹³

The same experience of South East Asia could be observed in the rural landscape of Ethiopia. As opposed to the southern landless tenant farmers, the northern small scale owner cultivator had a sense of individual liberty. The northern small scale producer felt at least he was safe and secure from arbitrary eviction and arrogance of the landowner, in contrast to the erosion of human dignity in the case of the southern tenants. Bruce, who had done extensive research in Tigray, has the following to say after observing the difference in social status between small scale peasants and the landless.

¹³ James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy and the Peasants*, p.36.

Insecurity of tenure partakes of social psychology as much as law or economics, and it is important to emphasize that the Tigray peasant regards both communal tenures as relatively secure. He compares them with the other tenures under which peasants farm in Ethiopia: tenancy, where expulsion by the landlord is a threat every season, and freehold, where a peasant can in a moment of extreme need or weakness sell his birthright and that of his children.¹⁴

Simon Chodak, explaining the centrality of land among African peasants emphasized not only the economic value attached to land as one of the variable elements needed for productive activities but also its equally vital social dimension. He says “. . . it is the source of life, the mother of humankind. Wealth and Prestige derive from possession of [land]. It contains the ashes of the ancestors and hence the roots of the present . . .”¹⁵ This reverence for land was so central for the landless peasant community in Harärgé in general.

But in rural Harärgé, as in the other southern provinces after the conquest, the landlords mistreated the cultivators on the very land that their forefathers had cultivated for generations. It was the land they considered their source of life. It was the land where the ashes of their ancestors were buried. It was prestige, pride and social status that they lost with their land. Instead they were denied proper social status and decent humane treatment.¹⁶ The dehumanization of tenants by the landlords instilled inferiority complex in the minds of the former. This mental subordination was expressed in different ways on different occasions.

Here are some of the manifestations of tenants' mental subordination. For instance, when the tenant greeted the landlord he had to take off his hat, bow low, kiss the boot and was expected to address him as *gofta* (literary *getaye*-master) or the wife of the landlord as *gifti* (*ittiye*). Tenants

¹⁴ John.W. Bruce, “Land Reform Planning and Indigenous Communal Tenures: A case Study of the Tenure Chigurafgwoes in Tigray, Ethiopia” (DJS Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1976), p.251.

¹⁵ Szymon Chodak, “The Birth of an African Peasantry” in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.5, No.3 (1971), p.343.

¹⁶ Informants: Musa Ibrahim, Telenji Bekr, Siraj Kodhele, Umar Ahmed, TehaMume, Umar Haji,Hassen Bekr

addressing their landlords and their wives without these preliminaries were considered disrespectful and incurred serious punishment.¹⁷

On the other hand whenever the landlord introduced his tenant to someone else, he often used terms like “my servant”, “my hired farmer”. The Amharic renditions are more expressive: “*Ashkäre*” and “*Qefer gäbüreye*” respectively.¹⁸ In fact it seems that landlords were resisting using the proper term due to their intention to deny the existence of landlord tenant relation which would impose some legal sanction on their arbitrary imposition of labor obligation on their tenants.

In the day to day social interaction, there were petty prohibitions that symbolized the inferior position of tenants. Whenever the tenant was instructed to bring a mule for the landlord, which was a common and regular duty of the tenants as the landlord was not supposed to make a tour on foot and supervise his fields located far from his residence, the tenant had to pull the mule all the way to where the master was waiting for him. In the meantime riding the landlord’s mule was strictly prohibited.¹⁹

Besides, landlords tried to prevent tenants from accumulating enough resources that can make them independent of the landlord or enabled them to be in a better economic position in their day to day household activities. Some informants claim that the landlord prohibited tenants from wearing clothes or shoes or carrying an umbrella etc. similar in standard or better quality to their master even if they could afford them.²⁰ Tenants were not allowed to construct their houses with

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Informants: Abdulqadir Aburahaman, Umar Ahmed, HassenBeker, Siraj Kodhele

¹⁹ Informant: Ahmed Mumed

²⁰ Informants: Yuya Abdula, Musa Ibrahim, Abdulqadir Ahmed

corrugated iron sheet on the land they were cultivating even if they could afford.²¹ Tenants had to sit on the floor when they entered the house of the landlord, even if there were extra chairs.²²

The landlords could exert considerable pressure on the tenants, to the extent of depriving them of a common solidarity. The common mechanism was to extend some kind of economic assistance or advance interest free loans for some of the tenants whom the landlord trusted with unwavering loyalty to their master. In the same vein, some resident landlords employed some tenants permanently with favorable wages. In addition to narrowing down the language gaps created between the landlord and his tenants, these employees were expected to supervise the other tenants as a check on their class solidarity.²³

Therefore, whenever a tenant was in disagreement with his landlord, his relatives or probably his neighbors would not stand on his behalf. Rather they were found supporting the landlord and castigating the tenant. Generally, class consciousness and solidarity among exploited tenants appear to have been felt less generally and less strongly than competitions for land among neighboring tenants who were compelled to eke out their livelihood in an environment where people were many and land was scarce.

In some parts of Harärgé, some landlords were said to have prohibited tenants from burying their dead relatives on their *qäläd* lands. Traditionally, burial sites were selected by the Oromo by identifying areas which were stony and therefore were not suitable for agricultural practices. Accordingly, in the suburb of Gälämso town, there was a burial site which was not suitable for agricultural activities. One of the biggest landlords, Zäläqä Yergu, bought the entire area around Gälämso in early 1940s when he was an administrator and parceled out the arable land through a

²¹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Musa Ibrahim, Juhar Abdurahman, Ahmed Mumed

²² Ibid.

²³ Informants: Tcha Mumed, Ahmed Sa'ih, Hamza Ali, Mohammed Abdurahman

sharecropping arrangement. He left the rocky area for grazing purposes so that resident peasants could pay for grazing services per heads of cattle. Informants narrated that he prohibited the local community from burying their dead there. Having no option, they had to travel long distance in search of a new burial site.²⁴

The landlords were extremely feared by the tenants as they exercised supreme power over their tenants. Any kind of instruction by the landlords was fulfilled without any hesitation and refusal had a serious consequence, to the extent of untimely termination of the tenancy contract. Conscious of the power of the landlord and their own helpless position except through divine intervention, the tenants on the eve of the revolution chanted the following couplet whenever they were engaged in cooperative agricultural activities.

AfaanOromo	Gloss
Abba laffaa yaagirgirtessaa	you the landlord who make [us] trembling
Amma rabiin walnuqixxeessaa ²⁵	God will soon make us all equal

The relationship between tenants and landlords could be described as one of enmity in which tenants considered landlords as their class enemies; this will be discussed further in chapter eight. But here, it can be said that their relation had caused a deep social instability whereby tenants reacted violently against their landlords on a number of occasions. Seid Amin, who claimed to be a journalist in Garamulata *Awraja*, wrote a letter in which he argued that social unrest such as disagreement between tenants and landlords, killing people, causing physical assault, damaging vegetables on fields etc. by the cultivators were common practices in Bädäno,

²⁴ Informants: Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji.
²⁵ Informants: Taye Bedhane, Tamene Urgessa

specifically at Gol’oda *Qäbälé*. According to him, these were the results of landlessness among the natives and the resultant subordination of tenants to the settler communities who have imposed different mechanisms of exploiting indigenous resources. (See details in Appendix No.5).

With the 1974 revolution and its attendant land reform proclamation, tenants in Harärgé felt that their expectation for divine intervention was realized as the decree made them free from the shackles of the landlord’s exploitation. They felt the landlords were powerless and started to mock at the landlords recalling their wrong doings. They reflected the same through the following verse

Afaan Oromo	Gloss
Abban laffaa kangodhe gabbee	The landlord regretted by his own misdeeds
Irrabu’ee harkisse gangee ²⁶	He dismounted from his mule to walk on foot

7.2 Ethnic and Religious Identity

Just as the class division of rural Harärgé was worth discussing, the ethnic and religious composition of the tenants and landlords merits investigation. Viewed from the point of ethnic identity and religious adherence, the social composition of tenants was heterogeneous. We do not have any empirical data that tells the religious and ethnic composition of tenants. Indeed, it is difficult to produce such kinds of information given the fact that the identity of people in Harärgé was the result of different contingent historical factors. It is also unreliable if at all it existed. This is mainly because by its very nature the formation of tenant groups is a dynamic process.

²⁶ Ibid.

Each year, new households were established and started life as tenants and still other groups of small holders rented out land to augment their income, implying tenants were in the making. Still other tenants might leave their holdings due to various reasons. In the absence and non reliability of such sources of information, we only rely on the information gathered from oral informants.

Based on oral sources, although the overwhelming majority of the tenants in the province were Oromo, there were some Somali agriculturalists in Gursum, jigjiga, Babile and Fädis with some kind of sharecropping arrangement.²⁷ Besides there were some Amhara tenants who leased land from landlords in different rental arrangements. Here, a number of questions could be raised. How did the Amhara, who settled in the region after the incorporation of Harärgé as a dominant force, become tenants? What kinds of tenancy arrangements were practiced by the Amhara tenants? Some informants trace the emergence of Amhara tenancy to the settlement of some outlaws who had left their birth place due to some criminal acts and were trying to elude capture. They started new life by leasing land in different parts of Harärgé.²⁸ These individual migrants found the tenancy arrangement a viable outlet to secure access to land in a new environment far removed from home.

Besides, there were some Amhara civil servants who leased land from the government to work themselves or sub lease to others by preserving the status of usufruct right. Regarding the second alternative, most commonly cash tenancy was the rental arrangement most preferred by Amhara tenants. During the field work I encountered Amhara tenant informants in Gursum, Gerawa,

²⁷ Informants: Berhanu Mäkonnen, Yahya Umar, Debebe Haile, Mohammed Abdulkarim, Zerihun Bezabeh.

²⁸ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Wendimu W/Yohannes, Berhanu Mäkonnen, Zerihun Bezabeh, Siyoum Tessema

Hirna, Qärsa and Gälämsa and the majority of them were working under cash tenancy arrangement.²⁹

Besides, investigation of documents at Harär high court provides some insight into the making of the Amhara tenantry. When the army of Emperor Menilek arrived in Western Harärgé, 10 *gasha* of land was granted in Qunne for the members of *Ras* Mäkonnen's army numbering around one thousand as *madäriya*; from this two *gasha* was reserved as *balderas* where horses of *Ras* Mäkonnen were kept. With the death of *Ras* Mäkonnen the land was given to his elder son, *Däjazmach* Yilma, and later was transferred to Emperor Haile Sillassie and was administered under the *béterest*. Upon taking the land, the *béterest* started to treat the soldier settlers and their descendants who took the land as mere tenants and asked them to sign a contract agreement. After a long period of petitions and appeals some of them became sharecroppers while others became fixed rental contract tenants.³⁰

In terms of religion the overwhelming majority of the tenant population was Muslim. But there were also adherents of Orthodox Christianity, although they were a minority. They belong to the Shäwan Oromo and other occupational groups who were not legally allowed to own land at least up to the 1974 revolution.³¹

The fact that the social composition of the tenants was heterogeneous in terms of ethnic and religious identity does not necessarily blur the class distinction of the rural mass of Harärgé. Although there were some ethnic Amhara tenants who were Orthodox Christians they were a

²⁹ Informants: Zerihun Bezabeh, Siyoum Tessema, Belete, Worqeneh, Mesfin Worqe, Niguse Anberbir, Wendemu W/Yohannes. The first was *erbo* cultivator, the second was *mofär zämät* tenant farmer whilst the remaining were working in cash tenancy arrangement.

³⁰ Harärgé Province High Court, File No.138/59E.C. The petitioner was , Bäqälä Siranegeru and the respondent, was chief of the *béterest* land in Qunne, Mämeré Däjäné Däbalqé.

³¹ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Askale Weldeab, Umar Ahmed, Dheqebea Gameda, Taye Bedhane.

minority and at any rate in terms of class belonged to the propertyless rural mass. Hence, the ethnic and religious cleavage between tenants was not an obstacle to the economic subordination and political subjugation by the propertied class of the propertyless. Indeed, in some places like Dädär and Gursum, the ethnic and religious antagonism between the two classes was given much emphasis by the local community and served as an obstacle to the class solidarity of the two subjugated social groups.

Coming to the religion of the majority of the tenants, Islam is the predominant religion of the Eastern Oromo. Although the Oromo had contact with Islam and Muslim culture long before their reported arrival around the city in the 1550s³², Islam witnessed a rapid expansion in the 19th century among the eastern Oromo under the auspice of the city state of Härär. The reign of *Amir* Muhammed (r. 1856- 1875) was marked by the rapid spread of Islam. He was said to have used different Oromo institutions such as adoption (*ilmangosa*-children of the clan) for the purpose of spreading Islam.³³ He was also said to have established several missionaries among the Alla, Daga (mainly Nole and Jarso), Babelle, Aniya and even as far as among the Ittu in Čärčär. These missionaries propagated Islam and built mosques wherever they went.³⁴ The ten years of Egyptian occupation (1875-1885) of the city state also played a key role in the spread of Islam among the Oromo of Harärgé.³⁵

³² Mohammed Hassen, "The City of Harär and the Spread of Islam Among the Oromo in Harärgé", A Paper Presented on African Studies Association Annual Meeting, (Philadelphia, November 11-14 1999), pp.55-61.

³³ Richard Caulk, "Harar Town and its Neighbors in the 19th c" *Journal of African History*. Vol.18, No.3, 1977, pp.379-380. Amir Mohammed, was an Oromo by origin, but an assimilated *ge'usu* and member of the royal family of Ali ibn Daud Dynasty. His reign was remembered by Haräri tradition with bitterness, as a period when the Oromo established supreme domination within the city and was much hated by the Haräri. On the other hand Oromo tradition regarded his reign as a period of relative peace and prosperity. He was credited to have brought the Haräri and the Oromo together, He was said to have tried to encourage agriculture especially planting of cash crops like coffee through this intensifying trade and Islam among the Oromo.

³⁴ Yusuf Ahmed, pp. 35-38.; Richard Caulk, 1977, pp.379-380.

³⁵ Mohammed Hassen, 1973, p.28; Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p.233.; Bedri Kebir, 1995, p.40.

However, it was the conquest and incorporation by Emperor Menilek's army that witnessed a rapid islamization of the Oromo.³⁶ As Islam was opposite to the religion of the newcomers, it equipped the Oromo with the necessary resilience and psychological strength to endure the shock of conquest, alienation of land and the assault on their cultural institutions.

Besides losing their ancestral land, the conquest represented an assault on Oromo culture and symbols of national identity. Oromo cultural and religious centers were replaced by Christian churches. Two of the many examples were the now famous church of St Gebriel at Qullubi and the church of St George in Gerawa. These churches were erected on previous Oromo holy places of worship.³⁷ Likewise the big Jami mosque at the center of the walled city of Härär was destroyed and supplanted by the church of MedhaneAlem (Savior of the world) in 1888.³⁸

By the turn of the new century, Emperor Menilek had even prohibited the famous Oromo pilgrimage to *muda* ceremonies. After forbidding the pilgrimage he abolished the mark of indigenous Oromo religion. The emperor also forbade the *caffè* assembly at Oda Bultum, in Bädessa, the traditional assembly center of the Eastern Oromo.³⁹

As the Oromo of Harärgé were forced to lose their freedom and political institutions along with the loss of their own ancestral land, they had no option but to look for Islam to give them

³⁶ Bairu Tafla (Trans and Ed), *Atsma Giorgis and his Work History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa* (Stuttgart: Franc Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBG, 1987), p.135.

³⁷ Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p.236., BedriKebir, 1995, p.31. Informants are well conversant with the destruction of this two traditional centers of Oromo holy places of worship. For instance in the case of Girawa, the *tabot* was brought and erected by the first *abegaz* of Garamulata, *Fitawrari* Dinku at a specific place called Čirecha where the traditional Oromo religious practice used to take place.

³⁸ Richard Caulk, "The Occupation of Harar: January 1887." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. Vol.9, No.2, 1971, pp.1-19. "Menelik's Conquest and the Local leaders in Harär", p.6.; Mohammed Hassen, 1980, p.236.; Camilla Gibb, 1996, pp.26-27.

³⁹ Ibsa Ahmed, "A History of the Itu Oromo 1880s-1974." M.A.Thesis (Addis Ababa; Addis Ababa University, 2007), pp.11-15.; Informants: Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji, Umar Ahmed, Jemal Abdurahman

ideological and institutional support. What is more, in order to endure the shock of brutal defeat, loss of land, devastation of their political, cultural and religious institutions, dehumanization, and economic exploitation, Islam offered them an alternative ideology. It was this condition which forced them turn to Islam en mass as a form of denial of the new system and symbolized resistance against the established order.⁴⁰ Hence Islam was used by the Oromo of Harärgé as a cultural marker of political resistance.

After the conquest and incorporation, the Ethiopian Orthodox priests and higher officials were concerned chiefly in proselytizing Oromo *balabats* and prominent men and through them the mass of the Oromo to be christened collectively. This method had been pursued and implemented successfully among the Oromo, mostly in Shäwa and some other regions.⁴¹ However, among the Oromo in Harärgé it was a complete failure. For reasons that require an independent investigation, the Amhara priests and deacons were not able to convert prominent Oromo chiefs in Harärgé. It is not astonishing then that of all the Oromo in Ethiopia, it is the Oromo of Harärgé who successfully rejected Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. In fact they did not spurn Christianity entirely, as there was a minority who espoused Protestantism while a few others embraced Catholicism.⁴²

As a dominant religion of the Oromo, Islam, however, had an enduring impact on agricultural activities and the spread of tenancy. Two aspects of the religion in particular had repercussion for the spread of landlessness and these were inheritance and marriage.⁴³ In accordance with Islamic inheritance law, each parcel was divided into pieces in order to accommodate all male and

⁴⁰ Mohammed Hassen, 1999,p.15,Bairu Tafla (Trans and Ed),*Atsma Giorgis and his Work History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa* (Stuttgart: Franc Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBG, 1987),p.135.

⁴¹ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Musso,Mohammed Ararso.

⁴² Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Hassen Bäkär, Abdulqadir Abdurahaman,Abdulaṭif Ahmed.

⁴³ Ibid.

female offspring equally and with consideration of fertility of the land.⁴⁴ This caused fragmentation of land which became the chief problem in agricultural productivity. The problem of fragmentation was exacerbated by the fact that in rural Harärgé, at least half of the land was transferred to the next generation according to Islamic rules of inheritance; besides the members of the immediate family, other rightful heirs include siblings, nieces, nephews and a host of other relatives.⁴⁵ This does not mean that fragmentation of land was caused solely by the influence of Islam. In fact fragmentation was caused by many other factors in the region, one of which was absence of alternative employment opportunity other than agriculture that can absorb the growing rural population.

The other legacy of Islam was polygamy. The number of children born to a single father from different wives increased and all of them demanded land from their father. This aggravated the shortage of land and was a source of frequent disputes to the extent of violent conflicts among relatives, even among brothers. This was and is a common experience in Harärgé, especially among the Nole where population density is very high. Reflecting the high density of the Nole area, in the early 1980s, Bishaw Badeg indicated that the highest population density in Harärgé was found in Haramaya and Qärsa districts with a density of 573 and 454 persons per square kilometers respectively.⁴⁶

Scarcity of land was a major problem on the Harärgé plateau that caused the high percentage of tenancy. But it would be misleading to assume that scarcity of land was created in a short period

⁴⁴ Yasir Billoo, "Change and Authority in Islamic Law: The Islamic Law of Inheritance in Modern Muslim States" (Berkley Electronic Press, Express Prepress Series, 2003), Paper 12, pp.14-29.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bishaw Badeg, "Determining Options for Agro Forestry systems for the Rehabilitation of Degraded Watersheds in Alemaya Basin ,Harärgé Highlands,Ethiopia." Ph.D. Thesis. (Oregon State University, 1993),p.57.

of time. It was rather a cumulative effect of long years of population pressure, absence of any employment opportunity for the growing rural population, concentration of productive lands in a few hands and stagnating agricultural productivity. Historically, different mechanisms were employed to alleviate the scarcity of land. Some of these were:

- A. Some *garadas* admitted tenants coming from different densely populated regions. These tenants paid the customary *bärča* to the *garada* and were given a small plot of land on which they lived. These lands were commonly termed as *kuti garada*.⁴⁷
- B. Some of the landless became sharecroppers working for other tenants who owned large tracts of lands.
- C. Still others migrated to the areas west of the Burqa river where land was relatively abundant and new *garada* domains were created by the government. This process became common in the 1950 and the 1960s.
- D. There were also cases whereby the sedentary agriculturalist Oromo communities migrated from the eastern parts of Harärgé into Aniya and Čärčär and were transformed into pastoralists. Of course this transformation was forced in the sense that the migrants wanted to avoid the heavy burdens imposed on them by crop production.⁴⁸ This has been discussed extensively in the previous chapters.

⁴⁷ *Kuti garada* is a plot of land belonging to the *garada*'s possession parceled out to his relatives and/or those who have no land. Those who received the piece of land should work for the *garada* as tenants. The land that was given was from the *qologarada*'s possession (300 *jerib*) but the size of *kuti garada* greatly differs.

