ABSTRACT.

The development of trade in the Red Sea since the second decade of the 19th century brought about a similar development in the Ethiopian region. A growing volume of Ethiopia's main items of export, gold, musk, ivory, incenses and coffee reached the coast from the interior. However, it was especially the slave trade which flourished in consequence of the growing demand for Ethiopian slaves in the Muslim world. This trade was mainly geared to supply the harems of the Muslim world with young concubines and wives, who were in fact of Galla and Sidama origin. On the whole, the volume of the Ethiopian foreign trade was still insignificant considering the potentialities of the country.

The most important caravan route in Ethiopia was the one from the rich southwest through Gojam to Gondar and from there either to the Sudan or to Massawa. However, a new route opened by the Tajurans to Shoa in addition to the route leading to Berbera and Zeila by way of Harar, was growing in importance.

With the help of the Muslim caravan traders who nearly monopolised Ethiopia's trade the revived Islamic propagation since the beginning of the century achieved great successes among the Galla. In the southwest the ruling classes of the newly founded Galla monarchies adopted Islam. In the north,
Islamised Galla tribes were making their last bid for supremacy in Ethiopia, while the Amhara ruling class was nearly oblivious to the dangers it faced. However, in Shoa with the help of firearms acquired by the Christian Amhara, the rulers were able to reconquer from Muslim dynasties or Galla tribes large areas of historical Shoa. Under the rule of Sahle Sellassie, Shoa became one of the most important political and economical centres in the Ethiopian highlands. One tends to believe that Sahle Sellassie in fact paved the way for his grandson Menelik.
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On the advice of my supervisor, Prof R. Oliver, I decided to look at the possibilities of writing a thesis on the slave trade in the hinterland of the Banadir-Somali coast. After studying the available material relevant to the above area I came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to write on such a topic. However, through the material which came into my hands I became interested in the Ethiopian trade-routes leading towards this area. I found to my surprise that the history of Ethiopia until the late 1880's was little known and that the rich and interesting source material regarding this area was hardly tapped. In fact I did not find any contemporary historical and economical study which covered the area in the first three quarters of the century. (Some general historical works devoted a few pages to this period.) Thus I decided to concentrate my efforts on Ethiopia. At first I intended to write on the slave trade from southern Ethiopia and the kingdom of Shoa under Menelik in the third quarter of the century, using the material on the slave trade in the second quarter of the century as an introduction. However, already in the early stages of my work I realized that it was next to impossible to disconnect the slave trade from the general foreign trade of the area, of which the slave trade was an
integral part. Moreover, the more material I saw, the more convinced I became that it was essential to connect the development of the economy and especially of the trade with the political developments in the region. When after six months I came upon the rich source of material on the Afar and Somali coast and on Shoa since the late 1830's which exists in the India Office archives, it became apparent to me that the part which I considered at first to be just the introduction to my thesis was so interesting, so rich in source material and yet so completely unknown that it might stand by itself as a topic for a thesis. In consequence I decided to limit my study to the second quarter of the 19th century, taking as my forward limit the rise of Theodros and the fall of the Shoan kingdom.

Without doubt the greatest and most important contribution to my knowledge regarding the Tajura trade route and the trade of Shoa came from the extensive information supplied by members of the Harris Mission which I found in the Bombay Secret Proceedings of the India Office archives. Nevertheless, a great gap remained in my knowledge of the trade of this area as a result of the fact that not even one European went to Shoa in the period I was interested in by way of the old established route of Harar or by the less important route through Aussa. Thus most
of my information concerning Harar and Aussa in the second quarter of the century was either not primary or was from the late 1870's and 1880's. To some degree this gap was closed when Prof. I.M. Lewis brought to my knowledge that an Arabic Ms. concerning Harar in the period I covered had been photographed and was included in a publication of the Ethnographical Society of the University College of Addis Ababa (Yusuf Ahmed Ms). Although I found this Ms. to be short, incomplete and in some cases not relevant to my essay, there is little doubt that it helped me to clarify the picture regarding the trade of Shoa by the Harar route. It further helped me to get a clearer picture of Harar, which was one of the most important commercial centres in the Ethiopian region. I am thus indebted to Prof. Lewis and to Mr. Yusuf Ahmed. The latter was good enough to discuss with me the contents of the Ms. when we met in Ethiopia. I am also indebted to Mr. George Savard of the Sociology department, U.C.A.A., Ethiopia for introducing me to Fitaurari Yayo, who proved to be an important oral source regarding the history of Aussa.

At first I did not intend to cover the Ethiopian foreign trade which passed by the route from the southwest to northern Ethiopia, to the Sudan and to Massawa. However, while working on material concerned with Shoa, it was
impossible to avoid a study of the sources of the Ethiopian foreign trade in the southern and southwestern provinces of the country. While working on this material the name of the French explorer-traveller, Antoine d'Abbadie, continually cropped up. I was greatly disappointed when I found that this celebrated traveller, who spent many years in Ethiopia in the period I was writing about, produced only a number of short articles in several geographical and other publications in addition to two books of little importance to my work - he was mainly concerned with geographical discovery and not with the trade and politics of the area. While in Paris I was fortunate to meet M. Glenison of the "Ecole des Hautes Etudes", who, besides introducing me to the different archives, brought to my knowledge the existance of the "d'Abbadie papers" in the Bibliotheque Nationale. There is little doubt that this was a turning point in my work as new horizons were opened before me when I started to go through d'Abbadie's papers. The importance of Enarea as the foremost trading centre in southwestern Ethiopia emerged very clearly from d'Abbadie's notes. Moreover, I was now able to understand the intricate relations and the political and social system which existed in southwestern Ethiopia and which had a great bearing on the economy of Ethiopia as a whole. Most important of all, I became completely
convinced that it would be folly to deal only with the economy and politics of one part of the Ethiopian region, when the politics and commercial relations of the main parts of the highlands were so interwoven that, unless the whole situation was dealt with, the picture was unclear and incomplete. Thus about a year after starting to work on my thesis my final topic started to crystalize. With the rich source material obtained from the d'Abbadie papers regarding southwestern Ethiopia, northern Ethiopia and the coast, I was now able to cover the most important avenues of the foreign and internal trade in the Ethiopian region. Moreover, I could now get a satisfactory, even if far from complete, picture of the "Abyssinia slave trade" and of Ethiopian society and politics in the most important centres of the Ethiopian region between the years 1830 and 1855.

The year 1830 was not chosen as a starting point for my thesis because it was a milestone in Ethiopian history. In fact I would have liked to start in the late 18th century, on the eve of the great changes which occurred in the whole area of the Red Sea. However, it was the available source material which dictated to me the early limits of my research and 1830 was chosen only because of the continuous flow of European missionaries, travellers and political agents who came into the highlands from this year on, and whose books,
journals and reports made it possible to form a somewhat coherent picture of trade and politics in the Ethiopian region. I would like to think that the picture obtained from my different sources also reflects the conditions which existed all over the highlands since the end of the second decade of the century.

The meteoric rise of Theodros to power in the early 1850's no doubt signified the end of a period in Ethiopian history. It was the beginning of a new united Ethiopia, of a new approach to the expansion of Islam, of a new attitude towards Europe and of the beginning of the end of slave trade in Ethiopia. Great changes occurred in the highlands in the course of a few years and thus my essay, covering the traditional Ethiopia of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century ends with the rise of Theodros.

The source material I have used could be classified into three categories. The first is the official archivial material, British and French, to which I think we might add the Yusuf Ahmed Ms., which is in fact an official document concerning the revenue and expenditure of different amirs of Harar. The second class is made up of manuscripts, books and articles written by different classes of people who visited Ethiopia in the period preceding, during and immediately following the period we are covering. Considering the scarcity of source material regarding south and
southwestern Ethiopia, I think that one ought to include in this class the books of all the travellers who visited the above mentioned area up to the time of its conquest by Menelik. The third category of my sources is made up of historical and sociological works of early and contemporary authors whose work has some relevance to our topic, even if in most cases they are far from being primary source material.

The British and French sources of the first category are actually complementary to each other. While the British material is primarily concerned with the Somali and Afar coast, and in the time of the Harris Mission with Shoa as well, the French material is far more detailed regarding Massawa and northern Ethiopia, which were visited by a number of French official Missions from the 1830's on. One must point out that both French and British material contain primary as well as secondary information the reliability of which depends to a great extent on the source or on the personality and qualification of the government agent, traveller or missionary who is reporting to his respective government. For instance, in some cases I felt that the voluminous reports by a questionable character like that of Lefebvre, should be accepted only with the greatest of caution, although he was a representative of the French government. On the other hand I had many doubts regarding Harris, who,
without mentioning his sources, based his reports and his book on the work of others. No doubt much of the information supplied by Harris could be considered plagiarism. The Harris Slave Report, part of which was of tremendous importance to my essay, was in fact copied nearly word for word, without any acknowledgement, from the report by Dr. C.T. Beke published in "The Friend of Africa" Vol. I. Harris continually reported on areas and events which he did not see and in which he took no part. What is very disturbing is the fact that Harris hardly examined the information he copied, and although his sources were generally trustworthy they were not always the best source of accurate information (as was the case with the missionary Krapf). Furthermore, at least in some cases, one suspects that the Harris reports and book are actually tailored to suit the taste of the people who he knew would read them. There is little doubt that occasionally Harris was not the dispassionate bystander who just reported on events as they were. Nevertheless, one has to admit that the information supplied by Harris and his comrades is of the utmost importance to the knowledge we have about southern Ethiopia, and above all about Shoa and the Afar country in the second quarter of the 19th century. It is, however, unfortunate that the bulk of the British material regarding Shoa, the Afar and southern
Ethiopia covers only the period of the Harris Mission. Excluding material arising from this mission and the reports of Consul Plowden on Massawa and northern Ethiopia from 1847 on, the British had usually to depend on doubtful information on the interior supplied occasionally to the British authorities in Aden by questionable people coming from the highlands. It is to be especially regretted that our knowledge regarding Shoa ends when the Harris Mission returned to the coast and nothing is known of the crucial times in Shoa after the death of Sahle Sellassie in 1846. On the other hand at least the coastal areas were well covered throughout the period we are interested in by British naval commanders who occasionally visited the Afar and Somali coast. However, most of those officers were surprisingly ignorant about the areas which they visited, and especially regarding the interior.

In France I have worked in a few ministerial archives. Naturally the most important for my work was the archive of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in which I think the "Commercial (et Consulair)" class is just as important as the "Mémoires et Documents". In the "Mémoires et Documents" section I would like to point out the most interesting reports of Combes on the Afar and Somali coast from the early 1840's, which in a way complements his and Tamisier's
book on the highlands of Ethiopia in the mid 1830's. Even more important in this class is a long report (in fact an Ms.) by Rochet d'Héricourt covering northern Ethiopia between 1847 and 1849. This report has contributed greatly to my knowledge of trade and society in the area in a period which was only sparsely covered by my other sources. Rochet d'Héricourt came to northern Ethiopia after spending some years in Shoa, and even if he has a tendency to exaggeration in his two published books on the above mentioned kingdom, one tends to believe that he has much benefited from his past experience when writing his third book which was never published. Finally, I would like to mention the reports of M. Degoutin, the French Consul at Massawa "Commercial (et Consulair)", who was reporting regularly to his government from the time of the establishment of the French Consulate in Massawa in 1841. Degoutin's reports are a mine of information regarding the trade of Massawa and of Ethiopia as a whole. However, one has the feeling that if a more able man had been stationed in Massawa, the reports would have been even more interesting, informative and accurate.

There is little doubt that Antoine d'Abbadie stands as a giant among all our informants, whether travellers, missionaries or government agents. It is, of course, of the utmost importance that his information covers large parts
of the Ethiopian region over most of the period I was interested in. As to his reliability, one must keep in mind that one part of d'Abbadie papers are notes taken of oral information which he received all over the region while the other part consists of his own observations and impressions of the areas he visited. True enough, the oral information came from people of different degrees of reliability, but d'Abbadie himself remarks from time to time on how far the informants could be trusted. As for d'Abbadie himself, I tend to accept him as a most reliable source. d'Abbadie was hardly interested in the economy, politics and society he found in the different parts of Ethiopia which he had visited. He was mainly after geographical discovery and information. The information which is so important to us was to him completely incidental. For instance, he would mention that a certain merchant with a certain background from a certain place visited another place in which he found certain conditions and who informed him about certain geographical facts. This information was scribbled down by d'Abbadie for his own use during his itineraries, many a time in a very imperfect manner. Those notes, often revised and rewritten, bear the stamp of authenticity. When it comes to d'Abbadie's own experiences and impressions it should be remembered that d'Abbadie was not influenced by political
or other factors as might have been the case with government agents. Thus one may assume that he tried to report exactly what he had seen as well as what he had heard in the most accurate and scholarly manner. However, whether one accepts d'Abbadie's authenticity or not, the fact remains that d'Abbadie was the first European in modern times to visit southwestern Ethiopia just one generation after great changes took place in the area. The sketchy, emotional, pompous and sometimes confused writing of Massaia, who reached the area about ten years after d'Abbadie is just the opposite of the d'Abbadie material and should be treated with great care by the historian.

One cannot overlook the great contribution of Dr. C.T. Beke to our knowledge of Shoa, southwestern Ethiopia and the trade of Ethiopia as a whole. Although he never wrote a book on the topic, his short pamphlets and articles are the nearest thing I found to a general work covering the subject I have taken upon myself. In his lifetime, Dr. Beke, a strange and quarrelsome personality, was much discredited. However, when studying his writings and comparing them to the results of my own research and to my conclusions, I cannot help but admire Beke's precise and meticulous information in the limited number of pages of his different articles.
Finally, I would like to mention the importance of the books written by people like Combes et Tamisier, Ferret et Galinier, Harris, Rochet d'Héricourt, Krapf, Johnston and Cecchi, each in his special area. The last, although he visited Shoa and southwestern Ethiopia in the late 1870's and early 1880's is no doubt the most accurate among our Italian informants and has contributed very much to our knowledge of Shoa and above all of southwestern Ethiopia. In a way Cecchi completed for me the picture of southwestern Ethiopia provided in general lines by d'Abbadie. However, one must keep continuously in mind that Cecchi visited Ethiopia in the beginning of the fourth quarter of the century while this essay is mainly concerned with Ethiopia in the second quarter of the 19th century.

To close my summary of the source material I have used, I would like to point out the importance of the many articles which were published by travellers, missionaries and government agents in the different geographical journals, in church and missionary publications and in official publications. Thus, for instance, Krapf and Isenberg, who visited northern Ethiopia before entering Shoa, hardly mention this visit in their books. However, their reports to the Church Missionary Society while visiting northern Ethiopia were published in the Church Missionary Record.
Assistant surgeon, R. Kirk, who was in 1841 only a junior member of the Harris Mission, did not have the honour of reporting to the Bombay government as did his superiors. However, he managed to publish his very interesting description of the route between Tajura and Shoa in the Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society.

Although I have tried to give in this essay as complete a picture as I could of trade and politics in the Ethiopian region in the first half of the 19th century, I must confess that I fully realise that the picture is far from perfect. The material I have covered is far from exhausted. The problem of the rise of Shoa in the first half of the century could serve by itself as a topic for a thesis. The interesting trade routes from Ethiopia to the Sudan and the Benadir coast were not covered at all and no doubt the history of the Galla kingdoms of the Gibe and of Kaffa is still nearly unknown. The political situation in northern Ethiopia has been only touched upon, while the relations between Ethiopia and the growing empire of Muhammed Ali and his successors, could serve as a topic for a number of research projects. It is my hope, however, that at least in a small way I have contributed something to fill the gap in the knowledge of the history of Ethiopia in
the first half of the 19th century which is to my surprise hardly known even in Ethiopia.

May I take the opportunity to thank my supervisor, Prof. R. Oliver, who not only encouraged me throughout my work but who was willing to edit my very poor English.
INTRODUCTION

Even after the Portuguese became the virtual masters of the Indian Ocean in the 16th century, some of the trade of India and the Far East continued to reach the Red Sea. In the 17th century and in the first half of the 18th this trade of the Red Sea was of such a size that it was of great importance both to India and to the Ottoman Empire. The port of Jidda and to a lesser degree the port of Mokha were the centre of the trade with the Indian Ocean. From Jidda large quantities of Indian products and coffee from the Yemen were reshipped to Egypt or through Egypt to Europe and to Turkey. Caravans carried some of the merchandise to Syria, to Iraq and even to Persia, while boats from Mokha and Jidda supplied the Ethiopian coast with small quantities of Indian and European products. Although this

trade was largely transit trade, a sizable part of the produce of India, Java, Sumatra and China reaching the Red Sea was actually destined for the permanent inhabitants of Arabia and for the many pilgrims who came to the Hijaz from all the corners of the Muslim world. The Haj, was not only an occasion for a religious devotion but also one of the main commercial events in the Ottoman Empire 1). In the fair of Jidda traders from the Maghreb, Egypt, Ethiopia and Somalia met their counterparts from Turkey, Persia, India and Indonesia. Moreover, many of the pilgrims brought with them small quantities of merchandise, which they either sold in Jidda or exchanged for the produce of other countries 2).

The Ethiopian trade was during the 18th century a minor branch of the Red Sea trade. A report on the trade of Arabia and Persia from 1790 says the following about the trade of the Ethiopian coast: "The inhabitants of that region are little acquainted with the articles of luxury with which India abounds...they have few wants beyond those which the

produce of their sterile country can satisfy - A few coarse Surat and Porto Novo goods, are however annually sold to the people belonging to that port of the western shore of the Red Sea which lies immediately opposite to Mocha, who pay occasional visits to that place carrying thither supplies of Abyssinian sheep, and as a communication is kept up by boats between Judda and Cossair it is to be supposed that a quantity of similar goods find their way to that place and its vicinity" 1). In fact Mokha and Jidda supplied Ethiopia, mainly through Berbera, Zeila and Massawa, with Indian cloth of different kinds and qualities (above all blue Surat cotton), unspun cotton, Hebron and Italian beads, glassware, Cokhol, copper, brass, tin, other metals and metal products, a limited number of matchlocks, powder and other products of India and Europe. In exchange for the imported goods Ethiopia was exporting some gold, ivory, musk, skins, small quantities of coffee and agricultural products and slaves 2).

The musk and the agricultural products exported from Ethiopia were consumed in Arabia. The slaves were exported to Egypt, the Yemeni coast and above all to the Hijaz. Ethiopian slaves were highly in demand in the Muslim world. The males were esteemed for their courage, honesty and loyalty. Many rulers, sheikhs and rich merchants employed Ethiopian slaves as their bodyguards, trusted servants and treasurers and some slaves reached a very high position. However the demand was above all for young Ethiopian females who became concubines and wives. "Many Mekkawys have no other than Abyssinian wives, finding the Arabians more expensive, and less disposed to yield to the will of the husband. The same practice is adopted by many foreigners, who reside in the Hedjaz for a short time".

By the beginning of the 19th century, as a result of the constant inflow of Abyssinian blood, there were very few

Arabs in the towns of the Hijaz who did not have some Ethiopian blood in their veins 1).

Besides the slaves sold to Arabia, large numbers of Ethiopian slaves were taken each year by pilgrims returning to their own countries, and thus there was a steady demand for the few hundred slaves exported annually from Massawa, Zeila and Berbera 2).

Nearly all the gold and ivory exported from Ethiopia found its way to India 3). Nevertheless, although Indian traders acquired large quantities of coffee at Mokha, Arabia had a very unfavourable balance of trade with India. Each year millions of Rupees were taken in specie from Arabia to Bombay, Surat, Calcutta, Mangalor and to


2) According to Bruce (Vol. III. p. 91) about 500 slaves were exported annually through Massawa, probably about the same number was exported from the southern ports.

the Far East 1). Thus the Ottoman Empire was constantly drained of coin and in the second half of the 18th century, a period of economic decline of the Empire. This situation naturally resulted in a slow decline of the volume of the Red Sea trade.

As a result of the continuous weakening of the Ottoman Empire throughout the 18th century law and order all over the Middle East were at the lowest ebb. In the last quarter of the century the Beduins became the true masters of the roads and the highways. The Haj caravans steadily declined, as pilgrims and merchants were not ready to risk their lives and property in making the long journey to the Hijaz 2). In Egypt the continuously unstable political situation brought ruin upon trade. In the last decades of the century the quarrelling Mameluk Beys tried to supplement their income by imposing tolls and taxes on trade and by exacting forced loans from merchants which they never intended to repay. Foreign merchants avoided Egypt and trade came nearly to a standstill 3). The hold of the


Ottoman Empire on the Ethiopian coast in this period became even weaker than it used to be in the past. The Naib of Arkiko, who for some time represented the Pasha of Jidda at Massawa was the actual ruler of this port and he did not pay any tribute to his so-called master. In addition to the Naib's rapacity, the Ethiopian trade was also suffering from the continuous struggle for power in Northern Ethiopia. The Yemeni coast was badly hit by conditions in the Red Sea and all over the Ottoman Empire, and the famous Mokha coffee did not have such a ready market as it used to in the past. The local rulers tried to augment their dwindling income by oppressing the merchants and by acts of sheer robbery. The immediate result of such acts was a threat by British vessels to bombard the town, and a further fall in its trade. The death blow to the trade of the Red Sea was given at the end of the century by the rise of the Wahabis and by the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon. For a time, the Haj came to a complete stop.

2) See below P.14.
stop, and in the Arabian Peninsula Wahabi raids caused great damage to whatever was left of the trade in Indian goods and coffee \(^1\). Foreign merchants who were continuously pillaged in the coastal towns did not even disembark when visiting the Yemeni coast \(^2\). Moreover, as a result of the long war between the British and the French, British-Indian boats fell a prey to French privateers while French boats could not take part in the coffee trade of Mokha \(^3\). It was only natural that with the complete stagnation of the Red Sea trade, Ethiopian trade through Massawa diminished to a trickle and whatever trade still going through Zeila and Berbera was nearly stopped by the appearance of Wahabi pirates along the southern coast of Arabia and in the Gulf of Aden in the first two decades of the 19th century \(^4\).

In 1811 Mohammed Ali, the Pasha of Egypt embarked upon the reconquest of the Hijaz. Within a few years he succeeded in subduing most of the Western coast of the Red Sea and

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extending Egyptian rule to Sawakin and Massawa as well. Thus most of the Red Sea coast was united under the centralised government of Egypt and for the first time in centuries the area enjoyed a relative security and stability. Furthermore, the Red Sea was opened to direct European trade through Egypt and European merchants and travellers enjoyed immunity and respect. The balanced economy of Egypt under Mohammed Ali had a direct influence on the economy of the Red Sea. The expenditure of the Egyptian government in Arabia by far surpassed the revenues from taxation, and the soldiers of the large Egyptian garrison spent most of their salaries (when they received them) on local products and services. The coffee trade was revived, and large quantities of coffee were sent through Jidda to Egypt and to Europe, while American boats arriving at Mokha took a sizable quantity of coffee to the United States.

With the reestablishment of Ottoman rule in the Hijaz, the mild unfanatical government in the holy places, the relative order and security in the area under Mohammed Ali and the growing safety on the sea and land routes, the

Haj not only recovered its past dimensions but by far surpassed them. Tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the Muslim world were annually visiting Mecca and Medina. The fair of Jidda was renewed, and many merchants came to the Hijaz from Turkey, Albania, Iraq, Persia, Egypt, the Maghreb, India and Indonesia and other places.

Within a few years of Mohammed Ali's invasion of Arabia the results of the economic revival and of the great development in trade were felt all over the Red Sea area and especially in the Hijaz. By the beginning of the 1830's this economic revival had reached its peak, and foreign traders were flooding the area with the products of their countries, mainly cloths of different qualities,


cheap industrial products, beads of different sizes and colours, metals, cheap metal products and firearms). Jidda became the entrepot for the trade between Europe and the Indian Ocean, and the seat of merchants having a capital amounting to hundreds of thousands of tallers. Arab boats from the northern parts of the Red Sea carried European products to Zanzibar while large ships from Jidda and Mokha regularly traded with India and the Persian Gulf.

The revival in the trade of the Red Sea was soon felt in Ethiopia. The ports on the Ethiopian coast were bursting with cheap foreign products offered at the most reasonable terms, while the demand for Ethiopian luxury-goods was growing by leaps and bounds. As in the past, Ethiopia's exports were composed mainly of items brought by caravans from the western and southwestern provinces - musk, incenses, spices, ivory, gold, rare skins and slaves. The demand

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for Ethiopian slaves in the Hijaz and in other Muslim countries was now insatiable. The growing number of pilgrims to the holy places bought an increased number of Ethiopian slaves and especially young girls. Moreover, Muscat merchants who had been actively involved in the Red Sea trade since the end of the 18th century, were mainly interested in slaves. Finally one must remember that by this time the Caucasus, which in the past had served as the main source of concubines for the harems of the Ottoman Empire, was now in Russian hands and very few slaves were reaching Turkey and the middle East from this direction. The gap was now filled with Ethiopian girls who were the most esteemed and the most valued, after those from Europe and thus the demand for the so called "Abyssinian slaves" was still further intensified.

Further stimuli to the development of Ethiopia's trade since the second decade of the 19th century were the


4) Usually of Galla and Sidama origin.
stabilisation and reorganisation of the government of Massawa and its surrounding district under Mohammed Ali, and the opening of a trade route from Tajura to the expanding kingdom of Shoa.  1) This new route served the trade of southwestern Ethiopia, now passing through Shoa, and complemented the old degenerating route through Harar. Thus the growing trade of Ethiopia in the first half of the 19th century reached the sea by two main avenues 2). The old customary route from the south and southwest to Gojam, Gondar, Adowa and Massawa, and the revived route from south and southeastern Ethiopia through Shoa to Tajura or to the Somali coast.

1) See below pp. 157-177.

2) Owing to lack of evidence, it has not been possible to deal either with the important outlet through Sennar and Khartum or with the less important outlet through the Webi Shebeli and the Banadir coast.
NORTHERN ETHIOPIA 1) AND MASSAWA

In the second half of the 18th century the Imperial power and authority in Ethiopia was already at a low ebb. When Bruce visited Ethiopia between 1769 and 1772 the real ruler of Gondar was Ras Michael Sehul of Tigre and the governors of the different provinces were able to strengthen their authority and were the real masters of northern Ethiopia and Gojam. After the fall of Ras Michael, the guardianship of the Emperor passed into the hands of a family of Yeju Galla chiefs. Although professing Christianity they derived their power mainly from their Muslim Galla brothers, who by this time penetrated deeply into Begamder and were the real masters of this important province 2). From the late 18th century nearly to the third decade of the 19th, the continuous struggle between the "converted" Galla nobility of Begamder and Gondar and the traditional Tigrean and Amhara Christian aristocracy led by Ras Guksa, the guardian of the puppet Emperor on the one side and by

1) For convenience sake we take the term "Northern Ethiopia" to mean all the provinces north of Shoa including Wollo, Lasta, Tigre, Begamder, Amhara (Gondar) and even Gojam.

Ras Walde Sellassie of Tigre, who cooperated from time to time with the ruler of Shoa, on the other side ¹). In 1831 Dejazmatch Sabagadis, who ruled Tigre in the 1820's ²) was defeated by coalition made of the ruler of Gojam, the Galla chiefs of Begamder and Ras Wubi (Ubi) of Somen. The head of the Galla forces, Ras Marea was killed in battle but Sabagadis captured by Wubi was immediately put to death. With the death of Sabagadis three major units crystallised in north and northwestern Ethiopia. Tigre and Semen under the overlordship of Ras Wubi, Begamder and the Amhara under Ras Ali II, nephew of Ras Marea, who became also the guardianship of the puppet Emperor and the provinces of Gojam and Damot under the overlordship of Ras Gushu. Besides the three main units, a great number of smaller units existed as well ³). The lords of those units usually attached themselves to Wubi, Ras Ali or Gushu, but loyalties and coalitions were very flexible, relationships very fluid and wars between the great lords or among some of their followers


²) Sabagadis was from Agame. Came to power in Tigre in 1818 - encouraged trade.

were continuous 1). While Wubi was seeking help and firearms from abroad 2) Ras Ali was fortifying his position by stronger alliances with the Muslim and Galla elements 3). Gushu, who was constantly involved in wars with the Galla south of the Abey, with the Shankalla to the west had nevertheless aspirations to the guardianship of the Emperor and was involved from time to time in wars with Ras Ali as well 4). It is thus clear that throughout the first half of the 19th century the situation in all the northern provinces was very unstable. The continuous wars and instability caused the depopulation of some provinces and agriculture was ruined 5). Trade, which depends to a large extent on peace and security, greatly suffered, and industry and craft were non-existent.


Trade in Ethiopia in the first half of the 19th century went hand in hand with slavery and with the spread of Islam. In the Middle East the ruling Islamic society had looked for many centuries with contempt and scorn on trade and traders. As a result, trade passed into the hands of levantine Christians and Jews, who were excluded from the army, the administration and other fields of government. This process was accelerated by the fact that European traders preferred to deal with their co-religionists and have them as their representatives and brokers. In Ethiopia, this process was reversed. The ruling Amhara Christian society composed of lords, priests, soldiers and agriculturalists had looked down for many generations on commercial activities. Moreover, the Muslim authorities on the coast of the Red Sea and the Muslim traders from Arabia, Somalia and Egypt preferred to deal with, and favoured, Muslim-Ethiopian merchants 1). Even if this situation had not existed, the Ethiopian Christian was always at a disadvantage when competing with the Muslims.

Ethiopia's main items of export - gold, ivory, musk and

slaves - came mainly from the southwestern provinces and were forwarded to the coast by means of trading caravans which came from the interior. The waste of time, and the expense, not to speak of the dangers, incurred by the long range traders was immense \(^1\), but once the journey was performed the profit was handsome. Slavery was always a recognised factor in Ethiopian society \(^2\). Nevertheless, the Ethiopian ecclesiastical as well as civil law forbade the Christian Ethiopian to trade in slaves \(^3\). The Muslim on the other hand was free to indulge in this trade and he could thus easily compete with his Christian rival. The difficult task of exchanging wares in the remote markets of the interior was always easier for the Muslim trader. As a result of the continuous wars in the southwest a great number of slaves were available in all the markets, whereas this was not so with gold, musk, and ivory. The Muslim could

\(^1\) Some caravans spent from one to three years until they returned to the coast. Confidential print, Abyssinian Correspondence 1846–1868, Enclosure in No. 12, Plowden 20.8.1847; Athenaeum. No. 1105, from 1848, Abbadie; Combes et Tamisier. M.: Voyage en Abyssinie, Paris 1838. Vol. IV. p. 99.


\(^3\) The penalty was sometimes death; Combes. Vol. IV. pp. 145, 147–148; Dufton Henry: Narrative of a Journey through Abyssinia in 1862–3, London 1867, p. 142; M. & D. Vol. 61. p. 188.
always outbid a Christian when lucrative commodities were available because his expenses were already covered by his slave dealings. If at anytime Christian merchants had taken an active part in the long range caravan trade and the export trade of Ethiopia, they had usually either adopted Islam under pressure of circumstances ¹), or had been gradually excluded from trade as a result of their inability to compete with their Muslim rivals. There is little doubt that in the second quarter of the 19th century most of Ethiopia's long range caravan trade and foreign trade was in the hands of the Jabartis ²) of the highlands and of the Muslim merchants of the Ethiopian coast. Their caravans served as a vehicle by which the principles of Islam and Muslim ulama from Arabia reached the remotest corners in the highlands. Moreover while Muslim trading centres flourished all over northern Ethiopia and the rich Greek-Armenian merchant community of Adowa ³) lost much of its important. The customs farming of the province of Tigre, which in the past had been in the hands of Greek merchants ⁴),

2) Ethiopian Muslims
passed in the first decades of the 19th century into the hands of Muslims 1). Greek-Armenian merchants are hardly mentioned by the different sources in the second quarter of the century 2). It is probably as a result of these developments that the importance of Adowa as a trading centre for Ethiopia had somewhat declined by the second quarter of the 19th century 3). But one must also keep in mind that Adowa greatly suffered from the continuous civil wars in the north 4). Nevertheless, Adowa still preserved its importance as a crossroad of the caravan routes and the key point on the route to the coast. Caravans were still organised in Adowa to go to Massawa and merchants from Adowa were still active in the trade of the southwest. However, Adowa lost its predominance in the caravan trade, and the foreign trade and the centre of this trade passed to the town of Gondar and to the little Muslim town of

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Derita in the province of Begamder 1).

Travellers and missionaries who visited Ethiopia from the 1830's onwards encountered some Ethiopian Christian merchants 2). Nearly all the travellers mention the Christian merchant Kidana Mariam as being one of the richest, if not the richest merchant in Ethiopia 3). Reports from British naval commanders visiting Massawa in the late 1830's and early 1840's mention not only Christian merchants (Ethiopian), but Christian caravans as well 4).

By far the most interesting information is supplied by Antoine d'Abbadie, who travelled extensively in Ethiopia in the late 1830's and in the 1840's. d'Abbadie met many Christian Ethiopian merchants in Massawa, Adowa, Gondar and Gojam. Offhand, he mentions in his journals, that 2 out of the 3 Negad Rases (chiefs of caravans) of Gondar were Christians. He met important Christian caravans in Massawa,

1) See below pp. 86-87.

2) Gobat Journal. p. 361. When speaking of the Muslims Gobat wrote in his journals "They generally engage much more in trade than the Christians".


Arkike and on the way to Gondar \(^1\). He claims that the big Christian caravans were called Mausem \(^2\) and he actually met such a caravan at Dobarok \(^3\) "Ya Mausem Nagade", which he describes as the largest caravan traversing Ethiopia \(^4\). This caravan was composed of 21 merchants travelling with their servants and porters. Only a few of the merchants were Muslims and the great majority were Ethiopian Christians \(^5\). The porters and 150 mules belonging to the merchants carried 233 "loads" of ivory worth about 27,630 tallers, the same number of "loads" of coffee \(^6\) worth about 1,864 tallers, 30 horns of musk worth 2,800-3,000 tallers, 1,000-2,000 tallers worth of hides, 1,400 tallers worth of Toges \(^7\), 8,594 tallers worth of gold, some other less important items and 150 slaves, probably belonging to the Muslim merchants, at 35 tallers per slave were worth about 5000 tallers. When one keeps in mind that the volume of trade of Massawa, one of

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\(^2\) Abbadie 21300. p. 347.

\(^3\) On the borders of Semen towards Gondar.

\(^4\) Abbadie 21300. pp. 384-385. 23.7.1843.

\(^5\) From their names it is quite clear that they were not Greeks.

\(^6\) Usually placed on the back of the mule under the ivory.

\(^7\) Probably Shamas, the Ethiopian dress.
Ethiopia's two main outlets, was about half a million tallers annually 1), one can appreciate the significance of the "Ya Mausem Nagade" caravan and the growing importance of the Christian traders. Moreover, at Basso in Gojam, the most important market in Ethiopia, d'Abbadie was told by a customs official 2) that each market day, 70 amoleh 3) were collected on Christian Merchants donkeys while 100 were collected from Muslim merchants beast of burden.

It appears that an important change had taken place in Ethiopia's commerce in the second quarter of the 19th century. The importance of the Greek-Armenian merchant community had declined, and a class of important Ethiopia-Christian merchants had emerged. The decline of the Greek merchant community was probably the result of the competition from the many Muslim merchants of the highlands and the coast. The emergence of an Ethiopian Christian merchant class is partially explained by one of d'Abbadie's informants, a well travelled merchant called Hages, who told d'Abbadie 4) in 1839 that not many years had passed since Ethiopian Christians abhorred trading. The Christian

1) See below pages 85-86.
merchants owed their initial capital to the priests and the monks, especially the great Kidana Mariam. Christian trade, according to Hagos, was developed owing to the urge to multiply the capital borrowed from the church. Hagos's words might explain the change of attitude towards trade as well as the source of the initial capital of some of the Christian merchants. However, Hagos does not explain how Christian traders succeeded in overcoming the drawbacks which we have mentioned before 1). One tends to think that the solution to this is to be found in the establishment of the Galla monarchies of the Gibe 2) and the emergence of the class of Galla traders called Afkala in the second quarter of the century 3). The capital of the Afkala merchants was too small to undertake long voyages towards the sea and their trade was based on a quick turnover. Thus they either sold their goods to their counterparts in the next trading centre and those in turn, reached the Amhara provinces, or they formed an Afkala caravan which travelled quickly all the way to Basso in Gojam, to Shoa and very rarely even to Gondar. The Christian merchants of the north,

1) See above pages 17-19.
2) See below chapter on Enarea and southwestern Ethiopia.
3) See below pages 120-121.
who in the past had not been able to compete with the Muslims, had now the agents or middlemen, who brought the lucrative wares of the southwest to their doorstep at a reasonable price. Moreover, the price was usually paid in Indian or European merchandise, on which the Christian merchant had a substantial profit. On the whole it is probable that the Christian merchant made a smaller profit than the Muslim who went himself to the southwest. However, he was saved from loss of time and the many dangers which the Muslim-Ethiopian merchant had to face. The Galla and the Christian merchants complemented each other. The first was in his element in southwestern Ethiopia, but he disliked to stay too long away from his country and he did not have the necessary capital and connections for the long range caravan trade. The northern Christian on the other hand, had the capital and connections, but could not compete with the Muslim rivals at the sources of the trade. Basso market in Gojam, Roggi in southwestern Shea and a few other important markets on the borders between the Galla and

1) Omar Baduri from Arkiko reached Jiren (Jimma) with 20 mules loaded with merchandise worth in Gondar about 1,000 tallers and in Enarea 26,000 amoleh. He was obliged to stay for two years in Jiren and keep servants in the markets of Gombota (Guma) and Sakka (Enarea) in order to dispose of his merchandise and buy the products of the southwest. Athenaeum. No. 1105, from 1848, Abbadie. In 1848 Baduri's house was burned. Abbadie 21300. pp. 798-799. According to Ibsa. April 1848.
Amhara provinces, throve owing to the fact that they served as meeting point between the Galla and the northern traders 1).

Internal trade in Ethiopia was carried in weekly markets scattered all over the country near every important village or town. To these markets came the inhabitants of each district in order to sell their surpluses and to buy the little they needed. The markets took place in an open flat field not very far from the village or the town. All the peasants of the neighbouring areas visited the market not only to exchange their surpluses for the little they needed, but above all to meet their neighbours, hear the latest news, listen to whatever announcements the governor cared to make and to inspect the animals and agricultural products offered by other farmers. In short, the markets were an institution which fulfilled an important economic, social and political function 2). Moreover, the markets were a significant source of income for each governor or

chief, as taxes were levied on all products displayed for sale. These markets were visited by merchants coming in caravans small or large, according to the importance of the market. Some of the merchants prolonged their trips to cover several important markets. Only a few, the most daring entrepreneurs, went to the markets at the limits of the routes, always striving to reach the sources of the trade.

Trade in Ethiopia's markets was usually carried by barter. The Maria Theresa taller called in Ethiopia "Bir" was known among the traders all over the Ethiopian highlands, but was accepted only in the more important trading centres. "Maria Theresa dollar which, however, must have a peculiar stamp to be accepted in payment. The seven dots at the top, the star in the middle, and the S.F. below, had to be distinctly impressed if the dollar was to be considered a female and not a male one, which is a few pieces of salt less valuable than the other" 1). For small change people

1) Krapf Lewis: Travels and Missionary Labour in East Africa, London 1860. pp. 70-71.; See also: Combes Vol IV, pp. 108-109; Rochet d'Héricourt: Voyage sur le Côte Ouest du Mar Rouge, Dans le pays d'Adel et le royaume de Choa, Paris 1841. p. 301; Rupell Edward: Reise in Abyssinien, Frankfurt an Main 1840. Vol. II. pp 17-18; Ferret. Vol. II. p. 413; Cecchi E.: Da Zeila, 1886. Vol. I. p. 305. If defective in its signs or if showing the face of the emperor, the tallers were exchanged in the main centres of trade in the highlands at a discount of 20-30%. See also: page 404 below.
used pieces of cloth, black pepper, blue silk cord ¹) and salt amoleh.

The salt amoleh might be considered to have been the official currency of the Ethiopian highlands from Tigre to Kaffa and from Wallaga to Argoba ²). The salt amoleh was a block of salt in the form of a prism about 20 centimeters long and 2½ thick. Its width was 5 centimeters in the centre and about 2½ at the ends. Its colour was greyish and a strip of leather protected it against damage ³). Each amoleh weighed about 19 to 20 ounces ⁴), but great differences existed between the weight of a new amoleh and an old one. Especially during the rainy season the amoleh became moist and tended to fall to pieces. People preserved their amoleh by burying them in ashes or by suspending them above a fire ⁵).

The amoleh were extracted only from the salt plains in the Taltal area about 100 miles south of Massawa and

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east of the Ethiopian highlands). An ancient agreement existed between the Taltals and the people of Tigre by which the Ethiopians were allowed to descend to the plains and extract the salt against a small payment. Thus each year great caravans left Agame and Enderta under the protection of an officer called Balgudda, who commanded a unit of about 200 soldiers. The Ethiopians stayed a few weeks in the Taltal area and then returned to the highland with thousands of amolehs. The Taltal themselves brought great quantities of salt blocks to the highlands which were later shaped by the inhabitants of Agame. According to d'Abbadie the quantities of amoleh extracted each year from the salt plains amounted to the load of 3,000 mules and about 3,000 porters. A good mule could carry between 150-200 amoleh, while a porter usually carried about 40. Thus nearly 3/4 of a million amoleh were added annually to the circulation in the Ethiopian highlands. But being very fragile and easily corroded a great number of amoleh were spoilt each year and losing their value were used as raw salt.

1) F.O. Abyssinia. 1/4. pp. 124-126, Plowden 17.11.1847. Plowden claims that the Tatal area is about 60 miles from Massawa; Ruppell. Vol. 1. p. 302.
5) Abbadie 21301. p. 28. para. 69.
The centre of the amoleh trade was the village of Fiche and the nearby town of Atsbi on the border between the provinces of Agame and Enderta. The amoleh were brought for sale to the market of Atsbi at a rate of 80-120 amoleh per taller according to the season 1). From Atsbi the amoleh were carried by caravans on the backs of donkeys, mules and porters to every province and district in the Ethiopian highlands. The main routes of those caravans were to Antalo, Lasta, Yeju Gall and Wollo country. On the borders of the Wollo the salt merchants were met by caravans coming from Shoa which took the amoleh into Shoa and further southwards 2). Another important route was the one from Atsbi to Ifag in Begamder from where some amoleh were sent to Gondar and large quantities were sent to Basso and to southwestern Ethiopia 3). Because of the high cost of transportation, amoleh which came all the way from Enderta were cut in southwestern Ethiopia into four and sometimes even into six pieces. These small amolehs were


in use as far as Kaffa 1). The rate of exchange of the amoleh to the taller differed according to the distance from Enderta 2). Thus in Fiche up to 120 amoleh were received for a taller 3), in Atshi 80-120, in Seketa 50-60, in Adowa 50-70, in Gondar 30-40, in Gojam 20-25, in Ankobar (Shoa) about 20 4) and in Sakka 10-12 5).

To some extent the economy of Ethiopia depended on the continuous and regular supply of amoleh. When the Egyptians tried to get control on the Taltal area in 1847 6) one may suspect that they were not driven only by economical motives. The fierceness with which Ras Wubi reacted to the Egyptian action may be partially explained by the above.

One of the worst hindrances to the development of trade in northern Ethiopia and between northern Ethiopia and the southwestern provinces, was no doubt the archaic system of customs which existed in the northern provinces. It seems that before the disintegration of the Imperial power in the 18th century, a number of "custom houses" existed

2) Because of the heavy taxation along the road (Abbadie 21301. p. 28. para. 69) the cost of transportation and the damage caused to the fragile amoleh along the road.
4) See below page 404.
6) See below pages 59-60.
along the main trading routes of the Empire. Those "custom houses" were farmed out to the highest bidder and the proceeds went to the emperor while a smaller sum had to be paid to the local Dejazmatch. As a result of the disintegration of the central authority, each provincial governor started to keep all the income from his province to himself including the income from the farming of the "custom houses" within his territory. The farmer of each "custom house" had the title of "Negad Ras" and was usually a very rich merchant. In the second quarter of the 19th century nearly all the Negad Rases of northern Ethiopia were Muslims. Even the important Negadrasship of Adowa passed into the hands of Muslims in the beginning of the 19th century.


2) Not to be confused with the Negad Ras who was head of the caravan - chief of merchants. Of the position of Negad Ras: Massaia.J.: I miei Trentacinque anni Di Missione Nell'Alta Ethiopia, Roma 1925. p. 95. Footnote 1.

3) See above page 19. In the past, claims Abbadi in 1838 (21301. p. 118), it was customary to give the position of Negad Ras to a "Gypt" thus "Haji" Yohannes of Adowa held this position until his death. After his death no white man wanted to become the Negad Ras and Ras Walde Sellassie (whom Salt met) tried to get an Ethiopian Christian to fill his position. But nobody wanted to farm the customs because it was unpleasant and bound to cause many quarrels. Thus the Negadraship of Adowa passed to the hands of the Muslims.
collection centre where the Negad Ras lived, each Nagad Ras has established a number of toll houses, or customs barriers, called Ber (pass). "Where nature in that mountainous country has confined the road to some narrow defile, not to be avoided without immense détour, if at all, and near some commanding elevation where a good lookout can be stationed, or perhaps at a brook fordable only at one spot" ¹).

There were six Negadraships in northern Ethiopia and Gojam. One at Adowa in Tigre, another in Sokota in Lasta, another in Dobarok in Waggar, another in Gondar in Amhara, another in Derita in Begamder and the last in Yejubi in Gojam ²). Besides these, there were tens of minor Bers where the merchants were harassed for small sums ³) and still other places where villagers or village chiefs had a traditional right to exact what they could from passing caravans. The custom's rates were never fixed. Merchandise was not inspected and the Negad Ras arbitrarily estimated the tax on each caravan according to the number of mules, porter and asses ⁴). This did not include the tax on slaves

¹) Confidential Print Abyssinian Correspondence 1846-1868. Enclosure in No. 256, Plowden 20.6.1852.

²) Plowden W.C.: Travels in Abyssinia, 1868, p. 130; Abbadie (21300. p. 383) claims that there was a Negad Ras at Takarakia in Tamben.


and ivory, both of which were exposed for inspection and both of which had usually paid a fixed sum at each custom barrier 1). The amount of the custom dues was always debated at length between the farmer of the customs and the head of the caravan (both called Negad Ras) and quarrels were most frequent. The passage of the caravan was thus an endless quarrel and argument between the merchants and the Negad Rases or their representatives. True enough the merchants had the right of appeal to the Ras or the Djazmatch who governed the province, but such a procedure usually took weeks 2) and in most cases the governor would side with his Negad Ras 3), who not only paid heavily for his post, but could always prove that the merchants were actively engaged in smuggling 4).

Every Negad Ras had in his service a few scores of matchlockmen, soldiers, and a great number of inspectors and spies. According to custom, the Negad Ras was not allowed to open and to inspect the packs of the merchants but the Negad Ras was usually informed by spies, sometimes stationed

4) In Gondar the Negad Ras paid annually 4,000-5,000 tallers. Gobat Journal, p. 233, 26.6.1830; Rochet Ms. pp. 308-309. The Negad Ras of Adowa paid also about 5,000 tallers. Abbadie 21300. p. 384.
even in Massawa 1) of the merchandise acquired and carried by the merchants. On the basis of this information, and according to the rapacity of the Ras, the sum to be paid was decided upon. As the merchants never agreed to pay what the Negad Rases demanded, arguments and quarrels always ensued, and in order to enforce his demands the Negad Ras had to depend on his armed servants 2). However, when the caravan was large and well armed, the merchants could force their way through custom barriers 3) and thus more consideration was given to a strong caravan. On some occasions when the Negad Rases demands went beyond reason, the merchants hired mercenary matchlockmen and simply fought their way through 4). If an agreement was reached between the merchants and the Negad Ras, the dues were paid by the chief of the merchants and then each merchant had to reimburse the Negad Ras (chief of merchants) proportionally, according to the number of loads and porters he had in the caravan.

In the 1840's the arbitrary exactions of the Negad Rases in some of the main towns reached their peak. Caravans going to the coast from Gojam and Begamder tried to avoid

1) Abbadie 21301. p. 117. para. 345.
2) Abbadie 21300. p. 383; Plowden Travels. p. 130.
3) Rochet Ms. p. 309.
Gondar and even Adowa altogether by using a route which did not pass these towns 1). In Gondar each slave and each load of ivory leaving the town was charged one taller 2). In Adowa each slave and each tusk paid about two tallers, and in the smaller custom barriers the dues usually amounted to about ¾-½ taller per slave and per tusk 3). On all other articles the customs charges were, as mentioned before, fixed according to what the Negad Ras fancied, or according to how strong the caravan was. Thus it is impossible to form any exact idea regarding the dues on the different items. Only in Gondar where taxation was the highest were the rates relatively regular - about 11 tallers per load of a mule and 6 tallers per load of a porter, while specie paid a fixed rate of 6% on entrance from the coast 4).

The picture provided by most sources regarding the customs authorities is of course completely one sided. The European travellers sympathised with the merchants, as they themselves had to undergo the annoyance of being stopped at many customs barriers. On the other hand the customs

2) Abbadie 21301. pp. 117-118. para 345. Much higher rates were charged on entrance.
4) Rochet Ms. pp. 308-309. Rates in the early 1830's were 10 tallers per load of a mule and 5 tallers per load of a porter. Ruppell. Vol. II. pp. 183-184.
officers had no way of knowing what the merchants carried in their packages; and it is safe to assume that not all the gold, musk and incenses were declared. It is of course an open question whether the exactions caused the smuggling or whether the smuggling caused the exactions. Considering human nature and the strange custom that merchant's packages should not be opened, it is to be expected that smuggling came first. Be it what it be, there is little doubt that the system of customs in northern Ethiopia and Gojam and the days and weeks wasted by each caravan at each custom barrier, were not conducive to the development of the caravan trade in Ethiopia.

During the rainy season between June and October, the whole economic life of Ethiopia was at a standstill. True enough little trading between neighbouring villages and towns was going on all the time, but trader's caravans did not risk the deep mud and the quick rushing rivers swelled continuously by the unceasing rain. The short rainy season which lasted only a few weeks between January and March also interrupted the economic activities in the highlands, but not to the extent of the period of the heavy rains 1). When

the rainy season was over, caravans were organised in all the commercial centres and Muslim merchantile communities in northern Ethiopia. Usually, a merchant of importance in one of these centres who decided to embark upon a trading trip, took care to spread the news of his intention, the date of his departure and the place from where he would depart. Smaller merchants and travellers took advantage of this opportunity and gathered before the day of departure in the place appointed by the merchant. There, they struck their tents around the tents of the organiser, and those of his servants and followers. The organiser usually became the Negad Ras of the caravan 1). In this capacity he was entrusted with the protection and security of the caravan, relations with the different rulers and the population along the road and the payment of taxation 2). The Negad Ras decided the time of departure and when and where to camp. He obtained guides and paid for protection and escort when it was necessary. In short he was responsible for the safety and welfare of the caravan while he led it to its

1) Chief of the merchants - head of the caravan, not to be confused with the farmer of the customs who had the same title.

2) The Negad Ras paid for the whole caravan and then each merchant had to reimburse him according to the number of loads he carried. See: Beke: Dr. C.T.: Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abyssinia etc, London 1852. P. 21.
destination. Usually the Negad Ras was a person who was known not only for his fortune, but above all for his experience, wisdom and bravery 1).

Caravans in northern Ethiopia were usually large and well armed and had little to fear from highwaymen and robbers 2). Nevertheless, during the night constant watch was kept, and during the day the merchants and their servants were all armed and resembled a small army 3). As there were no inns along the road the merchants had to transport with them utensils, provisions and tents, and they had always to camp in the open. About an hour before dawn each merchant started to load his baggage animals. The merchandise was usually packed in skin bags, which were piled on the back of the animal and not on its flanks, because of the damage that could be caused to the merchandise by trees and rocks which projected into the very narrow paths. The merchandise thus piled on the back of the animal, was tied mercilessly to its body causing great open sores which, left uncared for, resulted in a high mortality

2) Beke Commerce. p. 5.
rate among carriage animals 1). The most popular transport animal was the donkey, which was cheap and which could carry up to 40 Kg. The mule was most esteemed. It could carry about 60 Kg. 2), but it was far more costly than the donkey. It was a disgrace to ride a donkey and thus if the merchant had sufficient means, and if the route was suitable, he usually rode a mule. In some difficult areas, oxen were used by the caravans, and when descending to the sandy coastal plains camels were hired from the nomads. Human porterage was widespread, especially in Tigre where in many cases merchants preferred porters to transport animals 3). A good porter carried about 25 Kg. and received about 2½ tallers for a journey of about 100 miles. He had to supply his own food and he covered the distance in 18-20 days 4). Some merchants loaded their slaves with merchandise as well, but the loads on the slaves were by far lighter than those on the porters as the merchant was more interested in the welfare of his property than in that of the porter. In an open country, the merchants walked in

groups, but along narrow paths, which were the more usual, the caravan advanced in a file. The narrow and treacherous paths crossed from amba to amba plunging into deep gorges and then climbing steeply to the top of the next amba. To the heavily laden carriage animals one slip meant death, while to the porters and slaves trekking on foot, the road was exhausting. Rivers presented sometimes a major difficulty, as bridges were non-existent, and boats were unknown, and the flimsy rafts used in northern Ethiopia could sink in the middle of the river. Thus a day's march of a caravan was usually about six miles and its progress was very slow, especially as the merchants attended all the markets which occurred on their way. About mid-day the Negad Ras started to look for a suitable camping site, usually an open field near a river. When a suitable place had been found, little shelters made of reeds and covered with skins were quickly put up by the slaves or the servants. The women prepared bread, meat and coffee for the merchants and his followers and children and old men took the animals to pasture until the evening. At nightfall


the animals were taken back to the camps and tied to pegs around the master's shelter while guards were posted around the camp. In the afternoon the camp was visited by people from the nearby villages, who traded with the merchants and exchanged news with them. If business was good, the merchants would not hesitate to stay more than one day, although this prolonged the trip and put off the arrival at whatever destination they had.

Christian and Muslim merchants went together in the caravans. However each merchant kept with his co-religionists, and when striking camp the Christian merchants shelters would be put up in one group and the Muslim ones in another. If there were caravans called "Christian" they probably were the ones which had a Christian Negad Ras and a majority of Christian merchants. Muslim caravans had usually in them some Christian merchants as well, and not counting the question of food and prayer, the merchants of the two religions cooperated fully along the road 1).

The village of Derita, the nearby town of Ifag in Begamder, the Muslim quarter in Gondar as well as other Muslim settlements in Tigre\(^1\) were the centres of the slave trade in northern Ethiopia. Derita, Ifag and Gondar, being the entrepots for the slaves imported from southwestern Ethiopia, were always teeming with slaves\(^2\). It seems that throughout the 1830's and 1840's about 3,000 slaves passed through these centres annually\(^3\), half of which went to the Sudan through Gondar\(^4\) and the other half were sent by caravans to Massawa by way of Gondar or directly from Derita and Ifag by way of the province of Wag\(^5\) in order to avoid the high taxation on entering Gondar\(^6\). The price for a Galla-Sidama Gurbe\(^7\) in Gondar was about 15-18 tallers. Wesif\(^8\) fetched 20-25 tallers, an exceptionally beautiful

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1) See above page 19.
3) Over 3,000 slaves passed Basso northwards annually (see below pages 95-96). Of these probably a few hundred were led by Wollo and Yeju slave merchants to the northern borders of Shoa. The rest were brought to Begamder and Gondar together with a few hundred Shankala slaves the result of raiding to the west (M. & D. Vol. 61. p. 188; Pearce. Vol. II. pp. 235-236). Thus probably about 3,000 slaves were exported annually by merchants from Derita, Ifag and Gondar. See below pages 49, 51.
4) See below page 49.
7) A young boy 10-12 years old.
8) A young girl suitable to become a concubine or a wife.
girl fetched 50 and even 80 tallers\textsuperscript{1}). In Gondar slaves were sold in the houses of the merchants. Later they were taken to Massawa by Muslim slave merchants who formed their own caravans or joined one of the Maunem caravans\textsuperscript{2}). Although very profitable, the slave trade was very risky. In addition to the unavoidable taxation along the road, many slaves were lost owing to exposure, illness or theft, although on the whole merchants took good care of their human merchandise\textsuperscript{3}).

The most important caravan route in Ethiopia came from the rich southwestern provinces and went through the important market of Basso in Gojam to Begamder, Amhara and either to the Sudan through Matama or through Tigre to Massawa. The towns of Gondar, Derita and to a lesser degree Adowa were the centres of the caravan trade in northern Ethiopia. The first was actually the most important centre of trade in the Ethiopian highlands.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Abbadie 21300. p. 217; Ibid. 21301. p. 124. para 366; Rochet Ms. p. 233; Combes. Vol. II. p. 46. Compare to price in Basso page 95 below.
\item See below pages 50-51. See also: Abbadie 21300. pp. 384-385; L.G. 210. No. 2740, Appendix I. Of slaves taken to the Sudan see below page 49.
\end{enumerate}
Most of the travellers who visited Gondar in the first half of the 19th century agree in reporting that the imperial capital of Ethiopia was by this time delapidated and depopulated\(^1\). The population of Gondar, which had numbered in the past about 40,000-50,000 had shrunk by the 1830's and 1840's to 10,000-18,000\(^2\), living in a few thousand houses (some built of stone). The town was divided into quarters according to religions. The Christians in the centre, the Fallashas to the east and the Muslims in a quarter called Bet el Islam to the south\(^3\). Gondar was the centre of crafts and industry in Ethiopia. It had the only stone masons in Ethiopia\(^4\), a number of lock smiths, tanners, gunsmiths and silver and gold smiths\(^5\). The artisans came mainly from among the Greek and Armenian colony settled in Gondar. However the most numerous and the most influential element among the Christians, not counting the lords, were

\[^{1}\text{Pearce. Vol. I. p. 234; Ibid. Vol. II. p. 16; RuppeII. Vol. II. p. 82; Ferret. Vol. II. pp. 238-239; Rochet Ms. p. 286.}\]
\[^{2}\text{RuppeII. Vol. II. p. 82. actually claims that the number was 6,500.; Ferret. Vol. II. p. 239; Rochet Ms. p. 286. Bruce Vol. III. pp. 198-199.}\]
\[^{3}\text{Bruce. Vol. III. p. 195; Rochet Ms. p. 286; Plowden Travels. p. 42.}\]
\[^{4}\text{Sellassie Guebre: Chronique du regne de Menelik II, 1930, Tome I. p. 73; Bruce Vol. III. p. 195.}\]
the priests and the monks, who came from the many churches and monasteries in the town and around it.

The number of Christian merchants in Gondar must have been limited, probably a few score, but their importance in the second quarter of the 19th century was very great\(^1\). On the other hand most of the Muslim population of the town was occupied in trade, and among them the number of small merchants must have been considerable. On the whole it might be said that the most significant element for the economy of the town were the merchants whose importance and influence grew continuously throughout the 19th century\(^2\). The importation of foreign goods from the coast into the Ethiopian highlands was to a large extent in the hands of the merchants of Gondar\(^3\) and to a lesser degree in the hands of their neighbours in Derita and Adowa. Only a small part of the imported goods were sold at Gondar. The town was in a way the centre of the wholesale trade in the highlands. It had a permanent market, but the merchants did not have shops\(^4\) and they kept their stocks in storehouses.

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1) See pages 23-24 above
and in their homes\textsuperscript{1}). In addition to quantities of
merchandise sent directly by Gondari merchants to Gojam,
the Wollo areas and Shoa, caravans came to Gondar from many
provinces to acquire stocks of trade goods in exchange for
the produce of the interior\textsuperscript{2}). Other caravans were trading
between Gondar and the Sudan\textsuperscript{3}). Still others came from
Massawa and Akike organised by coastal people and joined
by some enterprising merchants from Arabia. In some cases
they did not stop in Gondar but joined the caravans going
to Gojam and even beyond\textsuperscript{4}). Rochet d'Hericourt, who visited
northern Ethiopia between 1847 and 1849, witnessed in Gondar
in one year the arrival of 47 important caravans from Massawa,
Sennar, Gojam and Enarea. Of those 16 were large and 31
medium. Some of the caravans were probably returning Gondari
caravans. On the other hand d'Hericourt\textsuperscript{5}) does not mention
any caravans coming from Shoa, the Wollo and other provinces
of northern Ethiopia\textsuperscript{6}).