⁴⁸ Mohammed Hassen, "Menilek's Conquest of Harar and its Effect on the Political Organization of the Surrounding Oromo up to 1900", *Working Papers on Society and History: The Southern Periphery from the 1880s to 1974*. Eds. Donald Donham and Wendy James (Cambridge: African Studies Center, 1980), p.237., Ezekiel Gebisa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of Khat in Harärgé, Ethiopia, C.1930-1991." Ph.D. dissertation, (Michigan State University, 1997), p.62.

The above division of tenants along religious lines also applied to the landlords. The majority of landlords were followers of Orthodox Christianity while there were minority Muslim landlords who were the ethnic kin of the Harärgé Oromo tenants.⁴⁹ Due to the religious differences between tenants and landlords the social distance between the two was wide. In this case, the majority of the landlords were outsiders. Whichever ethnic group they belonged to, they were part of the state structure that was imposed along with the incorporation of the region in the last quarter of the 19th Century by Emperor Menilek II.

State archives are replete with the kind of support Orthodox Christianity was enjoying. For instance, Christians would secure easy access to arable land. While every kind of material and ideological support was extended to the church members, in some cases the role of the Orthodox church was declining since the servicemen in the church were not adequately rewarded in terms of land grants and other benefits.⁵⁰

But a careful investigation of archives could also throw light on the opposite aspect. There were a number of priests and church men who in addition to *samon* land got *qälad* land and rented it out to tenants and reaped the fruits. Examples are the cases of *Mämeré Bälayneh* in *Bädessa*,⁵¹ *Mämeré Fantaye* in *Gursum*,⁵² and *Mämeré Endäshaw Kassaye* in *Bädäno*.⁵³ In the case of the last one, for instance, in addition to land given for his church service, he had one *gasha* of land on which he had fifteen tenants working for him in different tenancy arrangements. In the early 1950s E.C his tenants were working for him on an *erbo* basis, but later on in the late 1950s and early 1960s they were working under cash contract.

⁴⁹ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed. The documentary investigation of the subject establishes the same fact

⁵⁰ National Archive. Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.;17.2.20.07.

⁵¹ Harärgé Province High Court ,civil case.File No. 32/65 E.C

⁵² National Archive, Folder No.17.1.443.08.

⁵³ Harärgé Province high court .File No.99/53 E.C.

According to a document found in the *diwan* documents at the IES, *Fitawrari* Täklähawariyat confiscated the lands in the hands of the priests and clergy of Gälämso which they had used freely for the previous thirteen years. While he took the individual possessions, he left aside the church land for which *asrat* was being paid. The clergy then appealed to *Ras* Imiru in 1928 E.C not to lose their possession as they were given by the government some years back. *Ras* Imiru then instructed the governor of Čärčär not to evict the clergy but to let them live as before.⁵⁴

In general due to differences between tenants and landlords on ethnic, religious, cultural as well as regional backgrounds, the social gap between landlords and tenants was wide. The relation between landlords and tenants in most of the landlord and tenant cases was also more antagonistic than harmonious. As a result, class difference was more pronounced between the two social groups.⁵⁵

Some older tenant informants remember a time when the land they cultivated had belonged to their families. Even when the landlord was a local notable, he held the land not by virtue of a traditional system but by virtue of a land grant given by the emperor.

7.3 Education

Harärgé is one of the provinces where modern education was not expanded by the state. As a result the rate of illiteracy was high. In accordance with international practice; literacy was indicated by the CSA for each province in the 1960s for those people who are ten years of age

⁵⁴ IES-MS 909.

⁵⁵ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Hassen Beker, Abdulqadir Abdurahaman, Abdulañif Ahmed.

and above. Moreover, a person is classified as literate only if he or she can both read and write in any language or script. In Ethiopia, however, only reading was used as a criterion for literacy.⁵⁶

According to the survey made by the Central Statistics Office Report on the sample survey of rural Harärgé in 1968, the rate of illiteracy was 96.5%. Only 3% of the total population aged ten years and above were reported literate; a further 0.5% were indicated to have the ability only to read. At the sub province level Čärčär had the largest literate population followed by Obbora while Dire Dawa had the lowest. The large majority of literate population was male.⁵⁷

The fact that the majority of the rural population of Harärgé was illiterate had its own repercussion on the tenant population. Since the tenant population was high it follows that there was a very high illiterate tenant population. In conditions where the educational level of tenants was low, the tenants could not effectively bargain vis-a vis the landlord to safeguard their interest. The problem was more serious whenever the tenancy agreement that bind them with the landlord was a written agreement since they did not read what was included in the agreement.

There were several disagreements between tenants and landlords on the agreements they entered into and one of the major reasons for this mentioned by tenants was that they did not read Amharic and therefore did not understand what was included in the agreement. A good example could be found in the archives. A certain Mumed Jilo was said to have been given land as sharecropper by a landlord called Kefle Tēgneḥ in Tībiro, around Hirna. In addition, the tenant was given the responsibility of overseeing the activity of the other tenants on the twelve *gasha* holding of the same landlord. The agreement, as the landlord claimed, was written and the tenant agreed to undertake his responsibility and put his signature on the contract. But after thirteen

⁵⁶ Central Statistics Office, Report on the Sample Survey of Harärgé Province,(Addis Ababa,1969),p.13.

⁵⁷ Ibid.,pp.14-17.

years, the tenant was accused and was brought to court. The landlord had filed a case that the tenant had failed to discharge his responsibility as *wakil* in collecting the rent from the other tenants. The tenant denied that he was given the responsibility of *wakil* and the signature he put did not contain the responsibility of being “*wakil*” as he heard when the agreement was read for him because he did not read and write. The court ultimately ruled that the tenant pay the accumulated debt gradually as it was too heavy to pay in one harvest season.⁵⁸

Whenever tenants appealed to courts as petitioners or when they were accused by landlords they always needed petition writers who were paid for the service delivered. In addition tenants needed the assistance of someone who could read and write well and understood the court procedures. These services were not available for free and tenants had to hire someone. Hence a common practice as evidenced from court documents was that tenants were represented by paid agents.⁵⁹ This was therefore an additional economic burden for tenants.

Modern education was not expanded in Harärgé and the Harär Oromo could be considered as one of the least educated groups when evaluated based on the curriculum taught by Ethiopian government. Informants provide at least two reasons as to why Harärgé Oromo were not educated. The first has to do with the capacity of the rural poor to send their children to modern schools. It is argued that modern schools were opened only in *wäräda* and *awraja* capitals which were often too far from the villages. Since sending children to *awraja* capitals and supporting them economically was not affordable for the tenant family who had lots of responsibilities to the remaining household members, to the appropriating landlord and to the state, they decided

⁵⁸ Harärgé Province High Court, File No. 15/53 E.C. Civil case between the landlord Kefle Tigne and tenant Mumed Jilo. Both presented the case to the court through their hired lawyers.

⁵⁹ The majority of court cases involving landlord-tenant disputes indicated tenants were represented in courts by their hired lawyers. The discussion by informants is also telling that since the court procedure was in Amharic tenants were not able to communicate in the court. So that they had to be represented by individuals who had knowledge of the law and were fluent in Amharic.

not to send their children to schools. Especially the problem became more compounded when children reached secondary school level. Such schools were located only in *awraja* capitals so that children of tenants would have to stay in the *awraja* capitals with all the cost of accommodation covered by their families which was beyond the means of tenant families.⁶⁰

If we look at the number of schools and the centers where they were established they clearly ascertain the fact that they were established in *awraja* capitals. Besides, the overwhelming majority of students belonged to the settler community. Based on archival material, the following table illustrates the number of schools along with the number of students and the centers where schools were established in 1937 E.C.

Table.No.12 Names of schools, towns where they were located and Number of Students in Harärgé in 1937 E.C

No.	Name of the School	Town founded	No of Male students	No. of Female Students	Total
1	<i>Ras</i> Mäkonnen School	Harär	394	59	453
2	Emperor Haile Sillassie I School	Harär	520	99	619
3	<i>Leul</i> Mäkonnen School	DireDawa	275	22	297
4	<i>Däjazmach</i> WaldaGebriel Abaseytan school	Čiro (AsäbäTäfäri)	339	109	448

⁶⁰ Informants: AbdulqadirAbdurahaman,SirajKodhele,MohammedAbdulkarim,HassenBeker

5	Abära Gizaw School	Dädär	135	5	140
6	Gursum Junior and Senior Secondary School	Gursum	155	9	164
7	<i>Le'ul Räs</i> Mäkonnen school	Jigjiga	150	49	199
8	Legearba Mission school(catholic)	Legearba (Hančar)	172	19	191
	Total		2140	371	2511

Source: Adapted by the author from National Archive Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.

In 1944 E.C five additional schools were established in Kombolcha, Qočär (to the east of Gursum), Čällänqo, Gerawa and Gälämso .

The second reason for the low level of education of the Harärgé Oromo was ideological. Sending children to schools where the curriculum of the state was taught was considered as abandoning one's own culture. It was thought that modern schools were centers where indoctrination of Amhara culture and way of life were taught. They were centers for the expansion of Amharic language at the expense of the language of the indigenes. Instead of sending their children to modern schools sponsored by the state, the rural mass in general preferred to send their children to *qur'anic* schools which had flourished in the region.

This was also true among the Haräri, where illiteracy rate was probably the lowest in Ethiopia. According to Rahaji Abdella, the Haräri did not want to send their children to be taught in governmental or missionary schools. Instead they wanted to send them to modern Islamic

schools. One of the earliest of these, established in the 1920s, was *Jama'iyal Khariyal Islamiya* for short *Jama'ya*.⁶¹

Indeed state archives also attest that in Harärgé, *qura'anic* schools had become too strong and urge the state to expand Amharic language in the curriculum so that students have to be taught in Amharic from an early age.⁶²

Moreover, in one of the letters written by Harär sub province governor to the general director of the education bureau of the sub province, parents had opposed the expansion of modern education and demanded a parallel expansion of *qura'anic* schools. For example in Kombolcha, a few kms northeast of Harär town, the inhabitants boycotted the teaching learning process by prohibiting their children from going to school. As a precondition to send their children to school they demanded some classrooms to be reserved for *Qura'anic* education. The classroom saga was later resolved peacefully by the intervention and in the interest of the state.⁶³

The overall effect of the little participation of Harärgé Oromo in modern education was that they did not effectively integrate into the civil service. Since the opportunity of modern education was wide open for the children of the settler communities and their descendants, the various government posts were occupied by these same groups who have used their position to educate their children.

⁶¹ Rahaji Abdella, "The Kullub-Hannolato Movement by the Harari, 1946- 1948", Senior Essay, (Department of History, 1994),p.11.The foundation of this school was associated with an informal association called *Firmach*, in which some leading members of Haräri elders began raising funds to open a new Islamic school for their children. This school was said to have a relation with Al-Ahzar University of Cairo. The curriculum of the school consisted of Haräri history, culture, and the language of instruction was Arabic. It was these students who established the *Watani* group and who participated in the *Kulub –Hannolato* movement. The school funding was mainly raised by Haräri while the emperor was said to have subsidized 5000 birr for the school.

⁶² Informants Mohammed Abdurahman, Abdulatif Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman,Hassen Beker.; National Archive Folder No. 17.1.7.30.02.

⁶³ Harärgé Province Administrative documents archive, scanned document Folder.No.6

The only exceptions from among Harärgé Oromo were the children of the local gentry such as *damina* and *garada*. These social groups could afford to send their children to modern schools and had a better awareness on the role of modern education.⁶⁴ Hence their children were able to attend modern schooling up to the tertiary level and the impact of this could be seen even today.

7.4 Gender Relations

Rural Harärgé women were facing double oppression both from the household and from the landlord. In the household, they were victims of the social and established customs which confined them to the responsibility of housework and child care so that they were forced to stay at home and do backbreaking domestic chores even if they were feeling ill or if they were pregnant. They did not have any money of their own and when their husbands came home they had to cast their eyes down and bow their heads and act submissively before them.⁶⁵

In the agricultural sphere, however, the contribution of women was immense. The tenant household head had to be supported by the labor of his wife in agricultural activities except those involving heavy work such as clearing new fields and ploughing. The tenant's wife was involved in weeding, furrowing, harvesting, and bringing food to the farmstead while the husband was working in the field.⁶⁶ But ultimately decision making on the surplus was controlled by the husband. Even some small scale transactions such as the sale of vegetables and poultry were controlled by the husband.

Powerful elders were able to obtain additional land and wives. Some of the *damina* and *garada* discussed earlier in chapter two and chapter three married many wives which enabled them to

⁶⁴ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman, Umar Ahmed.

⁶⁵ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Zehara Mohammed, Iman Mohammed

⁶⁶ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Zehara Mohammed, Juhar Abdurahman, Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed

have more children and therefore more labor to mobilize so that agricultural surplus was easily accumulated. By accumulating more wealth they heightened gender and class differentiation in the countryside.⁶⁷

Fragmentary evidence suggests that many peasant women were able to shield some portion of the produce of their labor from appropriation by male household heads. The strategies they adopted were most often the tactic or weapon of the weak. For example, women informants narrate that some of the tenant housewives had been pilfering some produce; some of them hid goats and sheep in the villages of their fathers and mothers.⁶⁸ They used these properties in time of urgent personal need. Besides, in Harärgé, women frequently behaved in obscene and manifestly wild manner. It appears that it was one method of curbing excessive male domination whenever economic hardship became so pervasive in the household.⁶⁹

The other area of the exploitation of female labor was outside the household by the landlord. The landlord, who leased land to the tenant, demanded the labor of the tenants' wives though this was not sanctioned by law. By custom, in rural Harärgé, there was a gender division of labor whereby women labor was not exploited in direct agricultural activities such as ploughing. Their activity was restricted to home and confined to jobs necessary to convert the produce of the land into edible or marketable commodities. These areas of women labor were appropriated by the landlord. Tenants' wives were forced by the landlords to grind grains by using traditional methods of stone mills and produce course dough called in the local parlance *qosha* (which was again finely ground on the stone mill), fetch water during such occasions like festivities and

⁶⁷ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Abdulqadir Ahmed, Mohammed Abdurahman, Dawud Abdulahi

⁶⁸ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Zehara Mohammed, Iman Mohammed.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

holidays which the landlord observed. As part of the *sisso* labor requirement women labor mobilization was therefore made an important aspect of labor exploitation by the landlord.⁷⁰

Women labor was also conscripted by landlords in cleaning the kraals of animals. However, there were occasions when the appetite of the landlord for the unpaid labor was insatiable and broke the established customs in division of labor. As a result a landlord called Dessalegn in Doba was said to have forced his tenant to clean the animal dung in the kraal, which was customarily the preserve of women labor. The following couplet by a witness to the event as narrated by informants in Doba, near Hirna, illustrates this breach of tradition

Afaan Oromo	Gloss
Akka jedala robaa sassakan sibarsissa	Let me coach you how a jackal caught by rain runs
Dassen dhirra qisassasa yatti falti harsissa ⁷¹	See how Dessalegn [landlord] undermined the
	tenant and made him clean his kraal

The question of women land ownership was an important issue that needs some kind of discussion in relation to property ownership in rural economy. In Harärgé, the issue of women’s right in land ownership was never raised as some informants reiterated. Land belonged to the household head which by implication meant that the husband controlled and owned the land.⁷²

The only case where women enjoyed landownership was in the case of widowed women. In such instances, the wife inherited the land and got it registered in her own name. This was the case for all women irrespective of the ethnic and religious background. Some of them in the process

⁷⁰ Informants: Zehara Mohammed, Iman Mohammed, Siraj Kohele, Telenji Beker Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed
⁷¹ Informant: Ahmed Mumed
⁷² Informants: Ahmed Mumed, Juhar Abdurahaman, Askale Weldeab, Abdulatif Ahmed, Umar Ahmed

became landlords as the amount of land they inherited was fairly big. Archives attest that widows and daughters of landlords who inherited their husbands and fathers became landlords in this manner. Such were the cases of *Wäyzäro* Tesemé Abbayirga in different parts of Harärgé both East and West,⁷³ *Wäyzäro* Mulumäbet in Qärsa⁷⁴ and *Wäyzäro* Geṭenesh, the daughter of Abbatabor, in Mächara.⁷⁵

In some cases, women took their husband's title along with the land so that there were some *garada* or *malaqa* women though it is not clear whether they were supposed to execute the responsibility attached to the office or not. Often this mechanism was fixed through inheritance or through purchase of the office of *garadanät* or *malqanät*. Just like the discussion above, this mechanism of securing land worked for every female household irrespective of class, religious and ethnic background.⁷⁶

Beside these, some members of the royal family got land in different parts of Harärgé. As mentioned in earlier chapters, *Etege* Menen had lands in different parts of Harärgé, *Li'elt* Tänäññewärq had a large tract of land in Asäbot, *Wäyzäro* Zänäbewärq had land in Fädis, *Wäyzäro* Yäshimäbét had land in Babile, *Le'lt* Roman Wärq had eight *gasha* of *rest* land in Hančär etc.⁷⁷

⁷³ WMTMRC Folder No. 88, File No. 37 and 40.

⁷⁴ Informants: TehaMume, NiguseAnberbir, GoshuDinawo

⁷⁵ WMTMRC Folder No.16/92 Different letters exchanged between the *béterest* of Harärgé province, Ministry of Interior, Governor of Čärčär *Awraja* in the 1950s *Däjazmach* BekeleWeya and the representatives of *Wäyzäro* Geṭenesh Abbatabor.

⁷⁶ Haräri Regional State Archive, Scanned documents File No.6. the case of Fatima Hassen taking the title of *garadanet* with the death of her father and no male to inherit on his father's side, similar case was witnessed with Ash Hussen inheriting her father Hussen Mohammed.; Ayalech Siamir inherited the office of *garada* upon the death of her husband.; *Wäyzäro* Gojam Kililishie Yifru applied to inherit the office of *malaqanat* belonging to her husband Belayneh Kolase in Meta.

⁷⁷ IES- MS 900. IES-MS1346. Concerning Yeshimbet and her relation with the royal family, see detail discussion in chapter two. It is not clearly indicated in the sources under what kind of categories or land tenure these female ownership of land belonged. But presumably it seems to be under *béterest* since the owners were members of the royal family.

There were also cases where a number of Haräri women were given land by their fathers as dowry and through inheritance from their parents. Upon establishing her own household with her husband, she would have an independent source of income since her land was expected to fetch some income and she would not therefore bother her husband for petty household expenditure.⁷⁸

7.5 Marriage

There are different types of marriages among the Oromo in Harärgé. But the most commonly applied form of marriage was performed through the consent of the family. This form of marriage had an inbuilt bias against tenants. Informants discuss that the family of the daughter frequently broke an earlier marriage agreement they had entered with the family of the prospective bridegroom, who belonged to a tenant family. Often the former were reluctant to give their daughters to those who did not have land. They entered the initial agreement often induced by the labor service the son was expected to offer for years in lieu of a dowry.⁷⁹

On the basis of the *diwan* documents consulted in the IES, it can be established that marriage agreements frequently broke before the spouses started to leave on their own, independent of their families.⁸⁰ A crosscheck of this information with oral informants shows that families were not interested in giving their daughters to poor peasants especially tenants.⁸¹

A letter written by Seid Amin to the ministry of Agriculture in 1945 on land grants also gives the same information as indicated in appendix no.5. The daughter's family established a new marriage agreement whenever they came across a family with a better economic power. The problem was not only economic but also one of social security. Tenants could change their living

⁷⁸ Informants: Ayub Abdullahi, Abdusemed Edris

⁷⁹ Informants: Mohammed Musso, Ahmed Yuyo, Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Juhar Abdurahaman,

⁸⁰ IES-MS.919.

⁸¹ Informants: Mohammed Abdulkarim, Suleiman Ahmed, Hamza Ali.

residence due to eviction which implied his family would move to a new residence often far from their relatives. The dislocation of the family would obviously result in difficulty of communication between relatives in vital social events such as mourning and marriage when all relatives from near and far met. Due to this the daughter's family was not interested to establish family relations with tenants who could move from village to village due to the fear of apparent eviction.⁸²

On the other hand, settling in distant places where the clan members were not found has its own security cost. In Harärgé there was a *gosa* (clan) system in which members of the same clan help each other in times of hardship and happiness. The *gosa* system was open to outsiders who wanted to join the *gosa* of a certain area. People were absorbed into communities of a certain clan or kin groups in a variety of ways. Outsiders were in principle subordinates but they could often acquire a status and privileges theoretically reserved for insiders by making themselves useful to the clan or its leaders.

Those who joined the clan were provided protection against any danger coming from adversaries. They were also provided with social amenities during times of hardship like mourning, crop failure due to different factors, loss of cattle etc. Through the *gosa* system it was also easy to mobilize resources for labor activities such as weeding. It was therefore convenient for individuals with poor economic background to establish their residence sites where their clan had a strong base. Through the support of the clan he can start life as a tenant, accumulate some

⁸² Informants: Mohammed Abdulkarim, Mohammed Musa, Yahya Umar, Ibrahim Ahmed

wealth to build his own economic base and secure his own land through different mechanisms such as inheritance or purchase.⁸³

One often notices in the archives that illegal marriages were frequent in Harärgé villages. Characteristically this was observed among the younger members of the community who have come of age but did not have the property they could offer as bridewealth for the family of the daughter. Most importantly, because they lacked land ownership, they engaged in such illegal activities. Such marriages did not last long since the family of the daughter in turn engaged in retaliatory actions and litigation.⁸⁴ Thus the prevalence of tenancy was an obstacle for the creation of a stable family that can ensure the continuity of the generation and the community at large

7.6 Housing and Clothing

The housing conditions of tenants were generally very poor with little or no social service such as access to road transport, health services, education, electricity etc. In effect, these became luxuries rather than social necessities for tenants. Often dwellings were physically isolated, which made communication between households even more difficult. The tenant household was usually round-shaped and constructed by placing eucalyptus poles upright to a height of eight to ten feet in a trench. These were interlaced with smaller branches which are plastered with mud

⁸³ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Musso, Siraj Kodhele, Ahmed Yuyo. For the discussion of the *gosa* as one of mutual aid association see Million Tesfaye, "Mutual Aid Associations Among the Qottu Galla [Oromo] of Harär", *Ethnological Bulletin*. Vol. 11. No. 1., pp. 471-477.

⁸⁴ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Musso, Siraj Kodhele, Ahmed Yuyo

mixed with stalks of *teff* grain both inside and outside to form a smooth wall from four to six inches thick.⁸⁵

Often the tenant's *tukul* did not have separate rooms; a large center pole separates the living quarters of the family members from the area occupied by the livestock during the night. The only exception to a single farmstead building was a second house or '*tukul*' if there was more than one wife. It was customary for each wife to have her private house in which she stored food and fuel for her family.⁸⁶ The *tukuls* were constructed with the assistance of others in the village at a cost ranging from 30 birr to 250 birr. The cost was determined almost entirely by the amount of materials which must be purchased for construction as the labor is generally "exchange labor". The only exception was the thatching of the roof. This was generally done by persons skilled in this task.⁸⁷

The fact that the tenant household was too small and was made of wooden materials has something to do with the economic status and the influence of the landlord. In the first case the tenant was not economically strong to construct his house by using corrugated iron sheet and secondly the size was determined by the landlord who did not allow a spacious place for house construction as he needed the land.⁸⁸

Regarding the economic position of the tenants, informants claim that they were not able to construct their living residence by using corrugated iron sheet since they were not economically strong. They often tried to augment their income through the cultivation of cash crops in areas

⁸⁵ K.C. Davis ,Ahmed Mohammed and W.A.Wayt, " Farm Organization : Tere and Gelmo Villages, Harar Province" *Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, Experimental Station Bulletin No.42*.(HSIU, October 1965),pp.10-11.; Informants: Teleneji Beker , Ahmed Mumed, Mohammed Muso, Ahmed Yuya, Musa Ibrahim.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Informants:Teleneji Beker, Mohammed Musa, Ahmed Mumed, Umar Sali

where these were possible. For instance in different parts of Harärgé *čät* is the dominant cash crop but on *qäläd* land landlords were not ready to accommodate these cropping patterns. This was so because the landlords were not happy about the perennial crops on their lands as the legal procedures were too complicated when tenancy agreements broke up.⁸⁹

Narrating the transformation in tree crops, informants indicated that a large scale expansion of cash crops especially *čät* was a phenomenon that expanded rapidly only after the 1974 revolution. Once all the tenants became owners of the land they were cultivating they immediately rushed into planting *čät* which now had a high demand both in the domestic and foreign markets. *Čät* started to bring a high return for freed tenants who were now in a better economic standing to construct their houses by using corrugated iron sheet. Since the revolution every Harärgé village was covered by corrugated iron sheet, abandoning the old *tukuls* made of wood and grass.

The other, perhaps most pressing, social problem in Harärgé during the period 1887-1975 was clothing. Often tenants covered their expenditure for clothing and other social amenities by selling the crops left after sharing with the landlord. As discussed in chapter five, the marketing often took place during harvest seasons when prices for cereals were too low. Thus they had to sell a large amount of grain to cover the cost of clothing. But since the opportunity cost of selling food grain was too high for the survival of the tenant family, they had to spend a little amount of their produce for such amenities. As a result, the whole peasant family was poorly clothed.

Archival evidence corroborated by oral informants indicates that rural people were often found naked. In some localities the traditional clothing made of leather was commonly used by

⁸⁹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Mohammed Musa, Ahmed Mumed, Siraj Khodele Umar Ahmed

females. In Čärčär, for example, the government had arranged the import of *abujadid* through the railway line to be distributed for the rural people with relatively affordable price. But the archives indicated that the governor of the province conspired with wholesale traders who ultimately controlled the distribution and determined the price which was not affordable to the rural population. As a result the problem persisted.⁹⁰

The problem reached a point where it became difficult to cover dead bodies. One of the observers sent by the government, Täfära W/ Sämayat, wrote an open letter in 1936 E.C to the then Ministry of Pen, *Tsähafit'izaz* Wäldägiorgis Wäldäyohannes. The letter gave a vivid description of the extent of the crisis and is worth quoting. It reads:

በሀረር አውራጃ ከንግድ ሚኒስቴር ተፈቅዶላቸው ልብስ የሚሸጡ ጉሩፖች የራሳቸውን ጥቅም ከመፈለግ በቀር ድህውን የደገፉት ነገር የለም፡፡ በየወረዳው እና በየቀበሌው ያሉ ድሆች ትንሽ ገንዘብ ያላቸው እየገዙ ሐፍረታቸውን መሸፈኛ ልብስ ያገኙም አሉ . . . ድሆች [ግን] መስማሚያ ነገር ስለሌላቸው ቢሲዲም ጋራ ሙለታ አንያ ያሉ በብዙ የሚቆጠሩ ህዝቦች ወንድም ሴት [ም] [እ] ራቁታቸውን ከመሆናቸውም በላይ ሞት የሚባለው እዳ በደረሰባቸው ግዜ ለመከፈኛ ለሬሳ ልብስ ጆንያ የሚያገኙ እድላሞች ናቸው፡፡ አብዛኛው በቅጠል እየተጠቀለለ ስለሚቀበር ይህን የመሰለ ችግር በወገኖቻችን ላይ ሲደርስ በተቻለ መጠን ሩህሩህ ለሆነው ተመልካችነትም ሳሳስብ ክብሬ ነው፡፡⁹¹

Those groups of wholesalers living in Härär province have got permission from the Ministry of trade to distribute clothes for the poor at a fair price. But except promoting their own advantages they did not benefit the poor. The poor living in various *wärādas* and *qäbälés* with a little money have bought clothes and barely covered their naked bodies....But those with no adequate money failed to purchase and many people living in Bisidimo, Garamulata, Aniya, both males and females, were walking naked and above all whenever their brethren died they were at great pains to cover the coffins and only the lucky once were getting fiber sacks made of sisal. Most were buried being rapped up with leaves. It was agonizing to see such events happening to our citizens.

Obviously, the above quotation applied to the condition of peasants in general and was not confined to tenants. But relatively the tenants were the hardest hit by the crisis. Considering the meager amount of food grain that was left in the hands of the tenants after landlords took their

⁹⁰ National Archives Folder No.17.1.7.30.02.
⁹¹ National Archive: Folder No.17.1.7.30.02. Informants: Ahmed Sa'i, Umar Ahmed, Mohammed Adem, Abdulqadir Ahmed

share, the purchasing power of tenants would dramatically decline so that they would not be involved in adequate purchase of clothes for their children.

Oral informants amply demonstrate that the local officials at *wārāda* and *qābālē* levels frequently promised the peasantry distribution of clothes when mobilizing tenants for different free labor activities. However, after the mobilization was completed the promises were not kept and the tenants returned home bare handed.⁹²

7.7 Communal Labor Mobilization

There were different kinds of traditional work sharing arrangements in Ethiopia. Although the appellations and the practices differed from place to place they shared common features of working in groups during peak agricultural seasons. The most common of these work arrangements were *wāñfāl*, *dābo* and *jiggi*.⁹³ In Harärgé there were different kinds of communal labor mobilizations such as *guza*, *hirgi*, *qubi* and *faraqa*. Of these it was *guza* that was the most commonly applied form of mobilizing labor force for different activities.⁹⁴

Guza is a form of communal labor arrangement which was mobilized by agriculturalists who wanted helping hands for a certain task to be completed within a short period of time or where the nature of the work by itself demanded more hands. It can be mobilized by a peasant with small holdings, a tenant, a *damina*, a *garada* or even a landlord with a large plot of land. Those who were called up appear with the instruments required for the type of activity. For example if

⁹² Informants: Umar Ahmed, Jemal Abdurahman, Teha Abdella, Aliyi Mume

⁹³ For the discussion of communal labor among the Oromo in Western Shäwa and Wälläga see for example Temesgen Gobena, "Gege, Dabo and Other Communal Labours mainly among the Oromo of Wesern Shäwa and Wälläga", *Ethnological Society Bulletin Reprint*, No.7. pp.235-243. For a discussion in Shäwa see for example, H.S Mann "Land Tenure in Chore" pp.40-41.

⁹⁴ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Mohammed Musa, Mohammed Muso, Juhar Abdurahman.

guza was for farming, the participants would come with all their ploughing animals and instruments; if it was for weeding participants would appear with their own sickles etc.⁹⁵

Guza reflects the relative social position and strength of individuals. If an individual had a strong social base he had a better chance of mobilizing more people than individuals with relatively lesser social power and influence. This implies that *damina*, *garada* and landlords were in a better social position to mobilize more people as compared to tenants and small holding peasants. Tenants were less positioned to mobilize *guza* as its mobilization itself required the tenant family to prepare food on a scale not affordable by the tenants. This left tenants to depend on relatives or to depend on only the family labor force.⁹⁶

On the other hand, access to labor might be mediated through kinship, marriage or patronage. People who needed more labor but had a lesser social position would approach their relatives with a better social position. In this case the peasant or tenant who mobilized labor through the mediation of others was not expected to know all peasants who came to work on his field. It was also a common practice for marriage relatives to mobilize more labor through their ties.⁹⁷

On the occasion of *guza*, the family which mobilized the communal labor force was expected to provide food for the entire labor force. Under normal circumstances, lunch was served with *xunxufa* made of either wheat or barely. *Čat* as *bärča* was served along with *huja* and other accessories such as cigarette. If the peasant was well to-do he could invite the participants for dinner by preparing *laffiso* or porridge with butter and honey. If the *guza* was called up by a landlord, a sheep or a bull (depending on the number of the labor mobilized) was slaughtered for

⁹⁵ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Teha Mume, Mohammed Muso, Juhar Abdurahman, Niguse Anberbir.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker, Hassen Beker

dinner so that a well prepared feast was served for all participants. This was one of the few occasions in which tenants of Harärgé got the opportunity to have meat.⁹⁸

Guza could be viewed as a social responsibility for every farmer so that demanding *guza* labor was a right and an obligation. Refusing to participate in *guza* labor was considered a violation of a social norm. If a man who requested labor from individuals failed to secure it, he had the right to present the case to the *damina* or elders and has the right to be compensated by the one who refused.⁹⁹

The occasion of *guza* also served as an important event for tenants and the peasants in general to express their overall discontent with the system through various mechanisms. During work, they chanted, sang, and narrated folk tales and others stories. The contents of these songs and poetry were often political. Examples of these were indicated in the relevant parts of the various chapters in this work. They described their exploitation, their discontent and dissatisfaction with the system.

Tenants frequently faced shortages of labor to be mobilized for different farming activities that demanded labor beyond the supply of the household especially for ploughing, weeding, and harvesting. Due to this they were forced to rely on only their family labor. The use of collective labor would have helped them to maximize their yield. Because some of these activities were seasonal, the timely implementation of these tasks had a direct impact on productivity. For instance tenants might not complete ploughing or weeding of their fields on time by mobilizing their household labor only. Lack of preparation of the seed bed on time would have a direct

⁹⁸ Informants: for the details of these food items along with their preparation procedure see discussion in Admasu Niguse "Food of the Kottu [Oromo]", *Ethnological Society Bulletin* Reprint No.5., pp.122-126.

⁹⁹ Informants: Abdulaṭif Ahmed, Siraj Kodhele, Telenji Beker, Hassen Beker, Jemal Abdurahman

implication on the output. Likewise, failure of weeding the field with the optimal supply of labor would result in production shortfall. This would ultimately affect the final product. But if they mobilized *guza* labor and completed ploughing or weeding of their fields on time, it would be more likely for the field to give a better yield.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Building on developments discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter has demonstrated that the tenancy arrangement aggravated the social contradiction between landlords and tenants. As a socially constructed arrangement, landlord-tenancy relation widened instead of bridging the social gap. This was manifested in terms of class relations, ethnic identity, religious affiliation, educational opportunities, labor mobilization etc. In class terms the dichotomy of landlords and tenants was palpable; in ethnic terms the majority of tenants were Oromo farmers while there were some tenants from other ethnic groups; in religious terms the predominant majority of tenants were Muslim while the landlords were largely followers of the Orthodox Christian faith. In terms of educational opportunities, the landlords had the economic power and the ideological backing to send their children to modern schools while tenants were disadvantaged in both respects. In fact, irrespective of the ideological limitation, children of the local gentry were sent to schools as they were able to cope with the economic challenge.

Looking from the perspective of labor mobilization, the landlords from any religious and ethnic background had a better advantage of organizing more labor force for their agricultural activities while tenants were disadvantaged in getting access to this vital resource to augment their

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

agricultural productivity. This differential in accessing community labor force emanated from the relative social position they occupied.

At the core of the widening social gap was the accumulation of scarce factors of production, i.e. land, by the landlords, making them economically powerful. They also had the added advantage of the ability to influence state power to their own advantage. These were converted into the social power of the property owning class so that they became informal authorities in rural villages of Harärgé.

The class difference and status differentiation shaped the culture of subordination and submission by the illiterate tenants. Whenever tenants were treated in an inhuman way, they lacked solidarity and tended to accept as their fate all the gruesome and dehumanizing atrocities committed against them by the landlords.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tenants, Landlords and the State

In the preceding chapter peasants as a class were depicted as subordinate to the landed minority class. Their subordination was not reflected only in class terms. There were also other aspects of the inequalities that accelerated the social distance between the peasants and the landlord class. This unequal social positioning had become the source of frequent contradictions and conflicts. How these frequent frictions were featured in the relations of these polarized social groups within the wider context of political environment is the subject of this chapter.

In this chapter, we will try to take up a subject that appears simple but is deceptive in nature, i.e. the connection between tenants, landlords and the state. In other words the political aspect of tenancy is the focus of the discussion. The objective is to demonstrate that privileged access to state power was an important way of reproducing the class power of the landlords. Landowners exercised control of state power at either central or local level. This means that the state operated largely as an instrument of the economic and political elites. The state apparatus also operated as a source of accumulation of wealth for state actors. Thus, the state was an instrument that facilitated the exploitation of the rural producers in general by the landlords.

But tenants along with peasants refused to remain silent about and acquiesce in their economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural domination. They struggled against the state and landowning class in different albeit unorganized ways. The poor political consciousness of the rural producers was the major factor that hindered rural cultivators in general to make an organized resistance to safeguard their class interests vis-a-vis the appropriating class.

It is the argument of this chapter that although peasants in general waged resistance in their own ways, external ideological influences helped shape the rural producers to make an organized and violent resistance. This external involvement, I will argue, radicalized rural protests which were manifested through agitation by different actors like university students, religious and ethnic groups who actively engaged in politicizing peasant exploitation as well as individuals with high level of political consciousness who were in solidarity with the exploited peasants.

Due to the influence of external factors in some parts of Harärgé, the resistance took a violent course, with the state also taking its own counter measures. Ultimately, however, the 1974 revolution transformed the course of events that unfolded in the rural landscape by toppling down the old regime and proclaiming the Land Reform Proclamation of March 1975 that abolished tenancy.

The chapter is organized around three thematic areas, each indicating the political contestations among the peasantry, landlords and the state. The first part deals with the various forms of peasant resistance waged against the landlords and the state in an attempt to safeguard their vital interests. The second attempts to describe and analyze the inspirational role played by the then Alemaya College of Agriculture students and their contribution in agitating the surrounding rural community, whilst the last part deals with the Land Reform proclamation and the developments subsequent to the legal abolition of tenancy.

8. 1 Tenant Resistance (Weapons of the Weak and Rebellion)

Political conflicts between the subordinate and superordinate groups of societies were commonly described and analyzed by scholars by giving emphasis to open and often violent political actions. Thus, in the historiography of the peasantry and other subordinate groups, some violent

forms of political actions like riots, uprising, rebellions, and revolutionary movements have dominated standard political analysis rather than the less violent forms such as petitions, rallies, peaceful marches, strikes, boycotts etc.¹

These less violent forms of political actions by the subordinate groups can be unraveled through a careful historical investigation to grasp how certain social structures, state systems, cultural values and historical practices help shape political actions of a given society in time and space. One of the few contributions in this regard was made by James Scott who has studied Malaysian villages through an extensive fieldwork.²

According to James Scott, much of the politics of subordinate groups falls into the category of what he termed as “Every day forms of peasant resistance”. He argues that peasants engaged in these activities to challenge and lessen the exploitation and the flow of resources to the superordinate groups and their techniques should definitely be considered political. They

¹ The literature on peasants’ action characterized by violent expressions like uprisings, rebellions, wars, riots etc is vast. See for example, Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1971). He extensively discussed the wars peasants waged against the system that exploited their surplus products and labor in Mexico, Russia, China, Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba. L. Bianca also gives details on the rebellions, wars and different peasant uprisings in China. His discussion also illuminates the predominance of tenants’ rebellion on the southern parts of China. For details see L. Bianco, “Peasants and Revolution: The case of China.” *Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol.2 No.3, 1975, pp.313-335. In India, tenants violently resisted the crop sharing arrangement and exploitation by landlords through what came to be known as the *Tebehaga* Movement in Bengal in 1946-1947. For details See for example Adrienne Cooper, “Sharecroppers and Landlords in Bengal, 1930-1950: The Dependency Web and its Implications”, pp.232-261. In the African case, the discussion by Isaacman brings into light different strategies of peasants’ resistance. For details see Allen Isaacman, “Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa” in *African Studies Review*, Vol.33, No.2 (African Studies Association, September 1990), pp.1-120.; In the case of Ethiopia, peasants violently rose against the state and landlords in different parts of the country in the 20th century, see for example, Gebru Tareke’s *Power and Protest* that lucidly indicates peasants violent responses against rapacious state demands in Tigray Gojjam and Bale.

² James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); James, C Scott, “Every Day Forms of Peasant Resistance” *Journal of Peasant Studies*.1986.Vol. 13.No. 2. Pp.5-35.

constituted a form of collective action and any account which ignored them was often ignoring the most important means by which lower classes manifested their political interests.³

These everyday forms of resistance were integral parts of the small arsenal of relatively powerless groups. They included such acts like foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, squatting, arson, slander, sabotage, anonymous threats, clandestine attack etc.⁴

These techniques were prosaic, ordinary means of class struggle in which open defiance was impossible or entailed fatal danger. When they were widely practiced by members of the subordinate class against landlords or the state, they might have cumulative effects for the interests of subordinate groups. These forms of resistance were devised to thwart appropriation of property imposed by claimants who have superior access to force and to public power, often the landlords and the state.⁵ Scott's analysis focused on the class nature of resistance, particularly on the encounters between poor peasants and landlords. His study asserted that the disadvantaged were conscious of their exploitation and even under the most oppressive conditions they resisted in various forms.

In Harärgé, everyday forms of resistance were commonly applied by tenants against the appropriating landlords. Informants explained, even during normal times when it appeared that tenants and landlords were living smoothly, there was no time that tenants accepted their subordinate status and their exploitation. They always had a latent claim on their land and took every opportunity to oppose the landlord and expressed their displeasure with the system in

³ James C Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*, P.29. ; James, C Scott, "Every Day Forms of Peasant Resistance".PP.5-35.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

various ways and at various times. The most common form of resisting the system was through songs, proverbs, and folklore which were expressed during community labor mobilization; some of them had already been indicated in the relevant parts of this work.