1) Stern H.A.: Wanderings among the Fallashas in Abyssinia,
London 1862, p. 238.
3) See below pages 48-49
4) Athenaeum No. 1105, from 1848. See below page 57.
6) Of the composition of each large or medium caravan
according to d'Hericourt see below pages 49, 50-51, 88.
Gondari merchants were very active in the caravan trade themselves. Being the richest and most important merchants in Ethiopia they had three permanent Nagad Rases. Under their leadership caravans annually descended to the coast in order to dispose of the great amounts of merchandise which accumulated in the merchant's stores and in order to replenish their stocks of foreign merchandise. Other caravans were organised in Gondar to take imported merchandise to Gojam, to Alio Amba and Ankebar in Shoa and to the smaller commercial centres in northern Ethiopia. All in all, many caravans reached Gondar from every part of Ethiopia, or departed from this town to every important commercial centre in the highlands. Thus the significance of Gondar as the centre of the caravan trade, and the trade of Ethiopia at the whole, is clearly seen.

Very little is known of the character and volume of the trade carried between Gondar and the Sudan in the second quarter of the 19th century. The only concrete information comes from Rochet d'Hericourt regarding the late 1840's. According to d'Hericourt about 3 great caravans and 6 smaller

1) Two of which were Christians. Abbadie 21301. p. 118. para. 345.
ones reached Gondar from Sennar between November and June. It took each caravan about a month to cover the road between Sennar and Gondar. On the average each Sennari caravan was composed of 12-15 merchants, leading 50-60 donkeys. The Sudanese merchants brought to Gondar in a year about 2,000 ounces of gold in rings, called Sennari and considered the purest which reached Gondar. In addition to gold the Sennari merchants imported into Gondar some ivory, silk, moroccon, Maria Theresa tallers and the usual assortment of the products of Europe and Egypt which reached Gondar by way of Massawa. The Sudanese merchants were not allowed to go beyond Gondar. On their way back they took with them coffee, wax, musk and above all choice slaves (preferably females), of which it is claimed between 1,200-2,000 were exported annually from Gondar to Sennar in the 1830's and 1840's. In addition to the slaves taken from Gondar to Sennar by the Jelabs of the Sudan, some Jabarti merchants led each year a number of slaves to the Village of Doka near Matamma. Here they were met by many

1) Out of 16 great caravans and 31 smaller ones, which reached Gondar in the same year.
2) No differentiation was made between big and small caravans.
3) See below page 111.
4) Rochet Ms. pp. 232-233 -1,200 slaves; Combes Vol. IV. p. 95 - over 2,000 slaves.
5) Sudanese slave merchants.
6) Ethiopian Muslims.
Jelabs who were extremely keen to acquire the Galla-Sidama girls, and to a lesser extent boys, which they brought with them. Upon the conclusion of the rainy season, in the month of November, when the houses of many merchants were bulging with the merchandise of the interior, and the capital and stocks of foreign goods of many merchants was nearly exhausted, caravans were quickly organised in Gondar to go to Massawa. Those caravans, usually composed of a number of small merchants, reached the coast by way of Adowa in six to eight weeks. They brought with them to Massawa, hundreds of slaves and large quantities of the produce of the interior. Their arrival signalled in Massawa the opening of a new season. By far more important were the Mausem caravans, organised by the more important merchants of Gondar, who left the town after the arrival of the caravans from Gojam and Enarea. The Mausem caravans reached the coast in


2) Rochet Ms. p. 383; Combes. Vol. IV. p. 91.

the "season"\(^1\) between the months of May and August\(^2\).
Rochet d'Hericourt claims that 5 important caravans and 8-10 medium ones reached Gondar from the coast in a year\(^3\).
Large caravans, according to d'Hericourt, were composed of 20-30 merchants attended by a number of servants. Their merchandise was carried by 40-50 porters, 100-120 mules and 60-70 donkeys\(^4\). The smaller caravans were organised by 6-8 merchants who transported their merchandise with the help of 10-12 porters, 10-12 mules and were attended by a number of servants. The Gondar caravans took to Massawa gold, which came from Sennar, Fazegal and Wallaga, ivory, musk, coffee, tanned skins, some wax and about a thousand slaves\(^5\). On their return journey the caravans brought from Massawa copper, brass and other metals, knives, swords and metal products, black pepper and various other spices, beads of diverse sizes and colours, bottles, shawls, silk

1) Mausen in Arabic means season.
3) Rochet Ms. p. 307. Probably most of them returning Gondari caravans.
4) The Mausem caravan met by d'Abbadie in 1841 (21300 pp. 384-385) was composed of more than 20 merchants, whose merchandise was carried by 150 mules and about 30 porters. A good porter could carry about 25 Kg., a good donkey up to 50 and a mule up to 65 Kg. See Abbadie 21301. pp. 117-118. para 345; Ferret. Vol. II. pp. 408-409; Rochet Ms. pp. 307-308.
and above all cotton cloth of different colours and qualities.

The caravan road from Gondar to Massawa lay through Adowa which could be reached by several routes. The main obstacle on this stretch of the road was the Takkaze, which even in the short rainy season could be very dangerous, if not unfordable. All along the road, and especially at Adowa, the caravans were swelled by small parties of merchants or travellers, who wanted to reach the coast or an important market on the caravan route, and took advantage of the passage of the strong Gondari caravans.

Adowa in the 1830's and 1840's was a little town of about 3,000-4,000 inhabitants. It had some artisans, and cloth weaving flourished in the town. The most important factors in the town's economy were however its trade with Massawa and the interior and its being the crossroad of many caravan routes.

Massawa could be reached from Adowa by two main routes.

Through the province of Hamasin by way of the village of Kiakhor or through the province of Kalagooza through the town of Halai or Dixan. The Halai-Dixan route was preferred by many caravans, although it was slightly longer, because it was safer and food and water were plentiful along most of the road. On the other hand the well armed and large slave caravans preferred the Hamasin route which bypassed a number of custom barriers and which was shorter. After descending from the highlands the caravans coming by both routes had to exchange the oxen used for transportation in the difficult passages from the mountains, for camels which were supplied by the Saho. As food was comparatively expensive in Massawa, the caravans bought large supplies of foodstuff from the inhabitants of the last villages of the highlands. From Halai and Dixan an escort in a form of a Saho guide was furnished by the Naib of Arkiko. For a nominal fee this guide led the caravans to Massawa. On the Hamasin route the people of Kiakher had the right to supply the escorts. For this reason the Sahos and the

2) Abbudie 21305. pp. 340-341; Combes Vol. II. pp. 139-140.
Naib of Arkike "encouraged" the caravans to use the Halai-Dixan route and this was probably one of the reasons why it became the more popular¹).

The plain of Samhar, which separates the Ethiopian highlands from the sea is only about fifty miles wide. It is at this point that the Ethiopian escarpments are nearest to the sea. Ethiopians, who were going to the coast for trading and other purposes and who always abhorred the hot humid unhealthy coastal plains²), preferred to descend to the sea at this point as they could make most of their journey in the familiar highlands. Massawa with its excellent harbour³) had been for many centuries one of the main ports of Ethiopia, although the plain of Samhar had been overrun by the Beja tribes already at the end of the 7th century and the port of Massawa had been in Ottoman hands since 1557.

In the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, the most powerful ruler in the area was the Naib of Arkiko, the head of the Saho tribes, whose authority was recognised to some degree by all the nomadic

¹) Plowden Travels, p. 361  
³) Not very far from ancient Adulis.
or semi-nomadic tribes which roamed in the plain of Samhar. In fact the authority of the Naib in this period stretched well into the province of Hamasin in the Ethiopian highlands.

Massawa is actually a group of three islands in the bay of Massawa and the strip of the mainland opposite. The largest island, about one kilometer long and about four hundred meters wide, having an excellent port, was the Massawa which was the seat of the Ottoman rule and authority. As the island was waterless and as the Ottomans realised the wide authority of the chief of Arkiko, he was given the title of Naib (deputy) and he enjoyed the income of the port jointly with the Ottoman Pasha of Massawa.

2) Bruce. Vol. III. pp. 90-91; Trimingham J.S.: Islam in Ethiopia, London 1952. p. 169. As for the Ras of Tigre, in the early years of the 19th century we are told by Pearce (F.O. Abyssinia 1/1 p. 122, 29.12.1809): "The Ras (Walde Sellassie) has no power what ever lower than where the salt comes from, which is upper Bure".
3) This is the island often called by d'Abbadie in his papers Baté (for example see: Abbadie 21300. p. 335). Baté is the name of the island in Tigrinia. This I was able to verify in my visit to Massawa.; See also: Combes. Vol. I. pp. 91-92.
The weakness of the Ottoman authorities in Arabia in the second half of the 18th century and their diminishing interest in Massawa, owing to the great fall in the income from this port, were taken advantage of, by the Naib of Arkiko. When Bruce reached Ethiopia in 1769 the Naib of Arkiko was the de facto ruler of Massawa. Although he still acknowledged the overlordship of the Pasha of Jidda, he did not pay any tribute to his master, and he did everything in his power to assert his independance. When the Hijaz was captured by the Wahabis in the first years of the 19th century, the Naib of Arkiko recognised the overlordship of Sheriff Ghalib of Mecca, but he was still the real master of Massawa. In 1808-1809 troops were sent from Jidda under the command of Sirdar Omar Aga, who "dispossessed the Nayib of his authority on the island of Massawa and has taken upon himself the command."

In 1811 Mohammed Ali invaded the Hijaz and soon afterwards his forces took Massawa as well. A governor

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3) F.O. Abyssinia 1/1 p. 80, Salt 1810; Later on Omar Aga was replaced by Kaimakam Mustafa Aga. also: Salt p. 496; Range 383 Vol. 32. p. 835; Combes Vol. 1. p. 92.

having the title of Kaimakam, or Effendi, or both, was nominated for Massawa. But as Mohammed Ali could not spare the army to break the power of the Naib and as the people of Arkike held the keys to the trade of Massawa and the supply of water to the island\(^1\), the authority of the Naib of Arkiko on the mainland was recognised and the illegal practice of the Naib to tax all incoming and outgoing caravans was winked at. A sum of 12,000 tallers was paid annually to the people of Arkiko and a further 1,500 tallers to the Naib\(^2\). On his side the Naib was supposed to safeguard caravans crossing the Samhar plain and to supply guides, which were in a way equivalent to a "passport" or a permission to cross the country of the Saho and the other nomadic tribes\(^3\).

In the second, third and fourth decade of the century Mohammed Ali was far too occupied in his Sudanese, Greek and Syrian adventures to pay attention to Massawa and the situation in the area was probably not very different from

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1) In the late 1830's 10,000 gallons of water were supplied to Massawa daily at the price of 200 gallons per taller. Abbadie 21300. pp. 2, 330.

2) M. & D. Vol. 13. pp. 9-10, d'Abbadie, 14.7.1839; Abbadie 21300. p. 331; C. & C. Massawa. Vol. I. Degoutin, 20.4.1841. Combes (Vol. I. p. 113) claims that it was the Naib who paid the governor of Massawa a tribute of 1,000 tallers per year.

what it used to be after the Egyptian conquest. However, already in the early 1830's after being troubled by the rebellion of Turki Bilmes, Mohammed Ali started to consolidate his holdings in Arabia and to reassert his overlordship of the Yemeni coast\(^1\). If not for the quick British reaction and the conquest of Aden, the Red Sea would have been turned into an Egyptian Mare Nostrum. Moreover, in 1838 Mohammed Ali's interest in Ethiopia was reawakened and the Egyptians raided Ethiopian territory from Qalabat\(^2\). The Egyptians still controlled only the islands of Massawa and possibly a small strip of the coast facing the island and the Naib's authority was still recognised on the mainland. Nevertheless, the growing power of Mohammed Ali was felt in Arkiko. Although the Egyptian garrison, including all the officials, numbered less than a hundred\(^3\) the Naib was more submissive and Christians and foreigners were far better treated than in the past\(^4\). In the early 1840's, after


2) Trimingham. p. 115.; Longrigg H. Stephen: A Short History of Eritrea. p. 84


loosing his possessions in Arabia, Mohammed Ali evacuated Massawa and a Turkish governor was sent to the island by the Pasha of the Hijaz. The new vigorous Turkish governor tried to put an end to the power of the Naib, who was a thorn at his side. In 1842, it was reported that the power of the Naib was diminishing, but when a new Turkish governor tried in 1844 to annul the illegal tax on caravans and to take Arkiko, he was beaten back to the island.

The Egyptians continued their aggressive policy towards Ethiopia when they founded Kassala in 1840 and a large army threatened the borders of the country. In 1846 Mohammed Ali leased Massawa from the Turks and a stronger governor was sent to this port with 600 soldiers. Within a year the Egyptians were able to crush the power of the Naib. After receiving reinforcement they advanced south across and beyond the Samhar, nearly a hundred miles inland as far as the salt mines in the Taltal area, which supplied all the Ethiopian highlands with amoleh, the rock


salt money\textsuperscript{1). It was generally believed that Mohammed Ali was preparing an invasion of Ethiopia\textsuperscript{2). Ras Wubi of Tigre enraged with Egyptian interference and being after loot, started to raid into the Beni Amr area in 1847 and then in 1848 returned to raid the Samhar plain as far as Arkiko. With the death of Mohammed Ali in 1849, Massawa reverted again to the Turkish Pasha of Jidda and a Turkish governor replaced the Egyptian commander\textsuperscript{3). The plans of expansion into Ethiopian territory, if any, were given up. In the coming few years the Turkish authorities, the merchants of Massawa and the tribes of the Samhar were constantly in fear from Ethiopian raids\textsuperscript{4).}

With no agriculture and very little craft besides boat building\textsuperscript{5) the mainstay of Massawa's economy was its trade.

1) F.O. Abyssinia 1/4, pp. 124-126, 17.11.1847; Plowden Travels, p. 355; Confidential 1846-1868. No 46, Plowden, Massawa 16.8.1848. See above pages 28-31. Actually Plowden is mistaken, the Taltal area is about 100 miles from Massawa.

2) Rochet Ms. p. 291, from 1847-1848.


5) Salt Appendix 5; Ferret Vol. I. p. 372.
Until the beginning of the 19th century although Massawa was the main, if not the only, commercial outlet of Ethiopia, its trade was of little importance\(^1\). As a result of the general conditions in the Red Sea, the continuous wars in northern Ethiopia, and the exactions of the Naib of Arkiko, Indian merchants from Mokha, and others, coming with the Indian fleet to Jidda used representatives in Massawa to acquire the products of Ethiopia against small quantities of Indian merchandise and specie\(^2\). The conquest of the Hijaz and Massawa by Mohammed Ali, the renewal of the Haj and the revival of the trade in the Red Sea had their impact on Massawa, especially since the third decade of the century\(^3\). Massawa benefited greatly from the growing demand for the Ethiopian luxurious products and slaves, from the many pilgrims going to the Hijaz through its port\(^4\).

1) H.M. 436, p. 76. Taylor. 30.7.1791; Egypt and Red Sea. Vol. VI. pp. 301-302. Home Popham, 20.7.1802; F.O. Abyssinia 1/1 p. 9, Valentia, 13.9.1808. "Massawa is at present the only port through which any article can be conveyed to Abyssinia, and there are no Banyans or other merchants in the place who could purchase the cargo of a ship and make immediate payment".


3) F.O. Abyssinia 1/2. pp. 80-82. Mount Norris. 19.3.1831, probably according to Coffin who left Ethiopia in the late 1820's.

and from being visited by a growing number of Indian merchants\(^1\)). The town which in the first decade of the century numbered about 2,000 people\(^2\) grew in the 1830's and 1840's into a town of about 4,000-5,000 people. The island of Massawa became far too small and unsuitable for such a population and many of the inhabitants, particularly the richer ones, went to live on the mainland opposite the island. The merchants came each morning to the island to transact their business and returned to their homes at night\(^3\). The quick development of Massawa and its trade was probably halted after the mid 1830's owing to heavier taxation and the monopoly system which was introduced into Egyptian possessions in the Red Sea. However, 250-300 boats of 40-200 tons visited Massawa annually in the late 1830's and 1840's besides a number of large Indian and European boats\(^4\). The boats


\(^2\) Salt Appendix 5; Ruppell. Vol. I. p. 185.


\(^4\) F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. pp. 29-30, d'Abbadie. Late 1838 or 1839; When d'Abbadie entered Massawa in 1838 there were 8 bugalos in the port, one of which was of about 500 ton, probably from India. See Abbadie 21301. p. 34, para. 93; C. & C. Massawa Vol. I. Degoutin, 20.4.1841; Abbadie 21300, pp. 335-336; M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 139, from 1844; Ibid. pp. 88-89, 17.2.1842. From December 1845 to July 1846 9 European boats of a displacement of 2,540 tons visited Massawa, all of which, excluding one American boat, loaded a large number of mules. C. & C. Massawa. Vol. I. 30.7.1846.
from India brought to Massawa different kinds of woods, rice, cotton cloths, more expensive cloth, tobacco, dates, iron in small bars, copper, brass wire, tin swords, some firearms and powder\textsuperscript{1}). The Indians were usually after gold, ivory, coffee, pearls from Dahlak and a little musk. The boats coming from Jidda imported into Massawa cheap calico from Egypt, Venice beads, cheap metalware and metals. The Arab and Egyptian merchants were interested in slaves, musk, ivory, hides, agricultural products, and whatever gold was left by the Indians. Boats coming from the Yemeni coast brought building wood, dates, raisins, tobacco and some Indian manufactures and American calico brought to the Yemen by American and Indian boats coming for coffee. The Yemeni were interested in slaves, ivory, gold, if available, and even coffee, which they resold to foreign merchants\textsuperscript{2}). Massawa was also visited by merchants from Quseir, Sawakin, the Somali coast and even from Harar\textsuperscript{3}).

\textit{The island of Massawa, with its market and shops, served as a meeting place between the merchants of Ethiopia}

\textsuperscript{1}) The last usually smuggled.
\textsuperscript{3}) Bulletin de la Societe de Geographie de France, Paris 1839, 1st section, pp. 204-205; Abbadie; Abbadie 21301. p. 30. para. 75.
and the Indian, the Jabarti and the Arab traders of Massawa. Throughout the second quarter of the 19th century the stores were always stocked with foreign merchandise. The European and even Indian products greatly decreased in price as a result of the opening of the Red Sea to the European trade and the greater safety afforded to navigation and to the traders\(^1\). Three factors greatly influenced the Massawa trade. The rainy season\(^2\) in the interior made the road from the highlands difficult and some rivers, above all the Takkaze, practically untraversable. The Haj season in the Hijaz attracted a large number of pilgrims from the highlands to Massawa and greatly increased the demand for slaves, musk and other Ethiopian products. Finally, the departure of the Indian merchants from Massawa towards the end of August\(^3\) before the Monsoon changed and made it impossible to reach India in the same year. Thus caravans carrying merchandise intended especially for the Indian trade, like ivory and gold, had to reach Massawa before the


2) Lasted usually until October, but sometimes was prolonged. C.M.R. Vol. 1835. p. 150, Isenberg 2.12.1834.

end of August. Those coming after August lost greatly on the price of ivory and other items, because of the decline in demand 1).

Small caravans reached Massawa from the nearby areas, from Hamasin and further inland, all the year around. More important pilgrim caravans, leading hundreds of slaves and carrying great quantities of musk, came to the coast in the first and last months of each year 2). The most important caravans, above all the "Mausem caravans", reached Massawa between May and the end of August 3). All in all about 10 large caravans, a still larger number of medium caravans and many small caravans visited Massawa each year. The large and medium caravans coming from Ankobar, Sokota, Adowa, Gondar and as far as Basso and the Galla countries 4). Altogether about 1,200 mules carrying up to 200 lbs. of


4) According to d'Abbadie (M.&D. Vol. 13 pp 9-10. 14.7.1839) 5 to 6 grand caravans coming from Enarea reached Massawa annually. Rochet (Ms. pp. 307-308) reported that 5 large caravans and 8-10 medium ones left Gondar for Massawa annually. A report from 14.1.1850. (Cont'd next page)
merchandise each, reached Massawa annually 1) with the
great caravans in the late 1840's. But of course it was
not the bulky, distinguishable merchandise which was so
important, but the musk and the gold, well hidden by the
merchants, and the slaves walking on foot.

Massawa's merchantile community was made up of a
handful of resident Banyan merchants 2), a number of Arabs
from Yemen and Jidda and about 100-200 local merchants 3).

4) (From previous page) (Ministere de La France d'Outre Mer.
Ocean Indienne. Carton 22.117. Dos. 1846-1852) speaks of
10 to 12 grand caravans coming to Massawa annually.
Lefebvre (Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge, pp. 32-33) counted
in Adowa in 1841, 12 caravans leading 800 mules loaded
with ivory. No doubt that besides the caravans coming
from Gondar, Adowa and Derita others came from Antalo,
Adigrat and even Shoa. Vide list of caravans arriving
between February and May: L.G. 210. No. 2740. Appendix
I; M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 55, Lefebvre. 3.6.1840. Of the
composition of the Gondari caravans see pages 50-51 above.

1) Parkyns, Vol. I. p. 410; Lefebvre Vol. II. Appendix
Mer Rouge, p. 33.

2) In the late 1830's and early 1840's 5-7 Banyans.
to d'Abbadie (21301), (p. 68. para. 201) 12 merchants.
In the late 1840's, according to Rochet d'Hericourt
(Ms. p. 250) 20 merchants.

3) Rochet Ms. p. 250; Abbadie 21300. pp. 226, 238.
Most of the local merchants were small-scale retail merchants\(^1\). However some were quite important and took part in the caravan trade going as far as Adowa, Gondar, Gojam and even southwestern Ethiopia\(^2\). Others owned a number of boats which traded as far afield as India and the Persian Gulf\(^3\).

A number of Massawa's leading merchants served as correspondents and agents to the merchants of Jidda, Cairo, Yemeni coast and Ethiopia\(^4\). The system of brokers - Nazils was strictly observed in this port with the active help of the authorities. "The system of brokerage which is here oppressive to the Abyssinian merchants is a drawback, it amounts to 4 or 5 per cent on most articles. No business even in so small a place is transacted except thro a broker"\(^5\).

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2) Abbadie met Omar Baduri, an important merchant from Arkiko in southwestern Ethiopia, Athenaeum No. 1105 from 1848; Abbadie 21300. p. 236. Government officials took also an active part in the slave trade. Abbadie 21301. p. 145. See also: Abbadie 21301, p. 28. para. 69; Ibid 21300, p. 295.

3) Abbadie 21300, p. 1. List of boats including 3 belonging to the merchant Ahmed Yemeny. The merchant and principal banker at Massawa was Mussa Maffarrah, who sent boats to India, bought about 15,000\(\$\) worth of gum annually and loaned the government of Massawa money. Abbadie 21300. pp. 1, 238; Range 388 Vol. 61. No. 2709, Nott 1838.


5) L.G. 186. No. 1470. Christopher, April 1842.
Every merchant coming to Massawa had to have a broker in whose house he stayed while trading in the town and who usually served as his correspondent throughout the rest of the year. The merchant could not change his Nazil throughout his stay in Massawa and usually the relationship lasted for a lifetime\(^1\). The Nazil, himself a merchant, bought part of the merchandise from the merchants at greatly reduced prices. He had a right to a brokerage fee, called Hadarit\(^2\), on every article sold or bought by his guest merchant. This fee varied according to article from 5% to 20% of the value of the sale. Usually the Hadarit was collected from both buyer and seller and thus the profit of the brokers was very great\(^3\). The Nazil was responsible for the safety of his guests and for any insult or offence offered to him during his stay in the Nazil's home. It was also the duty of the Nazil to mediate between the merchant and the Naib of Arkiko regarding the value of the present-Fasas, that the merchant was forced to give to the Naib on the departure of his caravan to the highlands\(^4\). The authorities of

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1) Abbadie 21300, p. 332.
2) The Nazil was also called Adar. Abbadie 21300, p. 380, probably from the Arabic word Dar - house.
3) Abbadie 21300, pp. 332, 340. According to Rochet (Ms. p. 250) the Nazil collected 15% from each side.
4) Abbadie 21300, p. 344.
Massawa, who probably co-operated with the Nazils against payment, directed all their transactions with the merchants through their respective Nazils. They upheld the rights of the Nazil and when necessary, supported them against their guests\(^1\). One must keep in mind that some of the most important government officials at Massawa were themselves merchants and Nazils \(^2\).

The number of slaves exported through Massawa each year greatly increased in the second quarter of the 19th century when compared to the 500-1,000 slaves exported through Massawa in/time of Bruce and in the beginning of the 19th century\(^3\). No doubt the increased demand for Ethiopian slaves after the conquest of the Hijaz by Mohammed Ali, was well known in Massawa. Caravan merchants going into the interior in the second, third and beginning of the fourth decade were greatly encouraged to bring more slaves to the coast. In the late 1830's and in the 1840's the average number of slaves exported through Massawa annually

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\(^1\) Abbadie 21300, pp. 332, 344.

\(^2\) Range 388 Vol. 38. No. 2119. Wolff, 9.6.1837; Abbadie 21300, p. 332; Ibid 21301, p. 66, para 195, p. 76, para 248. Hussein Effendi, the secretary to the government was himself a Nazil.

\(^3\) Salt, p. 426; Bruce Vol. III. p. 91; Valentia Vol. II. p. 487.
was nearly 2,000\(^1\). This number fluctuated as a result of political conditions in northern Ethiopia and the Galla, Sidama countries. Sometimes wars prevented the passage of caravans. In other times the war supplied a large number of prisoners - slaves\(^2\).

Most of the slaves who reached Massawa were children of under twenty\(^3\) and the proportion of the sexes was at least two females for every male reaching the coast\(^4\). The largest number of slaves among those reaching Massawa were of Galla-Sidama origin, highly priced and greatly in demand in Arabia. A smaller proportion of Shankalla slaves came from western and northwestern Ethiopia. Amhara boys and girls were kidnapped from the highlands all the time by passing caravans and by nomad tribes, but their number was not very great\(^5\).


2) C.&C. Massawa. Vol. I. Degoutin. 10.9.1844. Of 1,000 Barea captured in battle by Wubi and sold into slavery.

3) L.G. 165. No. 2316. Haines 5.7.1841.


5)
The importance of each caravan was usually estimated by the number of slaves it led\(^1\). From Hamasin, where many slave merchants lived, caravans brought a score or two of slaves each\(^2\). The big caravans from the interior, above all those coming from Derita and the Muslim merchants coming with the Mausem caravans from Gondar, usually brought over a hundred and sometimes even two hundred slaves in one time. But the latter was considered outstanding\(^3\).

When passing Arkiko the merchants paid the Naib one taller for each slave\(^4\). On arrival at Massawa the slaves were inspected by the Diwan to ascertain that there were no eunuchs among them, as eunuchs paid a higher tax\(^5\). Then the customs authorities collected five tallers per slave and each slave owner received a square piece of paper with the stamp of the Diwan as evidence for payment of customs\(^6\). However, slaves imported for the personal use of the citizens of Massawa were free from taxation\(^7\). There is no information how the hundreds of slaves brought to Massawa were housed.

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4) Abbadie 21301, p. 36. para 102.
5) Abbadie 21300, pp. 236, 337.
6) Abbadie 21301, p. 36, para 102.
7) Abbadie 21300, p. 346.
A short time after their arrival and after recovering from the fatigues of the road, the slaves were taken to the market place and there sold by auction\(^1\). The average price of a Galla-Sidama Gurbe (boy) was 35-50 tallers. A wosif - a young girl suitable to become a concubine - fetched from 50 to 60 tallers. Shankalla slaves were sold for only 25 tallers while eunuchs brought between 80 and 120 tallers\(^2\). After their sale, the slaves were shipped by their new masters to Mokha\(^3\) or to Jidda. The slaves were usually put on the boats in the evening after being dressed in new tobes (dresses) and after their hands and feet had been painted in a reddish-yellowish colour. Before going on board each slave produced the "certificate" that the customs were paid\(^4\). The governor was usually sitting on a chair in the harbour, watching the slaves being loaded. A great number of slaves were smuggled in small boats from the little harbours near Massawa\(^5\). Others were dressed as pilgrims and thus avoided taxation and still others were introduced into Massawa as if intended for the use of the

1) The auctioneer received one taller per head. Abbadie 21301, p. 68, para 21.


3) Only a few hundred were sent to Mokha annually. L.G. 165 No. 2316. Haines, 5.7.1841.

4) Abbadie 21301. p. 72, para 234. The fare to Arabia was 2-3 tallers per slave. Combes Vol. IV. p.93; Abbadie 21303. p. 161. para 548.

merchant and later on, were put by stealth on one of the departing boats\textsuperscript{1). Some Muslim merchants from the highlands preferred to sell their slaves in Jidda where they received a better price and performed the Haj at the same time\textsuperscript{2). However this was done only rarely as the time expended in the voyage and pilgrimage could be used for another trip to the more familiar interior. The slave trade between Massawa and the Arabian coast was left mainly in the hands of Massawan, Arab and Egyptian merchants. Some coastal merchants, including the governor and some of the officials of Massawa were not satisfied just with the exportation of slaves. In order to acquire better quality slaves at cheaper price, they took an active part in the caravan trade with the interior\textsuperscript{3).}

Various coins, but above all the Maria Theresa Austrian taller and the Spanish Sequin, were acceptable in Massawa\textsuperscript{4). Even "defective tallers"\textsuperscript{5) taken in the interior at a discount of 20-30\% were brought to Massawa where they were

\begin{enumerate}
\item Abbadie 21300, p. 346.
\item Combes, Vol. IV. p. 93.
\item Abbadie 21301, p. 145; Combes, Vol. IV. p. 93; Katte, p. 130 in Gondar.
\item Ruppell, Vol. I. p. 192. The rate of exchange was about five tallers per pound sterling and just over five French francs for a taller.
\item Not having all the required signs. See above page 27.
\end{enumerate}
exchanged for their full value 1). For small change dark blue beads, much in demand in the Habab area 2) were used. Three such beads were called Kebir, 30 beads were called Diwany and 120 were called Harf. The number of Harfs exchanged for a taller varied according to circumstances. Sometimes 24 Harf were given, sometimes 30 and sometimes even 38 3).

The system of weights in Massawa was most complicated. For different articles different weights having the same name were used. Thus a Wakia of ivory was about 19 Kg, but a Wakia of gold and musk was 64 grams 4). The ounce was equal to the weight of the Maria Theresa taller (just over 27 gram). For most articles the Rotol (or Rotoli) was of 16 ounces, but for some articles it was of 17 5). A Rotol was about 445 grams and 20 Rotols were called Farazela 6).

Measurements of length were used especially for cloth. Besides the simple length of an arm from the elbow to the tip of the finger there was the pic Endesi of 0.72 meter for

2) In the neighbourhood of Massawa.
special kinds of cloth and silk. The pic Beladi used for all other cloths was only 0.62 meter.