In most extreme cases, tenants employed aggressive methods against landlords. In fact in rural Harärgé the most acute area of social tension was the tension between the landlord who rented the land and his tenants who had to remit almost half the value of the crop. We have seen in chapter seven that tenants in Garamulata rose against the landlords and took violent measures. Informants in Garamulata discussed that some tenants uprooted the cultivated crops from the fields before they were ripe for harvest whilst some set fire on the houses of landlords and fled to distant places. Siraj Kodhele, a prominent local elder in Gerawa, claimed that some tenants were very aggressive towards their landlords and took measures like destroying crops and taking refuge in the surrounding forest. He further adds that often tenants took such measures when they were within their clan territory where clan solidarity and protection was guaranteed and where there was abundant land to settle on and they were secure from the landlords' harassment.⁶

The nature and scale of implementing the various techniques of everyday resistance varied depending on different contingent factors. For instance, in areas where clan ties were strong they used every opportunity to resist the demands of the landlords. On the other hand when the number of settler communities was significant and clan ties were not so strong, the implementation of the techniques of weapons of the weak was not successful. On the whole, the majority of tenant disturbances remained traditional in nature, taking the form of complaints, petitions, pilfering, settling on government reserve lands and flight just before rent was due to be collected. These commonly observed forms of resistance are discussed hereunder.

⁶ Informant : Siraj Khodele

I. Evasion of Land Rent

It was common practice for tenants to refuse the payment of rent to the landlords once they took the land through verbal agreement. The common practice was to deny the existence of a landlord-tenancy relationship. There is ample oral and written evidence that indicated tenants' denial of the existence of such a relationship (for details see chapter six). By denying the existence of landlord tenant relationship tenants were safeguarding their vital agricultural resources from appropriation and if possible to avoid their exploitation. Informants claim that unwillingness to pay land rent was commonly observed among younger tenants.⁷

II. Pilfering

Another mechanism was pilfering the produce before the share of the harvest with the landlord. While harvesting and transporting to the threshing ground, tenants used different mechanisms to withhold some amount of sorghum so that all harvests were not transported to the threshing ground and thereby shared by the landlord. Thus, tenants used every possible avenue to fight back their entitlement rights from the fruits of the land they cultivated. Their rationale was that before the transfer of land from their forefathers, tenants believed the land was theirs and they had a legitimate right to claim the resources out of it.⁸

III. Denial of labor

Landlords and their agents have a big appetite for the labor of their tenants and the family. They mobilized them on *hudad* lands as discussed in chapter three and chapter five; they conscripted

⁷ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Jemal Abdulqadir, Zerihun Bezabeh, Hamza Ali

⁸ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Taye Bedhane, Ahmed Mumed, Telenji Beker

them for different construction services such as fences, granaries, houses; they asked them to transport grains to markets etc.

In addition, landlords required the labor of the tenants' children and wives. Tenants opposed the mobilization of the labor of their wives and children. They often produced pretexts such as claiming that their wives were pregnant and therefore were not able to clear kraals or to produce dough, etc.⁹ This would obviously spark disagreement with the landlord to the extent of the latter threatening eviction. Tenants on their part took serious measures such as destroying crops standing on fields, looting the grain granary and cattle belonging to landlords.

III. Claiming forest for agricultural activities

Among the local population it was believed that everyone had the right to as much as land as he or she needed and if such land was not available, then one had the right to clear forest land. This use right on communal property was based on the premise that properties like land, water, forest etc belonged to the clan and therefore every member of the clan within its territory enjoyed equal access.¹⁰ This understanding of the local population on communal property right had probably continued unaltered even in the post-occupation period. It was probably due to this nostalgic adherence of access to resources that the indigenous peoples expressed their opposition to the changed system of access to common resources. Hence, the large scale deforestation by the local people that took place in the post-1941 period, and especially during 1944-1945, in the various parts of the province could be considered as part of a resistance by the local population to the prevalent system.

⁹ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Hassen Beker , Yahya Umar.

¹⁰ Informants : Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji, Suleiman Ahmed.

For instance, one of the reports of the forest official in Čärčär in 1937 E.C. indicated that unknown individuals had set fire to 25 *gasha* of land in Burqa, Doba, and Mäsäla. The report further indicated that the forest was the private property of individuals like *Etege* Menen and other officials of the state serving at the lower administrative echelon. Similarly in Xullo, around Hirna, 12 *gasha* of forest land which was under the protection of the state was destroyed by fire.¹¹

In some cases the tenants fled to areas where forest cover was dense. They settled in the womb of the forest and contributed for the deforestation of some dense forests. According to available evidence, individuals who were facing shortage of arable land engaged in deforestation. Often it was tenants who were taking this course of action. The increase in the family size of the tenant had a direct impact on the farm size of the household as the output did not match its food requirements. The tenant responded by increasing his holding; in view of absence of access to land, forest clearing was one option. The most common mechanism for this was setting forests on fire. There were occasional cases when axes were employed to clear the forest.¹²

Another interesting aspect of claiming forest land was observed in Hančar, Čärčär. In this case squatters and land invaders hoped to acquire the right for property use by moving to distant places where landlord and state control was not strongly felt. Peasants who considered themselves entitled to land claimed by the state might choose to squat quietly rather than to invade openly. This was a tactical consideration because they knew that an invasion will probably be met with armed force of the state and result in bloodshed.

¹¹ National Archive, Folder No.17.2.20.08. Letter written on *Meskrem* 11 1937 E.C (September 21,1934) from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Interior, Again *Ato* Alämayehu Endalkachew, chief officer of Ministry of agriculture for Harärgé province, indicated the details of the deforestation.

¹² Informants: Hamza Ali, Ahmed Mumed, Askale Weldeab,

In 1968 more than sixteen farmers were accused by the Čärčär *Awraja* forestry office of settling on the state forest reserve of 40 *gasha*. They had cleared the forest by setting it on fire and expanding agricultural activity. On the other hand, the litigants claimed they had lived in the area for more than 20 years, long before the establishment of the forest reserve. They had planted perennial crops and cultivated annual crops for the upkeep of their family. Hence the tract of state land was fully occupied by squatters and the tax claim of the state was virtually lost in the area.¹³

Rural social protest

From the available literature there were at least six forms of rural protest in colonial Africa. These rural social protests were against the state, international market or landlords. It is true that the techniques employed by these rural protests were diverse. None of these were necessarily found in any one territory, nor should it be thought that there was any logical sequence which these forms of protest followed.¹⁴

In Harärgé, rural protests were observed largely against the landlords and the state. In some of these protests there were cases where peasants provided the bulk of the followers, the social mass which gave power to the movement, but they did not provide the leadership and found their aims subsumed under or even replaced by those of other classes. In Harärgé, peasants merged with other social classes instead of striking out on their own. Some of these rural protests gradually assumed the character of an Oromo nationalist struggle while still others fused religious and ethnic character.

¹³ Harärgé Province High court, File No.188/65 E.C File opened by the office of Harärgé Province Ministry of Agriculture through its representative against Mume Abdella.

¹⁴ Ken Post, " 'Peasantization' and Rural Political Movements in Western Africa" *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol.3, No.2, 1972, pp.242-249.

A good example was the social protest that occurred in Čärčär immediately after the end of the Italian Occupation. The genesis of the movement was the formation of a grassroots self help development project. It was called Ittu Self Help Association and was established in 1942.¹⁵ It can be considered as a form of protest since it implicitly challenged the authority of the local power designated by the state. Initially the association was engaged in the collection of money for the purpose of the expansion of service giving institutions like schools, roads, health centers in Čärčär as a whole. The putative organizers of the protest claimed that they no longer recognized government-imposed local authorities, mandating instead representatives elected by the peasant communities. They subsequently opposed the collection of money by the governor of Čärčär from peasants, allegedly for social services¹⁶

Later, the leaders of the association assumed positions in the government offices at least at *awraja* level. The immediate target was the office of *qadi* of Čärčär *Awraja* which was held by *Fitawrari* (later *Däjazmach*) Ahmed Ali Ṭese, who also served as vice *awraja* governor for a long time. The ring leaders of the protest were fourteen Ittu religious leaders who mobilized the entire rural mass in Ittu. They claimed that the appointment of *Däjazmach* Ahmed Ali Ṭese as *qadi* of Čärčär was illegitimate. It was claimed that Ahmed Ali Ṭese was a Jarso Oromo and the office should belong to the Ittu, as natives of the land.¹⁷

Although the whole of Čärčär was mobilized in the 1940s, the major centers of opposition were Gälämsö, Čiro and Hirna. The chief leader who went to Addis Ababa to present the petition of

¹⁵ National Archive, Folder No.17.1.7.28.01.:Folder No. 17.2.20.07.

¹⁶ Ibid. Informants: Umar Ahmed Ali, Jemal Abdulqadir. The former informant is the son of *Däjazmach* Ahmed Ali Ṭese and narrated the overall picture of the resistance waged against his father and the action taken by the state. Ahmed Ali Ṭese was a controversial figure in the post Italian period and had both supporters and enemies. He had dominated the politics of Čärčär for more than a quarter of a century. His influence was very strong in Čärčär. He was the vice governor of the *awraja* from 1942-1970. Before the Italian period he was the *qadi* of Čärčär and served during the Italian period. Ahmed Ali Ṭese died a natural death on the eve of the revolution.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the Ittu was *Shaykh* Umar Ali. He was a wealthy religious leader in Gälämsö, with high social acceptance. He was feared by the local state officials as he could influence the community against them. The remaining leaders of the movement were actively engaged in collecting money and sent it to the *Shayk* in Addis Ababa. The leaders were prominent gentry of the Ittu clan who could mobilize the rural mass and part of the success for raising a huge sum of money in a short period of time was their high social status.¹⁸

In the report presented by the *endarassé* of Harärgé province, Ṭassāw Wallälu, “*yä Ittu Amats*” (i.e. the Ittu’s protest) had its origins in the Italian occupation. The Italians had deliberately injected a powerful religious and ethnic propaganda among the Ittu which continued after the withdrawal of the Italians. The report also indicated that the Somali clan leaders like *Fitawrari* Mohammed Hashi and others had actively taken part in the movement by assisting the Ittu both materially and morally.

Ultimately the government captured the ring leaders and put them in prison. *Shayk* Umar Ali, who went to Addis Ababa to appeal on behalf of the Ittu, was forced to stay in the capital under house arrest and soon died.¹⁹ Although the movement was quelled by the government, it highlighted the unpopularity of state policy among the local people and the opposition which surfaced against the state-appointed local chiefs who lacked historical legitimacy in the local context.

Long after the Ittu protest, another external influence triggered Ittu rural protest of an ethnic character against the state and the landlords. This time it was the involvement of General Taddässa Beru. Subsequent to his involvement in the Mecha Tulama movement, General

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Taddässä was sent by the central government to Gälämso in 1973 under house arrest. Informants who personally met him narrated their experience. Since he was free to move in that small town, he started discussing political matters and the general condition of the Oromo under the old regime. According to informants, General Taddässä had created acute awareness of the harsh living condition of Oromo tenants in general and instigated them to resist the landlords in whatever possible way. His influence was far reaching to the extent that women who came from the rural areas carrying firewood to the market were advised not to do so as it was back breaking. In general, informants claim that General Taddässä Beru played a big role in raising the national consciousness of the Oromo of Harärgé.

On the eve of the revolution, he went to the surrounding forest called Ṭiro, and the movement came to be recognized as *fincilla Ṭiro*, (i.e the rebellion at Ṭiro) where few individuals like Mohammed Muṭeqi rebelled against the state and took refuge in the forest. These individuals caused lots of troubles before they were arrested.²⁰ With the outbreak of the revolution, General Taddässä Beru was taken to Addis Ababa by the military government.²¹ Most of the members of the guerilla force in the Ṭiro movement became the founding members of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

Some rural social protests had an external influence and merged religious and ethnic identities as their hallmark of opposition against the state. A good example was the role played by the Somali Youth Club which influenced the Oromo and the Haräri in their opposition to the system. The

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Informants: Mohammed Adem, Umar Haji ,Belete Worqeneh.Colonel Fescha Desta in his recently published book indicated that General Taddässä Beru was sent under house arrest to Garamulata but my eye witness informants claimed that they have personally talked to General Taddässä Beru while he was under house arrest in Gälämso.For details see Fescha Desta, “ Abiyotuna Tezetaye.” *The revolution and my Reminiscence*. (Addis Ababa:Aster Nega Publishers, 2015),p.20,84, 155.

Somali Youth Club was established in May 1943 in Mogadishu and its ideology greatly influenced the whole of rural Harärgé in the 1940s.²²

The Somali Youth Club was better known as *Kulub*, a derivative of the English word club. It was also known as *Hannollato*, a Somali catchword or slogan which literally means “Long Live” that is “Long Live Somalia”, a slogan that members and followers of the club used to shout on their return from the mosque after Friday’s prayer. Each term or a combination of them (*Kulub-Hannolatto*) came to describe this movement interchangeably.²³

The *Kulub-Hannolatto* movement first started in what later became the republic of Somalia in the city of Moqadishu. The aim of the movement was to unite all Somalis living within different political boundaries. This unity of Somalis might have received impetus from the proposal by the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, of a “Greater Somalia” in April 1946, during his speech to the council of foreign ministers.²⁴

The *Kulub-Hannolatto* movement did not confine itself to the present Republic of Somalia but it gradually spread to the regions where the Somalis inhabited, including Ethiopia. It spread into Ogaden, Harär, Arsi and Bale. Members of the *Kulub* were found all over Harärgé province and beyond. Archival documents indicate that the movement had spread into the sub provinces of Harärgé such as Jigjiga, Čärčär, Garamulata, Gursum, Dädär, Hirna and in the Afar and Issa territory, as well as in Balé, in areas such as Goba, Ginir, Goro and other small towns. What is surprising moreover was that in some areas such as in Balé members of the *Kulub* were found to

²² Tim Carmaicheal, “Approaching Ethiopian History: Addis Abeba and Local Governance in Harär C.1900-1950” PhD Dissertation.(Michigan: Michigan State University,2001),pp.193-194.

²³ Rahaji Abdella, “The Kulub Hannolatto Movement by the Haräri in 1946-1948”,BA Thesis (Department of History ,Addis Ababa University,1994),p.2.

²⁴ Ibid.p.3

be Christians, implying that the movement transcended Pan Islamic ideology and might have assumed the character of general political opposition to the establishment.²⁵

The *Kulub-Hannolato* recruited members from the rural areas and in some cases it provided economic assistance while recruiting the young. The archives reveal that the Ethiopian state discovered the activity of the *Kulub* in some small towns like Čiro, Dädär, Hirna, Qärsa, Gerawa etc. and arrested some of the members of the movement and fined them 100 birr each. From the list of individuals who were fined it can be established that rural producers, merchants, daily laborers and religious leaders were involved in the movement.²⁶ It is also interesting that some *damina* and *garada* were found to have actively participated in agitating and mobilizing the rural masses to oppose the state while at the same time they were given economic assistance by the *kulub* recruiters who gave identity cards to the youth who were recruited in different villages of Harärgé.²⁷

However, the *Kulub- Hannolato* movement did not last long. Its gradual atrophy in Harärgé was associated with the arrest and detention of some prominent Haräri activists of the movement. It was among the Haräri that the *Kulub-Hannolato* got wider acceptance and was used as a political instrument to inspire Haräri nationalism and oppose the central government. The Ethiopian state arrested some eighty-one political activists and detained them in distant places like Jimma. This action was taken by the state because the Haräri were considered as the chief activists in

²⁵ Archives from the Office of Haräri National Regional State Administration. "Selä Islamoch Yä Adma Mahebär Yäqäräbä" Report presented on the Protest of the followers of Islam. Folder No. 12 File No. 1 "Se Lä Keläb Mahebär Huneta Kä Garamulata *Awraja* Yä Qäräbä" Report on the [*Kulub*] society in Garamulata. Folder No. 12, file No. 1. "Selä Keläb Mahebär Huneta Kä Adal Ena Garaguracha *Awraja* Yä Qäräbä" Report on the [*Kulub*] society in Adal and Garaguracha. Folder No. 12, file No. 1

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid

mobilizing the surrounding rural population.²⁸ After that, the movement lacked energy and external support so that it lost its vigor. But its impact in raising the political consciousness of the rural communities in Harärgé was long lasting and left a powerful impression on the rural population.

Peasant rebellion

The condition of tenants was one of exploitation which has its basis (or at least powerful support) outside the rural areas. Peasant movements strike at local targets and as such did not attempt to reach out and attack their enemies who were located far away. A violent attempt to adjust local relationships would thus be a rebellion rather than a revolutionary attempt to destroy the exploitative system completely and bring about a regime change. While engaging in rebellion the rural masses used different instruments as ideological armor. One of these instruments was religion.

In the world of rural politics, religion has often been transformed into the language of rebellion. In Gursum and its surroundings, Muslim Somali and Oromo organized and openly challenged the state's authority through armed confrontation. As a result the language of Islam often provided atomized and ethnically divided peasants a basis of unity as well as alternative vision to oppose the "modernizing" Christian ideology of the state and its exploitation.

The fundamental factor for the conflict between the state on the one hand and the Muslim Somali and Oromo on the other was the imposition of the new property regime and its associated

²⁸ Archives from the Office of Haräri National Regional State Administration. Silé Aderewoch Guday. File No. 1. (No Folder No.) Archives from the Office of Haräri National Regional State Administration. Silé Aderewoch Guday. File No. 17. (No Folder No.)

political domination.²⁹ Because of the ethnic difference between the Somali and the Oromo, it was Islam that brought them together in opposing the state.

The antagonism between the Ethiopian state on the one hand and the two ethnic groups on the other had its origin in the imposition of the new administration following the conquest.³⁰ But there were events that led to the escalation of open confrontation. Such conflicts acquired a new dimension at a time of internal crisis within the government and during external invasions.

One of the earliest confrontations was in 1916 following the deposition of *Lij Iyyasu*. *Lij Iyyasu* was very popular among the Somali and the Oromo due to his progressive nationalities and religious policy. Hence, when they heard of his deposition, they engaged in a wide spread revolt in the areas of Gursum, Qočär, Seqere, Ejersa Goro and Falana. The settler soldiers fought a fierce battle against the Somali and the Oromo at a place called Beyeda Qočär near Fafan river in Gursum. Ultimately the combined forces of the Somali and the Oromo were defeated.³¹

After a long period of stalemate the Somali and the Oromo rebelled in 1941, following the withdrawal of the Italian occupation force. This new confrontation was precipitated by the fear of the return of the *mälkäñña* and former landlords of the pre-Italian occupation regime that supported them. The local population living around Giri Qočär in Gursum were determined not only to resist the restoration of the *mälkäñña* system but also to drive the settlers out of Gursum, declaring that the settlers' country was Shäwa.³²

²⁹ Mulgea B/Sillasie, "Gursum : The History of a Garrison Town 1887-1974" Senior Essay . (Addis Ababa University: Department of History, 1988),p.47.

³⁰ Ibid.p.48.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. p.49.

Thus the immediate post Italian period was characterized by political instability and direct conflicts between the settlers and the local population. Soon after the evacuation of the Italians the conflict spread to the surrounding areas like Daremo and Falana in Jarso. It reached its climax in 1942 and resulted in the complete destruction of the garrison town of Gursum. After the destruction of the garrison a new town 5kms to the north of the old town was established with an appellation of Addisu Kätäma while the old name and site was kept.³³

According to archival evidence, the conflict in Jarso continued for years. Some villages were completely destroyed by fire not only once but twice. For example, one of the archival letters indicates that in 1941 alone more than 1000 *tukuls* were burnt, more than 5000 cattle were looted, along with unmeasured amount of grain crops and coffee in Jarso.³⁴ The situation in other villages and towns of Gursum *Awraja* was similar with wanton killings, destruction of crops on fields and in granaries, looting of coffee harvests, as well as pillaging the cattle of landlords taking place on an unprecedented scale.

Oral evidence is replete with vivid pictures of the scale of the conflict. Zerihun Bezabeh and Mohammed Abdulkirim, two of the informants in Gursum, narrated that there was no time they remembered in the 1940s and the 1950s when the settler community and the local population lived in peace and harmony. Even the *damina* and the *garada* who were closer to the state apparatus rebelled and took up arms against the settlers causing serious casualties and damages both to human life and property.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Archive of Haräri National Regional State Administrative Office, Folder No.1262. (Letters Written by Ahmed Siyo and Adem Derbushi to *Däjazmach* Tasew Walelu on *Teqemet* 17, 1935 (October 27, 1942).

³⁵ Informants: Zerihun Bezabih, Mohammed Abdulkirim

In fact archives also corroborate the evidence given by informants. In 1942, Tasāw Wallālu, the *enderassé* of the province, put in jail in Harär two of the *balabats* of Jarso and Dāwāro Ahmed Siyo and Adem Derbushi respectively for their active participation in the conflict. But in the petition that they sent to the *enderassé*, they said that they did not take part in the confrontation and implicated some *daminas* like Besewin, Hamid Weday, Ali Shega, Abdi Dermen and others in the confrontation.³⁶

In order to protect the settler community from possible new rounds of attacks after the 1942 rebellion, the state settled 300 Body Guard soldiers around the town. Later reinforcement was deployed led by *Qaññazmach* Habté Sillasie from Bulga (Shāwa). This force was skilled in counter-guerilla warfare and was composed of the patriots who had been fighting the Italian occupation force in Bulga. Consequently, the local ethnic uprising was quelled and the landlords were restored to their former possessions.³⁷

When open confrontation was no longer an option the Somali and the Oromo changed their tactics and engaged in ambushing cars and merchants along the Harär-Jigjiga road. The other tactic they employed was expanding the zone of confrontation to the towns of Ejersa Goro in Jarso and Qočär, to the east of Gursum, where the settler community was large. As a result of the intensification of the confrontation, the two towns were burnt in 1942.³⁸

The series of letters exchanged between Andargachew Mäsay, *enderasié* of Harärgé in the immediate post Italian years, Kebede Gebre, the then chief of the military in Harärgé,

³⁶ Archive in Haräri National Regional State Administrative Office. Folder No.1262 (Letters Written by Ahmed Siyo and Adem Derbushi to *Däjazmach* Tasāw Walālu on *Tegemet* 17, 1935 (October 27, 1942)

854 Ejeta Feyisa, "Newcomers and the Peoples of Haräri in the Early 20th Century from Menilek's Conquest to the Italian occupation." Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, (n.d). *Social Sciences Miscellaneous* .No 4., p.3.

³⁸ National Archive, Folder No.171.7.30.08.

Däjazmach Mäkonnen Endalkachew, the then minister of interior, and many other officials indicates that various military logistics in terms of weapons, food and ammunitions were required for the army fighting against rebels. The types of weapons listed in these letters were required immediately as the army was in short supply and the fighting was intensifying and seriously threatening the lives of the settlers. According to the letters exchanged between the concerned higher officials the army was encircled by the rebels in all directions and different towns like Qočär were under serious threat of being set on fire.³⁹ In one of the letters exchanged between Andargachew Mäsay and *Fitawrari* Guangul Kolasé, governor of Jigjiga *Awraja*, the extent of the threat posed by the combined forces of the Somali and the Oromo was graphically described. An excerpt of the letter reads:

ሚያዝያ 18 1934 ዓ.ም

ለክብር አፈመስፍን አንዳርጋቸው መሳይ
የሐረር አውራጃ ገዥ እንደራሴ

... ከፊተኞቹ በፋፈም በኩል ከሚገኙት ሽፍቶች ሰላማዊ ነን ብለው ተቀምጠው የነበሩ ትጊሪዎች በአንድ ምክር በአንድ ቃል ሆነው የቆጨርን ከተማ በዙሪያው ከበው ዛሬ ቀን ወይም ማታውን ለመምታት ተደራጅተውበታል። ሳይመቱና ቤቱን ሳያቃጥሉ አይቀርም። ነገር ግን ከዚህ ቀደም የተላኩልን መሳሪያዎች ሰማቸው እንጂ በፀብ ላይ ምንም የሚያደርጉት ነገር የለም። ከእኛ ዘንድ መሳሪያ ባይገኝ ከእንግሊዞችም በኩል ቢሆን የአውሮፕላን ሀይል በግድ አስፈላጊ ነው። ይህ ካልሆነ ግን ከጅጅጋ እስከ ቆጨር ያለው መንገድ በፍፁም መቆረጡን እያስገነዘብኩ በቶሎ ስለዚህ ባይታሰብበት እውርደት መድረሳችን ስለማይጠረጠር ክርስቲያኑ አንድ አደጋ ቢያገኘው ለጥፋቱ ሀላፊ አለመሆኔንና ስለዚህ በየጊዜው የላኩላችሁ ማስታወቂያ ምስክር ይሆንልኛል ...⁴⁰

ፊታውራሪ 27 ንጉል ኮላሴ
የጅጅጋ ወረዳ አበጋዝ

April 26, 1942

To: His Excellence Andargachew Mäsay,
Enderasié of Harärgé Province

³⁹ Ibid.
⁴⁰ National Archive Folder No. 17.1.7.30.08. Letter Written by *Fitawrari* Guangul Kolasé, governor of Jigjiga *Wäräda*, to Andargache Mäsay *Enderasié* of Harärgé, on *Miyaziya* 26, 1942.

... the Giri who were found around Fafan claimed they were peaceful. But now they have joined the bandits around them and set to burn the town of Qočär soon. However, the weapons, sent to us earlier were found to be useless in actual engagement. If you have no weapons try to get some from the British including air crafts. Otherwise the route from Jigjiga to Qočär is to be completely cut off and we are going to face a great humiliation. Any failure to take immediate action will immensely jeopardize the Christian community for which I am no longer responsible for I have sent you series of reminders earlier.

Fitawrari Guangul Kolasé,

Governor of Jigjiga *Wäräda*

Later in 1954 E.C. probably due to the constant turmoil and instability and the fear for the security of the settler community, the state decided to reorganize its administrative structure and dissolved Gursum *Awraja*. While most of the *wärädas* in the former Gursum *Awraja* were subsumed under Harär *Zuriya awraja* the *wärädas* that were centers of conflict between the settlers and the natives were brought under Jigjiga *Awraja*. Settlers who were previously living in Giri, Qočär and Seqere but now found themselves in Jigjiga *Awraja* were bitterly opposed to the new administrative arrangement. They petitioned to be administered under Harär *Zuriya Awraja* claiming that the Somali have created lots of problems for their lives and that this would be dramatically exacerbated if they were put under Jigjiga *Awraja*.⁴¹

One of the most outspoken opponents of this arrangement was Zeleke Yergu, member of the House of Deputies representing the peoples of Gursum. In his letter presented to the parliament he indicated that the Somali were mortal enemies who destroyed many towns like Gursum, Jarso and Seqere, burnt many churches, killed many Christians and ransacked their properties. He was categorical in his letter that the attack had targeted the settler communities. He concluded his letter with the statement that the new administrative arrangement that brought some *waradas*

⁴¹ National Archive Folder no.17.2.293.14.

with a significant settler population under Jigjiga *Awraja* would exacerbate the already existing animosity between the social groups.⁴²

On the other hand the Somali represented by their *daminas* welcomed this new administrative rearrangement and said so through their chief representatives, Ali Shega and Abdi Dermen. According to these representatives, the *wärādas* which were brought under Jigjiga *Awraja* by the new administrative rearrangement culturally belonged to the Somali and therefore should be administered from Jigjiga. They further demanded that there were some *wärādas* which were still under Harär *Zuria Awraja* which like the rest of the *wärādas* in the former Gursum *Awraja* should be administered from Jigjiga.⁴³

8.2 The Student Movement as a Catalyst for Tenant Resistance

The year 1965 was a landmark in the history of the Ethiopian students movement. Ethiopian students of the former HSIU staged a demonstration with the slogan “Land to the Tiller”. By raising this fundamental social problem of rural Ethiopia, students demonstrated their solidarity with the rural mass of Ethiopia.⁴⁴

Ethiopian students abroad especially in Europe and America also took an active part in this movement through their organs. Bahru cogently argues that the 1965 demonstration was an event

⁴² National Archive, Folder no. 17.2.293.14.

⁴³ National Archive File no.17.2.293.14.

⁴⁴ Bahru Zewde, *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement c. 196-1974* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2014), pp.118-127. The lineage of the slogan “Land to the Tiller” is difficult to establish with certainty. But it was a credo for leftist organizations in different parts of the world. Student movements in different parts of the world influenced by Leftist political philosophy could have adopted the idea. For instance in India in 1946-47 when a widespread peasant movements took place, one from among the different slogans reverberated was “Land to the Tiller” and it was influenced by the Indian Communist party. For details see Bina Agrawal, “Gender, Resistance and Land :Interlinked Struggles Over Resources and Meanings in South Asia” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol.21. No.1,1994., pp.81-125.

of international significance as Ethiopian students abroad also unanimously supported the idea and played their role in exposing the evils of the old regime and the need for radical reform with respect to land ownership in the country.⁴⁵

It was not surprising as Bahru indicated, for students, both in the country and abroad to support the cause of rural cultivators as the majority of students had a peasant family background. Therefore they wanted to improve the lots of tenants whose pain they could feel closely. And for the obvious reason of widespread landlessness in the southern provinces, the question of tenancy drew the students' attention.⁴⁶

In this sub section the attempt is not to chronicle the events of the students' movement as they unfolded at the national level but rather to uncover the role of students of the then Alemaya College of Agriculture, part of Addis Ababa University, in agitating the surrounding rural population and high school students. I will thus try to situate the impact of the student movement in raising awareness among the local population and the latter's participation in demanding land reform.

The students of Alemaya College of Agriculture had their union and a club called "Rovering Club". They also had a regular Amharic newsletter called *Tänäsa* featuring issues of national concern. The union communicated with the students on campus through notices posted on some key places such as the cafeteria, dormitory, students' lounge and library. Based on these notices students attended meetings, held both in-campus and off-campus demonstrations and boycotted classes and occasionally confronted the police. Boycotting classes was a particularly frequent

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.122.

⁴⁶ Ibid.p.118.

phenomenon in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As archives show, class boycott and in-campus demonstrations were frequent.⁴⁷

Besides, the union through its club organized sessions in the evening in which plays were performed, poems recited, and discussions held. Some high quality literary works were produced by students and distributed as pamphlets to the surrounding communities. One of them was an anonymous letter under the heading *Appeal to the Conscience*, read in March 1969, which was highly critical of the regime. It was a powerful expression of the weight students gave to the problems of the rural poor. Although it was written in English it was translated into Amharic and was distributed to the public in Haramaya, DireDawa, Harär and to distant towns like Čiro, Hirna and Dädär in clandestine. It reads:

Appeal to the Conscience

Our origin is the peasantry—poverty stricken and the recipient of oppressive feudalism and injustice. Our enemy is the despotic government of God-elects and royal servants fed with lusty ambition and drunk with innocent blood. True governments are instituted to secure and serve the rights of the governed. But here we have an antagonistic regime of a hoard of false [staff?] which shamelessly devours the toilsome fruits of the peasantry because its conscience is made senseless by its wicked perpetrators.⁴⁸

On November 28-29, 1969, major events unfolded that shaped student-state relations in the province. On the first day students held a college wide demonstration with different slogans. They hailed the role Takälä Wäldä Hawaryat, who had died recently in a shootout with government forces, played in challenging the old regime. They also chanted the name of the Neway brothers who had led the abortive 1960 coup, which had served as an inspiration to

⁴⁷ Archives from the Haräri National Regional State Administration Office, Folder No.6, File No. S₄-156., Folder No.6, File No. S₃-196, File No 6, File No. S₃-76-149. (Scanned File).

⁴⁸ Archives from the Haräri i National Regional State Administration Office, Folder No. 6, File no S₅ 220 (scanned letter). The letter has no date and is handwritten.

students. While demonstrating in the campus they produced cartoons of the emperor and posted it at main street corners. Some of the cartoons displayed the emperor's hands and legs tied up and red ink being poured on them.⁴⁹ They also castigated the emperor for executing Takälä, Mängistu and other progressives.⁵⁰

On November 30, 1969, students organized a dinner party and invited the surrounding community claiming it was the emperor's *tazkar*. In the evening speeches were made by student leaders that castigated the regime and its exploitation of the rural population. Slogans and cartoons were posted in areas where students met frequently. Finally at midnight, the effigy of the dead body of the emperor was put in a coffin and burnt.⁵¹

The event was shocking to eye witnesses who were attending the events. Two eye witnesses who were employees in the dormitory and student cafeteria were interrogated by the security and narrated what they had seen. While narrating the events they were extremely apprehensive of students who could take revenge against them and demanded protection from the police. The security were able to identify only two students who had taken an active part in the events and had taken the initiative in burning the emperor's effigy. Accordingly students Mälaku and

⁴⁹ Archives from the Haräri i National Regional State Administration Office, Folder No. 6, File No. S₄ 152 Letter written by Täfära Bāyānā, Deputy chief of investigation and prevention of crimes for Harärgé province to *Däjazmach* Wärgenäh W/Amanuel, *Enderasié* of the province, on December 1, 1969. On the same date a report that detailed the events that took place around the dormitory, cafeteria and play ground was written by Mäkonnen Wädajo, Chief secretary of the Province to the *enderasié* (Scanned file). *Tazkar* is the 40th day commemoration of after death.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid.

Tsähayé (their second name was not mentioned) were identified as being responsible for burning the effigy and leading the events of that evening.⁵²

It is interesting to note here that some of the active opponents of the regime from among students were children of the ruling class. An example was Feqrämaryam, son of Major General Wäldä Sillasié Bäräka. He was accused of posting the photographs of Mängistu Neway and Germame Neway in students' cafeteria along with a message that highlighted the significance of the date of the attempted coup and the role they played.⁵³

This was an event that completely blew the ideological hegemony of the emperor who claimed to be elect of God. The peasants had believed that the source of the emperor's power was divine and couldn't be challenged by the acts of men. Now they saw that students had taken charge and seriously challenged the myth. This act eroded the public image of the divine origin of the emperor's power and hence the possibility for change. Some even questioned the very existence of law and order in the country. The incident gave confidence to the rural poor that the power of the emperor could be challenged and overthrown by popular opposition and that their active participation was vital.

The government was alarmed by this violent behavior of students and ordered the provincial administrators to take serious action. *Bitwäddäd* Zäwdé Gäbrehiwot, Minister of Interior, wrote a letter to the *Enderassé* of Harärgé, *Däjazmach* Wärqenäh Wäldä Amanuel on February 30 1969.

⁵² Two letters produced by the police allegedly the responses of two eye witnesses, Seläshi Tsägayé working in student cafeteria and Wase Haile working as a proctor gave their responses, Folder No. File No. S₄ 152(scanned file)

⁵³ Letter written on *Hidar* 29, 1962 (December 8, 1969) from the police officer of the province, colonel Täfära Bedane to the *enderassé* of the province. Also handwritten meeting appointment by the Rovering Club for December 29 ,1969 .Folder No. 6.File No.S₄ 156 (Scanned file).Letter written on *Tahisas* ,1962 (December 16,1969) by Letenal Colonel Haile Mikael Gebré, Chief Police officer of Harär *Awraja* to Harärgé Province Police officer. Folder No. 6.File No.S₃ 148 (Scanned file).

The minister emphasized that the students' action was totally unacceptable and serious action should be taken against the ringleaders immediately.⁵⁴

Following this, on April 3, 1969, the police force in Harär took serious measures against the students. One student, Demeke Zewdu, was killed, some were imprisoned, some were suspended, and still others were tortured in the police camp. The students on their part held a general meeting and passed a six point resolution demanding the government to stop harassing students and release the students who were detained. Until their demands were met they would not resume class. The stalemate was resolved only when the college dean pacified the students by securing the release of some of the students.⁵⁵

Students, including students in secondary schools, continued to agitate the surrounding communities. One of their strong bases where they inculcated students with the ideas of the need for change was Harär Medhanealem Secondary School. Taking the example of students of the college, students of Medhenealem School frequently boycotted class and participated in demonstrations in the town. These demonstrations were recurrent in 1969 and 1970. Some of them were made on their own initiative whilst others were made in alliance with the students of the College of Agriculture.⁵⁶

Soon the students' activities spread like wild fire to the other schools in the province. Schools in Čiro, Dädär, Gälämso, DireDawa, Hirna etc. became centers where anti-government propaganda was spread and pamphlets were distributed. In some schools the demonstrations developed into a

⁵⁴ Letter written by *Bitewded Zäwdé Gäbrehiwot* Minister of interior to the *Enderassié* of Harärgé , *Däjazmach Wärqenäh Wäldä Amanuel* on February 30 1969.Folder No.6.File No.S₅ 240 (Scanned file).

⁵⁵ The Students' Union of Alemaya College held a meeting on April 6, 1969 and passed a resolution on the police attack.Folder No.6, file no S₅-259.(Scanned File).

⁵⁶ Different letters officials communicated on students' activity on the different secondary schools of the province .Folder No.6. File No S3- 76-149 (Scanned File)

violent confrontation with the police and caused the destruction of school properties, as in Harär Medhanealm, Abära Gezaw school in Dädär and *Däjazmach* Wäldä Gäbreil Abasetan School in Čiro. As a result of the confrontation, students were killed, seriously wounded and some were imprisoned.⁵⁷

On one occasion, the director of Medhanealem Secondary School, Bälaynāsh Wäldä Gäbreil, wrote a letter to Amdä Sillasie Jember, chief of education bureau of the province, expressing her extreme disappointment by the brutal action taken by the police force against the unarmed students by entering in the school compound without permission from the school.⁵⁸

On May 26, 1971, students of Alemaya college of Agriculture staged a demonstration in Harär town. Students of Harär Medhanealem School also took part. Some informants who witnessed the event narrated that the students travelled more than 17kms on foot from Bate, where the college is located. The demonstrators had slogans such as “Land to the Tiller”, “let the tenant be the master of his labor” and others related with the questions of the peasant cultivator. They also distributed pamphlets to the residents of the town. The police encircled them and detained some leaders of the demonstration while the majority of them were taken to the campus by the police and incarcerated.⁵⁹

Student continued to directly agitate the farmers surrounding the campus. For instance in February 1972, some Afaan Oromo speaking students went into the villages and agitated the

⁵⁷ Letter written by colonel Mamo Asfaw on February 30, 1972 Chief Police officer of the Province to the deputy *enderasié* of the province. The letter was also copied to the different schools instructing the school administrators where students’ disturbances occurred to investigate and report the case as soon as possible. Folder No. 6 File No. S₃-81-82.(Scanned file).

⁵⁸ Letter Written on *Tahisas* 27 1962 E.C (January 5,1970) by Bälaynāsh Wäldä Gäbreilthe director of Medhanealem Secondary School to *Ato* Amdä Sillasie Jember, chief of education bureau of the province

⁵⁹ The provincial police reported the whole event to the office of *enderasié*. Folder no. 6, File No. S₃-96 (scanned letters). ; Informant:Abdilatif Ahmed.

peasants that they were not actually benefiting from their lands and labor. Instead the state through high taxation and the landlords through the high rent that they charged for their land as well as arbitrary labor service requirements were exploiting them. The only way to free themselves from the shackles of feudal exploitation was to rebel against the system and resist landlords.⁶⁰

Again students submitted their concerns in writing on regional issues and demanded solutions from higher officials in the college and through them from the provincial governor. They also clarified their objectives to the masses in general that they have requested the government to introduce reforms and take action as soon as possible on some outstanding social problems in the region. In one of the letters of the students union of Alemaya college of Agriculture in August 1971 they discussed four major issues of current concern. One of these was the cholera epidemic that had afflicted the province and had taken the lives of thousands of the peasant population. They criticized the government for failing to tackle the problem by mobilizing its resources or even by requesting aid from the international community.⁶¹

Besides, they demanded that the government stop the eviction of pastoralists in Dakata, near Babile and around the Awash River, where they had become victims of the expansion of commercial agriculture. The human causality that attended the eviction was stated to be unprecedentedly high.⁶²

Finally, in their demonstration, they communicated to the general public that they had demanded that the government legislate the tenancy bill which had been submitted to the parliament. They

⁶⁰ Letter written by Colonel Mamo Asfaw, Chief of the police force of Harärgé Province to the *enderasié* on *Yekatit* 11, 1964 (February 18, 1972) Folder No.6. File No.S₃-83 (Scanned File).

⁶¹ Letter written by Students' Union of Alemaya College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts to the Dean of College Folder No.6. File No. S₃,No.95 (Scanned File)

⁶² Ibid

claimed that it was crucial to solve the problem of the tenant population in the country. They said.

... የመሬት ይዞታ የሚያሻሽልና የድሀ ገበሬውን መብት የሚጠብቅ ህግ ተጠንቶ ለፓርላማው ከቀረበ ብዙ ጊዜ አልፎታል። ህጉ ጥሩ ነው ብለን ስለምናምን በተቻለ ፍጥነት በሰራ ላይ እንዲውል መንግስትን ጠይቀናል።⁶³

It has been a long time since a bill on land tenure was submitted to the parliament. We believe that the law would solve the problem of the poor rural cultivators and therefore should be approved and implemented immediately.

In spreading the movement in the surrounding secondary schools, the role of University students who went to secondary schools under the Ethiopian University Service (EUS) program was immense. For instance, in Hirna, a service student, Yoseph Hailemikael, blatantly criticized the regime for lack of commitment to expand modern education in the province along with the low level of facilities and materials the schools were provided with. He was said to have politicized some issues in class while teaching and thus inciting students against the system. For instance, he said that the renaming of the town of Čiro as “Asäbä Täfäri” was meant simply to glorify the personality of the emperor and hence was a misnomer.⁶⁴

The other service student with strong impact among students of Medehanealem secondary school was Mäkonnen Hagos. He was killed, presumably by the police, on February 29, 1970 in the town of Harär. Following this, students waged a relentless fight with the police and commemorated his death every year by boycotting class, flying the flag at half mast and

⁶³ Ibid. Apparently, they were unaware of the contents of the bill, for it did not aim at abolishing tenancy, but only at regulating it.

⁶⁴ Folder No.6.File No.S3-107 (Scanned File) Also a letter written by Birgader General Gashaw Kābādā Chief police officer of the province, on may 13,1970 to *Däjazmach* Wārquenah Walda Amanuel. Folder No.6.File No.S3. 107

demonstrating on the major streets of the town demanding that the perpetrators should be brought to justice.⁶⁵

The overall effect of student agitation was raising the political consciousness of the peasants in the province. Some informants claim that peasants had believed that the old regime was deeply entrenched in power and its political legitimacy unquestionable. As a result of the students' agitation, however, tenants began to refuse to accept instructions from their landlords and to pay land rents. They opposed the system and started to claim their right and to fraternize with the students.