The governor of Massawa was nearly an absolute ruler. The commander of the small garrison, the controller of the customs, the customs inspectors and the treasurer were all paid out of the revenue of Massawa. The seat of the government was the diwan or government house and its secretary was usually one of the more important merchants in Massawa. Until the early 1830's the customs were farmed out to different people, but as a result of the introduction of stricter control, heavier taxation and monopolies since the mid 1830's, the customs collection became the responsibility of the governor who received a regular salary.

The custom house was one of the centres of economic activity in Massawa. All the incoming and outgoing merchandise

2) Ten Yemenies were employed at 3 tallers per month and keep. L.G. 186. No. 1470, Christopher 1842.
4) Abbadie 21300, p. 337.
had to be registered in the customs books 1). Furthermore, large quantities of the luxurious articles brought from the highlands or imported by sea, were kept in bond until sold. However, as the tax in such case was usually fixed according to the selling price, every sale had to be witnessed by the Nazil of the merchants and another person 2). After paying the customs dues the buyer was given a certificate stamped with the stamp of the Diwan. This certificate together with a Raftiya 3) had to be produced before any boat was allowed to depart from the harbour.

Trade in Massawa was regulated and supervised by the government and thus served as another source of income for the authorities. The Shubashi, head of the market, kept the weights, saw to the security and order and arbitrated between the merchants when difficulties arose. He farmed his position for a hundred tallers annually and received for his services presents from each shop-keeper and trader who used the market 4). The chief weigher in the custom

2) C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. Degoutin, 20.4.1841. The sale was finalised by both sides holding hands over a piece of cloth. Abbadie 21301. pp. 73-74. para. 234.
3) The Raftiya was a certificate showing that the boat paid the port dues of two tallers per indigenous boat. Pankyns, Vol. I. p. 418; Abbadie 21300, pp. 333-336; Ibid 21301, p. 72, para. 237.
4) Abbadie 21300, p. 341.
house also farmed his job for five hundred tallers per annum and was compensated by each person who needed his services 1). The town cryer and auctioneer farmed his position as well and was paid for his services 2) by whoever needed them.

The monopoly system was not introduced by the Egyptians in Massawa until the 1830's. By the middle of the fourth decade a partial monopoly on trade already existed in the town and half of the merchandise had to be sold to the government while the other half was shared among the merchants 3). When Egyptian rule was reintroduced to Massawa in 1846 the whole trade of the town was monopolised and foreign merchants could not trade directly with merchants of the highlands 4). The many Indian and European merchants

1) Abbadie 21300, p. 337. There were many opportunities for cheating and bribery in this position. According to Flowden (Confidential 1846-1868. No. 35. 10.12.1848) this job was farmed in the late 1840's for 700 tallers per annum and the weigher charged the merchant 5% for performing his duties.


3) Katte, pp. 129,135. Compare to similar regulations regarding the coffee of the Yemen. Page 264 below.

who visited Massawa in the late 1840's could acquire the
produce of Ethiopia either from the government or from local
merchants 1). Under pressure from foreign governments and
as a result of the decline in trade the above arbitrary
regulations were annulled in 1848 2).

The revenue of the government of Massawa was derived
from port charges, income from the nearby islands and above
all from taxations of foreign and local merchants. The
income from the nearby islands must have been negligible 3)
and the port charges were about two tallers per indigenous
boat and thus could not amount to more that 600-700 tallers
per annum 4). The revenue from Massawa's customs was
usually estimated in the 1830's and early 1840's to be about
25,000 tallers per annum 5), but in some cases it was claimed
that the taxation on trade brought 40,000 and even 70,000
tallers 6). Customs were collected from all the merchandise

4) Including what was exacted from the occasional European
   and Indian boats which docked at Massawa. C. & C. Massawa,
   Vol. I. Degoutin, 20.4.1841. 250-300 boats docked at
   Massawa annually. See above page 62, footnote 4.
5) L.C. 186. No. 1470. Christopher. April 1842; C. & C.
   p. 97. Not including income from the farming of
different positions.
6) Abbudie 21300, p. 331; Ibid. 21301, p. 76, para. 249;
   Confidential 1846-1868. Enclosure in No. 12. Plowden
imported to Massawa by sea. Merchandise brought to Massawa by land paid not only import duties but a small export duty as well. Indian merchants were somehow protected by the British from heavy arbitrary taxation 1), especially after Aden became a British base in 1839 and the ports of the Red Sea were regularly visited by boats of the Indian navy. After Massawa reverted to the Turkish Pashalik of the Hijaz 2) in the early 1840's, a smaller duty of 5% was negotiated for the British subjects based on the 1838 agreement between the Porte and Great Britain. Arab merchants from Jidda and the Yemeni coast, being Muslims and in some cases closely related to the merchants of Massawa, usually managed to get around the custom authority and pay a low rate 3). The bulk of the income of the Massawa authorities came from the caravans coming from the highlands. Although on the whole duty in Massawa on articles coming from the highlands was considered to be about 10% of the value of the merchandise, the rates were arbitrary and not fixed 4). Thus Christian and Muslim merchants alike were fleeced by the authorities.

3) Abbadie 21301, p. 27, para. 68.
and by anybody connected with the government of Massawa and the hinterland. In some cases the extortion amounted to between a quarter and a third of the value of the merchandise brought by the highland merchants 1). First came the Awaid 2), which the merchant had to pay to the Naib of Arkiko and which amounted to about 10% of the value of the merchandise 3). Then there was the arbitrary taxation of Massawa, and last but not least, the many charges for services afforded by government officials and the presents to the commander of the army, the soldiers and other officials 4). Finally.

On the return journey the imported merchandise which had already paid the taxation of Massawa was subject to the Fassas, or the present to be given to the Naib. This usually amounted to about 10% 5) of the value of the merchandise. The merchants on their side protected themselves by smuggling, and it was well known by all that actually a large part of the exports of Ethiopia were

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2) Imposition.
3) The Naib was described as the greatest robber. Abbadie 21300, pp. 332, 335; C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. 24.12.1846. Degoutin claims that the Awaid was only 3%.
5) See above page 68.
smuggled through Massawa and the nearby coast 1). Even the authorities assumed that about a fourth of the merchandise coming down from the highlands was not declared 2). However, it seems that the amount of merchandise smuggled was far larger than one fourth of the quantities declared. No doubt the larger part of gold exported from Ethiopia did not go at all through the customs of Massawa 3). Gold was very easily hidden and the merchants usually kept it hidden on their own body or in their saddles 4). The same could be said about the musk, which was transported in horns and could be easily hidden. Furthermore, a large number of slaves did not reach Massawa but were transported to the Arabian coast by little fishing boats departing at night from the small harbours near Massawa 5). Thus if the customs revenues on the merchandise coming from the highlands throughout the late 1830's and 1840's remained steady and did not amount to more than 25,000 tallers per year, it

3) Some Europeans who got their information from the customs, naively declared that the gold exports through Massawa stopped. Abbadie 21301, p. 59, para, 173 (1838) just after arrival; Range 388, Vol. 61, No. 2709. Nott, 1838.
5) See above page 72.
would be wrong to assume, on the basis on 10% taxation, that the exports of Ethiopia amounted to only a quarter of a million tallers. It should be pointed out that d'Abbadie estimated that the "great caravans" coming from the southwest through Gojam and Basso carried alone about 200,000 tallers worth of merchandise 1), that one of the Mausem caravans which Abbadi met transported to Massawa about 50,000 tallers of merchandise 2) and that Ferret claimed that about 30 Kg. of gold reached Massawa annually 3). As for the musk it is claimed by some sources that the export of musk through Massawa amounted to about 150-200 horns annually 4). On the other hand, local merchants told d'Abbadie and other Europeans who visited Massawa, that the export of musk was between 1,000 to 2,000 horns per year 5). The great discrepancy between the different

2) Abbadi 213oo, pp. 384-385.
3) Ferret, Vol. II. pp. 426-427; Lefebvre (Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge, pp. 29-31) saw 5 Kg. of gold in the house of Adowa's greatest merchant. Even if Ferret's information is exaggerated one must keep in mind that about 7,000 ounces of gold (Rochet Ms. p. 233) of different qualities passed through Gondar annually and probably most of it was smuggled through Massawa.
4) C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. Degoutin, 20.4.1841; Ruppell, Vol. I. pp. 193-194; Degoutin remarks that actually much more is exported than appears in the table he is giving.
sources occurred probably due to the fact that great quantities of musk were smuggled by each caravan.

In 1841 the French consular agent in Massawa, Degoutin, reported to his government 1) that 118,230 tallers worth of cloth and some metals was imported into Massawa from Bombay. 167,250 tallers worth of cloth, beads, bottles, wood, tobacco and sugar 2) were imported from Cutch, 96,400 tallers worth of cloth, metalware, metals and other goods were imported from Jidda, 68,500 tallers worth of agricultural products and tobacco were imported from the Yemeni coast and 40,750 tallers worth of ivory and agricultural products, mainly for re-export, were imported into Massawa from Sawakin. If one deducts the agricultural products imported for the consumption of the population of Massawa and the nearby area, and the goods imported into Massawa for re-exportation, one may assume that nearly 400,000 tallers worth of merchandise intended for Ethiopia were brought to Massawa in the year 1840-1841. The exports of Ethiopia by far surpassed the imports into this country and usually the gap was covered by a large amount of tallers which were taken into the country to be used as currency and for the use of the

2) Mainly cloth.
silversmiths\textsuperscript{1}). Nevertheless, according to customs returns supplied by Degoutin only about 281,000 tallers worth of merchandise was exported through Massawa in 1840-1841. Degoutin's information came from the customs authorities but he was told by the leading merchant in Massawa that the volume of the exports as claimed by the authorities was far too small, especially for the luxury articles coming from the highlands\textsuperscript{2}).

\begin{itemize}
\item[1)] According to Heuglin (p. 56) the exports were larger than import by one third. See also: Parkyns, Vol. I. pp. 410-411; C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. Degoutin, 18.11.1844; Range 383, Vol. 29. pp. 4310-4315, Radland 1811; "The balance of trade is in favour of Abyssinia, so that several thousand dollars find their way there". Valentia. Vol. III. p. 268.

\item[2)] According to the table brought by Degoutin (C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. 20.4.1841) only 1,000 slaves, 11,250 Kg. of ivory (600 Wakia), 312 Kg. of musk (about 120 horns) and about 1,500 ounces of gold were exported in the mentioned year. We have already shown that nearly 2,000 slaves were exported annually from the Massawa area (see above page\textsuperscript{70}). In a report submitted by Degoutin in 10.9.1844 (C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I.) Degoutin claims that about 100,000 Kg. of ivory reached Massawa in over a year. Commander Nott (Range 388, Vol. 61. No. 2709) claims that one caravan could bring sometimes 400 tusks. The figure for the musk is far too small as pointed out above and the gold is only a fraction of what was actually exported (See: Rochet Ms. p. 233. See also above p. 82.) One must keep in mind that 1841 was Degoutin's first year of office.
\end{itemize}
The two thousand slaves, most of whom were females, sold at over 50 tallers each, were worth about 100,000 tallers \(^1\). The ivory exported through Massawa was worth between 50,000 to 100,000 tallers \(^2\). The gold nearly 100,000 tallers \(^3\) and the musk, probably about 30,000 tallers \(^4\). One tends to believe that with other less costly products, especially ghee exported to Arabia, the exports of Ethiopia through Massawa amounted in the 1830's and 1840's \(^5\) to nearly half a million tallers annually.

1) See above pages 69-70. According to Ruppell (Vol. I. pp. 193-194) they were worth 120,000 tallers.

2) The supply of ivory grew throughout the second quarter of the century. Degoutin reports in 1844 (C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. 10.9.1844) that in 15 months 100,000 Kg. of ivory worth 112 tallers per 100 Kg. reached Massawa. See also: Parkyns, Vol. I. pp. 410-412. In 1842-1843 the price of ivory was 1.4 tallers per Kg. C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. Degoutin. 15.1.1843.

3) Abbudie 21301. p. 119, para 348. - 100,000-120,000 tallers; 7,000 ounces at an average price of about 12 tallers per ounce. See: Rochet Ms. p. 233; Plowden estimates that 2,500 ounces at just over 15 tallers per ounce is exported but he adds that most of the gold is smuggled. Lefebvre, Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge, p. 31.

4) The price of musk was about 35 tallers per Kg. (C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I. Degoutin, 15.1.1843). When Degoutin reported an annual export of 10,000 ounces at 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) taller per ounce (C. & C. Massawa, Vol. I., 20.4.1841) he was told by the most important merchant in Massawa that this figure was far too small. Of an export of a few thousand Kg. per year. See: Range 388. Vol. 61. No. 2709. Nott, 28.4.1838; Lefebvre, Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge, p. 33.

5) It is only to be expected that in times of war and during the period of Egyptian aggression and Tigrenian raiding, trade diminished.
There is little doubt, if any at all, that the luxury products and slaves coming from western and southwestern Ethiopia formed the largest part of this export 1).

By the first quarter of the 19th century caravans from Begamder and Gondar were regularly trading with southwestern Ethiopia, as far as Kaffa. Some northern merchants, especially from Derita, even settled in the more important centres of trade, among the Galla and Sidama people 2). Caravans to the southwest were usually organised in Gondar which became the entrepot for the lucrative products coming from Basso, Enarea and Kaffa. However, the most active in this branch of trade, the leading slave merchants in the area, specialising in the "better quality" Galla-Sidama slaves, were the merchants of Derita, a small town in Begamder 3).

Derita was a town of merchants, a short way from the town of Ifag in Begamder on the route to Debra Tabor. The town's population was a mixture of Amhara, Galla and Arabs 4).

1) Some ivory and about 2,000 ounces of gold as well as a number of slaves came to Massawa from northwestern Ethiopia and the Sudan.


3) Beke Dr. C.T.: On the countries South of Abyssinia, London 1843. p. 13; Athenaeum No. 1105, from 1848; Abbadie.

4) Combes Vol. II. p. 44.
most of whom professed Islam \(^1\). The influence of the town of Derita on the spread of Islam and the commercial development in southwestern Ethiopia was out of all proportion to the size of this town. The merchants of Derita were very active in the caravan trade of Ethiopia. Caravans left Derita for Shoa, for the Wollo areas, to the coast, to Sennar, to Gojam, to Enarea and even to Kaffa \(^2\). Nearly all of the male population of the town visited Mecca at least once and had a right to the title of Haj \(^3\). One of Derita's leading slave merchants told Dr. Beke in Basso: "Where is the land that a Derita lij (a child of Derita) does not reach" \(^4\).

The head of the customs of Begamder, one of the six Negad Rased of northern Ethiopia \(^5\), was from Derita and had his headquarters in this little town and only a representative in the large commercial town of Ifag \(^6\).

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1) At one time there must have been a strong Christian element in Derita. Abba Lagas, a Christian and a grandson of a merchant of Derita who settled in Sakka told D'Abbadie (21300 p. 205) of tens of Christian families in Sakka who came from Derita.


3) Combes Vol. II. p. 43.


5) See above page 33. Massaia G. Miei Trentacinque Anni, pp. 94-95: Massaia claims that in the late 1840's, the muslim Negad Ras lived in the nearby town of Enfaras.

Small caravans and merchants from Derita joined the larger caravans organised in Gondar. Some of the more important Derita merchants were usually commissioned by some of the great merchants of Gondar to serve as their agents and to transport the merchandise which they imported from the coast to Basso in Gojam. On the other hand many Gondari merchants joined the Derita caravans organised by the merchants of this town. It is therefore very difficult to distinguish between the caravan trade from Gondar to southern Ethiopia, and that of Derita, especially when taking into account the very scanty source of material regarding this subject.

Rochet d'Hericourt claims that six large caravans and fifteen lesser ones came from Gojam to Gondar in a year and that two large caravans reached Gondar directly from Enarea in the same year 1). Those caravans brought with them a large number of Galla-Sidama slaves and the usual luxury products of the southwest, gold, ivory, musk, cardamon and precious skins. The caravans, probably those classified as big, were usually composed of 50 to 60 merchants who transported their merchandise on approximately 100 mules and 80-100 donkeys. The merchandise sent with the caravans from Gondar to Gojam, was mainly old copper, old brass, cheap metal products, some

1) Rochet Ms. p. 309.
silk, and above all blue and white Indian cloth and Venice beads\(^1\).

The route to Gojam\(^2\) lay through the town of Ifag, where the Negad Ras of Derita, or his representative, inspected the caravans and received the dues. After leaving Ifag the caravan went to Manto Gora near Derita which served as an assembly place for merchants and caravans going to Gojam. Here the Derita merchants and other travellers joined the Gondar caravans\(^3\). The passage of the Abay could be affected only after the rainy season\(^4\) and thus the first caravans from Begamder and Gondar could not reach Yejubi or Basso before November\(^5\). Although the only place in Gojam which had an official Negad Ras was Basso, caravans had to pay their way through a number of customs barriers. Caravans were well received by the inhabitants of Gojam and were relatively safe in this province. Their advance was relatively speedy although Gojam was much disturbed by war and greatly depopulated\(^6\).

\(^1\) Rochet Ms. pp. 305-306, 309.

\(^2\) On caravan route from Gondar to Basso, see: Abbadie 21305, pp. 343-344.

\(^3\) Abbadie 21305. pp. 343-344; Combes Vol. IV. p. 96.


\(^5\) Beke Commerce p. 25.

The market of Basso in Gojam was among the most important in Ethiopia, and from the point of view of the export trade, Basso was probably the most important 1). Basso was actually the channel by which the products of the southwest reached the north and the products of the north reached the southwest. In the market of Basso merchants from the Galla-Sidama areas met merchants coming from Shoa, Wollo, Gondar and even Massawa. By necessity Basso was the only passage by which caravans going from the north and from the Wollo countries went to Enarea, Jimma and Kaffa and caravans coming from the above mentioned countries went to north and eastern Ethiopia. Basso was situated on the border of the Galla-Sidama countries of the southwest near one of the best fords of the Abay 2) and on the route to the Gudru countries.

War between the Amhara of Gojam and the Galla tribes


2) Called Melka Furi. In May 1841 the Abay in this spot was 50-60 yards wide and its greatest depth was about 5 feet; Journal of the Royal Geographical Society. Vol. 14. p. 18, Beke. One must remember that this was the end of the dry season. See also: Abbadie Antoine: Geographie de L'Ethiopie, Paris 1890. p. 89.
beyond the Abay had been continuous since the 17th century 1). Further Galla expansion into Gojam, it is claimed, was prevented only because of the firearms which reached the hands of the Gojamites 2). However, in the first half of the 19th century the governors of Gojam not only succeeded in containing the Galla but they frequently transferred the war to other side of the Abay 3). Nevertheless, the only tribe whose resistance was completely broken, and who became dependant on Ras Guchu of Gojam by the second Quarter of the century, were the Gudru 4). All the other Jimma, Galla tribes succeeded in holding their own against the Amhara and even raided from time to time into Gojam 5). Gudru, a dependancy of Gojam, having many Gojamis immigrants 6) became in the first half of the 19th century the natural avenue for the trade of the north with the rich areas of southwestern Ethiopia.

The market of Basso, like many other markets in Ethiopia, was just an open field, about 8 miles from the

3) Abbadie 21302 p. 387.
4) Abbadie Athenaeum No. 1041, from 1847.
6) Abbadie 23851, pp. 588-589.
provincial town of Yawish \(^1\). It was the seat of the only Negad Ras of Gojam (called Negad Ras of Basso) as the greatest part of the income of the province was derived from this market \(^2\). Thousands of villagers and small Galla merchants from beyond the Abay gathered each Monday at Basso to exchange agricultural products and domestic animals and to acquire the little they needed of foreign products. The revenue of the Negad Ras of Basso from agricultural products was substantial, but it was even greater from taxes collected from passing caravans \(^3\) and from merchants who came to trade at Basso \(^4\). Each coffee load paid at Basso one amoleh, each ivory load two amolek, slaves two to three amoleh and imported merchandise, a percentage which was decided upon by negotiation \(^5\). Some caravans coming from the north or from the south just passed Basso on their way and camped for a few days near the market in order to acquire the necessities they needed, and in order to do a little trading while the market was going on. Most caravans came to Basso for a longer period or made Basso the terminal of their journey.

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2) Plowden Travels, pp. 130, 279-280; Beke, Commerce, p. 21.
3) From one caravan 300 tallers worth of merchandise were received. Abbadie 21300, p. 387.
5) Beke, Commerce, p. 21; Abbadie 21300, p. 387.
The latter turned to the village of Yejubi, a short distance from the meadow in which the market of Basso took place.

The population of Yejubi numbered a few hundred. Most of them were Muslims but there was also a small Christian community living in the village. Galla merchants coming from beyond the Abay with lucrative merchandise and slaves, had to stay with one of the local brokers while transacting their business \(^1\). Thus the houses of the merchants and brokers of Yejubi were always full of merchants, their slaves and piles of the produce of southwestern Ethiopia as well as imported merchandise. Yejubi had seventeen recognised brokers who succeeded in monopolising most of the trade in the Basso area. On every gold transaction the brokers charged for their services two amoleh per each ounce from each side, on coffee one per cent in kind from each side, on musk one amoleh per ten ounces from each side, and for slaves two amoleh per head from each side \(^2\).

Over and above the great quantities of agricultural produce and domestic animals sold on each market day \(^3\), caravans from the north and from the Wollo areas imported

\(^2\) Beke, *Commerce*, p. 18; Matteucci, p. 281.
\(^3\) See: returns of Basso customs. Abbadie 21300, pp. 387-388.
into Basso enormous quantities of beads, of colours and sizes in demand in the Galla areas 1), cotton cloths of various qualities and colours. Above all of dark blue colour of two qualities. Hindi, the better quality and Tekur, the poorer quality 2). Copper which was greatly in demand all over the southwest was also imported in great quantities into Basso 3). Of the products of northern Ethiopia large quantities of amoleh were brought to Basso to be re-exported to the whole southwest, either in their original form or in smaller pieces 4). The rate of exchange of amoleh at Basso was 20-25 amoleh per taller 5).

Small groups of merchants started to appear in Basso in October, just after the end of the rainy season. The Galla merchants still had to swim across the Abay in order to reach the market and they transported their merchandise through the river in sealed skin bags 6) to prevent damage by the water. The market became very busy in November when the river became fordable and many caravans from all over the southwest, including caravans from Asandabo in Gudru,
reached Basso each week 1). The market reached its peak with the arrival of the great caravans from Enarea from the month of December or at the latest in the beginning of January 2). All the caravans coming from beyond the Abay brought to Basso huge quantities of coffee of different qualities 3). On top of the coffee carried by mules and donkeys 2,700-2,800 loads of ivory reached Basso annually 4). Nearly all of the musk produced in the southwest and the gold from Wallage went to northern Ethiopia through Basso. Gold and musk were exempted from taxation but as it was customary to trade in those items in secrecy no information is available regarding the quantities of gold and musk which passed through Basso 5).

Basso was one of the most important centres of the slave trade in Ethiopia. All the slaves exported from Enares northwards passed through Basso in addition to the many slaves brought to Basso as a result of the constant wars between the divided Galla tribes, which lived in the area between the Abay, the Gibe and Didessa. Dr. Beke 6) was

2) Beke, Commerce, p. 25.
3) 200-250 tons of coffee reached Basso annually in the 1840's. Abbadie 21300, p. 387; See also: Matteucci, pp. 265-266. Enarea's coffee was considered the best.
4) Abbadie 21300, p. 387; Matteucci, p. 268.
6) Beke, Commerce, p. 23.
told that between 5,000 to 10,000 slaves passed through Basso annually. However, in the 9 weeks in which Beke stayed at Basso, from the end of 1841 to the beginning of 1842\(^1\), only 725 slaves, or an average of 80 per week, reached the market. If one takes the season at Basso to be made of about 35 weeks \(^2\) this would mean that nearly 3,000 slaves reached the market annually. True enough, Dr. Beke was told that the 1841-1842 season was a bad season for the slave trade and that slave merchants in Gudru preferred not to bring their slaves to Basso in order not to flood the market \(^3\). But even if the weekly average during the height of the season in a "good" year was much higher than 80, one tends to believe that in the first and last months of the market the figure was probably below 80 and thus the number of slaves reaching Basso could not be much more than 3,000 per year. Moreover, in 1844 Abbadie was told by an employee of the Negad Ras of Basso that 3,000 slaves reached Basso annually \(^4\), although he claimed, that from 1841 this number was swelled to 3,700 as a result of

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1) The height of the season.
2) The season being from the end of October to June.
3) Beke, Commerce, p. 23.
4) Abbadie 21300, pp. 387-388. 300 tallers were collected on slaves at 2 amoleh per head. The taller being reckoned to be worth 20 amoleh.
the coming of Djazmatch Marso 1) and the continuous wars.

Having paid the Negad Ras the regular customs, some caravans leading hundreds of slaves from southwestern Ethiopia just passed Basso on their way northwards. However most of the slaves from the Galla-Sidama areas were brought to Basso for sale, and were disposed off, through the brokers in the village of Yejubi 2). These slaves were first exposed for the inspection of potential customers in the market of Basso 3). After being displayed at the market, they were taken back to the huts of the brokers in Yejubi in which the bargaining took place. "The principals of their brokers seated on the ground take each other's hands, the hands being covered with their cloths ... by grasping or pressing the fingers they make known the price which they are respectively willing to give or accept ... Having first settled between themselves whether the price in question is to be in gold (ounces), silver (dollars) or in salt (amoles)... for 50 grasp the whole 5 fingers, for 40 only four. For 60 they first grasp the whole five and say 'this' and then

1) The sentence regarding Djazmatch Marso is not clear in the above document. Djazmatch Marso was Ras Ali's cousin and was taken prisoner by Guchu's son - See Plowden, Travels, p. 208.
2) Beke, Commerce, p. 21.
3) Customers and onlookers examined the teeth of the slaves, felt their bosoms and touched the palms of their hands while the slaves stood completely passive. The Friend of the African. Published by the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade. Vol. 1. p. 135. Beke.
after a momentary pause add "and this" accompanying the latter words with pressure of one finger only... subdivisions of the wokiet are made known by pressing the nail of the forefinger on the forefinger of the other party, the end joint being \( \frac{1}{4} \), the second joint or middle of the finger \( \frac{1}{2} \) and the middle of the first phalanx \( \frac{3}{4} \). As it mostly happens that several persons are interested or if not so, at all events take part in the transactions as friends or advisors, - its progress is communicated to them by the principals through the other hands which are in like manner hidden under their clothes... When any of these think the amount offered sufficient, they cry out 'sell', 'sell' and if the conclusion of the bargain be long delayed, this cry is repeated"...

The usual price of a Galla-Sidama Gurbe \(^2\) was about four to eight tallers paid in Tekurs of Rumania \(^3\). Wosifs were sold for eight to twelve tallers and for the most beautiful even sixteen tallers were obtained. Mature women were cheaper and could be bought for four tallers, while

2) For explanation of Gurbe and Wosif see page 159 below.
3) 3 Tekurs, an inferior cotton cloth, equalled one taller. 150 Rumanis, a coarse dark red glass bead, equalled one amoleh.
Shankalla (Negroid) slaves usually sold for four to six tallers 1).

While in the house of the brokers in Yejubi, the slaves were on the whole well treated. In order that they should fetch a better price, they were given a scanty dress, and they were washed and fed. The girls were even adorned with all kinds of primitive jewellery which was taken from them when they were sold. They were taken each day to a meadow near the river where they were left to themselves, but of course, the young children-slaves frightened out of their wits by the new environment, clung to their masters, and never dreamt of escaping 2). After being sold the slaves were taken by caravans to Derita, Gondar, Wollo or Argoba, from where they were later on taken to the sea or to the Sudan.

In addition to caravans coming from the north and going through Basso to Leka, Enarea of Jimma, caravans were organised at Basso to go across the Abay into the southwest. The caravans going from Basso were not very different from

2) Beke, Commerce, p. 22; F.O.T.A., Vol. II. p. 8, Beke. A very different picture of the conditions of slaves in the late 1870's is presented by Matteucci, p. 274.
those organised all over the north. d'Abbadie considered the caravan with which he went to Enarea in 1843 to be small. This caravan was composed of over 20 merchants with 31 donkeys, 8 horses and 23 mules, 3 or 4 of which were carrying amoleh 1). On leaving Basso each caravan received an escort from the Negad Ras of Basso 2) which accompanied it across the Abay 3). On entering Gudru the merchants came to a country which system of government was very different from the north and each merchant had to choose immediately a patron and protector from among the Gudru chiefs 4) in order to be able to proceed into Galla territory.

In the first half of the 19th century the Gudru tribes beyond the Abay south of Gojam numbered about 100,000-120,000 people 5). They were divided into seven main units led by traditionally elected officers 6). "Goodroo is perhaps a specimen of nearly as pure a republic as can exist ... Of course the influence of comparative wealth, of personal character and courage, or of inherited name, is

1) Abbadie 21300, p. 241. Of the composition of large caravans see above page 88.
3) The merchandise was taken across the river in sealed skin sacks. Abbadie 21300, p. 137
4) Abbadie 21300, p. 156.
6) Plowden Travels, p. 305; Abbadie 23851, pp. 508-509.
felt here, as elsewhere, but only the extent of persuasion, not of command and frequently even that only on the territory, or in the immediate neighbourhood, of the great man. Each man on his father's land is master; the public road even is thus private property"¹). As among the other tribes of the area the Gada system among the Gudru was still the form of social and political organisation and each tribe had a few elected officers changing at the end of the cycle of the Gada ²). Nevertheless, it was property and bravery as well as experience which counted most and in the late 1830's and throughout the 1840's the most important chief among the Gudru was Chumi Macha Abba Biña, the richest in cattle and the largest land owner among the Gudru people ³). Abba Biña had the support of six out of the seven Gudru tribes ⁴). Furthermore, there are signs that here as elsewhere, the Galla political system was corrupted and that the traditional elective offices tended to become hereditary ⁵).

There were no villages in Gudru as each family lived

1) Plowden Travels, pp. 307-308.
5) Plowden Travels. p. 290. The sons of Dookee; Massaia, I miei Vol. III. p. 44. Dookee was the Abba Dula; See also Athenaeum, No. 1041 from 1847 - Marriage arranged between son of Chumi Macha and grand-daughter of Abba Bagibo; Abbadie 21300, p. 171.
on its own, and was master of the area surrounding its enclosure "on ne trouve pas deux maisons qui touchent" \(^1\).

Since the 18th century many Muslim and Christian Gojamis settled among the Gudru. In the 1830's and 1840's Asandabo, the central market of the Gudru became very important \(^2\).

The Gudru merchants as well as many individuals frequently visited the Basso market and the Gudru people as a whole were favourably inclined the passage of trade through their country, from which they greatly benefited. However, owing to the lack of central authority, the system of patronage and the many extortions of Gudru chiefs, the passage through the country of the Gudru was a nightmare to the merchants \(^3\) and all prayed for the conquest of this country by its enemies \(^4\). The traders had to put up with all exactions and extortions of the Gudru as long as this country was the only Galla area along the Abay, which afforded at all the passage of the caravans \(^5\). Many weeks were wasted by

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3) Abbadie 21300, pp. 161-163, 164, 166. Some Gojamites married Gudru women and even became important chiefs, Massaia, I. Miei, Vol. II. p. 156.

4) Abbadie 21300, pp. 159-160.

5) Abbadie 21300, pp. 161-163; Ibid 21303, pp. 259-260. Para 106. Cecchi E.: *Da Seilla alle frontiere del Caffa*. Rome 1886-1887 (Vol. II. pp. 555-556) claims that to the tribes of this area strangers were equivalent to an enemy. A stranger was not respected and to kill was considered an honour.
caravans in endless arguments with Gudru chiefs and heads of families regarding the value of presents which should be given to each landlord and chief along the road which the caravan wanted to pass 1).

During the second quarter of the 19th century the Gudru were under constant pressure from their neighbours to the south and to the east, mainly subtribes of the greater Jimma tribe, The Jimma Rare, Jimma Hine, Jimma Nunoo and the Horro. The Gudru by this time were completely sedentary and completely lost their belligerent spirit. They were considered among the neighbouring Galla tribes as cowards, and an easy prey 2). The Gudru were constantly losing ground to their enemies and large tracts of land, inhabited by the in the past, Gudru and under cultivation were in the 1840's either completely deserted or in the hands of the semi-pastural Jimma 3). There is little doubt that it was owing to this constant pressure, that the Gudru were becoming more and more compliant and dependant on Ras Gushu of Gojam to whom they

1) Plowden Travels, p. 308. The Negad Ras had to know who merited a present and who did not. Abbadie 21300, pp. 161-162.
3) Athenaeum No. 1041, from 1847, Abbadie; Abbadie 21300, pp. 159-160, 166; Plowden Travels, p. 305. The Jimma tribes north of the Abay should not be confused with the Jimma tribes under Abba Jifar.
paid some sort of a tribute. In the late 1840's, the Gudru fighting a losing war on two frontiers, sent a delegation to Ras Gushu to ask for his protection 1).

In war and in peace trade was flowing through Gudru country throughout the second quarter of the 19th century, the merchants being "protected" by different Goftas for whose services they paid very heavily. In times of war a woman would lead the caravan out of Gudru areas towards the nearest camp of the Jimma warriors, or the Gudru Gofta would escort the merchants until some Jimma came into sight 2). Merchants were always welcomed by the Jimma chiefs, who afforded them patronage in exchange for payment 3). The merchants were then forwarded from one Gofta to another 4), spending many days, in some instances weeks, with each patron. The Gofta, as custom demanded, feasted the merchants, while the amount of payment was decided upon. The longer the merchants were detained the surer the Gofta was of breaking their resistance to his demands. Thus the relatively short route between Basso and Sakka, which could be covered by a caravan in two weeks took about three

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1) Abbadie 21300, p. 799.
2) Athenaeum. No. 1041, from 1847, Abbadie; Abbadie 21300, p. 167.
3) Abbadie 23851, p. 34; Ibid 21300, pp. 171-172.
4) Athenaeum No. 1042, from 1847, Abbadie.
months 1), not counting the great amounts of merchandise which were expanded as presents along the road 2). It is to be expected that after suffering the continuous exactions along the road and unwillingly wasting many days with each unimportant chief or head of a family, the merchants looked forward to reaching the haven of despotic Enarea, where there was only one ruler and where they and their merchandise, were safe, as long as they paid the usual duties demanded by the king 3).


2) Abbadie 21300, pp. 172, 176, 187.

3) On the caravan route from Basso to Sakka, see: d'Abbadie 21305. pp. 344-345.
ENAREA AND SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA

In the second half of the 19th century Ethiopia's most important items of exports were, as in the past, gold, ivory, musk, slaves, incenses, precious skins and hides. All these products came from the southern, southwestern and to a lesser degree from the western provinces of the country. The northern provinces and Shoa had nothing of their own to export, except for some agricultural products and small quantities of high quality cotton cloth.

Before the Galla invasion in the 16th century, southern Ethiopia was inhabited by people of Kushitic origin called Sidama. In the east, Sidama territories reached the Webi, in the west as far as the valleys of the Sobat and the Didessa. In the north the Sidama occupied parts of Shoa and in the northwest they reached Agaomedder. When the Amhara started to expand southwards they absorbed certain groups of the northern Sidama, they placed military outposts


2) Meaning in Galla foreigners, Non Galla. Trimmingham, p. 179 footnote. Beckingham and Huntingford: Some Records etc. p. 1. While the term Sidama describes the people of the area, the form Sidamo is the name of a single tribe. See Beckingham, p. Li, LXIII.

3) Trimmingham, pp. 180-181.
in the centre of the Sidama regions and they propagated Christianity. This expansion was ended in the time of Gran and completely reversed by the great invasion of the Galla.

By the beginning of the 18th century, after two centuries of constant wars with the Amhara and the Galla, the Sidama resistance was completely broken and the Sidama plateau was overrun by the Galla tribes. The Galla completely absorbed the Sidama people in the areas they conquered. In their turn the Galla gave up, for the most part, the strictly nomadic life they led, and gradually adopted many of the Sidama customs, cultural features and forms of social and political organisation. Owing to the difficult mountainous terrain and the river valleys, the loosely knit Galla tribes split into even smaller units lacking any cohesion. Each unit was governed by duly elected officers, whose authority depended completely on the good will of each individual in the tribe, a system which to the outsider seemed to be bordering on anarchy. This political system and social organisation prevailed among the Galla of south and southwestern Ethiopia until the end of the 18th century, and continued to prevail, with some

1) Trimingham, p. 109; Beckingham: Travels of the Jesuits, pp. 150-151.
2) Taking office, according to the Gada system.
exceptions, until Ethiopia was united by Menelik. Throughout this time the whole area inhabited by the Galla and Sidama was in a continuous state of war. Besides attacks upon remaining Sidama principalities the many Galla tribes fought each other unceasingly and two tribes would unite only to attack a third. Thus it might be said that in the 18th century the political situation in Ethiopia's richest provinces was not at all conducive to trade. The number of north Ethiopian merchants who dared to make the long, difficult and dangerous road to Enarea, Wallaga or Kaffa in this century must have been very small ¹), and the trade with the coast through Harar greatly diminished.

In the second quarter of the 19th century European travellers and missionaries brought back to the coast information about the existence of five highly organised despotic Galla monarchies between the Omo and the Didessa. Those kingdoms were Limu-Enarea, Goma, Guma, Jimma-Kakka and Gera. One tends to believe that the monarchic system was adopted by the Macha Galla either at the end of the 18th century or more probably in the first years of the 19th ²).

¹) Bruce (Vol. III. p. 253) mentions Dreeda and Kroota as "the only territory in Abyssinia that produces wine, the merchants trade to Caffa and Narea, in the country of the Galla" Dreeda, is of course, Derita in Begamder. See above, pp. 86-87.

It is impossible to establish the exact date at which each of the kingdoms mentioned above became a monarchy. This was probably the culmination of a process by which the authority of a successful war leader or of a traditional office holder, like the Abba Boku, Abba Dula or Moti, was strengthened gradually. In the second part of the 18th century the main elective posts among the southwestern Galla tended to become hereditary. The Moti or Abba Dula, which in the past was just the war leader during the cycle of his Gadda, acquired more and more authority until his title according to d'Abbadie, meant actually something very near to the Abyssinian Negus. This process, no doubt, was

1) d'Abbadie (21300. p. 760) writes that the Abba Boku or the "carrier of the scepter" is the head of the legislative authority. The Boku, is a wooden scepter carried in his belt. This scepter passes into the hands of the son on the father's death. If the Boku has no son, his wife holds the scepter and legislates the laws. See also: Massaia, I Miei, Vol. III, p. 60. Beckingham, p. 121, footnote I, describes the Abba Boku as "leader and representative of the age set". Bofo - Abba Gomol, who we think was the first king of Enarea is said to be the son of Boku. See: Harris, Sir William Cornwallis: The Highland of Aethiopia, London 1844, Vol. III, pp. 54-55; d'Abbadie 21300. p. 569. Actually one of d'Abbadie's informants (21301. p. 129) calls Abba Bagibo, the son of Bofo, sultan, while Bofo is called Abba Bokka. Ato Asmaron Legasse from the department of sociology U.C.A.A. who has worked for sometime among the Galla told me that he reached just the same conclusions as those brought above.

2) Moti, d'Abbadie writes (21300. p. 759) is the executive authority which the Abyssinians call Negus, but the Galla Moti cannot legislate laws as his main duty was to lead the army in battle.
affected by the transformation of the Macha Galla from nomadism to sedentary life. It was also greatly influenced by former and still existing Sidama states. Moreover, it seems that the establishment of the monarchic system was somehow also connected to the fact that the Gibe area was not only the main channel of trade with the north, but by itself an important source of lucrative items.

The new monarchies of Enarea, Guma and Goma 1) were established, it seems, in the first or even in the second decade of the 19th century 2). The kingdoms of Gera and Jimma-Kakka were founded in the third decade of the century 3). One is tempted to believe that the developments in the Red Sea area in the first quarter of the 19th century somehow influenced the consolidation and maybe even the foundation of the Galla states of the Gibe. The revival of islam and of trade in Arabia, were in the first decades of the 19th century, soon felt on the Ethiopian coast. Ethiopian merchants, mostly Muslims were eager to answer the demand for slaves, ivory, gold and musk and many caravans were

1) Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 239; Abbadie. 21300. p. 755. See also: Huntingford G.W.B: The Galla of Ethiopia, London 1955, p. 20; Trimmingham. pp. 200-201. Goma was the first state to be established as a result of Muslim settlers.


organised to go to the sources of those luxury items. No doubt the most important route by which political, economical and religious influences reached southwestern Ethiopia in the first half of the 19th century was the route from Massawa through Gondar and Gojam.

Harar had been declining throughout the 18th century and the expansion of Christian Shoa since the beginning of the 19th century had completely disrupted the direct route between the Somali coast and southwestern Ethiopia. The Sudan radiated very little influence, if any, to southwestern Ethiopia in the period we are covering. Even the conquest of the Sudan by Mohammed Ali did not change this situation. Sudanese merchants coming from the Sennar through Matamma were not allowed to penetrate into Ethiopia beyond Gondar. Those who tried to penetrate into western Ethiopia along the Abay and its tributaries were prevented from doing so by the hostile tribes and by a situation of complete anarchy which existed in Wallaga throughout the first half of the 19th century. Sudanese merchants reached the outlying

1) See below chapter on Harar.


negroid provinces of Kaffa but were not permitted to enter the kingdom proper. Thus they were not even able to contact the northern Abyssinian Muslim merchants who settled in Bonga in the eastern part of the kingdom and were not allowed to penetrate westwards beyond this point. It should also be kept in mind that the Islam adopted by the Galla of southwestern Ethiopia since the beginning of the 19th century, was of the Shafii Madhab predominant in northern Ethiopia and Harar, and not of the Maliki Madhab which is predominant in the Sudan. Moreover, among the many Muslim informants of d'Abbadie, whom he met all over western and southwestern Ethiopia not one came from the Sudan.

In the second half of the 18th century some northern merchants were trading with the rich kingdom of Kaffa through Lofe, Bun-O and Guma or through Enarea. Enarea's

1) Abbadie brings confused information regarding their allegiance to king of Kaffa. See Athenaeum, No. 1042 from 1847, No. 1105 from 1848.
importance was derived not only from its connections with Kaffa but also from the fact that owing to the continuous instability in the area of the Jimma tribes, merchants made this country their headquarters while trading in the southwest. Here they acquired the many slaves offered on the market as a result of the continuous wars among the Galla and the Sidama, the ivory which came from all over southern Ethiopia, the musk produced in Enarea and Kaffa and quantities of gold which reached the country by different routes.

The kingdom of Enarea was invaded by the Limu Galla probably at the beginning of the 18th century and the king of Enarea had to escape to Kaffa. The Limu Galla settled in the valley of Enarea and around it, and absorbed whatever Sidama people were left in the country. As the people became more sedentary the power of their chiefs grew. While in Enarea in 1843, d'Abbadie heard the following oral tradition regarding the establishment of the Galla monarchy of Limu-Enarea. Abba Rebu (whom d'Abbadie described

5) Galla chiefs were usually called after the name of their war horses. Thus Rebu was probably the name of his horse.
as an energetic old man), was in the past the most important Soressa of Enarea, or at least of the Limu tribe. Bofo, the son of Boku was a poor nobleman. He cultivated his land on the border of Nonno who often invaded Limu. From time to time Bofo took part in raids into Nonno country riding his war horse Gomol, always returning with booty. He became very famous and Abba Rebu gave him his daughter in marriage. From this wife Bofo had his son Abba Bagibo or Ibsa. The story goes on to describe at length how Bofo quarreled with his father-in-law and was disgraced, and how relations with the jealous Guma neighbours deteriorated. The Guma invaded Limu and the Limu people led by their chief Abba Rebu escaped to the Mogga. Bofo, with a few friends, penetrated unnoticed into the valley of Enarea and into the midst of the Guma invaders. He took the Guma by surprise and killed many of the invaders. When the battle was over and the Guma were completely defeated, all the Limu fell

1) Dignitary, chief, leader.
2) Probably the son of the Abba Boku of the Limu. The Abba Boku was more of a spiritual leader. See on this subject: Trimingham, p. 192.
3) The Nonno Galla were the bitterest enemies of the Limu. They were semi-nomads and lived in the areas northeast of Enarea.
4) Thus he acquired the name Abba Gomol.
5) King of Enarea 1825-1861. See below.
6) Nomensland, existing between each Galla or Sidama territory to its neighbours. See below page 131.
on their knees before Bofo and said: "We do not want another master but you". Abba Rebu became one of Bofo's most devoted subjects. About 1825 1) Bofo abdicated in order to ensure the succession of his son Abba Bagibo. Abba Bagibo became the king of Enarea at the age of 23 2) and Bofo retired to the Massera (enclosure) of Sappa where he died in 1837 3). If Abba Bagibo was not as brave as Bofo, wrote d'Abbadie, he was at least much more cunning and crafty 4).

Abba Rebu was still alive when d'Abbadie visited Enarea in 1843. Bofo's death was only a matter of a few years and one should expect that events as important and as fresh as the foundations of the monarchy should be still reported relatively accurately by people who took part in those events. From the oral tradition brought above it seems that Bofo, who one might assume, was the son of the Abba Boku and a great warrior besides, founded the absolute monarchy of Limu-Enarea after strengthening his position by marrying the daughter of the recognised political or war

4) Abbadie 21300. p. 572.
leader 1). As Bofo died in 1837 and Abba Bagibo, his son by Abba Rebu's daughter, was 23 years old when he came to power about 1825, it is probable that Bofo - Abba Gomol, was acknowledged as the king of Enarea in the first or perhaps even in the second decade of the 19th century 2).

Throughout his reign, Bofo acted as a bloodthirsty tyrant, and was cruel even to his own flesh and blood. We are told 3) that "Abba Gumbal (Gomol) sought to destroy

1) It is claimed that Abba Bagibo was a descendant of Sapera, one of the two Portuguese who settled (it is claimed) in Enarea in the 16th century, the other being Sigaro. (Massai: I Miei. Vol. IV. p. 144; Cecchi Vol. II. p. 157; Bieber: Vol. II. p. 511; Beckingham, p. lix). It is further claimed by Massaia that in the competition between the house of Sapera and Sigaro, the final blow to the Sigaro clan was given by Abba Gomol (Abba Bagibo's father) in the beginning of the century and thus Abba Gomol and the Sapera clan were able to establish their authority in the area from Sakka, or Enarea Mountain, to the south of Sappa. The Northern and Eastern provinces were added to Enarea in the time of Abba Bagibo (Massaia, I Miei. Vol. IV. p. 144). It is of course possible that Bofo represented the Sapera clan while Abba Rebu was a Sigaro and when Bofo emerged supreme, or even before, a political marriage was arranged between the two clans. To ensure the peace, Bofo abdicated and Abba Bagibo, who belonged to both clans, came to power.

2) In a letter to Cardinal Franzoni, d'Abbadie (23851, p. 34) writes: From Lofe we came to Enarea, a country which became a kingdom at the beginning of this century. In the 1840's Bofo was still remembered as the Gofta - patroni, of Limu and not as Moti or Sapera which might have been the title of the king - d'Abbadie 21300, p. 223. See also: d'Abbadie 21303, p. 344, para 166. (from 1843); Cecchi Vol. II. p. 156; Tringham p. 201.

3) Isenberg, p. 14; See also: L.G. 184. No. 1098, Harris. 7.1.1842; Abbadie 21300. 744-5.
his sons and brothers". This behaviour of the new king could be easily explained by the need to establish a new form of government and to prevent disputes and civil war. Thus probably for the same reason Bofo adopted Islam a short time after coming to power \(^1\) on the advice of Muslim traders who settled in the country \(^2\). In his steps followed most of the ruling class and a large part of the population. "This country being the principal place of residence of the Mohammedan merchants of Abyssinia, whose precepts and example have had, and still continue to have, most surprising results in the conversion of the Gallas" \(^3\).

During Bofo's reign Enarea was continuously at war with Guma \(^4\), and merchants from Enarea had to go to Kaffa through Jimma-Badi which was a tributary of Enarea \(^5\). But the route through Jimma was very precarious and trade by this route could not be very much developed. In 1825 Abba

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1) Massaia (In Abissinia e fra i Galla. Florence 1895, p. 279) claims that the ruler of Jimma adopted Islam because this religion favours the idea of an absolute monarchy.


Bagibo came to power 1). While Bofo had been a cruel and a brave king, his son achieved his ambitions through politics and intrigues. Above all he believed in political marriages. He married the daughters and the sisters of many of the neighbouring rulers and he gave in marriage to rulers and important chiefs the large number of daughters he had from his many wives and concubines. Messengers and ambassadors were continuously on the road between Enarea and all the countries of southern Ethiopia and embassies from many kings and chiefs continuously visited Abba Bagibo 2). Thus, although a king of only a small kingdom, Abba Bagibo's name was known in many parts of Ethiopia, and Enarea became important out of all proportion to its size. Many merchants were attracted to the country, as they knew that from the moment they entered Enarea they would be free from exactions and vexation and could be sure of their own safety and the safety of their property 3).

1) Although according to tradition Bofo abdicated to ensure the heritage of his son, it seems more likely that Bofo was deposed by his immediate family. See: Isenberg and Krapf: Journals of the Rev. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf. London. MDCCXLIII. P. 14. When Abba Bagibo became king he was helped by a council made by his uncles, nephews and sons. Abaddie 21300. p. 199. November 1843.

2) See below page's 137-138.

Two events which probably occurred just after Abba Bagibo came to power helped to turn Enarea in the second quarter of the 19th century into the metropolis of the trade of southwestern Ethiopia. A war broke out between Guma and the principality of Bun-0 to the north, and thus the road through Guma to Kaffa was closed. This situation continued until the 1840's and the only remaining avenue open for the trade of Kaffa was through Enarea and Jimma-Badi 1). The second event was the pacification of the country between Enarea and Kaffa and the unification of the Jimma tribes by Abba Jifar Sanna. In 1833 Abba Jifar became the Abba Dula of Hirmata, one of the Jimma principalities south of Enarea 2). The Jimma were at that time under continuous pressure both from Kulo and from Enarea 3). Abba Jifar embarked upon a plan to reunite the Jimma tribes and within a few years of his coming to power, he succeeded in establishing the united kingdom of the Jimma - Jimma-Kakka or Jimma Abba Jifar 4), the strongest state among the

2) Massaia: In Abissinia, p. 279.
4) They were Habatti, Hadia, Jada, Hirmata, Jimma-Badi and Sadero. In 1847-1848 Badi-Folla was annexed as well. Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 540; Abbadie 21300. p. 797. April 1848; Abbadie Antoine: Geographie, de L'Ethiopie, Paris 1890. pp. 79-80
Gibe-Galla countries 1). At first Enarea benefited from this turn of events, as much more of the Kaffa trade reached Sakka by way of Jimma-Badi owing to the stability brought to the Jimma areas to the south. But later on merchants just passed through Enarea on their way to Jimma and to the north or tried to avoid the taxation of Abba Bagibo by by-passing Enarea altogether. In order to prevent the merchants from abandoning Enarea for Jimma, and in order to draw more trade to Sakka, Abba Bagibo from the mid 1830's on forbade foreign merchants to go beyond Sakka 2). The merchants from Kaffa, from Kulo and from the south were thus forced to sell their merchandise to the merchants of the north at Sakka and the merchants from Gondar, Adowa and Derita, who wanted to sell their merchandise and acquire the luxurious products of the south, had to do it at Sakka as well.

Indirectly the rise of Enarea and the prohibition on northern traders to go beyond Sakka, encouraged the immersgence of a new class of small Galla traders called Afkala. The

1) Massaia: I. Miei, Vol. VI. pp. 3-4. Massaia wrote that Abba Jifar died in approx. 1855; Abbadie 23851, p. 34. To strengthen his position and to further the unity among his people, Abba Jifar adopted Islam and took the title of Moti-king. Massaia: In Abissinia, p. 279.


relative security afforded by the Galla kingdom since the second decade of the 19th century encouraged the growth of internal trade in the southwest and produced the beginning of the new class of Galla merchants. The Afkala came mainly from the Galla of Lofe and Leka, but also from the many other Galla tribes. Some of these traders were freed slaves or former employees of northern merchants. Many others were younger brothers who, according to the Galla custom, did not share in the inheritance of their fathers 1). The afkala merchants had very little capital, but they did not confine themselves to one trip a year like the northern merchants and were continuously going and coming between the remotest parts of the Galla-Sidama countries. They travelled quickly and on their way stayed with kinsmen, acquaintances and protectors (Gofta). Their trade was based on a quick turnover and they could be satisfied with small profits 2). The prohibition upon traders to go further than Sakka was an important stimulous to the development of the Afkala traders class. With their small capital and lack of connection in the north they could not dream of embarking


upon long trips to Gondar or to the coast. Thus they were not affected by being prevented from going beyond Sakka.

On the other hand they found themselves nearly without any competition from the north Ethiopian merchants and they had a chance to develop their trade and build up their capital. In the 1840's much of the trade between the southwest and Basso in Gojam was already in Afkala hands.

Abba Bagibo's reign was not completely undisturbed. Although an able ruler, and although he nominated members of his family to his advisory council and as governors of provinces, he was continuously worried by rebellions and intrigues 1). Even his son and heir Abba Dula, tired of waiting for his inheritance, unsuccessfully tried to depose his father 2). Thus it was the third son of Abba Bagibo, Abba Gomol, who came to power on his father's death in 1861 3).

Abba Bagibo continuously fought his neighbours to the north and to the east in order to keep the caravan routes open and in order to strengthen his position. To secure the outlet to Gojam, Abba Bagibo led each year a few expeditions against the Nonno-Galla who disturbed the trade 4). These

3) The first son was drowned by the order of Abba Bagibo as he did not resemble him. See: Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 159.
expeditions lasted from one week to fifteen days and fast moving units of cavalry were sent in different directions to confuse the Nonno. The king was able to watch the advance of his troops and to co-ordinate between the different units by the columns of smoke which rose in the path of each unit. The soldier-farmers of Enarea 1) carried their own food, but after consuming this food they lived on the country. Those of the enemy, who were not killed in battle were enslaved together with all the women and children. The raided area was turned into Mogga 2) and Limu-Enarea's border was thus slowly advanced in the 1830's and 1840's until it incorporated large areas of the Nonno country. Raids were also carried against the Agalo and the other tribes 3) which continuously threatened the caravan route to the Soddo markets and the "coffee route" to Wari Haymanot (north of Shoa) through Agabja.

The reign of Abba Bagibo coincided with the rise of the Amhara kingdom of Shoa under Sahale Sellassie. As a result of the expansion of Shoa southwards and the frequent raidings and wars carried out by Shoa against the Soddo and other Galla tribes, Abba Bagibo lost his influence in the Soddo area and

1) See page 133 below
2) See page 131 below
his direct access to the important Soddo markets \(^1\)). In consequence Enarea was cut off from the Harar-Zeila and Tajura outlets \(^2\)) and thus it was even more dependant on the northern outlet.

In the south and southeast Abba Bagibo met political and military reverses as well. His advance in this direction was stopped by the rapid rise of Jimma-Kakka in the 1830's and in the 1840's. When Jimma-Badi became part of Jimma-Kakka, Enarea lost its chance of having a common border with Kaffa.

Immediately after the unification of the Jimma tribes, it became apparent to Abba Jifar that his interests and those of Enarea were clashing. The Jimma-Badi were tributaries of Enarea and the influence of Abba Bagibo was predominant among the Jimma tribes to the southeast of Enarea. Above all, while the near monopoly of the trade of the south brought prosperity to Enarea, Jimma enjoyed only the leftovers of this trade. Jimma at this time did not produce any coffee or musk which could attract the traders \(^3\)). It had on the other hand a direct access to the richest sources of

\(^1\) Harris. Vol. III. pp. 54-55; Krapf. pp. 64-65; See also below pages chapter on Shoa.
\(^2\) See below pages chapter on Shoa.
\(^3\) Abbadie. Athenæum. No. 1042, from 1847; Beke, Southern Abyssinia. p. 7.
ivory, and through it went the only open road to Kaffa. As a result of the security and the stability brought to the Jimma areas by Abba Jifar, more of the rich trade of Kaffa passed by the Jimma route. But this trade only went through Jimma to Enarea and thus enriched Abba Bagibo. With war going on intermittently between Jimma and Enarea throughout the 1830's and early 1840's, it became one of Abba Jifar's main objectives to free himself from his dependance on the Enarea route to the north. True enough, some traders defied Abba Bagibo's prohibition and reached Jimma through Liban, Nonno, Agalo and Folla, but on their way the merchants had to depend on the good will of many Goftas and in some parts this route was infested with robbers. It thus became clear to Abba Jifar that in order to divert to Jimma part of Enarea's prosperity he would have to open a new route leading to the new borders of Shoa and thus bring Jimma into touch with the merchants of the Somali and Afar coast. The most obvious way to achieve this goal was to conquer a corridor leading to the Soddo area.

Abba Bagibo was well aware of the fact that if Jimma had a

4) See below pages 380-381.
direct route to Shoa, Enarea would lose much of its importance. He intensified the war against the Agalo and the Nonno and pressure was exerted on the Badi-Folla who occupied a key position beyond the eastern borders of Enarea. Here again Abba Bagibo clashed with Abba Jifar, who wanted to annex the Badi-Folla, who were related to the greater Jimma-Badi tribe. After a continuous war, an understanding was reached about 1840 between Abba Bagibo and Abba Jifar (both Muslims) and the daughter of Abba Jifar was given to Abba Dula, son and heir to Abba Bagibo. Notwithstanding the agreement, Abba Jifar kept up his pressure on the tribes and kingdoms between Jimma and the Soddo markets. By 1843 Jimma's borders reached Botor, and only the old Sidama kingdom of Jinjero was able to repulse the Jimma attacks. In 1843 a large Jimma army was annihilated after entering the fortifications of Jinjero. Abba Jifar called upon his Galla allies, and above all upon Abba Bagibo, to support a renewed attack on Jinjero. It was, of course, against the interests of Enarea to help Jimma in this affair, and, although Abba

2) See below pages 380-381.
Bagibo promised to send his army, the Enarean reinforcements did not arrive on the appointed day and the Jimma had to resume the attack on their own. Finally the Jinjero were defeated in 1844 and their king was taken prisoner. Many Jinjero were sold into slavery and for about two years the country became a tributary of Jimma. In 1847 Abba Jifar released the old king of Jinjero after the latter swore allegiance to him. No sooner had the king of Jinjero reached his country than he renewed the war against the Jimma, using the treasures gathered by his fathers to finance it. Abba Jifar was not able to subdue Jinjero again 1), but raids against the Jinjero were carried on continuously until both countries were conquered by Menelik 2).

In 1847 Badi-Folla was finally conquered by Jimma and more of the trade of the north reached Jimma by this route 3). Abba Bagibo, who failed to conquer Agalo and the other tribes to the east, realised that the race was lost and he decided to change his tactics. The renewed war against the Jimma was stopped and the Kulo allies of Enarea were called off

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from the Jimma borders 1). The prohibition on traders going beyond Sakka was abolished, and most of the monopolies on trade existing in Enarea were done away with. Foreign merchants could now sell directly to the people of Enarea many items which had been a royal monopoly in the past, and on the other hand they could buy the products of the country directly from the people 2). Notwithstanding Abba Bagibo's realistic policy, Enarea started to decline. The death of Abba Bagibo in 1861, the rise of his untalented son to power and the reopening of the Kaffa-Guma-Lofe route hastened this decline. By the last quarter of the century it was quite apparent that Enarea had completely lost its predominance and importance in southwestern Ethiopia.

Enarea was typical to her sister Galla kingdoms of the Gibe-Didessa area. It was her favourable geographical position and her talented king which made her so famous in the second quarter of the 19th century. The kingdom of Enarea was quite small in size and in population, very far from the old kingdom of Enarea from which the new Limu-Enarea

1) Abbadie. 21300. p. 797. April 1848.
2) Red cloth was Freed from monopoly but gold continued to be an exclusive right of the royal family. See d'Abbadie. 21300. pp. 797-798. April 1848.
borrowed its name 1). Nevertheless it would be wrong to accept Cecchi's description of Enarea in the late 1870's 2) as applying to what Enarea used to be in the second quarter of the century. During the interval Enarea had undergone two terrible calamities. First, the plague, which caused a great depopulation of the country in the late 1840's 3); and the loss of much of its trade as a result of the expansion of Shoa, the growth of Jimma, the reopening of the Guma route and the death of Abba Bagibo 4). Cecchi estimated in 1879 that the area of Limu-Enarea was about 3,000 square kilometers and that the population of the country including slaves was about 40,000 souls 5). One must remember that by this time Enarea had lost an extensive area which in the past had been directly or indirectly dependant on her. Moreover, besides the great loss of population owing to the plague 6), the merchant community and many other people had left the country 7). It is probable that in the second quarter of the century the population of Enarea numbered about 100,000 souls.