8.3 The 1975 Proclamation and its Sequel

The march 4, 1975 land reform by the *Därg* which was officially known as "Public ownership of rural lands Proclamation (PORL)" was the most radical land reform laws that had been promulgated in post-colonial Africa.⁶⁶ Following the proclamation (Proclamation No.31) , thousands of the rural population in Harärgé province flocked to the towns on foot and horseback and took to the streets to express their joy and their support for the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia. They chanted slogans condemning the landlords and the system that exploited them. They expressed their delight in various ways. The Oromo tenants particularly expressed their feelings by singing and dancing traditional dances.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Folder No.6. File No.S₃-103 (Scanned File).The students held the police responsible for the death of Mäkonnen Hagos. Their claim was strengthened by the report of a Doctor Bäräkät ,a medical Doctor whose report indicated that the student service was shot dead on his chest. The police on the other hand argued they were not responsible.

⁶⁶ For a thorough discussion of the Land Reform, the agrarian structure under the old regime, a summary of the contents of the reform legislation in line with a Marxist classics, see, Dessalegn Rahmato's *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*. (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1984).; Siegfried Pauswang, *Peasants, Land and Society: A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia* (Munich, Kilogne and London:Weltforum Verlag, 1983),pp.12-13,105-107.

⁶⁷ Informants: Siraj Kodhele, Hamza Ali, Abulqadir Abdulrahman, Abdulaṭif Ahmed

At least for the first few years, when the euphoria of the land reform was alive, peasants throughout the villages of Harärgé regularly gathered on open fields annually and celebrated the anniversary of the proclamation to commemorate the day they freed themselves from feudal serfdom and economic exploitation.⁶⁸

The proclamation was welcomed not only by rural producers but also by students of the *zämächa* campaign who long before the proclamation had been deployed to rural areas and played a significant role through radical agitation of the peasants. The *zämächa* campaigners committed themselves to educate the peasants and to awaken and strengthen their political consciousness. Subsequently they helped to organize farmers' associations and assisted in their day to day activities to implement the reform.⁶⁹

The proclamation of *Yekatit* 25, 1967 E.C (March 4 1975) had six chapters, thirty-three articles and many sub-articles, some of which dealt with tenancy. For example Article five stipulated that all forms of tenancy were abolished. Landlord estates (entirely tenant farmed) were broken. Land may not be given to others against payment nor cultivated through paid work. The use of the fruits of the land is the exclusive right of those who worked on the land. An exception was made for widows, orphans, the sick, the aged and the disabled who could not cultivate on their own.⁷⁰

Article six sub-article one stated that tenants may keep all the land they tilled prior to land reform without paying compensation to the land owner. The same Article sub- article three

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Informants; Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele ,Abdulaṭif Ahmed. For a useful account of the role of the students of the *zämächa* campaign in southern Ethiopia in general see for example Siegfried Pauswang, *Peasants, Land and Society: A Social History of Land Reform in Ethiopia* (Munich, Kilogne and London:Weltforum Verlag, 1983),p.105-107.

⁷⁰ *Negarit Gazeta*, Proclamation No. 31 of 1975. Vol.34,No. 26

stipulated that all rental payments, labor obligation or other duties attached to land or its use were abolished. The tenant's right was extended in sub article four, which stated that ploughs, oxen and other agricultural implements belonging to the landowner should go to the tenant who had used them previously. In addition to these rights, Article six waived all debts tenants owed their landlords while it also gave the landowner the right to cultivate the land himself if he was resident on his land. In this case he may share the land with his former tenant on an equal basis and reclaim one pair of oxen and one set of farm implements.⁷¹

It is true that there were losers and beneficiaries of the land reform. Tenants in general and the majority of small holding peasants were among the beneficiaries as they could hold land in their own name without any obligations to landlords. Evicted tenants returned to the land they used to cultivate before their eviction by landlords.

The land reform, at least in the immediate years of the revolution, was a liberating experience. According to tenant informants they were for the first time considered as human beings. The low social status that was attached to them due to lack of land ownership came to an end. Some even became members of the executive committee of PAs while others went up to higher level PAs in the country.⁷²

On the other hand landlords were the losers as they lost their land holdings which were hundreds and thousands of *gashas* and they could no longer access the free labor of tenants and the landless to develop it. Land reform ended both privileges. They were allowed to own only up to

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Informants:Yahya Adem, Hassen Beker,Musa Ibrahim Telenji Beker .The discussion With Zegeye Asfaw and Tamrat Kebede also affirmed the same position tenants had.

10 hectares of land to work and live on it with their own labor. The landed elite also lost the economic, social and political status which was largely derived from their ownership of land.⁷³

Damina and *garada* were also among the losers of the land reform proclamation. In some parts of the province, the *damina* and *garada* in Harär plateau and the *abbaburqa* in Čärčär lost their land ownership and other properties like cattle. Like the landlords discussed above, they were forced to be content with the 10 hectares of land. Good examples of this were *Damina* Mohammed Orfo of Garamulata, *Fitawrari* Hassen and *Qaññazmach* Adem of Dädär (father and son).⁷⁴

Besides losing their landed property, the local *balabats* were forced to lose the monthly salary given them by the previous government for their services. The petitions of some of the *damina*, *garada* and *burqa* to the government are found in the archives. According to them, the lands which they had rented to tenants were lost as a result of the proclamation and they were denied their monthly salary.⁷⁵

In the various letters sent by the new military regime to the sub provinces, the government stated that it was not interested to continue with the institution of *balabat*. Accordingly, all the sub provinces were instructed to investigate the significance of the *balabat* institution. Based on their investigation, two scenarios were established. In the highland sub provinces, where agriculture was the mainstay of the population and where tenancy was predominant, the institution was found to be no longer important for the people. It was indicated that the *balabats* were always

⁷³ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Siraj Kodle, Abdulatif Ahmed, Abdulqadir Abdurahman. A closer look at the proclamation in *Negarith Gazzeta* also confirms this reality.

⁷⁴ Informants: Siraj Khodele, Faisal Towfiq, Hassen Beker.

⁷⁵ National Archive File No. 17.1.7.37.06 : Archives of Haräri National Regional State Administrative Office, File No. 16582 and 3772.

maximizing their own interest at the expense of the poor rural population; this was found to be not in line with the philosophy of the new regime.⁷⁶

On the other hand, in the lowland part of the province, the institution was found to have some value in relation to the security of the sub provinces bordering with Somalia. Nevertheless, based on detailed investigations, the *balabat* institution was immediately abolished [even in the lowlands] and its role was to be taken by the Peasant Associations. Similarly the appellation “*balabat*” was found to be outdated and it was decided to replace it with a loose title called “*yä gosa täṭäri*” or “*yähezb täṭäri*”, i.e. representative of the clan or representative of the people. Hence, the former *damina*, *garada* and *burqa* were addressed with the new title.⁷⁷

In their attempt at thwarting the implementation of the land reform, some local gentry and influential landlords were said to have been engaged in disseminating unfounded rumors and spreading suspicions so that unrest could occur in some areas. Zegeye Asfaw, who used to be vice minister of land reform and administration at the time of the proclamation, went for a field visit in some villages of Bädessa in western Harärgé. The visit was initiated by a rumor which circulated in the ministerial office that peasants in Harärgé had refused to till the land. While he was discussing with tenants on the land reform and its implementation, the peasants argued that

⁷⁶ National Archive File No.17.1.7.37.06 ;Archives of Haräri i National Regional State Administrative Office, File No. 16582 and 3772. There are different letters written by the Ministry of Interior to Harärgé *Kifle Hagere* on the future of the *balabats*. Based on the requests from the ministerial office the office at Harärgé *Kifle Hagere* also sent different reports by collecting data from the different *awrajas*. The report included the total amount of the payment for all *balabats* in the province, the names of the *balabats* etc. There are also petitions by the *balabats* that they were not paid their salary while they were performing their tasks properly. For example on *Hidar* 25 ,1968 (December 4, 1975) five *balabats* in Gursum *Awraja* including Abdi Dermen and Mohammed Wersema appealed to Harärgé *Kifle Hager* Administrative Office for the release of their salary.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the reform was meant to prohibit the planting of *čat* tree, which by then was becoming the leading commercial crop, in favor of promoting the cultivation of cereals. When asked how they came to realize this intention of the government they claimed that they were told by the *burqa* and some socially accepted resident landlords. Indeed the land was not cultivated at all. But *Ato Zegeye* realized that the proclamation went into effect in February and according to the agricultural calendar of the area, peasants did not cultivate their fields at that time. Therefore the rumour might have been spread by reactionary forces.⁷⁸

The land reform proclamation not only evoked enthusiasm and caused demonstrations in the south, but it also added impetus to the actions that had already began on the eve of the revolution. Peasants in many rural *qäbälés* of Harärgé province went on pillaging and attacking landlords and their properties. Grains stored in the granaries of landlords were sacked; cattle belonging to landlords were looted along with available properties. Soon conflicts broke out between landlords and tenants in various parts of the province.⁷⁹

In this conflict students who went into the rural areas under the *Zämächa* (“National Revolutionary Campaign for Development through Co-cooperation”) also congratulated and supported tenants in their struggle and achievement. They were in fact the key figures who brought the revolution to the remote rural areas. For instance tenant informants in Gerawa remembered that the students who participated in the *zämächa* campaign fought against the landlords on their side. They made opposition to the land reform almost impossible. This no doubt assisted the government which was uncertain in asserting its power among the rural

⁷⁸ Informant : Zegeye Asfaw

⁷⁹ Informants: Telenji Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Mohammed Abdulkirim, Zerihun Bezabih, Hamza Ali.

population and therefore badly sought the implementation of the decree so as to win the hearts and minds of the oppressed broad masses as well as the leftist organizations.⁸⁰

Tenants on their part organized their own defence and were prepared to fight for what they had gained from the Revolution. According to informants, even before the proclamation of the land reform, tenant uprisings against their landlords and their agents sharpened social tensions in Harärgé. In some parts of Harärgé, such as Hirna, Mäsäla, Doba, Garamulata, Gursum and Fädis the conflict between landlords and tenants was violent ranging from looting of property to killings of landlords and their agents.⁸¹

A similar narrative can be established from the archives. On 10 *Ginbot* 1966 E.C. (May 18, 1974), the local elders and *wäräda* officials in Mäsäla held a meeting. Top on the agenda was the robbery committed by tenants and their allies against the property of landlords in six *qäbälés*. It was indicated that more than half a million birr was robbed from landlords in the form of grain from granaries, stored coffee produce, cattle etc. In the conflict that ensued, three people were reportedly dead and insecurity became rampant. (See details in appendix No. 6).

Soon after the proclamation, landlords near the big towns fled leaving their property behind. For instance, resident landlords in Fädis fled to Harär town while those living around Garamulata, Dädär, and Qärsa fled to Dire Dawa. Oxen belonging to landlords, grain crops stored in the granaries and ground pits all became the properties of the respective tenants.⁸²

The violence was severe in Čärčär. Here landlords were relatively significant in number and were well armed so that they were ready to resist any actions of tenants. A discussion with oral

⁸⁰ Informants: Telenji Beker, Abdella Miko, Abdella Ahmed.

⁸¹ Informants: Askale Weldeab, Hamza Ali Siyoum Tesema, Zerihun Bezabih, Mehedi Abdulla, Telenji Beker.

⁸² Informants: Mehedi Abdulla, Hassen Beker, Siraj Kodhele, Teha Mume

informants in Hirna and Čiro established that landlords in rural *qäbälés* had no way to escape and their only means was 'to fight back tenants in an open confrontation. Former tenant informants clearly remember the names of landlords who fought pitched battles against tenant forces organized by *zämächa* participants.⁸³ Although we could not establish the exact figure, the number of casualties (both dead and seriously wounded) was high on both sides.

This act was not controlled even after the proclamation of the land reform. In *Hamle* 1967 (July 1975) in Mäsäla *Wäräda*, part of Čärčär *Awraja*, six landlords were robbed by unidentified peasants. The letter listed the types of properties plundered without indicating its total estimate. It listed 172 quintals of sorghum, coffee, cattle, grain crops on threshing fields etc. The *awraja* police force reacted by getting hold of more than 200 suspects; more than that number fled into the forest.⁸⁴

The response by landlords also varied. For instance in Čärčär around Mäsäla and Hirna, landlords were well armed and responded to tenants' robbery with violence. In Hirna, one of the landlords, Taddesse Jenberu, organized some eight landlords to take military action. Accordingly, he and his armed band successfully responded to the attempt by tenants to pillage their property and succeeded in inflicting heavy casualties. In the meantime, the military government sent a police force to capture the armed landlords in their villages. In the shootout that ensued, a policeman was shot dead while the ring leader was captured after being seriously wounded by the police. Such conflicts and armed encounters were commonly observed in Hirna, Čiro, Doba, Gälämsö and Biyokaraba.⁸⁵

⁸³ Informants: Hamza Ali, Taye Bedhane, Tamene Urgessa, Legesse Beqansa

⁸⁴ National Archive Folder No.17.1.7.18.18.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

The political economy of tenants in Harärgé has been generally based on expropriation of their surplus by powerful outsiders through corvée, rent, tax, exorbitant interest rate and unequal terms of trade. This exploitation of agricultural surplus formed the background for the various forms of peasant resistance. Long and bitter local struggles between tenants and landlords, which invited the involvement of the state on the side of the landlords, had different features ranging from passive, non-violent forms to outright rebellions and violent attack against landlords and their properties. State intervention to keep the economic interest of the settler landlords was a political necessity without which many resident and absentee landlords could not have kept their economic interests.

In the meantime, students of the former Haile Sillassie I university in the college of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (what is now Haramaya University) took up the slogan “Land to the Tiller” which was a slogan of the student movement at the national level. Through their various organs and activities they inspired a generation of students and the rural masses in general to rise in common with the other Ethiopians who had passed through a feudal system that condemned them to live under political domination, cultural subordination and economic exploitation.

When the nationalization of land was proclaimed, the peasants, who were already agitated, their political consciousness raised by the university students and later by *zämächa* campaigners, were able to shape their own destiny. They became militant fighters against their former landlords and local gentry and seized the vital means of production which their forefathers had been forced to lose through military conquest a little less than a century ago. The radical land reform proclamation liberated thousands of landless peasants from the shackles of feudal exploitation

and made them the beneficiaries of their own fruits at least for some time. Subsequently, the military regime took a series of measures that curtailed their rights to the land.

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IES-MS-1346

Haräri National Regional State Administrative Office Archive

Folder No.1262 “Selä Aderewoch”

Folder No.10290 “Harär Kätäma Hizboch”

Folder No. 6479,File 49

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3. List of Oral Informants

No.	Name and Title	Age	Date and Place of Interview	Remarks
1	Abdella Ahmed	67	Gerawa January 3/2014	Former merchant now retired .He knows the condition of tenants very closely as he had relatives who served as tenants on the <i>qälads</i> of landlords.
2	Abdella Miko	54	Gerawa January 4/2014	Former tenant under <i>Qaññazmach</i> Abäbä with a sharecropping arrangement in <i>erbo</i> basis.
3	Abdosh Musa	71	Hirna March 11,12/2014	Personal servant of <i>Fatwrari</i> Täklähawariyat. He had been with his master until the death of the later in DireDawa. He knows a lot about <i>Fitawrari</i> Täklähawariyat's life.
4	Abdulatif Ahmed (phD)	61	Haramaya June 2/2014	A son of <i>damina</i> in Haramaya. He went to school at his early age and got the opportunity of modern education. He specialized in plant science and is working as an instructor in Haramaya University. He knows the genealogy of Afran Qällo. He also narrates land tenure dynamics in Harärgé in general, the cultural practices, community labor mobilization and other details.
5	Abdulkerim Umar	75	Hirna March 10,13/2014	Former tenant under <i>Fatwrari</i> Täklähawariyat, working as labor tenant. He was salaried labor worker on Täklähawariyat's <i>qälad</i> . He discusses the experiences he

				gained through acquaintance with his master.
6	Abdulqadir Abdurahman	62	Adama January 30/2014	He is among the few Oromo children who was sent to school in Asäbot and understood the school system. His memory on the development and the effect of mechanized agriculture in Asäbot is still fresh .
7	Abdulqadir Ahmed (<i>Haji</i>)	73	Fädis December 20/2013	He is a merchant in the town of Boko,fädis. He had witnessed a number of landlords having their <i>qälad</i> land in the area supervised by their agents. He discusses, the role of agents in exacerbating the exploitation of the tenants.
8	Abdusemed Edris	69	Harär November,24,25/2013	He is considered as oral historian among the Haräri. He knows details of Haräri land tenure,culture,and history.
9	Abraham Abdulle	51	Adele December 10,11/2013	Former tenant working under many landlords at different times. He describes the reasons for the disagreement with landlords and frequent change of landlords. He had worked in <i>hirta</i> and <i>erbo</i> arrangements along with other obligations imposed by landlords on tenants.
10	Adem Yusuf	50	Gursum November 13,14/2013	Former tenant on the land belonging to one of the body guards who came to Gursum in 1942.The agreement was on <i>hirta</i> (equal) basis.

11	Ahmed Mumed	63	Hirna March 3,4/2014	He used to be former tenant under a landlord called Dässalāñ. He narrated how the landlord treated his tenants. The relation between tenants and landlords is described in detail. He also remembers the different poems, songs, satire etc tenants sung which were oppositional in content and described their grievances against the system.
12	Ahmed Sa'i	66	Gursum November 15/2013	Former tenant on the land that was granted to the Body Guard. Actually his tenancy was inherited from his father. Since the land his father rented from Body Guard solders was small they have entered an additional tenancy relation with a landlord called Tenebu. He narrates that how the agricultural activity was so unrewarding due to the demands of the landlord and the climate was not suitable for crop production. On top of this the landlords did not allow them to cultivate economically profitable crops like groundnut.
13	Ahmed Yuyo	92	Haramaya June 2/2014	He used to cultivate a small plot of land he inherited from his father. But he also rented small plot of land from a landlord called Mäshäsha surrounding Bate.
14	Aliyi Mume	59	Čiro June 6,7/2014	He is knowledgeable on the genealogy of the Ittu Oromo and their relation with other Eastern Oromo groups. His knowledge on folklores, songs and satires poems recited by tenants and other members of communities is also insightful.
15	Aliyi Yuya	80	Adele February 1/2014	Former tenant on land owned by a soldier as <i>madäriya</i> . He used to be relatively free from sundry labor demands as the soldier was frequently away for military services. But he closely knows tenants working on <i>qälad</i> lands of other landlords

				and hence knows very well how these tenants were under pressure both in their living and working conditions.
16	Amin Musa	68	Erer gota March 26,2014	He was a labor tenant on the <i>béterest</i> land in Erer Gota.He describes the living and working condition of tenants on <i>béterest</i> land.
17	Askale Weldeab	85	Harär November 16/17,2013	She was the wife of one of the landlords in Biyo Karaba, North of Hirna .She also inherited the land of her grandfather on which tenants were working. She describes how tenants were working, the relation between them and tenants, and ultimately how the 1975 land reform changed the stats-quo. She describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
18	Ayub Abdulahi	67	Harär December 2/2013	Knowledgeable on Haräri agriculture, land tenure and culture. He had served as an agricultural expert in Gälämso <i>Awraja</i> during the <i>Därg</i> regime.
19	Beker Hassen	60	Kombolcha December 18,19/2013	Former tenant on the <i>qäläd</i> of local <i>balabat</i> . He narrates the living and working condition of tenants.
20	Belete Worqeneh	72	Gälämso May 27/2014	He used to be a tenant of Gebreyes Gobana. He narrates how the landlord used his office as a source of political power to influence tenants and advanced his economic interest. He also remembers how the landlords in general used information radiated from the center towards the end of the imperial rule and tried

				to adjust his rental relationship accordingly.
21	Beyene Yerga	87	Gerawa January 9,10/2014	He was employed in Gerawa as a civil servant as a teenager and came to acquaint himself how land allocation favored the settler community at the expense of the local population.
22	Berhanu Mäkonnen	87	Gursum February 3,4/ 2015	Former civil servant and landlord. His birth place is in Dädär but he moved to Gursum along his father who used to be a <i>wäräda</i> administrator. By using his father's position he took <i>qälad</i> land in Gursum on which tenants were working while he was a tax collector of the <i>awraja</i> . He narrated his experience on land measurement in Babile and the challenges he faced from the pastoral Somali. He also narrates how they approached the problem in consultation with the emperor.
23	Dawud Abddulahi	81	Kombolcha December 10,11/2013	Former peasant on his own <i>shibeta</i> land. He closely knows the working and living conditions of tenants. He narrates the fear tenants felt every year in connection with eviction. He narrates the verbal landlord tenant relations ,crop sharing arrangements and other details of .He also remembers the exploitation related with the <i>mälkäñña</i> system as he was told by his father.
24	Dawud Adem	92	Kombolcha December 11,12/2013	Former tenant on the <i>qälad</i> of <i>Fitawrari</i> Mäshäsha. He had passed through numerous difficulties in his tenancy relation with the landlord. He also remembers the <i>mälkäñña</i> system that was imposed on the local population. Along with this the land tenure system both before and after the conquest are well discussed by him..