2) Cecchi. Vol. II. Ch. XXXV.
In the time of Abba Bagibo the people of Enarea were completely sedentary and their life was relatively happy. As in all the Galla areas, there were no villages in Enarea. A small group of huts belonging to a family or to an important chief would be separated from the next group by cultivated fields. Only around some of the royal enclosures (Massera) did anything resembling a village or a small town grow. Sakka, the so called capital of Enarea, was described as a town of about ten to twelve thousand people with at least a few hundred Muslim Ulema. Actually the town was made up of groups of small hamlets inhabited by the indigenous people, in the centre of which was a market village where merchants from the north had probably settled since the beginning of the century. The market village was constantly inflated and deflated with the many merchants, servants and slaves arriving and departing with the many caravans.

3) Krapf. p. 64.
4) L.G. 184. No. 1098. Harris. 1.1.1842; Krapf. p. 64.
5) Abbadie. 21300. p. 205.
6) According to d'Abbadie (Athenaeum. No. 1105, from 1848) when the caravans are gone most of Sakka huts disappear. See also: Ibid: No. 1042, from 1847; Abbadie 21300. p. 218. para. 55.
Like every other Galla and Sidama principality in southwestern Ethiopia, Enarea was surrounded by several lines of defences. First came the Mogga, the no-mans-land left uncultivated around the country, which was inhabited by bands of thieves called Ketto. The Mogga was the battle­field in which all the wars were fought. The country or the tribe which was victorious moved its defences into, or beyond, its Mogga and turned part of the defeated country, into a new Mogga 1). Next came the lines of defences proper. Whenever nature did not provide them, the defences were built by the population. Thus the country was surrounded by palisades, ditches, rivers, swamps and thick forests. Wherever roads from the neighbouring areas entered the country the defences had gates called Kella. Enarea, for instance, had a Kella on the road to the north, a Kella on the road to Guma, another on the road to Goma, another to Jimma and some others on the roads leading to the east and northeast 2). Each gate was guarded by a unit of cavalry commanded by an officer called Abba Kella. This officer helped a special representative of the king to count the entering merchants to inspect their merchandise and to

collect the customs. Undesirable people were prevented from entering the country and nobody was allowed to leave the country unless accompanied by a "Passport man" called Dagno or Daggo 1). When departing the merchants were counted again to prevent unauthorised people from leaving the country 2). In this way the king had the strictest control on the people entering his territories and at the same time he could prevent the many thousands of slaves employed by himself and by his subjects, from escaping.

The main duty of the Abba Kella was to prevent unexpected attack by the enemies of the country. A high platform was constructed beside the Kella and a soldier continuously scrutinized the Mogga from it. If anything suspicious was sighted the officer of the guard was informed, and the alarm was sounded by hitting the Bideru, a hollowed trunk of a tree suspended from a beam 3). The sound of the Bideru could be heard at a distance of several kilometers, and other Biderus were placed at the appropriate intervals. Thus within a few minutes the news of an approaching enemy

1) Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 228, footnote I; Abbadie 21302. pp. 411-412, 389-390; Abbadie Geographie. p. 22, (Preface); Abbadie 21303. pp. 112-113; See also below page. 137.
2) Abbadie Geographie. p. 22, (Preface); Abbadie 21302. pp 389-390.
was known in the capital and all over the country and every able-bodied man left the fields and joined the army.

All the free population of Limu-Enarea were actually part-time soldiers of the king and could be called upon to fight for him at any time 1). When so called, they received no pay and they had to bring their own food and their own weapons and riding animals. The wealthy people among the Limu used a mule to carry them to the battlefield in order to spare their war horse. But most of the soldiers walked all the way with their war horses trailing behind them 2). Only for outstanding achievements did soldiers receive a present from the king, usually a horse, a precious skin, cloth, slaves or imported merchandise. The king had only a small standing army, or bodyguard, made up of a few hundred professional soldiers. Most of this unit was cavalry but it also had some infantry and a handful of matchlockmen. The matchlocks were the pride of Abba Bagibo and they were smuggled into the country through unfriendly Galla territory by Muslim merchants 3). A few matchlocks were sent to Abba Bagibo by Ras Guchu of Gojam with whom Abba Bagibo was exchanging presents. As the Galla could not, or did not

1) Abbadie. 21300. p. 569.
2) Abbadie. 21300. p. 569.
want, to adapt themselves to firearms which they hated and
despised, the matchlockmen were mercenary Amhara soldiers
from Tigre and Gojam 1).

The Moti, or king, of Enarea was an absolute monarch.
He had the power of life and death over his subjects and
could do whatever he wanted with their property. Abba Bagibo
was helped by an advisory council composed of some of his
closest relatives and important officials of the court 2).
But this advisory council did not constitute a check on his
unlimited power as he could make or unmake any of the
dignitaries who took part in the council 3).

The king was also the head of the judicial system.
True enough the different Abba Koro and Abba Ganda dealt
with most of the judicial problems which arose in the country.
Nevertheless, Abba Bagibo regularly held court in the great
market place of Sakka, sitting on his wooden throne which
was covered with the skin of an ox 4). Abba Bagibo is said
to have been very just, even if he was most severe in his
judgement 5). For minor offences people were put in the

1) Abbadie 21300. pp. 797-800. April 1848; Abbadie 21303.
pp. 393-394. para. 219; Krapf. p. 65; Beke. *Southern
Abyssinia*. p. 5.
4) Krapf. p. 64; Harris. Vol. III. p. 54.
gindo 1) and sold into slavery. For murder and other serious offences people were put to death, usually by drowning 2), and their families were sold into slavery 3). Slavery was also very often the punishment for theft.

The country was divided into provinces called Koro. Each Koro was governed by an Abbakoro who held the administrative, judicial and military power in his province 4). Very often the governor was one of the king's brothers or sons. Such a governor had his own Massera (or Masseras) in which he housed his family, followers and slaves 5). In time of peace the governor ruled his province and collected the taxes from the peasants through his subordinates. In time of war the governor became the commander of all the able bodied people in his province. The Abba Koro had under him a number of Abba Ganda or village heads, who were actually district governors, as there were no villages in

1) A wooden block weighing about 60 Kg, put around the leg of the offender. Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 162.

2) Abbadie 21300. p. 218.

3) This was the so called 'Hari' - legal enslavement. See: Abbadie 21300. pp. 710, 712. It is possible that the above punishment brought the wide and sudden islamisation of the population, as a Muslim ruler could not sell Muslim subjects into slavery. Abbadie 21300. p. 218.


5) Abbadie 21305. pp. 344-345; Abbadie 21300. pp. 188-189, 798-799; Abba Dula had his own Massera.
in the Galla areas ¹). Under the Abba Ganda came all the land owners or the heads of the families who lived in his district.

The king had a number of Masseras all over the country ²). The king’s court moved with the king from one residence to another, depending on circumstances and on the season ³). The most favourite and most important Massera was the one in Garuka in Sakka and next to it was the one in Sappa, where the king had extensive land holdings and coffee plantations ⁴). Many slaves and officials lived permanently in each Massera. Abba Bagibo had 12 official wives, hundreds of concubines and several thousand slaves, mainly females ⁵).

Together with his bodyguard and court officials who accompanied him when he moved from one Massera to another, the king had quite a large retinue. Thus it was only natural that small towns existed around the more important Masseras of the king.

One of the most important officials of the court was

3) While carrying the war against the Agalo the king moved to the Massera of Tinnige on the Agalo border. The Massera was actually part of the defences against the Agalo. Abbadie 21300. pp. 798-799.
the Abba Mizan. This official combined the functions of treasurer and minister of foreign affairs. He supervised the king's treasuries, accounts, storehouses, private domains, and the royal workshops. He was responsible for relations with foreigners and foreign merchants and he supervised the market and the merchant village which existed in Sakka 1).

Attached to the court were a number of courtiers called Dagno or Daggo 2). They were known to every official of the country and they carried a royal symbol, usually in the form of a double edged spear. These were the "passport men" who were entrusted with the inspection and counting of those entering the country and who accompanied everybody who was permitted to leave the country, especially foreigners.

The very extensive political life, the intrigues and the treaties negotiated with the neighbouring countries, necessitated a large number of messengers and ambassadors called Lemmi 3). The importance of the Lemmis varied according to the tasks they were entrusted with. For minor

affairs the king employed unimportant personalities 1),
while for treaty making and important messages he would
employ a well known dignitary (Soressa) or even an Abba
Koro. A number of translators for the different languages
in use in the surrounding kingdoms were also employed in
the court 2). The interpreters were used whenever embassies
or Lemmis arrived from Kaffa and from the other countries
whose language was not Gallinia. Attached to the court were
also a great number of ambassadors and messengers (Lemmi)
sent by the neighbouring rulers to Abba Bagibo 3). Thus
it can be seen that the court of Abba Bagibo was a bee-hive
of activity and that a great number of people were fed and
kept by the king.

The revenue of the king came from three main sources.
Taxation on the land and its products, incomes from the
king's domains and income from trade. No information is
available regarding the regular taxes paid by the king's
subjects and collected by the Abba Gandas 4). The same

2) Abbadie 21303. p. 323, para 319, p. 378, para 201;
   Abbadie Geographie. p. 211. Abba Bagibo had a secretary
   for Arabic (the dialect used by the Ethiopians) as well.
3) Abbadie Geographie. pp. 83, 90; Abbadie 21303. pp. 323-324,
4) Abbadie. 21300. p. 569.
situation exists regarding the revenues of Abba Bagibo from his private domains. It was nevertheless reported that the king had extensive estates cultivated by slave labour and that all the coffee trees which grew wild on the mountains of Enarea on unoccupied land belonged to the king. The income of the king from trade must have been very great, taking into account that the king collected customs from a large part of the trade of Southwestern Ethiopia which went through his country. Until the late 1840's Abba Bagibo had also a virtual monopoly on all the trade of his own country. The foreign merchants could buy the coffee, the musk and other luxury items produced in Enarea only from the king, and they could sell many of the items they brought with them only to the king. Moreover, the merchants could not start trading before they visited the king and presented him with some pepper, cloth and other imported articles.

2) There was no form of taxation on the market of Sakka and the merchants were not obliged to take brokers as in some other places. Abbadie 21300. p. 569.
3) We are told by d'Abbadie (21300. p. 569) that 120 to 160 tons of coffee were exported annually from Enarea; Beke (Southern Abyssinia, p. 5) claims that 7 to 15 lbs. of coffee were sold per amoleh according to quality.
4) Beke. Southern Abyssinia. pp. 4-5; Abbadie 21300. pp. 797-798. Gold was the sign of sovereignty and trade in gold was forbidden. Princes of the royal blood alone were allowed to wear a gold bracelet. Cecchi. Vol. II. pp.197,513.Footnote I.
5) These were usually divided among the courtiers and different chiefs. Abbadie 21300. p. 189-190.
Taking into account that the king's expenses, excluding the upkeep of his court, were quite limited, Abba Bagibo's revenue in kind and in amolehs continuously accumulated in the king's treasuries and storehouses\(^1\). Thus when Cecchi was given a pack of old and corroded amolehs he was told that they were probably put in the treasury in the time of Abba Bagibo's father\(^2\). The great fortune amassed by Abba Bagibo was not used for the development of the country and hardly even for the comfort of the king, with the exception of the Massera and "palace" of Sakka\(^3\), which were continuously improved.

The Gibe Galla kingdoms were agricultural countries producing mainly coffee, cotton and cereals. In addition to the cloth woven by the women\(^4\) and the crude metal implements and arms produced and repaired in the primitive workshops attached to the courts\(^5\), no craft or industry

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4) As leather was worn by slaves, there was a great demand for cloth, especially dark blue, among the free people. Imported "Hindi" cotton cloth of the above colour was far too expensive for the masses. Abbadie 21300. p. 744.
existed in the area. The prosperity of the Gibe kingdoms and above all of Enarea, was derived from being the channel of trade between northern and southwestern Ethiopia and being important producers of musk, coffee and to a lesser extent ivory and slaves.

Trade was carried at Sakka all the year around by the resident merchants, but the trading season lasted only from the end of October to the end of May. Throughout this season Sakka became a busy commercial centre. Small caravans usually of Galla-Afkala merchants, brought to Sakka ivory, precious skins and incenses from the south as far as Lake Rudolf. Musk, gold, ivory and spices came from Kaffa and Wallage. Thousands of Galla, Sidama and Negroid Shankala slaves were driven into Enarea from all over the south and the southwest. At Sakka the merchants from the Galla-Sidama countries, were met by merchants from Basso in Gojam, from Shoa, from Derita, Gondar, Adowa and even Massawa. The caravans from the north brought to Enarea amoleh salt money, cloth, beads, little white bottles,

1) The heavy rain season lasted from June to October.
4) Especially dark blue or black cotton cloth called "Hindi". Red cloth was a royal monopoly. Abbadie 21300. p. 241.
black pepper, snuff, sal amoniak, cheap metalware and an assortment of metals, especially copper 1). The arrival of the caravans from the north, usually in the month of December or January, was an occasion of public holiday and rejoicing at Sakka. After huts had been quickly built near the market to accommodate the merchants 2), the important merchants of each caravan presented themselves before the king and told him the latest news while refreshments were served 3). Caravans from Shoa departed immediately after the coffee crop was gathered in December, but the caravans coming from the north usually stayed at Sakka about three months in order to conclude all their business and be able to return to Basso before the rainy season. Some merchants with large quantities of merchandise and others who came towards the end of the season found it necessary to stay in Sakka for a whole year or even two or three years 4). Caravans going to Basso were organised by local merchants at the beginning of each season. Those caravans and the caravans of the northern merchants which departed from Enarea in the last months of the season,

1) Ferret. Vol. II. pp. 420-421
2) The building material for the huts was brought from a distance of several miles. B.S.D.G. Serie III. Vol. III. January 1845. p. 56. Abbadie; Abbadie Athenaeum. No. 1105, from 1848.
4) Abbadie Athenaeum. No. 1105, from 1848.
carried with them the products of southwestern Ethiopia.

Coffee of good quality grew wild, or with very little cultivation in Kaffa, Gera and Enarea, but it was mainly in Enarea that coffee was grown commercially. Enarea's coffee was considered in Gojam the best among the Galla-Sidama varieties and the cost of transportation from Enarea to Shoa or to Basso were by far cheaper than from Kaffa or even Gera. Coffee was gathered in Enarea in the month of December by the king's slaves and by a number of his subjects who were paid for their labour in kind. The coffee was collected into the royal storehouses and then sold to the waiting merchants from Shoa and Gojam. The trade in coffee was a royal monopoly and the merchants had to acquire the coffee from the king's agents in the Sakka market. Only the less important merchants took part in the coffee trade. Coffee was bulky to transport, it was cheap and it brought little profit. The demand for coffee existed only in the Muslim areas in northern Ethiopia where

coffee was not grown. The Christian population was in this period forbidden from drinking this beverage\(^1\). The great cost of transportation and the inferior quality of the "Galla coffee" compared to the Mokha and Harar varieties hindered the exportation of Enarea's coffee through Massawa\(^2\). Thus the market for the coffee was limited while the supply was substantial. Nevertheless, the small merchants who had only little capital and who could not afford to buy a horn of musk or a tusk of an elephant, found it still profitable to trade in Enarea coffee\(^3\). Considering the volume of coffee exports from southwestern Ethiopia to the north\(^4\), it seems that a large number of people and transport animals were engaged in the coffee trade. Moreover, the coffee trade contributed each year many thousands of amolehs to the Enarea's treasury\(^5\) and to the economy of southern Ethiopia as a whole.

By far more important was the musk trade of Enarea.

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4. 120 to 160 tons exported annually from Enarea. Abbadie 21300. p. 569. 5,000-6,000 loads of coffee (40 Kg each) arriving at Basso annually from all over the southwest. Abbadie 21300. pp. 387-388.
5. According to Beke (Southern Abyssinia. p. 5.) 7 to 15 lbs. of coffee were sold for one amoleh.
The Muslim population of Kaffa exported large quantities of musk through Enarea, but Enarea was considered by some to be the home of the civet cat and a large part of the musk exported each year from the country was actually produced in Enarea\(^1\). The musk was a royal monopoly and Abba Bagibo was said to have owned several thousand civet cats \(^2\). The civet cat was captured in the forests of Enarea and Kaffa. The males were put into specially constructed cages, where they were "milked" each day, by a special process, of a few precious drops of civet musk \(^3\). The musk was put in a hollowed ox horn called Jerebundo, which contains from six to ten rotolli of musk \(^4\). According to an informant of d'Abbadie, Enarea exported in one season about five thousands Wakias of musk of thirty two grams each \(^5\). A Wakia of musk was sold in Enarea for one fifth of a taller. In Gondar it was worth nearly three fifths of a taller. In Massawa it was sold for over a taller and in Cairo for about

5) Abbadie 21300. p. 572. Compare to Rochet, (Ms. p. 233) claiming that five thousand rotels of 9\(\frac{1}{2}\) tallers weight each (about 250 gram) reached Gondar from Enarea and Gojam.
two tallers. It is not surprising that the merchants were so keen to acquire the musk which yielded such high profit, which presented no problem of transportation and which was easy to hide from inquisitive customs officials and avaricious Goftas along the road 1). Different sources claim that the annual export of musk through Massawa was from 150 horns to 1,500 horns 2). The great discrepancy was the result of the fact that most of the musk was smuggled by the merchants and sold in secrecy 3). Thus it is impossible to form an opinion of the volume of the musk exported from Enarea. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that a Wakia of musk was sold at Enarea for one fifth of a taller, the annual value of the Enarean musk could not amount to more than a few thousand tallers.

Enarea's ivory was considered the best in Ethiopia as the tusks were large and the ivory soft and white 4). Most of the ivory exported through Basso in Gojam was claimed to

1) Matteucci, p. 271.
have come from Enarea ¹). In fact the "Enarea ivory" did not originate at all in the Gibe area where elephants were nearly extinct ²), but came from the tropical forests of Kaffa, from as far south as Lake Rudolf and from the lake district in the eastern Sidama country beyond Jimma ³). A large part of the so-called Enarea ivory probably did not even enter Enarea, as it was acquired by merchants coming from Enarea and passing through Gudru where many people were engaged in elephant hunting expeditions in Wallaga and in the neighbouring areas ⁴). The ivory brought by the caravans was transported on mules. A small tusk or even two or three, if they were very small, made the load of one mule. When the tusk was very large it was attached to the sides of two mules walking one behind the other. To balance the tusk a load of coffee, or other merchandise, was attached to the other side of each mule. Sometimes the tusk was cut into a few pieces in order to make it more convenient for transportation, especially when

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¹) E.O.T.A. Vol. I. p. 29. Dr. Beke saw one caravan bringing 150 tusks. A few months later when the route to the south was closed only a few tusks reached Basso weekly.

²) Soleilet. p. 211.; Abbadie Athenaeum. No. 1042 from 1847.


moving through the thick forests of the south. The ivory thus transported was usually wrapped in skins in order to preserve it from chipping and from deterioration through the effects of the weather 1). When sold, the ivory was never weighed by scales. The weight of the tusk was either estimated by sight or the tusk was lifted and weighed by hand 2). The price of ivory in Enarea was ¾ taller per Kg. In Gondar it fetched nearly four fifths of a taller. In Massawa it brought about a taller and a quarter and in Cairo two tallers 3). It might be thus seen that the profit on ivory was very handsome and merchants sought ivory to the extent that in some cases they were ready to pay for the ivory before the elephant was killed 4). Although elephants were still abundant in parts of southwestern Ethiopia the quantities of ivory reaching the markets in the second quarter of the 19th century could / have been very great.

Elephant hunting was still carried on with primitive weapons 5).

3) C. & C. Massawa. Vol. I. Degoutin. 15.1.1843. According to Beke (Commerce. p. 4.) a tusk weighing about forty lbs. was worth 24 Hindi or about 12 tallers at Basso. Such a tusk was sold for over 20 tallers on the coast. An exceptional large and beautiful tusk was sold at Basso for 40-50 tallers.
and the killing of an elephant was still considered a great achievement. The growing demand for ivory in the 19th century hastened the destruction of the elephant population of Ethiopia. The quantities of ivory reaching the markets grew steadily even before the introduction of firearms. In the 1840's the number of tusks passing through Basso annually was nearly three thousand.

Gold was a royal monopoly in the Sidama and Galla kingdoms. Gold reached Enarea from Kaffa, from Jimma and above all from Wallaga, where gold was panned from river beds by slaves. The Wallaga gold was commonly known as "Galla gold" and it reached the market either in the form of grains of various sizes or in the form of ignots weighing about one ounce of twenty seven grams. The gold from Jimma came in the form of dust and was transported in hollow bamboo canes. As the trade in gold was a royal monopoly and even foreign merchants were "encouraged" to sell to the ruler the

2) C. & C. Massawa. Vol. I. Degoutin. 10.9.1844. In the beginning of the century Valentia estimated the ivory reaching Massawa at 100 farazela of 32½ lbs. each (Vol. II. p. 269). Degoutin estimated the quantity of ivory which reached Massawa between 1.6.43 to 10.9.44 to be 1000,000 sold at 112 tallers per 100 Kgs.
gold which came into their possession 1), the gold trade was carried on in great secrecy. The Galla gold was usually smelted by the traders at Gudru before it reached Basso or Shoa 2). It was alloyed again at Gojam and then again in Gondar and its purity was greatly reduced. The Galla gold was considered by northern merchants as the most impure reaching the northern markets and its price was the lowest. At Basso an ounce of Galla gold (twenty seven grams) was sold for about seven tallers and in Massawa it fetched about twelve tallers 3). The amounts of Galla gold reaching Gondar were estimated in the late 1840's to be about two thousand ounces 4).

In the 1870's, when Enarea lost much of its trade, the centre of the gold trade moved to the market of Billo in Leka on the borders of Wallaga. According to Cecchi 5) a few hundred Wakia (twenty seven grams each) of gold reached the market each week. The price of a Wakia of gold at Billo was from sixty to eighty amoleh. If Wallaga gold

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3) Ibid. Profit by alloying should be kept in mind.
4) According to Rochet Ms (Pp. 232-233) 2,000 ounces of Galla gold reached Gondar at 8 taller per ounce, 3,000 ounces from the Shankala areas near Fazogol at 12 tallers per ounce and 2,000 ounces from Sennar, the purest, at 14 taller per ounce.
reached Enarea at all in the time of Abba Bagibo this was only because of the commercial importance of this country, and because Wallaga was accessible at the time only to Galla-Afkala merchants 1).

Enarea was famous for its slaves and slaves made one of the most important items of Enarea's exports 2). In the second decade of the 19th century Nathaniel Pearce wrote the following 3): "...The most famous districts for slaves are Yer Angero (Jinjero ?), Gingaro (Jinjero), Yamha (Jinjero), Bonja (greatest market of Kaffa), Lakar (Leka), Jemar (Jimma), Narria, Sedammar (Sidama), Nonno and Gooderoo 4). A considerable quantity of civets also come from those districts...This article, as well as slaves, is purchased by the cofla, for beads, small looking-glasses, brass trinkets and salt; red cloths and iron are also taken for traffic... The Narria slaves are most esteemed; they are in general very fair, good-tempered and make excellent wives and servants. The men in those districts are always on the look-out on the borders, whether in war or not, for the young

1) See below page 44.
4) All of which were kingdoms and principalities around the Omo and Didessa basins.
persons of both sexes ... whom they steal and sell to the cofla" (caravan).

One of the most important sources of slaves in southwestern Ethiopia was the continuous warfare carried on among the Galla tribes and between the Galla and Sidama. According to custom the defeated were enslaved and the wives and children of those who were killed became the property of the victorious. Wars were not the only source of slaves. Among the thousands enslaved each year, many were kidnapped by roaming Galla bands 1) or sold into slavery by deceit and trickery. People were carried off from the fields, men married girls and then sold them in a faraway market, some sold the children of their neighbours and merchants, enticed young people into the camp of their caravans and later sold them as slaves 2). Many slaves reached the markets as a result of the frequent famines which occurred in southwestern Ethiopia. When conditions became unbearable many poor Galla and Sidama people either sold their own children or gave them as a guarantee for a loan or in lieu of tax paying. Often the fathers of the children could not

1) Krapf. pp. 50-51.
redeem them and they were sold into slavery 1). The cruel laws which existed in most of the Galla and Sidama kingdoms and principalities, were also responsible for the large scale slavery in southern Ethiopia. In accordance with those laws everybody could be sold into slavery for the smallest offence and the wives and the children of those condemned to death, became the property of the ruler who passed the sentence on the head of the family 2).

When the usual sources of supply did not answer the demand, or when the merchants did not care to pay the market price for slaves, raiding expeditions were organised by the merchants of Enarea and of Kaffa. The expeditions went to the Doko countries south of Kaffa and of Kulo and to the Shankalla countries to the west of Kaffa, where people of negroid origin lived 3). "Doqqo c'est le nom de plusieurs peuplades qui vivent au sud du Kullo, dont ils sont séparés par la rivière Uma" 4). The raids, or more correctly slave


hunts, were organised by groups of merchants who were accompanied with skilled "professional slave hunters". A merchant who came to Shoa from Enarea in a caravan with 300 other merchants, told Harris 1) that the caravan came to Enarea from Kaffa where it traded for six months. While in Kaffa the merchants went to Dokko to kidnap slaves. It took them seventeen days to reach Kulo and from Kulo another day to arrive in Dokoland. The merchant described Dokoland as a thick forest of bamboo, the inhabitants of which built their huts of bent bamboo canes and grass. They did not have a king and did not possess laws. They had no property and lived on fruits and roots. All this, according to Harris "affords the very seat of slavery". Harris was further told that the slave merchants of Enarea went to Dokoland in large groups. When hunting for slaves they held a gay cloth before their person, and they danced and sang in a special manner. The ignorant defenceless Doko who knew that they could not escape the merchants, and if they escaped they might be killed, tamely approached, and let themselves be caught, the cloth being cast over their heads. Many times the Doko were found on high trees and then the merchants had to entice them to come down. In this way,

1) L.G. 184. No. 1098. 1.1.1842.
Harris's informant explained, 100 merchants could kidnap a 1,000 Doko ¹). When in captivity the Doko were kept bound until they learned to eat bread ²), but they usually did not try to escape. Besides the Enarean merchants only the Kulo and the Dumbaro raided in Dokoland, probably because they were the nearest to the so called Doko areas.

Even if quite a lot of fantasy was mixed in the facts given to Harris, it is quite evident that wide scale slave raiding by Galla, Sidama and northern merchants was going on in the negroid areas to the south of the Ethiopian highlands. If for the Sidama and Galla areas the term kidnapping seems to be quite suitable, for Dokoland and the negroid areas to the west of Kaffa, the term slave raiding, or slave hunts, seems to be much more proper.

Although the slaves coming from Enarea acquired the name "Enarean slaves" and as such were much appreciated, it is quite clear ³) that those slaves originated in many Galla and Sidama kingdoms and tribes and above all in the

1) A slave from Enarea belonging to the king of Shoa, told Harris that before being kidnapped he was extensively engaged as a kidnapper. In this capacity he had taken part in three slave hunts into the country of the Doko, beyond Kaffa, in the course of which 4,000 individuals of both sexes were captured. Harris. Slave Report. para. 21.; See also: Krapf. p. 51; Johnston. Vol. II. p. 383.

2) Probably the Injera, the staple food of the Ethiopians.

3) See quotation from Pearce, page 152 above.
kingdom of Kaffa. A number of Abba Bagibo non Muslim subjects were probably sold into slavery each year and a few hundred captives were brought by the Enarean army from each raid. Nevertheless if Enarea itself, or even all the Gibe kingdoms combined, were to supply each year the thousands of slaves which were exported through Enarea, they would have been soon depopulated. Moreover, Enarea and the other Galla kingdoms were themselves an important market for slaves. The whole economy of those kingdoms was based on slave labour and in the 1870's Cecchi estimated that about one third of the population of the Gibe countries was made of slaves. Each household had a few slaves, while the king and the ruling class employed thousands of slaves on their estates and in their Masseras. Slaves were given as presents and slaves served as a medium of currency. In Enarea those slaves who were not of Galla origin learned Gallinia and together with other slaves acquired the customs and mannerism of the country. When sold they were labelled "Enarea slaves" and fetched better prices in the far away slave markets.

In Sakka as in the other markets in southwestern

Ethiopia, slaves were sold directly to buyers without the mediation of brokers 1) either in the hut of the slave merchants, or by public auction 2). One of the most important principals of the slave trade was to remove the slave as far as possible from his home. A slave trader would always tell his colleague from which direction the slave came whom he sold him. The slave would be usually sent afterwards in the opposite direction and thus slaves from Jimma and Kaffa would be taken to Basso, slaves from Wallaga would be taken to Shoa, slaves kidnapped from the Afar would be sold at Enarea and slaves from Soddo would be found at Kulo. The merchants were always careful not to have in their caravan any slaves from the people through whose country they intended to go. This practice diminished the possibility of escape and made the slave more obedient and devoted to his master. At the same time the merchants avoided the danger of being set upon by the avenging family of the slave 3).

It is impossible to estimate the number of slaves sold each year on the markets of Enarea. Some were kept in the country, others were sent westwards and southwards and of those we have no information. Still others going eastwards

1) Abbadie 21300. p. 569.
probably entered Shoa among slaves coming from Gurague and the eastern Sidama. Most of the slaves exported from Enarea were taken northwards to Gojam. Dr. Beke estimated that the number of slaves reaching the market of Basso in Gojam annually was seven thousand. But one tends to believe that the real number of slaves reaching the above market was actually between three and four thousand. It is to be expected that most of those slaves probably came to Basso from Enarea's markets or at least from southwestern Ethiopia.

The price of a "Gurbe", a young boy aged ten to sixteen years, was in the Gibe area about three to four tallers worth of Hindi, while in Basso the price was up to eight tallers and in Massawa they fetched thirty five, forty and in some cases even fifty tallers. A "Wosif" or a young girl aged ten to thirteen suitable to become a concubine or a wife was sold in Enarea for five to six tallers worth of cloth, while in Basso she fetched eight tallers worth of cloth.

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1) See below chapter on Shoa page 422.
2) J.R.G.S. Vol. 14. p. 19 (1842). Leon des Avanchers claims (Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 518) that in the 1870's about seven thousand slaves were exported annually from Kaffa, but this informer is not very reliable.
4) Dark blue cotton cloth of better quality.
to twelve tallers and in some cases even sixteen and in Massawa fifty to sixty tallers 1). Eunuchs were obtained after their deformation in Folla for about eight to nine tallers worth of cloth. The buyer usually took a risk as many of the young unfortunates died a few days after their deformation. If the eunuch remained alive he fetched in Massawa between eighty to a hundred and twenty tallers 2). One must keep in mind that the prices quoted above varied according to the age, the qualities and the origin of each individual slave. Some races were especially appreciated by the slave merchants and higher prices were offered for slaves coming from those tribes. It was even said that the Enareans kept to themselves the best slaves from Sidama origin coming from Gimira, a province of Kaffa 3).

Each trading caravan going northwards or going to Shoa took besides lucrative articles, skins and coffee, a number of slaves. The slaves were usually well treated in order to encourage them not to run away 4). The older and the able bodied slaves were attached together in pairs by

2) Abbadie 21300. pp. 219, 236.
3) Abbadie 21300. p. 219. Next in order were the Walamo. After them the Warato and only then the Gurague.
a stick forked on both ends \(^1\) and sometimes were bound at night \(^2\). The young slaves were led unbound, joyfully walking along the road, carrying in some cases small loads of food and merchandise \(^3\). The girls usually received most of the attention of the slave dealers. They were well looked after, well fed and were given only light tasks to do in the merchants huts and while camping, in order that their value would not diminish. At the same time they served as concubines to the merchants and their servants while on the road and thus they lost part of their value \(^4\).

The proportion of females among the slaves driven to Basso market was much higher than the males \(^5\). Young men were usually killed in battle while the women and children were taken prisoners \(^6\). Male slaves and boys were greatly in demand in the Galla areas where slaves were employed for agricultural work and children were adopted into families in order to strengthen the power of the family or of the tribe \(^7\).

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2) Harris Slave Report. para. 21.
4) Virgin slave girls were called "Bakr" and non-virgins "Karag". The Bakr were worth about one sixth more than the Karag; Abbadie 21300. p. 220. Of the practices of slave dealers in Emarea see: Abbadie. 21300. p. 236; Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 194.
Last but not least, the northern merchants preferred young girls as the demand in the markets of Arabia and the Sudan was mainly for "Wosifs" to serve as concubines and wives 1).

A limited number of eunuchs was also led from the southwest to the north and then exported to the Muslim world 2). The eunuchs, mostly very young children, were highly priced and greatly in demand among the Muslim slave merchants. Those who did not become eunuchs as a result of the barbarian practices of war among the tribes 3), were all deformed in the principality of Badi-Folla, southeast of Enarea. Even the cruel rulers of the Galla kingdoms were disgusted with the terrible practice of deformation and drove out of their country those who were engaged in it 4).

Although the Muslim merchants from northern Ethiopia and the coast were also opposed to the deformation of the children at Folla, they nevertheless did not abstain from buying a number of those young unfortunates and in some cases were even ready to take the risk of buying them just after the "operation", in the hope of getting the enormous profit in Gondar or on the coast 5).

3) These were much less appreciated. Abbadie 21300. p. 220.
4) When Folla was conquered by Abba Jifar in the late 1840's those who were engaged in the above practice moved to Gudru. Abbadie 21300. pp. 236, 797.
The slaves, gold, ivory, musk, coffee and other items exported yearly from southwestern Ethiopia were probably worth south of the Abbay, about 100,000 tallers. On the coast, they probably fetched many times the amount which they originally cost. It might be said that the exports of southwestern Ethiopia paid not only for the imported goods brought to the Galla, Sidama countries, but they also financed to a large extent the imports of northern Ethiopia and brought about the favourable balance of trade with the outside world.
THE AFAR COAST

The Afar, who are called Danakil by the Ethiopians and Arabs, are a Hamitic people of the same branch as the Somali. They are nomadic herdsmen, whose stock consists chiefly of goats and sheep and some camels. They occupy the area stretching from the Ghubat Kharab in the gulf of Tajura to the slopes of the Harrar plateau in the south; to the peninsula of Buri to the north and from the shores of the Red Sea to the Ethiopian plateau. It is a most infertile country of a stony or sandy desert, lava streams, and salt depressions. The Afar are divided into two main groupings:- Asaimara (the red house) and Adoimara (the white house). These again are divided into a large number of tribes and kinship groups. Their political system is based upon the kinship group rather than on the tribe. The heads of the kinship groups have the real authority among the Afar. The loose tribal organisation is mainly for the purposes of war\(^1\). "Tribal boundaries are never static, but constantly change as the power of tribes wax and wane\(^2\)."

In the first half of the 18th century the Mudaito

1) Trimingham. pp. 171-175.
tribes of the Asaimara group overran the valley of Aussa and drove away the dynasty of Imams which ruled Aussa 1). The chief of the Mudaito, Kedafu, became the first sultan of an Afar dynasty of Aussa, probably in the second quarter of the 18th century 2).

In the 18th century the sultanate of Aussa under the Mudaito sultan was the strongest and most important Afar political unit. Not only did the sultans succeed in uniting the different Mudaito clans and the Aussan peasants, but they were also the masters of the only fertile and cultivable area in the country of the Afar. The valley of Aussa produced Jowari, grain, dates and other crops which supplied the needs of the inhabitants, the visiting caravans, and the nomads of the neighbouring areas. The peace and the security afforded by the strong rule of the Aussa sultans, the abundance of food and water and Aussa's geographical position in relation to the Ethiopian highlands attracted

1) Fitaurari Yayo who is today the highest ranking Afar next to the sultan of Aussa and other Afar elders told me that the last Imam was Imam Salman, before him ruled Imam Ali, before him Imam Omar, the family of which came from Arabia.

2) Kedafu, according to Yayo, ruled 15 years. His son, Kedafu Mohammed ruled about 30 years. His grandson Ijdais about 22 years. His great grandson, Ijdais Mohammed one year and his second great grandson Anfari, who died in 1862, ruled about 60 years.
many traders who kept open one of the only trade routes to the highlands 1).

To the half-starved, nomadic Afar, roaming in the dry infertile desert around Aussa, the valley of Aussa seemed to be paradise upon earth.

Towards the end of the 18th century it seems that the sultanate of Aussa was past its peak, or at least suffering from the general stagnation in the Red Sea area. The Adoimara Afar, jealous of their enemies the Mudaito, started to encroach on Aussa's territory but the power and fame of Sultan Ijdais and the fierceness of the Mudaito kept them from completely penetrating the cultivated areas in the valley of Aussa. The Debene Wema, the strongest tribe among the southern Adoimara, decided to break the monopolisation of power and wealth by the Mudaito Asaimara and their sultan 2). A delegation was sent to the decaying merchantile town of Zeila, always jealous of the trading activities of Aussa, and with which the Wema had strong ties. With promises of rewards and concessions, including a tax on each slave exported through Adoimara country, the Wema notables succeeded in obtaining a force of 300 Yemeni

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1) According to Yayo each merchant arriving at Aussa gave presents to the Vazir or Naib for the sultan. Thus enriching Aussa.

2) Krapf. F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. pp. 83-84, 1840. In his letter Krapf writes that this happened 60 years ago, i.e. 1780-1790.
matchlockmen 1) to assist them to overcome the Aussa sultan. The Yemeni force swiftly crossed Adoimara country, where they were joined by the Wema. Aussa was taken by surprise, while most of the warriors and the sultan were away. At this point the ulema and elders of Aussa intervened and tricked the Wema into waiting for the sultan for a peaceful settlement of their demands. During the night, the Mudaitos succeeded in wiping out the Yemeni force, which was camped alone in the valley 2).

It seems that in the first or second decade of the 19th century the Wema, probably taking advantage of the disorder and instability in Aussa resulting from the death of Ijdais and his son Ijdais Mohammed and the young age of the ruling sultan Anfari, attacked Aussa and succeeded in sacking it. Later they forced the Mudaito sultan to share his authority with an Adoimara chief 3). Without the strong hand of Ijdais, the unity among the Mudaito tribes and the settled peasantry, which was the basis of the sultan's power, was broken, and the sultan could only claim obedience

1) Isenberg (p. 24) claims they were from Aden, while Yayo told me that they were from the sultanate of Jafie in Southern Arabia.


3) Harris. I. p. 175.
from the people of the valley of Aussa 1). Most important of all, it seems that the Wema victory enforced the claim

1) According to Krapf (F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. pp. 83-84) and Harris (Vol. I. p. 175) both of them writing in the 1840's, the sultan of Aussa in the last decades of the 18th century was Yusuf Ali Bin Ijdais, who was described as a brave warrior and who had many matchlocks and guns. While Harris claims that the Yemeni force was wiped out by Yusuf Ali but later on Aussa was sacked by the Wema, Krapf and Isenberg claim that the Yemenies were victorious, but after mistreating the wives of their allies they were sent away. Yayo and the Afar elders on the other hand, completely disdain the existence of Yusuf Ali Bin Ijdais. They knew about the Yemeni force which was sent against Aussa in the time of Ijdais and they claim (as Harris) that this force was wiped out. Furthermore, they say that firearms were not introduced into the Afar country before the second part of the 19th century (this is further strengthened by Johnston, Lp. 40: Rochet. Voyage. p. 42). Harris's version is long and detailed but one tends to think that his informants, lacking conception of time, telescoped the defeat of the Yemeni force with the weakening and sacking of Aussa. The sacking of Aussa might have occurred at the beginning of the 19th century, when Afari, who must then have been a young child (died in 1862), came to power. The Yusuf Ali in whose lifetime (according to Harris) the sacking of Aussa occurred, might have been the chief of the sedentary Aussan, Sheik Ras Ali, whom Ibrahim Shehim claimed in 1841 that he killed (Harris. L.pp. 180-181). Yayo and the other Afar elders whom we met claim that, after the death of Ijdais at the end of the 18th century, or beginning of the 19th, his son Ijdais Mohammed ruled for one year, and then Afari, who ruled for 60 years and died in 1862, came to power. It seems to us that the beginning of the 19th century was a difficult time for the sultanate of Aussa. The unruly Mudaito might have taken advantage of the changing of the sultans and the rule of a child-sultan, to renew their independence. The Wema, no doubt, used the opportunity to attack Aussa and put an end to the Mudaito sultan superiority. Sheikh Ras Ali might have been the regent to the young Afari who was abandoned by many of his Mudaito supporters.
of the Adoimara to a share in Lake Assal, one of the most important sources of salt in the Afar country 1). This in turn provided for the opening of a new and more direct trade route to Ifat in Shoa than the one through Aussa to Dawe in the Wollo country. This route completely by-passed Aussa and left the Mudaito without the income which they derived from the passing caravans. Tajura, the seat of one of the decaying Adoimara sultanates along the Afar coast, emerged as a result of all this as an important centre of trade with the Ethiopian highlands.

The sacking of Aussa and the opening of a new trade route to Shoa 2) only enhanced the bitter and constant wars between the Mudaito and southern Adoimara. Although Mudaito unity was broken, the different Mudaito sub-tribes were still the largest and the fiercest in the southern Afar country 3). The Galela Mudaito, who it seems, lost most from the new trade route to Shoa, constantly harassed the Adoimara tribes, attacked their caravans and tried to re-establish their former predominance in the area.

With the revival of the Red Sea trade during the second decade of the 19th century and the quick expansion of Shoa,

1) See page 201.
2) According to Yayo this route was called Arho Gita - caravan's road.
trade through the country of the Afar grew quickly in volume. Aussa, having trade connections with the Wollo country, Argoba, Gondar and even Massawa\(^1\) probably benefited from this new development as well.

Although described as but a shadow of its past glory\(^2\), in the 1830's and 1840's, Aussa was said to be the seat of law and Islamic learning for the Afar people, where many ulema, aukal and merchants lived\(^3\). The Mudaito sultan of Aussa had his main dwelling in the village of Gargarre on the northern fringes of the valley of Aussa. In the valley he was represented by a naib or vazir who was assisted by a council of elders\(^4\). The sedentary Aussans were divided into clans living in different localities, each ruled by a sheikh who was probably responsible to the naib\(^5\). Travellers in the late 1830's and early 1840's had the impression from the information they received (not one of them went through Aussa) that Aussa was a town\(^6\).

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2) Harris, I. p. 175.
3) Isenberg, p. 39; Harris I. p. 175.
4) L.G. 165. No. 2276. Beke. 20.4.41; Rochet "Voyage". p. 43.
5) Abbadie 2130?. p. 25.
6) Rochet ("Voyage". p. 74) claims that in 1839 Aussa was a town of 1,400-1,500 huts with a population of about 5,000-6,000 souls all of which were merchants and peasants from the tribes of the Asaimara Mudaito. Harris (Vol. I. p. 175) describes Aussa as "an extensive encampment, at which is held a perpetual fair, frequented by all the tribes of Danakil, Besa, Sumauli and Mudaito".
Later sources consider Aussa to be the name of an area and not a town. Our Aussan informants completely reject the idea that in the valley of Aussa there was ever a town by this name. But of course there is the possibility that such a town existed at the beginning of the 19th century, but it was not rebuilt after it was sacked and burned by the Wema.

It seems that in the second quarter of the 19th century the sedentary Aussans and elements of the southern Adoimara grew nearer to each other mainly for economic reasons. The Aussan traders and farmers suffered just as much as the Adoimara from the evils of the Galela Mudaito. The Aussans needed large quantities of salt for their own use and for their trade with the highlands, and the salt found near Aussa being impure was not liked in Ethiopia. Better grade salt was regularly brought to Aussa by Adoimara caravans.


2) Harris. I. pp. 178-181. It is possible that the great market held in Aussa, to which many traders came, was called by the traders Aussa.

3) Fitaurari Yayo and other Aussan elders agreed that Aussans were not originally Mudaito but immigrants from many places including Harar and Arabia. They kept their identity by settling in one part of the valley. Thus there were many "communities" in Aussa like Sharifa, Kabirto, Saido, Harara etc., each of those had a sheikh of their own as mentioned before.

4) Abbudia 21302. p. 27.


from Lake Assal. The same caravans took back to Adoimara areas and to Tajura the agricultural surplusses of Aussa consisting of dates, jowari, corn and butter 1). The outlets of Aussa's trade in the 1830's and in the 1840's were Tajura and its smaller sister Rahita rather than the Mudaito coast between Edd and Rahita 2). With the growing commercial importance of Alio Amba in Shoa, Aussan traders and caravans used the Adoimara route to Ifat 3). On the other hand Tajura and the Adoimara, not producing any food themselves, relied partially on Aussas' surplusses. Adoimara merchants, especially the Tajurans, were constantly using the trade routes passing through Aussa to Argoba, Dawe and Massawa 4).

At the beginning of the fourth decade of the 19th century the Galela Mudaito who roamed from the coast 5) to the Awash River, succeeded in blocking completely the newly opened Adoimara trading route to Ifat. Having lost the income from caravans using the old route through Aussa,
and envying the profits which Adoimara caravans made on salt supply to Shoa and on slaves led to the sea, they exacted heavy contributions from all caravans going to and coming from Ifat. "Having at length fully established an intercourse with Shoa through their own country, by another passage of the river Hawash, north of Mulkukuyu 1), they endeavoured to monopolize the trade in salt and slaves. To effect this, they seized the whole country to the north of the road to Bahr Assal, and allowed no Tajourah Kafilah either to load with salt...or to proceed for slaves to Shoa"2). After having been defeated a few times by the Galela, the Adoimara were even kept away from Lake Assal, to which the Adoimara claimed a right 3). The Tajurans and other Adoimara who needed salt for the Shoan trade had to approach the Lake stealthily by night, load their camels hurriedly with salt and return to Ghubat Kharab, where they were safe from Galela attacks. From thence to Shoa they went through Issa Somali country, or by boat to Zeila and from there by the old caravan routes either through Issa country or by way of Harar. This of course not only curtailed the volume

1) Where Adoimara caravans usually crossed the Awash.
3) See below page 202.
of their trade with Shoa but also was much more costly. "It was not likely such a palmy state of things...would be allowed to flourish long without exciting envy and jealousy, especially among the inhabitants of Tajourah and Owssa, who had not forgotten the great advantages that accrued to them when an uninterrupted road allowed them to carry on a direct trade with the populous countries west of the Hawash. Accordingly, through the machinations of some of the wise men of Tajourah, the braves of all the Dankalli tribes in the interior, consented to combine their forces under one leader, and Lohitu, the Debenee chief was unanimously chosen... Owssa is inhabited by a Muditu tribe 1), but on this occasion they assisted the Tajourah people, because of their dependence upon that port, to enable them to communicate with foreign markets... The other leagued tribes were the Issah Soumaulee, the Wahama, the Hy Soumaulee, the Debenee, and a mixed multitude of minor subdivisions... Tajourah and Ambaboo also sent their warriors" 2).

The battle between the coalition forces and the Galeela probably took place at the end of 1837 or the beginning of 1838 near, or on, the mountains of Ayelu, not far from the

1) According to Yayo-Modaituised tribes.
Awash. The Mudaito were completely defeated, leaving behind a few hundred dead. The road to Shoa was again opened 1), only to be continuously threatened and harassed by Mudaito and Galla raids 2). The Galela were very bitter at seeing rich caravans going to Shoa through what they considered their own land without being able to reap a considerable benefit 3). As for the Galla, they were only too happy to attack the Afar, who were their traditional enemies.

From time immemorial the inhabitants of the southern Afar desert used to bring salt to the Ethiopian highlands in exchange for food stuffs, local products and slaves. The salt of Lake Assal, the best salt obtainable in the area and the relatively short routes leading from the coast to Ifat, were actually the two most important assets of this barren waterless country. It is no wonder that in a country so poor, the possession of those two sources of income was a matter of life and death and gave a cause for never-ending wars.

The new development in the political situation in the Red Sea in the first half of the 19th century and the revival

3) L.G. 166. No. 2842. Harris. 25.6.41.
of trade in the area had a direct impact on the Ethiopian-
Somali coast. With the growth of trade, new blood was infused
into the veins of the old trade routes with the interior
and the dying coastal settlement, which had direct connection
with the Ethiopian highlands grew in importance.

Not less important for the Afar coast was the rapid
expansion of the little kingdom of Shoa from the end of the
18th century onwards, when the borders of this kingdom were
brought to the verges of the Afar desert. On the other hand
its expansion southwards and westwards brought within the
realm some of the important trade routes leading to the rich
south, and diverted to Shoa part of the lucrative trade of
southwestern Ethiopia. 1)

In Shoa salt was greatly in demand, both for local
consumption and for the growing transit trade of the country.
Most of this "Domestic salt" 2) was brought by Afar trading
caravans 3). The growing court of the Shoan king and his
provincial governor contributed to the demand for foreign
merchandise. The constant wars with the fierce Galla not
only created a demand for large quantities of metals, but

1) See below pp. 378-332.
2) As opposed to salt blocks serving as currency.
Krapf. F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. p. 84.
also enhanced the importance of firearms, which proved themselves to be the decisive factor in the otherwise nearly equal battle against the brave Galla cavalry. Furthermore, beads, copper and certain types of cloth coming from abroad were necessary in order to obtain the lucrative products of the Galla and Sidama areas. The possession of the salt of Lake Assal and the short route to Shoa, were therefore even greater assets in the second quarter of the 19th century than they had been before. It is no wonder that the rival Afar tribes, trying to supplement their meagre livelihood, fought so bitterly for the possession of those assets 1).

Of the handful of Europeans who succeeded in reaching Shoa in the late 30's and early 40's of the 19th century, nearly all went through the Sultanate of Tajura. Although some tried to reach the highlands through the other Afar coastal sultanates or through Zeila and Berbera, they found soon enough that the only point on the coast, besides Massawa, having a direct and constant intercourse with the highlands was Tajura 2). It is only natural that one studying the written material left by all those travellers tends to get

1) See Krapf on the subject of salt. F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. pp. 84.

2) As was the case of Krapf, Isenberg, Rochet d'Hericourt, d'Abbadie, Dr. Beke, Johnston and others; See also: L.G. 146. Despatch No. 4858, 1840.
an exaggerated idea of the importance of the sultanate of Tajura, because all the reports deal at length with the village of Tajura and its inhabitants who organised the caravans going to the highlands. Nevertheless it is a fact that while all the Afar sultanates along the coast are described at this time as small decaying villages with hardly any trade, and 1) while many of our sources agree that the trade of Zeila is hardly worth mentioning, Tajura kept steady, even if interrupted trade connections with Shoa 2). In addition to other lucrative goods arriving from the highlands, Tajura exported in the 1830's and the 1840's between 1,500 and 3,000 3) slaves annually, a number which equalled, if it did not surpass the number of slaves exported through Ethiopia's main port, Massawa 4).

In all the printed and the archivial material concerning the Red Sea in the late 18th and early 19th century Tajura


4) L.G. 165. No. 2316. 5.7.1841. See above pages 69-70
is not even mentioned and the "Abyssinian Coast" trade, with the exception of Massawa and Berbera, is completely dismissed. It seems that at the beginning of the century the customary line of communication with Shoa was through Zeila and Harar. In his despatch to the British Foreign Office Henry Salt writes on the 21st August 1811: "Zeyla - a port under the Imaum of Sana or Dola of Mocha - This is of some consequence as being the only point of communication with the Mahometan kingdom of Hurrur and through that with the kingdom of Shoa & Efat."

The question therefore arises, what happened within less than half a century to turn Tajura into the active little place which it was described to be in the fifth decade of the 19th century, while its neighbours remained the same sleepy decaying villages, and while Zeila's trade, which was


still described in the beginning of the century as having some importance \(^1\)), was falling from day to day. It seems that four main factors contributed to the rise of Tajura - first, the expansion of trade in the Red Sea after the conquest of the Hijaz by Mohammed Ali and the consequent growing demand for Ethiopian slaves in the Islamic world \(^2\); secondly, the expansion of the Shoan kingdom, the establishment of security and order in the newly conquered areas and the encouragement given to foreign traders to visit the markets of this kingdom; thirdly, the strangling of the Harar trade by the growing pressure of the surrounding Galla tribes in the 19th century \(^3\) and as a result the falling off in importance of the Shoa-Harar-Zeila route; fourthly, that although sometimes very difficult to cross, and frequently closed by Mudaito raids, the Tajura route was the shortest to Shoa, and it also led past Bahr Assal, the source of the salt supplied to Shoa.

The opportune breaking of the Mudaito power and monopoly of trade in the beginning of the 19th century provided for the opening of this new route between Tajura and Shoa, and made it possible for Tajura to take advantage of the new circumstances.

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1) Salt. Appendix V.
2) See Introduction.
3) As we intend to deal with Harar separately we will not press on with this point.
From being just the seat of the degenerate sultanate of Ad Ali Abli, Tajura became the centre for the economic activities of all the southern Adoimara tribes as well as for the neighbouring coastal clans. In contrast to Zeila, Tajura was not cut off from its hinterland. The Adali and Abli tribes, formerly the largest among the Adoimara, lacked central authority and owing to the character of the country were dispersed from the western borders of Shoa to the coast. Many of Tajura's leading citizens still took their wives from their brothers and found shelter for their caravans in their encampments. This facilitated the development of the caravan trade with Shoa and at the same time made it possible for the tribes of the interior to use Tajura as a market place and an outlet for the little trade they carried on their own. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs among the different Adoimara tribes, attracted by the growing trade of Shoa and Tajura, made their second home in the latter place. Thus we find in Tajura in the late 1830's and in the 1840's among the leading traders and the caravaneers, not only Tajurans, but people from other Adali and Abli clans, as well as from the Wema, Debebe,  

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Rahita and Aussa 1)

The new class of Afar merchants were quick to grasp the opportunities offered by trade. Tajura merchants constantly visited the opposite Arabian coast. They went to Mokha and Hudieda, and travelled to Jidda at least once in the course of making the pilgrimage. There they made commercial contacts and acquired knowledge. Tajura merchants were also prominent in the Berbera fair, and with the development of Aden from the 1840's onwards, they established commercial relations with this town as well.

It is very difficult to determine Tajura's 2) population or even the number of the huts in this village in the period we are dealing with. The information given by the Europeans visiting the place within a few years is so varied that while one source claims that Tajura had three hundred inhabitants 3), another claims that it had

1) J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 462; Isenberg. p. 24; Harris. Vol. I. p. 332; Johnston. Vol. I. p. 405; Tajura, Dr. Beke says (The Friend of Africa. Published by the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade. Vol. I. p. 88., 26.11.40), "is inhabited by persons of the different Danakli tribes spread over the country between the coast and the Hawash". Typical of those Adoimara entrepreneurs was Mohammed Ali, the son of one of the Wema chiefs whose tribe headquarters was near Herer but he had a house and slaves in Tajura, owned at least one boat and led trading caravans from the coast to Shoa twice or three times a year. Beke. F.O.A.Vol. I. pp. 28-29; Harris. Vol. I. p. 48.

2) According to Beke (F.O.A.Vol. I. p. 88, 26.11.1840) Tajura was the name used by the Arabs while the natives called their village Togorri.

3) L.G. 146. No. 4858. 1840.
two thousand 1), and while one source describes Tajura as having a hundred to a hundred and twenty huts 2), another claims that it had five hundred 3).

Probably the reason for the very contradictory information we have about Tajura lies in the fact that it had a very fluid and mobile population. A number of Tajura caravans were liable to be absent, either on the road in Aussa or waiting in the highlands for a suitable time to return home. Tajura merchants were to be found in Berbera during the season of the fair and in Yemen and Zeila during the rest of the year. A number of Tajurans were probably employed on the Tajura boats while others might have been performing their pilgrimage in Mecca or trading in the Persian Gulf. On the other hand Tajura was the headquarters of the nearby Afar nomads of the Adali Abli Asoba and other clans, estimated to be about five thousand strong 4). We are told that "the town is...the rendezvous of the petty chiefs of all the surrounding clans, who, to the number of

eight or ten claim an equal voice in the senate, and with about a hundred litigious followers each, made it their headquarters during the greater portion of the year. Furthermore, between September and the end of December the southern Adoimara tribes held their annual fair in Tajura and according to eyewitnesses Tajura became at this time a big town with tribes arriving from as far away as twenty days distance.

It is easy to account for the discrepancies in the information about the population of Tajura. From the available material it is next to impossible even to guess the true number of its permanent inhabitants. Considering the light structure and the convertibility of the Afar huts which could be erected or dismantled from camel back within a few hours, one can imagine that with people coming and going from Tajura at all times, huts were put up and then disappeared in a matter of a few days or weeks.

The more permanent huts of Tajura were built from mud, rough stems and branches. They were covered on the inside with mats and they had arched thatched roofs. One, two,

three or four huts surrounded with palings, which formed an irregular yard with a single gate, constituted the residence of a family. Courtyards including two or more huts were the habitation of the more respectable families and slave dealers. The narrow winding streets between such courtyards were kept very clean and were constantly covered with gravel brought from the shore. The only stone buildings of which Tajura boasted were two dilapidated mosques without minarets.

Tajura was considered the seat of the Adali-Abli sultanate. Although claiming complete independence, Tajura was paying the governor of Zeila three quarters of a taller on each slave exported from the village, while the sultan received from the governor of Zeila twenty tallers annually.

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2) A third mosque was just a large hut. Johnston. Vol. I. p. 54.
Some of the Europeans who visited Tajura in the 1830's and 1840's wondered whether the place could be truly called independent 1) if it was paying a tax to Zeila. The sultan and all the Tajurans claimed complete independence and, but for the tax on slaves, there was no other sign to show any dependency on Zeila. It is of course possible that the tax was a remnant from the times that Zeila was the strongest power on the coast as one of our sources claims 2). Another explanation could be found in the story repeatedly told to European travellers about the battle between the Adoimara and the Asaimara to which the government of Zeila sent a few hundred matchlockmen against a promise of concessions and a tax of all slaves 3). By helping the Adoimara to break the power of the Asaimara the opening of a new route to Shoa was made possible. It is only natural that the government of Zeila would insist that it should be compensated for the revenue it lost as a result of the merchants using this new route. Moreover, this claim of Zeila could have been probably strengthened by the need of the Tajurans to return from time to time to the old

3) See pages 166-168.
established route from Zeila to Shoa as a result of Mudaito raids. In this case the tax paid by Tajura to Zeila was more in the nature of compensation than of tribute. Nevertheless, it seems to us that there was some sort of nominal dependency of Tajura on Zeila. The fact that the sultan was receiving a sort of annual stipend very much like that paid to the naib of Arkiko by the governor of Massawa points to the same sort of relationship. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that when the Tajurans quarrelled with Shermerki, the governor of Zeila, in the 1850's, they went with their complaints to the governor of Mokha. Furthermore, French sources actually say that the governorship of Zeila included all the coast from Tajura to Guardafui and that the chief of Tajura was tributary to that of Zeila.

Tajura had a sultan and a vazir whose titles were Dardar and bulaito respectively. As in other Afar sultanates, the position of sultans and vazirs were not hereditary, but alternated between the two main clans. In the case of Tajura

1) See above pages 55-57.
2) L.G. 301. Appendix to No. 482. Shermerki 28.11.1855; No. 396 of 1855; See also L.G. 297. No. 787. para's 79-87; Coglan. 8.11.1855.
these were the Adali (or Burhanto) and the Abli (or dinsara). When the sultan was from the clan of Adali his vazir had to be from the Abli. When the Adali sultan died, his vazir became the sultan while the elder son or another member of the family of the late sultan became the vazir.

In the period we are covering the sultan of Tajura was Mohammed Ibn Mohammed from the Adali clan. The sultan claimed that his authority stretched from Tajura to the borders of Shoa and that all the southern Adoimara accepted his authority. However although it was true that sub clans of the Adali and Abli actually roamed as far as the western bank of the Awash or even to the borders

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of Ifat 1) even the staunchest supporters of the sultan agreed that his actual authority did not stretch beyond Lake Assal 2). The sultan's adversaries claimed that the sultan had no authority beyond the limits of Tajura itself 3). In fact Tajura caravans had to buy the right to cross the areas held by the Adoimara tribes all along their way to Shoa. The village of Ambaboo, a few miles from Tajura belonged to a slave-trading family of the Asoba tribe. This village came into being when this family, who had formerly lived in Tajura, quarreled with the sultan. In Ambaboo they completely disregarded the authority of the sultan 4).

Even in Tajura itself the sultan had a very nominal authority. Afar society was based on very democratic, if not anarchic, system by which all the authority actually rested in the hands of the elders of the extended families and clans 5). In Tajura even the smallest matter had to be discussed by the council of Ukals-chiefs (Kalam). We have some vivid descriptions of this "senate of elders" meeting.

4) They took Rochet to Shoa on his second visit. See also: Isenberg. p. 24.
in a clearing before the sultan's enclosure. The sultan's main function on this occasion was actually to serve the coffee 1).