25	Debebe Haile	51	Jigjiga January 8/2014	The son of a patriot who went to Jigjiga and settled on the land belonging to the <i>béterset</i> of Emperor Haile Sillassie. He remembers how the patriots were under frequent friction with the Somali pastoralists who resisted the increasing state encroachment of their pastoral niches in the suburbs of what is now Jigjiga town.
26	Dheqebe Gemedä	85	Adele April 27.2014	He went to Harär from Shäwa in search of daily work. He started life as a weaver in Adele. After sometimes he started agriculture by renting land. Gradually with a small amount of money he took land as <i>wäläd agäd</i> which became the source of wealth he accumulated. He knows the lives and working conditions as well as the agreements tenants entered with landlords. He also narrates the changes that attended the 1975 land reform and how he was affected.
27	Faisal Towfiq	51	Gerawa July 17/2014	Grandson of Mume Orfo, the <i>Damina</i> of Garamulata. He narrates how his grandfather managed to win the support of the emperor, the mechanism employed to amass wealth through marriages with different daughters of <i>balabats</i> .
28	Gashaw G/Mesqel	80	Adele April 25/2014	He used to be a soldier in the Eastern border of the country when he retired he came to settle at Adele having a small plot of land granted by the state. The land was cultivated by himself but closely knows the condition of tenants around him.
29	Goshu Dinawo	83	Qärsa August 8/2014	Former tenant on the land his father worked as tenant. He discusses the landlord tenant relations and frequent disputes between them. He also narrates the natures of contract agreement both in terms of cash and crop share arrangement.
30	Hamid Umar	65	Hirna	Personal servant of <i>Fitawrari</i> Täklähawariyat. He was employed as a house

			March 5,6/2014	servant in washing clothes, ironing and other related jobs. His remuneration was 15 birr per annum while all accommodation was provided by the master. He closely knows the agreements of cultivators and their relations with <i>Fitawrari</i> <i>Täklähawariyat</i> .
31	Hamza Ali	66	Hirna August 16,17/2014	He had been a clerk as self employee. His major task was writing petitions, litigations, appeal letters and other related letters for tenants and other groups of people who have court cases. Through his interaction with peasants in general he came to realize the overall feature of tenants. When land reform was proclaimed and when tenants militancy targeted against landlords, he fraternized with the cause of tenants and participated in the confrontation against landlords and graphically describes the scale of the confrontation. He also mentions the names of persons who died, wounded, and the types of properties robbed from landlords. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
32	Hassen Beker	53	Dädär April 13,14/2014	He is now a tailor but was a son of a tenant who worked on his own family land. He described the social inequality in terms of education and other opportunities. He was a teenager when the land reform was proclaimed he remembers the general turmoil ensued in the area.
33	Ibrahim Ahmed	88	Kombolcha December	He was an independent farmer on his own <i>shibeta</i> land but closely knows the lives of tenants. He also closely knows the expansion of <i>čat</i> production. He knows a lot

			10,11/2013	about the clan relations and traditions related with Afran Qällo. .
34	Ibrahim Hussein	51	Hirna March 7,8/2014	Former tenant on local <i>balabat</i> 's land. He narrates; although he was not severely mistreated as the rest of tenants, the crop sharing arrangement was sever that made tenants insecure in terms of having sufficient food supply for their family throughout the year.
35	Iman Mohammed	57	Hirna August 16,17/2014	The wife of Hamza Ali. She narrates her experiences in relation to landlord tenant relationship specifically in Mäsäla where she was born. She relates the production of coffee in Mäsäla and the sharing mechanism, the mechanisms employed by landlords to exploit female labor etc.
36	Jemal Abdurahman	64	Čiro June 20/2014	Former tenant when he lost his land to commercial farmers around Asäbot, he learnt driving a tractor and was employed on the commercial farm owned by Lägäsä Tsadiqu. He closely knows and remembers the processes of eviction in Asäbot area when commercial farming expanded. He is also knowledgeable in oral literature and folktales that tell the condition of tenants in Čärčär. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
37	Juhar Abdurahman	53	Damota,Haramaya June 4/2014	His father was killed by <i>Fitawrari</i> Mäshäsha when the victim refused to handover the land as it was claimed by the landlord. The landlord claimed the land was granted for him by the government. Later on the informant retreated from his father's land and came to settle on where he is currently cultivating. He remembers the condition of tenancy in the area and the obligations imposed by

				landlords.
38	Kassaye Wegayehu	79	Gursum February 26/2014	Former teacher and now retired. He remembers the condition of tenants' life in the area and claims the land reform was a big step in liberating tenants from the exploitation in the hands of landlords. He also served as a <i>wäräda</i> administrator for a brief period
39	Khalid Hussien	45	Harär February 5/2014	His knowledge on the historical geography of Harärgé especially on the eastern part is detail. He had worked as a field assistant for different archaeologists and anthropologists working in the area.
40	Legesse Beqansa	62	Čiro June 12/2014	A civil servant who went from Shäw to Čärčär in his youth and had got the opportunity to learn more about tenancy and its impact on agricultural productivity. He also learnt the land tenure dynamics and landownership by different communities including the submerged social groups.
41	Mehadi Abdullahi	61	Fädis December 21/2013	Now a broker in the town of Boko (Fädis).He closely knows the landlord-tenancy relations. In Fädis area, he remembers there was commercial agriculture which depended on irrigation that utilized different rivers in the area. But on peripheral areas it was tenant labor that dominated production relation.
42	Mengesha Seyoum (<i>Le'ul Ras</i>)	80	Addis Ababa February 1/2014	He belongs to the royal family through his marriage to princess Aida Desta, the grand daughter of Emperor Haile Sillasie. He had served as governor of Sidamo ,Arsi and Tigray provinces. He also served in Ethiopian airlines, Ethiopian Roads Authority and as minister of communication. Especially in his tenure as governor

				of Arsi and Sidamo provinces he came to realize the extent of the problem of tenancy and he claims, predicted as a potential danger for the regime. He also closely knows and narrates the power politics in the parliament and the challenges the emperor faced from the upper house of the parliament to endorse the draft tenancy legislation.
43	Mesfin Worqe	55	Hirna August 5/2014	A son of a settler tenant. His father used to work as cash tenant in which the contract was paid in cash yearly. When the landlord wanted to renew the contract it became normal for the contract tenant to extend payment in the form of <i>bärča</i> . He refused to work as a tenant and fortunately secured some land with the land reform. He very well remembers the general turmoil set in surrounding Hirna with the revolution.
44	Mohammed Abdullahi	110	Dädär April 15/2014	He belongs to the Shekash family. Although he is old enough, his memory is incredible and his knowledge on the history of Harärgé's population interaction and cultural practice is immense.
45	Mohammed Abdulkerim	51	Gursum February 25/2014	A peasant on his father's land .Although not a tenant he is knowledgeable on landlord tenant relations, the causes of evictions, tenants' sabotage of the produce, the disputes between the two, the role of agents in exacerbating the harsh living condition of tenants, he also remembers the names of landlords in Gursum and Seqere, evolution and mechanism of <i>wäläd agäd</i> and turmoil that attended the revolution.

46	Mohammed Abdurahman	65	Kombolcha December 15,16/2013	Former teacher. He knows the details of the landlord tenancy relationship. He also collected different traditions and information from elderly people due to his curiosity and some of the information he shared during the interview.
47	Mohammed Adem (<i>Haji</i>)	84	Gälämso May 27/2014	He is considered as an oral historian among the community and indeed is knowledgeable on the history of the Ittu Oromo, His narration on the communal land ownership and the transformation attended by the conquest is valuable. He discusses how landlord tenancy relation evolved in Harärgé in general and the general feature of the relationship. He also remembers the names of different landlords in Gälämso and the differing treatments these landlords implemented on their respective tenants.
48	Mohammed Dawud	91	Gursum November 14/2013	Former tenant on <i>hirta</i> basis. He remembers how the landlord forcefully mobilized the labor of tenants as part of the requirement of tenancy on his land. He also narrates the prohibitions in terms of crop cultivation.
49	Mohammed Ibro	67	Erer Gota March 26/2014	He used to be a labor tenant on the <i>béterest</i> land found in Erer Gota. He discusses how labor tenants were treated by the institution.
50	Mohammed Hassen	56	Kombolcha December 16/2013	A son of a tenant. He refused to take up agriculture for the depressed condition of tenant families he only came to have a plot of land due to the revolution and hails the revolution for it gave him freedom to take up agriculture by his own.
51	Mohammed	59	Čällänqo	Son of Musa Ibrahim, a tenant on <i>Afänigus Zäwdé Ayälä</i> . He remembers the

	Musa		April 18,19/2014	physical confrontation with the agent of the landlord when he brought some fresh corn for household consumption. He was labeled as “thief” on the land his father and he himself worked. Due to this his father was evicted from the land and was installed in another infertile land. After many years of landlessness. As a result, he refused to work as a tenant on any of the <i>qälad</i> lands until the revolution provided him some amount of land.
52	Mohammed Musso	87	Haramaya December 3/2013	A well known oral historian in Haramaya.His knowledge on Afran Qällo genealogy, traditions, culture etc is fascinating .His knowledge on the land tenure in both pre-and post conquest Harärgé is also impressive.
53	Mohammed Seid	80	Gursum February 25,26/2014	He used to be a member of the parliament representing the people of Gursum.He remembers the parliamentary debates on the draft tenancy bill and learnt that the upper house of the parliament had strongly opposed the passage of the bill. He also discusses the ill-treatment of tenants in Gursum.
54	Mume Ahmed	83	Adele December 27/2013	Former tenant .He clearly knows Italian period and narrates labor mobilization of the Italians for different activities. After liberation he closely knows how the army especially the 3 rd division took the lands of peasants around Adele for the army stationed around that area.
55	Mume Yuya	73	Čällänqo April 18,19/2014	Former tenant on the <i>qälad</i> of <i>Afänigus Zäwdé Ayälä</i> in <i>erbo</i> basis. The <i>qälad</i> was managed by an agent, Tässäma. The labor demands, the unequal sharing of the produce as opposed to the agreement and many other mal-treatments of tenants are

				discussed in detail.
56	Musa Ibrahim	96	Čällänqo April 18,19/2014	Former tenant on <i>qälad</i> of <i>Afänigus</i> Zäwdé Ayälä in <i>erbo</i> arrangement. The <i>qälad</i> was managed by an agent, Tässäma. He describes the nature of exploitation by the agent. His detail discussion of the unequal relationship between landlords and tenants, the cases of evictions, the social inequality of landlords and tenants is valuable.
57	Mustefa Adem	63	Suqul, Hamaresa November 21/2014	He is s well informed oral historian. His narration on the genealogy of Eastern Oromo in general is attractive.
58	Nigussie Anberbir	80	Qärsa July 20/2014	Former tenant under a female landlord, <i>Wäyzäro</i> Yeshimäbet .His agreement with the landlord was a sharecropping arrangement with fixed share of the product. Due to this, the tenant was free from any labor requirement of the landlord.
59	Nigussie G/Medhin (<i>Likebirhanat</i>)	96	Gerawa July 8/2014	The son of a well known priest in Gerawa who copied, according to my informant, <i>gädlä</i> Täklähaymanot which is now found in the church of Täklähaymanot in Kurfačale. He narrates the events during the Italian occupation as he was a teen ager and was following his father. He also discussed the life of <i>Lij</i> Iyyasu and his prison life. He also describes the amount of <i>samon</i> land under each church and how these churches administered the land.
60	Salih Adem	89	Hirna August 6/2014	He was a personal servant of <i>Fitawrari</i> Täklähawariyat. His job was to tend animals and milk them twice a day. He narrates the personality of his master. <i>Fitawrari</i> was described as generous, carrying and greatly admires hardworking

				men and women. He thought them basic skills in life ,childcare, modern agricultural practices , environmental protection etc.
61	Sani Abdulle	80	Adele February 9,10/2014	The son of Damina Abdulle Ibrahim who lost his land in Adele to the Italians without any compensation. He narrated the information he was told on the experiences of his father, the Italian policy on land, labor and agricultural practices.
62	Shafi Usman	83	Erer Gota March 26/2014	He used to be a labor tenant on the <i>béterest</i> land in Erer Gota. His information on the payment of laborers working on the land as daily agricultural laborers is eye witness.
63	Siraj Kodhele	65	Gerawa July 8,9/2014	Knowledgeable and well informed oral historian among the Abadho sub clan of the Alla. He used to be a teacher which helped him collect a considerable amount of oral traditions among the Afran Qällo in Garamulata.He is also an eye –witness for some of the events related with land eviction, tenancy and mal-administration of the government. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
64	Siyoum Tesema	83	Gerawa January 10/2014	A <i>mofär Zämät</i> tenant under <i>Qaññazmach</i> Gädlägiorgis. He describes the condition of tenants as one of extreme poverty and exploitation by landlords especially those who were living on the <i>qälad</i> land by taking examples tenants working on the same landlord he was working for. He indicates that he has no other obligation like labor mobilization when the landlord needed. He also

				indicates the nature of tenancy agreement which was verbal and can be twisted by the landlord. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
65	Suleiman Ahmed	75	Dädär April 16/2014	Well informed oral historian who knows a lot about the settlement patterns of the Afran Qällo , especially the Obbora sub group. He narrates the resistance waged by the Obbora against the occupying army in 1887 and the subsequent suppression and land alienation by the occupying forces. He also narrates the various mechanisms how the Obbora tried to hold on their land and shield their labor from exploitation.
66	Tamene Urgessa	63	Hirna March 8 /2014	A civil servant for a long time and closely knows the condition of tenants in Hirna.
67	Tamrat Kebede	67	Addis Ababa January 25/2014	Currently serving as Director of Inter Africa Group. As a young graduate he had served in the Ministry of Land Tenure and administration and closely knows the Ethiopian Land Tenure system during the imperial period. He had also produced some scholarly articles on the subject. He narrates the details of the process in the efforts towards the passage of the Tenancy draft legislation.
68	Taye Bedhane	84	Hirna March 8/2014	He went to Hirna from Shäwa as a migrant daily laborer. His comparison of tenants under <i>Fitawrari</i> Täklähawariayt and other landlords is found to be in line with the discussion of other informants who narrated their experiences working uner their respective landlords. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor

				requirement not a crop sharing arrangement. He also remembers the names of landlords in Hirna, Mäsäla, Biyo Karaba and Doba.
69	Taha Abdella (<i>Shaykh</i>)	61	Čiro June 16/2014	Knowledgeable on the traditions of the settlement of the Ittu Oromo. He had collected lots of the folklores, songs and oppositional oral literature of Eastern Oromo. He closely knows the landlord tenancy relations, the nature of exploitation, the cultural subjugation of tenants by the ruling elites and rural protest movements.
70	Täha Mume	60	Qärsa July 20/2014	Former tenant working under <i>Balambaras</i> Täyeqachäw. His experience on the working and living condition of tenants under the landlord was interesting. He compares and contrasts crop sharing arrangements and fixed cash tenancy arrangements. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
71	Tekle G/Tsadik	92	Harär November 24,25/2013	He is a retired retail trader. He used to cultivate by renting land in Čällänqo, where he grew up. He discusses the <i>gibir</i> and other food provision mechanisms by Abashawel Gäbré who organized it every sunday. He also gives clear picture on how tenants were working under pressing conditions and demands of the landlords.
72	Telenji Beker	70	Gerawa January 4,5 /2014	A former tenant under <i>Qäññazmach</i> Dästa in Gerawa. He was working as a sharecropper on <i>erbo</i> basis. Besides, crops sharing, he narrates the insatiable and sundry labor demands of the landlord. He also narrates the experiences of other

				sharecropping tenants in Gerawa, the relationship with the landlords, the nature of the agreements between tenants and landlords and many other details. He describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
73	Teshome Zewde (Likekahinat)	87	Gerawa July 8,9/2014	He is knowledgeable on the land under the domain of the church, how the church administered these lands and other details .He describes that he had <i>qälad</i> land he bought by his own from the government's possession and on his <i>qälad</i> land tenants were working with labor tenancy arrangement.
74	Umar Ahmed	62	Čiro June 12, August 7/2014	The son of <i>Däjazmach</i> Ahmed Ali Tese, who used to be a long time vice governor of Čärčär <i>Awraja</i> and a landlord with a considerable amount of land in different parts of Čärčär. He narrates in detail the experience and the challenges his father faced while serving the government.
75	Umar Haji	68	Gälämsö May 28/2014	A well informed oral historian on the Eastern Oromo in general. He discusses the processes of the occupation, the introduction and nature of the <i>mälkäñña</i> system and subsequent land alienation that converted the overwhelming majority of the Ittu into tenancy. He also remembers the names of landlords who have <i>qälad</i> lands in the regions beyond Gälämsö.
76	Umare Mohammed (Haji)	80	Kombolcha November 18 /2013	He used to be a merchant but closely knows the living and working conditions of tenants. According to him, tenants were always mistreated by their landlords and the latter did not recognize their tenants as human beings.

77	Umar Salih	96	Kombolcha November 19/2013	Formerly a peasant on his own land but very well remembers the life of tenants. He discusses in detail the cultivation of <i>čat</i> tree in pre-revolution and post revolution periods. His discussion clearly establishes <i>čat cultivation</i> dominated the production relation in Harärgé in recent years due to different factors.
78	Usman Mangasha	81	Činakson February 22/2014	His discussion is largely focused on the genealogical and ethnic relationships between the Somali and the Oromo. He also narrates some of the historical and archaeological sites such as Darbigar and their relations with the Harla people
79	Wondimu W/Yohannes	82	Gursum February 24/2014	He went to Harärgé as job seeker and worked as a sharecropping tenant under different landlords in different tenancy arrangements. He experienced both rapacious and self-effacing landlords.
80	Yahya Umar	68	Gursum February 26,27/2014	Former tenant working on <i>hirta</i> basis on Ashagre Qonjile's <i>qälad</i> .He narrates how the landlord exploited the tenants without actually taking part or by investing in agricultural practices. His discussion on the credit conditions, the repayment mechanisms, mechanisms of share of produce, nature of tenancy agreement vividly indicated that all were dictated by the landlord.
81	Yusuf Hashif	80	Gursum November 13,14/2013	Former tenant on <i>Mämire</i> Fantaye's <i>qälad</i> and was working in <i>hirta</i> (equal) basis
82	Yuya Abdulahi	75	Čällänqo	Former tenant on <i>Afänigus</i> Zäwdé Ayälä's <i>qälad</i> . He remembers the landlord was absentee and the land was administered by an agent called Tässäma .He narrates

			April 20 /2014	how agents exploited the tenants as they were the only de-facto administrators of the land.
83	Zahara Mohammed	70	Hirna August 6/2014	The wife of Salih Ahmed, who was mentioned earlier as a servant of <i>Fitawrari</i> Täklähawariyat. She narrates how their lord used to help them .She describes the meaning of <i>sisso</i> as purely a labor requirement not a crop sharing arrangement.
84	Zegeye Asfaw	66	Addis Ababa January 27/2014	A former vice-minister of Land Reform and administration and during the early years of the revolution he served as a Minister of the same ministerial office. He shared me a lot of his experiences on the political struggle in the parliament during the discussion of the draft legislation of landlord-tenancy relation. According to him the government, especially the upper circle, was full of reactionary forces that thwarted the draft legislation. Now he established an NGO called <i>Hunde Grassroots Initiative</i> working on land related issues in Oromia regional state
85	Zerihun Bäzabeh	78	Gursum February 25, 26/2014	Former tenant under <i>Mä mire</i> Fantaye with a fixed share arrangement. His discussion on the hostile relation between the Oromo and the Somali on the one hand and the settler community on the other hand found to be useful as it is corroborated by archives. The antagonistic relation was largely predicated on the expropriation of land by the settler community after the incorporation of Harärgé. As to the landlord-tenancy relations his discussion is one of the few examples for the existence of harmonies landlord tenancy relations.

Appendix IV-1

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নিত্য, স্বাস্থ্য-এ যত্ন.

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1069. 44077, 408612, 01133. 5, 20418, 911666, 10.947
 167, 1077, 41167 — — — — —

4 of 36: 468/58 in 196. 2012 B. 2C-PAHs

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Appendix NO-2

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ቀን 30/5/62

መጋቢት 30 ቀን 1962 ዓ.ም

የመረት ቦንት ሙሉ

አከራይ የተባለው ጋራ ሥላሴ ቤተ ርስት ጽ/ቤት

ተከራይ ከቶ ቡሽራ ያሉኛ ሆነው ተጥሎ የተመለከተውን መረት በቦንት ሙሉ ተጥብቀው በሰራተኛው ጠ/ዛት በወርወር አውራሻ በሃቢሮ ወረዳ በወረዳ አኒኒ ቀበሌ የመረት ልዩ ስም ቡርታ ተብሎ የሚጠራውን ገጣሽ ጋሽ መረት አከራይ ለተከራይ ለሁለት ዓመት አከራይቷል ፤

1. ተከራይ ለመገንዘብ የሚከፈለውን የመረት ገቢና አሥራት በቤተርሰት መ/ቤት ስም ከፍለው ባርነውን ከቦንት ሙሉ ገንዘብ ጋር ያስረክባሉ ፤

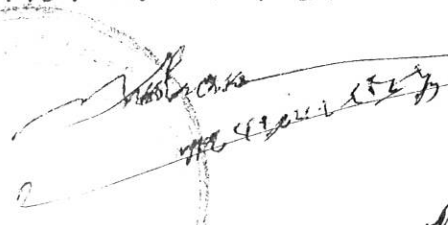
2. አከራይ መ/ቤት በገጣሹ ጋሽ መረት በየዓመቱ \$ 180 አገድ መቶ ሰማኔያ በር ሆኖ ውሎ ከተቆፈበት መጋቢት 30 ቀን 62 ዓ.ም ጀምሮ የውሎ ዘመን አለቶ ድረስ በየዓመቱ መጋቢት 30 ቀን ቤተ ርስት መ/ቤት አምጥተው ሊከፍሉ አረጋገጠዋል ፤

3. የቦንት ሙሉ ጊዜ መጋቢት 30 ቀን 1962 ዓ.ም አስከ መጋቢት 30 ቀን 1964 ዓ.ም ለሁለት ዓመት ነው ፤ የቦንት ሙሉ ገንዘብ በየዓመቱ በውሎ መሠረት ለቤተ ርስት መ/ቤት አምጥቶ በወርወር ወልደን በመቶ ዘመን ሂሳብ ሊከፍሉ ተጥብቀዋል ፤ የቦንት ሙሉ ገንዘብ በላውከፈላቸው ውሎ መሠረዝ የቤተርሰት መ/ቤት መብት አለው ፤

4. በውሎ ማለፊያ ጊዜ የሚገባቸውን ገቢ ለውሎ ያሳገባች ገደብ ለከራይ መ/ቤት በነፃ ለቀው ይገባሉ ፤ ያልከተሉት የመረት ገቢና የቦንት ሙሉ ገንዘብ ተገደው ሊከፍሉ ተስማምተዋል ፤

5. ለመገንዘብ የሚከፈለውን የመረት ገቢና በጊዜው ባይከፍሉ ቢቀሩና መብቱ የሚያስከትል ቢሆን መብቱንና የሚፈለገውን የመረት ገቢ ተከራይ ሊከፍሉ ተስማምተዋል ፤

ይህ ውል በሁለቱም ተጥባቂዎች በኩል የጸና ማስረጃ ሆኖ ተፈፈረው በአስከ ውሎ ፍጻሜ ድረስ የጸና ይሆናል ፤ ቤተ ርስት በዚህ በቦንት ሙሉ የሰጠውን መረት ለሌላ ሥራ ቢያስፈልገው የውሎ ዘመን ባሳለቀ ብቻ ከመረት ላይ አልነሳም በሚለት ልጽክራክር አልቸልም ስለ በዚህ ውል ተስማምቼ በፈርማዎ አረጋገጣለሁ ፤ ገን በመረት ላይ ያለውን ሰበል ሰበሰብ አገዳለቁ መ/ቤት ይፈቀድላቸዋል ። ይህ ውል በሁለት ቦታ ተጽኖ አንዱ ቦታ በተከራይ አጅ ሁለተኛው በአከራይ መሥሪያ ቤት ይገኛል ።

የቦንት ሙሉ መ/ቤት ፊርማ	የዋስ ፊርማ	የተከራይ ፊርማ
		
#180 PC 4249 1962		የተከራይ ገደብ የውሎ ፍጻሜ በገንዘብ ወልደን

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ከም: ሆከተ: ወገን: ሆነው: ከዚህ: ቀን/ከ: ያከውን: ከምም ነት: ከቁጥር: ተዋህዶቤ:

ከከ፡ ትርጉም ፡ ህገንዳጌ ስጦታ ፡ በዚሁ ፡ ውሳኔ ፡ መሠረት ፡ ገደብ ፡ አድርጎናል።

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የኢ/ብር፡ኣዓባሪ፡ኣካላዊ ጠቀሙ በት፡ከ_____

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ቋሚ፡ በሚሆኑት፡ ተከከሞች፡ ማከት፡ ህንጻ፡ ቡናና፡ ጤት፡ ህንጻ፡ ከሚና፡
ትርጓሜ፡ ብርቅኝና፡ መጓዳሪያ፡ ዓመታዊነት፡ ህንጻ፡ ባሕር፡ ዛፎና፡ መስክ፡
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በዋቢነት፡ ከጓቀድ

ጀመረ፡ ወገን፡ በጀመረ፡ ከጓቀድ፡ ዓቃጥ፡ ጥላ፡ ቋሚ፡
ዘፎችና፡ ተከከሞች፡ ዘርቶ፡ ወይም፡ ተከከሞች፡ ህንጻህም፡ ከዚህ፡ ሕንጻ፡ ሠርቶ፡
ቢገኝና፡ በማናቸውም፡ ምክንያት፡ መሪቱን፡ በሚከታተል፡ ጊዜ፡ በግምት፡ በም፡
ዓመታዊነት፡ መብት፡ ቢመረ፡ ከጠ/ግዛቱ፡ ዓመታዊነት፡ ገቢ፡ ፑም፡
ተረቀቀ፡ ኪሳራ፡ በምምነት፡ ካሳ፡ በበተቀረ፡ ደህንነት፡ መሠረት፡ ከፍጥነት፡
ዓመታዊነት፡ ማናቸውም፡ ከጸደቀ፡ መብት፡ በህግ፡ ሌት፡ ጥጋ፡ ዓክልማይ፡ ሆኖ፡
ህንጻቶች፡ ከገረ፡ ተገረ፡ ተከማምተን፡ ራሳችንን፡

በባለቤት፡ ከጓቀድ

ህክ፡ ከጓቀድ፡ ወገን፡ በዚህ፡ ጊዜ፡ ካደ፡ በተመከተው፡
መሪቱ፡ በውጭ፡ በበጠቃም፡ ሆነ፡ በማናቸውም፡ ኬከ፡ ግደነት፡ ምክንያት፡
ጸገባቸው፡ ባደ፡ ተገረ፡ ቢሆን፡ ሁከተቸው፡ ወገን፡ በባለቤት፡ መከፋፈል፡ ካሳ፡
በመግለጽ፡ ሆኖ፡ በመግለጽ፡ ገንዘብ፡ ከገንዘቦች፡ ከመገንዘብ፡
ክፍሉን፡ ከገረ፡ ማከሙ፡

ህንጻህም፡ በከተማ፡ ጀመረ፡ ወገን፡ በግል፡ ሊፋ፡
ወገን፡ ገደብ፡ ወይም፡ በህግ፡ መሪቱ፡ ኪደዘው፡ በጊዜ፡ ወይም፡ በረቀቀው፡
በዚህ፡ ጊዜ፡ በተመከተው፡ መሪቱ፡ ወገን፡ በመገንዘብ፡ ክፍሉን፡ ከገንዘብ፡
ዓክልማይ፡ ጀመረ፡ ወገን፡ ደግሞ፡ በጊዜ፡

በምንጭ፡ ከጓቀድ

ህክ፡ _____ ገቢ፡ በካደ፡ ዓቃጥ፡ ጥላ፡
ከምምነት፡ ከጓቀድ፡ ተገረ፡ በሚገባ፡ በተረፋሁት፡ በጊዜ፡ በዚህ፡ ጊዜ፡
ካደ፡ ዓቃጥ፡ መሪቱ፡ በጊዜ፡ በወገን፡ _____ ገቢ፡
_____ ዓክልማይ፡ (ህንጻቤት) በግደነት፡ _____ ገቢ፡
_____ ዓክልማይ፡ ህንጻቤት፡ _____ ገቢ፡
ግ፡ ም፡ ግም፡ ህንጻቤት፡ _____ ገቢ፡
በቀረ፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
ተጠቅሞ፡ ዓቃጥ፡ በከተማ፡ ኪደዘው፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
ገቢ፡ በጊዜ፡ በግደነት፡ ህንጻቤት፡ ኪደዘው፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
በካደ፡ በጊዜ፡ በግደነት፡ ህንጻቤት፡ ኪደዘው፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
በወገን፡ በግደነት፡ ገቢ፡ መሪቱ፡ ከጓቀድ፡ ቀን፡ በተቀረ፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
ር.10%) ማከት፡ በጊዜ፡ _____ ገቢ፡ _____ ገቢ፡
_____ ዓክልማይ፡ ከምምነት፡ በከተማ፡ በዚህ፡ ከጓቀድ፡ ገቢ፡
ከግደነት፡ ገቢ፡ _____ ገቢ፡

_____ 0/0

ክፍል ፡ ፫ ፡ ፩ ፡ ወገን ፡
ሙስ ፡ ከተመከተረ ፡ አማናቸውም ፡ ሳይነት ፡ ገፍታቸው ፡ ኃላፊ ፡ ሆነው ፡ የ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ መብት ፡ ዓመጪ ፡ ያለጠብቁና ፡ ዓመጪ ጠብቀው ፡ አስከፋይና ፡ ክፋይ ፡ ሄጃዎች ፡ ሆኑ ፡ ዋስትና ፡

ግዛቱ ፡ አስፈላጊ ፡ ነገሮች ፡
ሃይማኖት ፡
ተዳራሪ ፡ ሙስ ፡ መሠረት ፡ ተከራሪ ፡ ማከት ፡ ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
በገቡበት ፡ በማናቸውም ፡ ሳይነት ፡ ሀላፊነት ፡ ተጠያቂና ፡ ክፋይ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ መሆኔን ፡ በፊርማና ፡ ክፍል ፡ ላይ ፡

ግዛቱ ፡ በድብተር ፡ አንቀጽ ፡
ሃይማኖት ፡
መሠረት ፡ ከተከራሪ ፡ ወገን ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ አንቀጽ ፡ ዓተጠቅሙ ፡
በቁ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ከድርጅት ፡ ተቀብያቸዋል ፡

ግዛቱ ፡ በባተኛ ፡ አንቀጽ ፡
ደህ ፡ ሙስ ፡ በ _____ ገጽ ፡ ተጽፎ ፡ ተነገረ ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
ተዋዋይ ፡ ወገን ፡ በተከራሪ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በኋላ ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ምክር ቤት ፡ ወገን ፡ ከ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ ምክር ቤት ፡ በሀላፊነት ፡
መቆጣጠሪያ ፡ ባርድ ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ተወስኗል ፡

የአካላዊ ፡ ፊርማ ፡
ደህ ፡ ሙስ ፡ በ _____ ገጽ ፡ ተጽፎ ፡ ተነገረ ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
ተዋዋይ ፡ ወገን ፡ በተከራሪ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በኋላ ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ምክር ቤት ፡ ወገን ፡ ከ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ ምክር ቤት ፡ በሀላፊነት ፡
መቆጣጠሪያ ፡ ባርድ ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ተወስኗል ፡

ደህ ፡ ሙስ ፡ በ _____ ገጽ ፡ ተጽፎ ፡ ተነገረ ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
ተዋዋይ ፡ ወገን ፡ በተከራሪ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በኋላ ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ምክር ቤት ፡ ወገን ፡ ከ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ ምክር ቤት ፡ በሀላፊነት ፡
መቆጣጠሪያ ፡ ባርድ ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ተወስኗል ፡

ደህ ፡ ሙስ ፡ በ _____ ገጽ ፡ ተጽፎ ፡ ተነገረ ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
ተዋዋይ ፡ ወገን ፡ በተከራሪ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በኋላ ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ምክር ቤት ፡ ወገን ፡ ከ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ ምክር ቤት ፡ በሀላፊነት ፡
መቆጣጠሪያ ፡ ባርድ ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ተወስኗል ፡

የወረዳ ፡ ጽሕፈት ፡ ቤት ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ገጽ ፡ ተጽፎ ፡ ተነገረ ፡ በ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡
ተዋዋይ ፡ ወገን ፡ በተከራሪ ፡ ዋስትና ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በኋላ ፡
ወገን ፡ _____ ምክር ቤት ፡ ወገን ፡ ከ፪ ፡ ወገን ፡ ምክር ቤት ፡ በሀላፊነት ፡
መቆጣጠሪያ ፡ ባርድ ፡ ህጋዊ ፡ ተፈርዶ ፡ ተወስኗል ፡

ቀጥሎ ፡ 25/7/10/51
22 ፡ ደግሞ ፡
ደብዳቤ ፡ አባሪ ፡ ሆኖ ፡ ተላልፏል ፡

7	"	"	"	የመረጃ ይዘታና አስተዳደር ሚኒስቴር
"	"	"	"	የአርባ ሚኒስቴር
"	"	"	"	የቴክኖሎጂና ማግኒቶን ፖለቲካ ፖርቶ ፖርቶ ሚኒስቴር
"	"	"	"	የጥሬ ጥቃትና ሚኒስቴር

h²u, h²u

35 / በአገሪቷ ገሬሳነት ውስጥ አሬት ወይም ለሌሊት ገባር ጫት አለ በአገሪቷ ገሬሳ
ነትና በአገሪቷ ገባር ጫት ላይ ከ59 ዓ.መ በሬት የሚገፈገፈው ገባር \$8 ብር የአሰራት \$12
ብር የጤና ታክስ \$6 ብር የኮህሮት ታክስ \$6 ብር በጨዋላው \$32 ብር ብቻ ነው ለሦ
ሣሌ አገሪቱ በው በው በው በው በው በው የሚገኘው \$32 ብር ቢሆንም በዓመት \$384 ብ
ር ይሆናል ይህ ገንዘብ የ12 ገባር ጫት የሚገባ ገባር ገቢ ገንዘብ ነው እኛ የገሬሞለታ

አዘዘ የትምህርት ዕውቀት ስለሌለን ይህ ነገር ሲያስቡት መገንዘብ ጎዳን የሚል በውስጥ አይታወቅም ነገር ነን በአዘዘ ላይ ጉዳትን የሚያደርሱ መሆኑ የታወቀ ነው። ደቡ አገደኛ የሆነው አንድ ጋሽ መረት \$80 ብር ለመገንዘብ አንክፍላለን አንዳንድ በጥቅ ይህን ለመክፈል አቅጥ አቸው ይቸገራሉ ገበሬዎች ገብሩን ለመክፈል በርካታ ለመሸጥ ዛሬ ነገ ገብሩን አንክፍላለን ቢሉ በየገንዘቡ ወጣት አየገዛቸው በበቂ ታቸው ጥጋ ገብሩን ሲይዙ ለሀገር ገንዘቡን ይመርቡታል ስለዚህ ጥበቃ ትዕዛዝ አስፈርባቸው ድረስ ይዋጃሉ የመገንዘብ ትዕዛዝ ጥሩ በመሆኑ አርሰታቸውን በመገባት በከፍተኛ ድክነት በኛ ዘንድ ገብሩን ለመክፈል ወጣትን ለመገዛት ገንዘቡ ወጭ አንዳዘን አሳታሰበርን ሴት ናት ይህንን የሰንጠረዥ ሰራተኛ ለውገድ የአደረሰው ወጣት ነው።

[illegible]

የኢትዮጵያ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ገገሥት የአርባ ጊዜ ልዩ ድርጅት የሙራት ሁኔታ አንገጫ
ሠራበት በጋሪዛ በረዱቀ በአናረገ ቀላ ደንደ ከየተርጎም በጋሪና ነገገር በአንድ ሠራት አ
ንድ ገዜ ለዚህ ነገር መፍትሔ መስጠን አንዲነገርረኝ በጤተባቸን ሰጦ ሆኜ ለመናፃፅ አቀርቦ
ልጋታለሁ። ሠከንድሎ በኛ ጋራላታ አውራጃ ገዛት ጦሰጥ የሚገኙ ከርሰኔያኖች የአጣርኛ
ደንደ ኖኖያት አፀወፈውና ነው። ይህን አሰናድቶ ያተረበላቸሁ ሠይድ ከሚገኝ ሺክ ስበን አ
ድርሻው በጋራላታ አውራጃ በበደና ወረዳ ገዛት ነው።

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የጋራላታ አውራጃ ከቡርታ በታች ኢትዮጵያ አገራችን ውስጥ ዉክልት ሚናረት በታች
በባለሃይማኖት የሌላው ሰላሳኝ አርባ በርባው በመጥያየም ላይ አዲስ ፍጥነት በዚህ በታች ህ
ይሆን በየጊዜው የበጋ ሀብት ለመዘረፍ የጥራት አገልግሎት በመስጠቱ በየጊዜው የጥላቻ ተካላ
በታችው በሀገሪቱ ይታያል ለዚህ ሁሉ መሆኑን በታች ይሆናል ብዬ የጥበብና የጥላቻ በተረፈ ቅዱስ
ተከላከል አባቶችን የሚሉ ።

15 / በጋዜ ጠላኝ ስሜናቸው በላይ ሰጣቸው በመሆን ውስጥ ስለጣደገኛና በመገንጠት ዘንድ ሁኔታቸው በጥሩ ስለሰላተባቸው በላይ ሰጣቸው መሆኑን ያሳያል።

25 / ራት በሱ ተለከቱ እየተሰባሰቡ በመገዝ ተጽኖ የራት ይዞታ ከፍላ ተረከበት ያው ራት ርስት ለሌላው ሕዝብ በርስትነት ተወጥቶ ከዚያ በኋላ በገር ውስጥ አገዳ ጥሩት በ ተደረገ ጊዜ ባለራት ሕዝብ አጥፊውን ሰው በተባበረ ተከታትሎ በቀርቦ ጊዜ ውስጥ ለመያዝ በ ሙሽል ያገሩን በጥታ በደህና ሁኔታ ያራዶደዋል ራትም ለም በመሆን ለመገንዘት ተገቢው ገብር በያሙ ተከናሎ ገቢ እየተደረገ ሕዝቡም በገብርናው ሥራ እሁላና የሰበሰቡትን ሀብት አገኝቶ ከ ሙሽኑም በላይ ተባበሮ በዚህ ዓይነት የወበን ድብረቶችን አገዳደረረ በጥበቃ የመጠቀሙ ሆኑ አያወራጥሮ ይህ ገብር አራሱ አገደው በጃ ወይም አገደከባድ መሆኑን ይኖጠል ወይም ይገጠ ወይም ሰው ጥሩ ሆኑንና አለሆኑን አገደ መሆኑን ሊሆን ይችላል ሰው ይታያል ። በሱ አገራችን ሙሽኩን ገብር ሁሉ ያሰጠዋል ። ስለዚህ እነዚህ በጥቅ ገብር ለመገንዘት መከራለን አገዳጭ ዘላንነታቸውን ትተው ሁኔታቸውን ለማሻሻልና ለማጥፋት በጥታ ጋር መረዳዳት ነው ።

ተጠቃሪ በጋራነት አውራጃ በበደና ወረዳ ገዛት በክፍለ ኦምስት ቀን ሥልጣን ስር የአገልግሎት ገቢዎች በገለልቶ ወረዳ ገዛት ከኩርያ ከተማ ከሌለ ጀመሮ ያለውን ግራት ተለከቱና ተጽኖ አገዳጅነት ለከቡር የጠቀሰው ገዛት ጸሐፊት ቤት አቅርቦ የግራት ጠቀሰላ ገቢ እና ሁኔታ ለማወቅ ከኩር የጠቀሰው ገዛት ጸሐፊት ቤት ለውራጃው ገዛት ለመጻፍ አስተሳሰብ ነበር ለዚህ ግራት ያውራጃው ገዛት ለወረዳው ገዛት ሂጋጉ በመጻፍ ስለሚሆን በገለልቶ ወረዳ ገዛት ያለውን ግራት ከ10.000 ጋሺ ግራት በላይ መሆኑን ገቢ የተሰጠውን ተጨማሪ ያለመናራገ በቅጥር 2 / 2279 / 7426 / 63 = ጋሺ 15 / 63 ዓ.መ ለከቡር ጠቀሰው ገዛት ጸሐፊት ቤት በተሟላ ስራ ገቢ :: ስለዚህ ይህን የግራት ነገር ታይቶ ጥሩ ሆኖ ከተገኘ ይህም ግራት በበባተኝ ቀን ለተለየ ለኪት ለአገልግሎት ለጀምሮ አገዳጅነት ጥበቃ ትዕዛዝ ለጠቀሰው ገዛት ወደ ልረር አገዳጅነት ለመጠየቅ ገቢ እና ሁኔታ አስገቢ ሲሆን ::

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Appendix-NO-6

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my work and that all sources of materials used for this dissertation have been dully acknowledged.

Name: Mohammed Hassen

Signature: 

Date of Submission: June 2016