It seems that in the 19th century the title of sultan of Tajura was an empty one. The different clans and sub-tribes did not recognise any authority but that of their rases or ukals 2). The feeble personality who was the sultan in the second quarter of the 19th century was not even respected in Tajura itself 3). Nevertheless, public life and ceremony revolved around the figure of the sultan and his humble enclosure. Not only did the meeting of the elders take place near his hut, but all transactions with outsiders were carried on through the sultan 4). The sultan was the only one in the community who was not supposed to trade. He was therefore compensated by a right to certain taxes which enabled him to carry on the functions of a leader of the community. Besides the quarter of a dollar


4) When Tajuras' boats returned from Berbera the captains and the passengers wearing their best clothes came to the sultan's house and after kissing his hands related the latest news to the elders. Johnston. Vol. I. p. 61.; See also: Beke. F.O.A. Vol. I. p. 28. 22.11.1840.
which he collected on each slave exported through Tajura he received a 10% tax from all Adoimara trading through his village, while the Aussans, it is claimed, paid as much as 50%\(^1\). His income was further augmented by the small stipend he received from Zeila and two hundred head of cattle, the annual tribute from the neighbouring Afar tribes \(^2\).

The Tajurans were extremely orthodox Muslims at home as well as when with a caravan on the road. The little town of Tajura had three mosques, a (gadi and a sheikh who taught the children \(^3\)). The (gadi was highly respected and sat in council with the elders of Tajura \(^4\). Although the law of Tajura was the law of the Sharia, customary Afar law was very important as well. The administration of this law was in the hands of the elders of Tajura, but in the more important matters the advice of the elders of Aussa,

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1) Harris. Vol. I. pp. 178-179. As we have mentioned before, it is claimed that income from inland trade went to Zeila while the sultan had a right to tax on all imports coming by sea, excluding food.


known for their wisdom, was asked for 1). Most of Tajura's leading citizens visited Mecca on a pilgrimage and had a right to the title Haj 2). All probably combined their religious duty with business. The people prayed regularly and on all important occasions, and in every gathering of the elders, the Fatha was recited by all who attended 3).

On the road Tajuran merchants performed their religious duties with the same sincerity as they did at home. They prayed regularly and when a caravan was out of a dangerous situation or achieved a difficult task prayers of thanks were said 4). In some occasions even a Dikr 5) was performed 6).

The Tajurans had a school 7) for their children. This school was placed in the hands of a learned Yemeni Sheikh. All the children between the ages of three and six were

2) Some performed the trip to Mecca many times.
3) We are told that the sultan's brother was visiting the Yemeni sheikh regularly every Monday to recite with him a Sura of the Quran. Abbadie 21300. p. 486. See also above page 182.
5) Literally means remembrance (of Allah), a ritual of derwish orders.
6) Johnston. Vol. I. p. 155; According to Rochet (Voyage. p. 328) the Fatha was read before hunting.
7) Probably a Qutab.
taught how to read the Quran and write in Arabic ¹). It seems that some of the chiefs of the tribes from the interior were in the habit of sending their children to get Islamic education in Tajura, and one of the travellers going to Shoa in the 1840's as astounded by the many Afars he met who knew how to read and write ²).

The people of Tajura owned herds of camels and sheep, and some cattle. As the country around the village was too poor to support the large herds all the year around, and as water was not plentiful, the Tajurans left their herds under the care of their poorer relations the nomad tribes ³) in the region round about. Agriculture was not practiced at all by the Adoimara, and the Tajurans had to import most of the food they consumed from the outside. Dates, jowari, corn and rice were imported from Aussa, Shoa, Berbera and Mokha, while ghee and other animal products were supplied by the beduins. In addition to the herds they owned, the inhabitants of Tajura derived their income from a few sources. They supplied foreign merchants and

¹) Kirk. p. 319. (For this purpose the chalk found around Tajura was utilised); Rochet. Voyage. pp. 40, 43; Abbadie. 21300. p. 486.
travellers with camels, drivers, guides, protectors, food and merchandise 1). However, there is no doubt that the mainstay of Tajura's economy was trade. The trade could be divided into two branches: trade with the interior and trade with Arabia and Berbera.

Trade with the interior could be sub-divided into trade with the nomad Afars, and caravan trade with Aussa and the Ethiopian highlands.

It was only to be expected that the Tajura merchants travelling slowly to the highland took every opportunity to trade with the nomad population along the road. They sold them a few cheap items they needed and acquired from them food and whatever goods they had for sale; ivory from occasional elephant killed in the area 2), slaves captured from the Galla or kidnapped from a passing caravan, skins, and gums እንደ. Far more important in the trade relations with the nomads was the Tajura fair. It started at the end of the rainy season when grazing was plentiful around Tajura.

"The appearance of the new moon in September is a sign to


the various wandering tribes of the interior to assemble in Tajura, when an annual fair is held, similar, though much inferior, to that of Berbera. In the course of a month, the population of the quiet little village is swelled to ten times its ordinary amount and becomes the seat of extensive traffic. Slaves, honey, gold-dust, ivory, ostrich feathers, senna, madder, civet, gums, myrrh, frankincense, grain, hides, and an immense supply of cattle, are brought by the pedlars of the numerous tribes occupying the country within twenty days' journey. For two months the beach is piled with merchandize and the suburbs are crowded with camels, mules and donkeys" 1). The Tajura fair very conveniently terminated just when the Berbera fair reached its height. While Tajura merchants sailed away in their boats to Berbera, the nomads departed to the interior and carried with them blue coarse cloth, red cloth, luban or frankincense, brass, lead, zinc and agricultural products 2).

We have no evidence to show that Banian merchants who were active in all the ports of the Red Sea, attended the Tajura fair. On the contrary, we have all reason to believe that the Tajurans being traders themselves probably did

2) L.G. 153. No. 412. 1.1.1842.
everything in their power to keep the Banyans away, in order to monopolise the trade with the nomad Afar.

All trade with the Afar of the interior was carried on by barter. In exchange for larger and more costly items the Tajuran gave inferior blue dyed bafta and grey Indian kosh 1). One cubit in length by the whole width of the blue surat cloth was considered equal to half a taller 2). For smaller purchases the Tajurans and the Afar used pieces of ox skin the size of a sandal 3).

Because of climatic and physical difficulties in the Afar desert and because of the constant danger from the blood thirsty Nomads along the road, the merchants of Tajura had to organise caravans in order to trade with the interior. In fact most of Tajura's population was engaged in the caravan trade 4). Even children were broken into this trade at a very early age 5).

Before the opening of a direct route between Tajura and Alio Amba in Shoa through Adoimara dominated country,

1) Linen. Sixteen local yards of kosh were called a tobe - a dress. Isenberg. p. 36.
2) Blue surat cloth was the only money current in Danaklia. Johnston. Vol. I. p. 211.
4) As most of the general information about the caravan trade is concerned with the Shoa route, it will be found below in Page 198 and onwards.
the merchants of Tajura and other Afar merchants either used the old established route from Zeila to Harar and Shoa, or the route through Aussa and the Asaimara country. Now, with the opening of a direct route to Shoa, the Tajurans left the Zeila route but they still used the route through Aussa in order to reach Dawe, in the independent part of Argoba, which was under a Muslim ruler. Aussa, we are told 1) was connected with Massawa and even with Gondar, but as the Afar traders and the Tajurans were mainly interested in slaves, most of the caravans going through Aussa went to Dawe 2). Dawe served as a meeting point between the Wollo Muslim merchants bringing slaves and other merchandise from Gojam and Enarea 3), and Afar merchants who were not allowed to go beyond this point 4).

Tajura Adoimara caravans going to Aussa left the Shoa route at Ahmadu, not very far from Aussa 5). Their camels were mostly carrying salt but probably some imported goods as well. It took those caravans about a month to reach

2) L.G. 193. No. 2918 A. 8.5.1842. Harris claims that communications between the coast and Dawe through Aussa are known to be much more frequent and safer than between Tajura directly to Shoa.
3) See page 223 below.
On the way back the camels were not used for the transportation of the slaves, but, in addition to more valuable commodities, they brought in grain and other food stuffs from Aussa. Although this route was extensively used by slave dealers and many slave caravans came to the coast through Aussa, we have no information about it, as not even one European went to the highlands by this route.

The Tajura route to Shoa went through a narrow corridor in which roamed small Adoimara sub-tribes who had some acquired rights to parts of this route. Those Adoimara tribes were hemmed in, and were under constant pressure from their strong neighbours, the Mudaito Asaimara to the north and the Galla and Issa Somali to the south. At least one stretch of the road, from Bahr Assal to Kilulu valley, traversed recognised Mudaito territory, a cause for many

1) Abbadie 21302. p. 27. April 1841; Of caravans through Aussa see also: Ibid 21300. pp. 477, 479.
2) Abbadie 21300. p. 479. 17.2.1841.
3) See number of slave caravans which arrived at Tajura via Aussa while d'Abbadie stayed in Tajura. Abbadie 21300. p. 486. March 1841; Ibid 21302. p. 27, April 1841; See also: L.G. 193. No. 2918 A. May 1842.
bloody fights and raids on passing caravans \(^1\). Nevertheless, the most dangerous and difficult part of the route was the area from the plain of Mullu \(^2\) to the Awash at a point called Mulkikuyu crossing. This stretch of the road, and especially the eastern side of the Awash valley, was thickly populated by a mixed Galla and Mudaito population \(^3\) who resented the crossing of their country by any caravans, be it even an Aussan one \(^4\). Each caravan had to fight its way through this area, until it reached the relative safety of either the western bank of the Awash or the strong Debene concentration at Mullu. It was customary for the caravans coming from the highlands or from the coast to join forces with as many other caravans as possible before crossing this area. Only when the number of warriors reached a few hundred,

\(^1\) L.G. 166. No. 2842. Harris, 25.6.1841. Harris tells of Mudaito visiting the camp of his caravan and asking by what right did the Tajurans lead caravans through their country; L.G. 185. No. 1440. 7.1.1842. Barker tells that the caravan route was blocked at the above point.


\(^4\) Johnston. Vol. I. pp. 432–433; Isenberg. pp. 44–45; Rochet. Voyage. p. 99. From the scant information we have from the beginning of the century until the 1830's it is clear that this area used to be even then the main obstacle for any caravan going to the coast; See Combes. Vol. IV. p. 102; Abbadie. 21302. p. 346. According to Alaqa Kidana Maryam.
did the caravans dare to penetrate this troublesome place. Even then, they did not escape from attacks, and they never stopped on their way before they reached the safety of Mullu or Ethiopian territory 1).

If the Tajura route was at all kept open, it was a result of mutual interest between the merchants and the Adoimara tribes, who benefitted directly from the passage of caravans through the country they claimed and from the right to visit Tajura and to trade through that port 2). "The numerous small tribes are constantly at enmity with each other. Friendship extends only so far as their mutual interests require it; the Tajurans, for instance, have to pass with their salt and slaves through the country of the Adels, and, as the interest of both people accord, they live on the most friendly terms. Those neighbouring tribes, however, who have no advantage from this trade, try to enrich themselves by plunder and hence arise innumerable feuds and quarrels" 3).

2) L.G. 185. No. 1440. Barker. 20.3.1842; Rochet. Voyage. pp. 73,78; Harris. Vol. I. p. 212; Bernatz. Vol. I. Plate 7.; According to Johnston (Vol. I. p. 328) the hy Somali claimed a right to the area between Bundurah and Kuditee which was held by the Wema. The Tajurans disclaimed the Wema right to use their port as they did not own any part of the route to Shoa, but as the Wema were the strongest Adoimara tribe the Tajurans did not dare refuse the Wema the facilities of their village and port.
The most important benefit reaped from this corridor to Shoa by the Adoimara tribes was actually the salt trade with the highlands which in the late 1830's and 1840's, seems to have been in the hands of the Adoimara.

Bahr Assal, a short distance inland from the bay of Tajura is an almost oval crater lake, a few hundred feet below sea level, 12 miles long and about 3 to 4 miles wide. On its edges it has a crust of salt almost a foot deep in some places 1). In order to be able to load the salt, the Afar nomads used a heavy stone which they threw on the salt crust to break it into small pieces. These pieces were put into cylindrical sacks made of plaited palm leaves called Ankab 2). Each camel could carry from twenty to thirty sacks tied to its saddle 3).

The salt trade was one of the mainstays of the economy of the southern Afar. Caravans of camels and asses were going

1) Isenberg. p. 22.
2) Always plaited by Afar women and men while travelling. J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 460; These sacks were about 3½ feet long and with a diameter of a three quarter foot containing about 3½ kilograms of salt each; Bernatz. Vol. I. Plates 11, 12; Mektar. p. 359.
3) Abbadi 21300. pp. 479, 488; Harris. Vol. I. p. 116. One must carefully differentiate between the Assal salt and the salt extracted from the salt plains in the northern Afar country. In the north the salt was hewed and shaped into the amoleh-salt money while the Assal salt in uneven pieces was cheaper and was used for domestic purposes.
and coming from Assal during most of the year. The Adoimara and also the Mudaito Asaimara who claimed and equal right to the lake, transported salt to Aussa \(^1\) in exchange for grain and other food stuffs. Still the largest traffic with Assal salt was carried with Shoa.

In the late 1830's and 1840's this trade was mostly in the hands of the southern Adoimara tribes residing along the route to Shoa, as well as the Tajuran caravans going to the Ethiopian highlands. Although the Adoimara nomads usually exchanged the salt against grain, and to a lesser degree against cattle and horses, the Tajurans on the other hand used the salt mainly to finance their slave trade \(^2\). It might be said that because of the Assal salt the southern Afar and Shoa were mutually dependent. The Shoans could not do without the salt coming from Assal, which they needed for their cattle and for their food, and the Afar would have starved, but for the grain and other commodities which they acquired in the highlands against their salt \(^3\).

The Mudaito and especially the Galela subtribe had, it

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3) Krapf. F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. p. 84.
seems, as much right to the salt of Bahr Assal as the Adoimara 1). When they failed in their bid to monopolise the salt trade with Shoa at the beginning of the second quarter of the 19th century, they were completely dispossessed from this trade. In order to reassert their rights they resorted to constant raids and attacks on the Adoimara and Tajura caravans. The Issa Somali had also every reason to interrupt and put an end to the Adoimara monopoly. They had no right to the salt of Lake Assal, which was in Afar territory. Nevertheless, from time to time they forced their way to Bahr Assal, only a short distance from their territory, in order to load their camels with as much salt as they could carry 2). A large part of this salt was afterwards sold or exchanged for grain to the other Somali tribes and to Harari merchants 3). Furthermore, the Tajura trade route to Shoa competed with the long established route from Zeila to Shoa through their country. Small Adoimara caravans plying to or from Shoa were therefore always a welcome prey to Issa raiding parties 4).

In the late 1830's and early 1840's the Gallas of the

Harar area continued their expansion and succeeded in dislodging the Afar from the only foothold they had in the fertile areas on the border of the Harar range near the valley of Herrer 1). Both Ittu and Alla Gallas raided continuously into the country of the Afar, their long-standing enemies, and took every opportunity to attack Afar caravans. The pressure of the Galla from Harar area continued all through the 1830's and the 1840's and many times it brought to the closure of the road to Shoa for many months 2).

Nature did not favour the country of the Afar. It is an arid sterile and broken volcanic country. It can be considered the worst kind of a desert as most of the country is not even fit for grazing and the little rain that falls in the country quickly evaporates 3) unless collected in a few wells and water holes. Besides the raiding Mudaito or Galla, the traders worst enemies were the very difficult

1) As a result the Wema chief had to move his headquarters from the rich area of Herrer to Hassan Dera. J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 463; Isenberg. p. 33.
terrain \(^1\) and even more difficult, the weather of the area they had to cross. The best period for the caravans to travel between the coast and the highlands was November to May. In June and July the hot wind blowing in the Afar desert made life a complete misery and nearly prevented any advance along the difficult passes. Most of the water-holes were by this time completely dry and grain had to be carried for the horses and the mules \(^2\). Yet if a traveller who missed the "good season" wanted to reach the Awash before it was swollen in July or August by the heavy rains falling in the highlands \(^3\), he had to leave the coast just in this period. In August, September and part of October, as a result of wind and rains many paths and passes in the Afar country were completely blocked by falling rocks \(^4\). It was therefore only at the end of October that caravans could cross the Awash again, when the water started to recede and the paths were cleared \(^5\).

It is no wonder that the Tajura-Shoa route was very often closed for many months, and the trade with the highlands

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5) Between January and March there is in the highlands a short rainy period and the Awash rises again for a few weeks.
was on a much smaller scale than it could otherwise have been. The risks, the difficulties and the exactions along the road did not encourage foreign traders 1) to use the Tajura route. The Shoans, discouraged by many factors from trading 2), frightened by the murderous Afar and abhoring the climate of the lowlands, hardly ever went on a trading trip to the coast 3). In the second quarter of the 19th century Shoa's trade with the Afar coast was therefore monopolised by the Tajurans.

Camels and to a lesser extent donkeys and mules, were used for transportation in the Afar trade with Shoa. Asses were especially used on the trade with Aussa and probably by Aussans 4). Mules were regularly brought down by the Tajurans from Shoa where mules of excellent quality were obtained for a very low price. But those mules were sold in foreign markets or in some cases sold to foreigners who were going to the highlands 5).

1) Harrəri, Somali, and Arabs.
2) See below page 409.
3) Some did go down with Harrəri caravans to the Berbera fair and others travelled by this route on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Christians) and Mecca (Muslims).
5) Johnston. Vol. I. p. 150. In all the material that came to our hands we did not find one instance of Afar using mules for transportation.
The Afar camel was inferior to the Somali. It was less sturdy and carried a smaller load 1). Nevertheless, the camel was the most suitable transport animal for the waterless broken country which separated the coast from the highlands. The Afar rarely used their camels for riding, except when a slave in a caravan became weak or sick and in times of alarm when women and children were put on the camels 2).

The southern Afar did not have enormous herds of camels like the Somalis. The Tajurans had their own little herds of camels, but owing to lack of sufficient grazing near their village and their being mainly traders, camels as well as their herds of sheep and cattle were given to the care of their poorer relatives some days distance from Tajura 3). When the camels had to be obtained for foreign merchants or travellers, it was quite a tedious task to round up the necessary number 4).

Considering the fact that Tajura caravans were constantly

1) Isenberg. p. 27; L.G. 166. No. 2482, Harris. 25.6.1842, while d'Abbadie (21300, pp. 479, 488) claims that an Afar camel could carry twenty to thirty sacks of salt weighing about seventy to ninety kilograms; Borelli (p. 52) tells us that Somali camel could carry over a hundred and fifty Kgs.


3) Arnauld Abbadie. p. 595; L.G. 164. No. 2147. Harris. paras. 22-26, 44. 5.6.1841.

on the road to Shoa, to Aussa, to Dawe and other places while other Tajura caravans were organising for a return trip from the highlands, the Tajurans had to employ quite a large number of camels. Important Tajura merchants like Ahmed Medina 1), Ishak, the brother of the Sultan 2) and others, employed tens of camels each trip. We do not know if the great merchants of Tajura owned all the camels they needed, but it seems as if they had a large number of camels of their own.

On the road the camels were driven and tended either by trusted slaves 3) or by poor Adoimara 4). A diligent man could look after 20 camels for which he received one dollar per camel and he was not considered responsible to the owners for the safety of the camels and their load 5).

Even according to Ethiopian standards the capital of Afar merchants could be considered small. It is doubtful whether Tajura's greatest merchant could boast a capital of over two thousand tallers. Ahmed Medina described as

3) Isenberg. p. 10; All the camel owners in Johnston's caravan were Tajurans. L.G. 187. No. 1772. April 1842.
5) Abbadie 21300. p. 408.
the greatest slave merchant 1) had with him on his trip to Shoa in 1842 merchandise that to our estimate could not be worth much over a thousand dollars 2). The son of Tajura's qadi, Abdul Rakhman, an important merchant, led to the coast in the caravan in which he was the Ras el Kafila (1841-1842) only twenty slaves of his own, worth at Alio Amba in Shoa not more than 400 tallers 3). Ishak, the most important man in Tajura 4), brought through Aussa while Abbadie was in Tajura in 1841, fifty slaves for which he probably paid at Daw all less than a thousand dollars 5). Mohammed Ali, an important caravan leader, after being paid for taking two European caravans to the highlands, did not bring down from Shoa more than forty slaves 6). Smaller merchants like Burhan, the son of Abu Baker 7) had only seven slaves in a caravan reaching the coast in March 1841 8).

It seems that, whatever merchandise the Tajurans carried to or from the highlands, represented most of the capital of each trader. In Mokha and in Shoa credit was

2) He and another merchant joined Johnston's caravan with five and six attendants and twenty eight camels.
3) Kirk. p. 337.
7) From the family which were to become the largest slave traders in the Somali Afar coast in the second half of the 19th century.
unknown, and one had to pay for everything one required with cash or with the equivalent in merchandise. The huts in Tajura including those of the more important citizens are described as being simple if not bare. Although in the case of the important merchants we do not believe this to be a precise reflection of their poverty, it stands to reason that the Tajuran merchants would leave cash hidden in their huts while they were far away. These merchants did not extend any credit themselves, so nothing was owing to them. They might have had a few slaves in their homes which represented a small capital, but this could not change our contention that most of their capital was represented in whatever they carried along with them. Although profits were quite high, capital growth under conditions which Tajuran merchants had to undergo was very slow. A merchant had to spend two months going up to Shoa with his pitiful merchandise, then he had to spend many weeks selling it and buying slaves and other items to take along to the coast. He had to wait a long time for the organisation of a caravan going to the coast in the right season. All along the way from or to Tajura he had to appease the nomad tribes through whose territory he had to pass with many presents. The long months of inactivity at home and in the highlands, when roads were closed either by weather or raiding Mudaito and Galla,
constantly drained his small capital and there was always the possibility of a calamity on the road or on the sea, when the merchant might lose all his capital, if not his life.

Even Tajuras' more important merchants were not rich enough to form caravans of their own, and for their own safety were very much interested in joining forces with as many small merchants as possible. Usually a caravan was organised by two or three important merchants, who were joined by a number of smaller merchants. From time to time they were joined by small caravans from the villages of Rahita and Ambaboo. Even then, those caravans were quite small 1), and they succeeded in protecting themselves only by joining forces with nomad salt caravans, as well as with other trading caravans going to Shoa from Aussa and Harar 2). "It was the interest of the Ras 3),...and of every camel-owner that composed it, to get as great a number of people together as possible to resist any extortion, or repel any attack..." 4).


3) Of the Kafila.

All along the route the caravan was subjected to constant extortion by the Adoimara tribes through whose territory they had to pass and at each tribal territory a new protector or Abban had to be obtained with presents and money 1). Without the good will of the Abban, usually the head (Akil) of the tribe, the caravan was sure to be pillaged and the merchants slaughtered 2).

It had been suggested by some of our sources 3) that the position of the Ras el Kafila in all caravans organised in Tajura was a monopoly of the Asoba tribe living around the village of Ambaboo. On the other hand we are told by Harris 4) that the position of Ras el Kafila "is invariably filled by the individual elected by the unanimous voice of the camel owners, in conjunction with the sultan and the chiefs of Tedjurra".

Probably Harris made the natural mistake of presuming that the head of the merchants or the most important personality in the caravan who was actually delegated by the chiefs

4) L.G. 193. No. 2919. para. 43. Harris. 10.6.1842.
of Tajura to look after his (Harris's) welfare and to protect him along the road, was the technical chief of the caravan, the Ras el Kafila¹). It seems that besides the Asoba Ras el Kafila, the authority in the caravan rested in the hands of the chief merchant, who usually organised the caravan in the first place ²).

The Ras el Kafila, in order to succeed, had to command respect and obedience. He had to be a good organiser and a first class diplomat. It always helped to be a renowned warrior and to be acquainted with all the chiefs along the road. He had to know the country very well and have knowledge of any hidden water hole by the way. He had to be well versed in Afar politics and to be aware of everything that happened along the caravan route. Actually his position could be summed up as that of commander in chief, minister for foreign affairs and intelligence officer. The Ras el Kafila gave the orders for camping and the orders to rise in the morning and load the camels ³). He alone dispersed

¹) Ibrahim ibn Buranto, an Asoba from Ambaboo complained later to Lt. Barker that he was the head of Harris missions Kafila and not the Sultan's brother who received all the presents from Harris. L.G. 184. No. 1129. para. 10. 28.2.1842. This mistake probably arose from the fact that Harris did not have a mutual language with Ibrahim.

the presents in the name of the whole Kafila to those whom he considered important enough. The safety and the success of each caravan very largely depended on the quality of its Ras 1).

Because of the very difficult terrain, the lack of water and the weakness of the camels, the pace of the Afar caravans was quite slow. An average of not more than ten miles was covered each day. In order to let the camels regain their strength and at the same time to be able to trade with the nomads along the route, the caravans halted from time to time for a few days in places where grazing and water were available. No wonder, therefore, that the not very long road to Shoa from the coast took the caravans between six to eight weeks to cover.

Along the road there were about fifty known halting places called Mahallah 2). At each Mahallah the camels were unloaded and sent to graze under the care of one or two guards while the people of the caravan put up simple shelters for the night, cooked their meals, prayed and sipped their

coffee. Tajuran caravans never understood the necessity of haste unless dangerous enemies were in the area.

While on the road, each member of the caravan, be he a merchant, a camel driver or a slave, had to be constantly on guard to preserve the safety of the whole caravan as well as his own life against raiding parties and single warriors hunting for a "trophy" 1). Each stranger appearing in the distance was a cause for an alarm. Visitors to the camp, including women, were looked upon with suspicion, as they could be spies preparing for an attack 2). The smallest laxness on the part of the guards could always bring loss of life 3).

When going through a dangerous area the Ras el Kafila would send flankers to the sides to protect the caravan from an unexpected attack 4). Alarm would be raised in the camp as a result of the smallest hint of an approaching attack. The struggling caravan would immediately form into a more compact unit ready for war, and women and children would be put on the camels to afford more mobility. Everybody who could carry arms would leave the baggage and the

1) L.G. 185. No. 1440. para. 40. Barker. 20.3.1842.
2) Isenberg. p. 49.
animals to the care of the old, the children and the women. The warriors would form two tight lines behind or between which the more vulnerable part of the caravan was put.

Firearms were hardly known among the Afar until the second half of the century. It is surprising that even the Tajurans who were constantly trading with Arabia did not possess any firearms 1), although such arms could give a greater safety to the caravans. Still the Afar were not outstanding in this matter. Although the Ethiopians appreciated the advantages of firearms at an earlier date, the southwestern Galla disliked the use of firearms until conquered by Menelick and the coastal people, including the Somalis, did not acquire firearms until the last quarter of the 19th century.

Although some food could be obtained from nomad Afars along the road and a little water was to be found in well hidden water holes, travellers could not always be certain of obtaining those two commodities. One of the reasons why the camels accompanying the caravans were not used for riding was probably that they had to carry food and water as well as merchandise. The Afars in the caravan took usually

only one meal a day 1). Their food consisted of a little jowari, some ghee, a handful of dates 2) and milk which was occasionally obtainable from the nomads.

While food could be carried for the whole trip, or for a good part of it, water was a much more difficult problem. The Ras el Kafila knew every little water hole and every water source along the route, but especially at the end of the dry season, water holes, could be found empty 3). Other water holes could be in the possession of a Mudaito band and others could be in the use of another caravan coming from the opposite direction. In the terrible heat of the Afar desert large quantities of water had to be consumed in order to survive. With caravans coming down from Shoa with large numbers of slaves, lack of water or insufficient water could mean the death of many slaves 4). Some water was carried by the pack animals and by each man and slave in whole kid-skin bags called Affaleetah 5), but the quantities thus carried were limited. It was therefore essential for

2) If they could afford them.
   This was one of the main reasons why the caravans coming from the highlands had to take the road in the season when they were sure of finding plenty of water.
the Ras el Kafila to acquire all the information he could on the conditions along the route. Caravans meeting on the road exchanged news and information with each other \(^1\), nomads were closely questioned on the situation in the area and scouts were sent forward to find what was the condition of the water holes and sources ahead.

At the end of the dry season the Awash was about 60 feet wide, and up to four feet deep, at the crossing of Mulkukuyoo \(^2\). A short time later in August after the beginning of the rainy season, the Awash was swollen by flood waters coming from the hills and became unfordable \(^3\). Even during the short rainy season in east Ifat around the month of January caravans could not cross the river \(^4\). The more adventurous among the traders and especially those who wanted to reach the coast before the closing of the Berbera fair used primitive rafts and skin sacks filled with air in order to cross the river. Most of the merchants usually waited for the water to subside and departed from the highlands only at the end of January or the beginning of February. Caravans coming from the coast had to plan their arrival

\(^2\) Isenberg. p. 53.*
\(^3\) Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 608.
so as to reach the river in time.

Some European travellers 1) claimed that the Afar did not know the art of building simple rafts. They say that the merchandise brought by the caravans was transferred to the other side of the river in "entire sheep skins" tied by the neck and that the skin bags filled with air were tied to animals and men to help them cross the water. On the other hand Harris 2) describes simple rafts which could carry two camel loads each, built by the people of his caravan for the crossing of the Awash. These rafts were pulled to the other side of the river after one member of the caravan had swum to the other side with the end of the rope 3).

When the caravan reached the Shoan side of the Awash its troubles were nearly over. The big caravans started to disintergrate into the small units of which they were composed. After two or three short marches, the caravans reached the administrative borders of Shoa. The Ras el Kafila or a messenger went forward to announce the approach of the caravan while the men of the caravan washed themselves and put on their best clothes for the occasion 4).

3) For a different system of constructing rafts to cross the Awash, see: Bernatz. Vol. I. Plate 20.
Although far less important than Massawa in relation to Ethiopian foreign trade we think that Tajura surpassed Massawa as an outlet for the slave trade of southern Ethiopia 1). It might be said that all Tajura merchants were actually slave dealers who accompanied their slave trading with occasional trade in other lucrative items like gold and ivory 2). We estimate that in the late 1830's and in the 1840's, between 1,500 and 2,000 slaves were exported annually from Tajura 3). This number grew as extra capital came into Tajuran hands from Europeans travelling to Shoa in the 1840's and especially the Harris Mission.

As we have pointed out before, Tajura was not even mentioned in documents from the late 18th century and the beginning of the 19th dealing with the trade of the Red Sea. Henry Salt in 1811 4) claims that the insignificant trade of the Afar coast 5) was in the hands of Somalis and that

1) "More slaves are exported from Tedjoura than either of the ports mentioned above" (Massawa or Sawakin, Zeyla and Berbera). Haines. L.G. 165. No. 2316. 5.7.1841; See also Beke. Commerce. p. 5.
the trade of Shoa and Ifat went through Harar to Zeila 1). Speaking of the slave trade of Ethiopia in the first quarter of the 19th century 2) Nathanial Pearce 3) does not even mention the Tajura route. On the contrary he says: "Those (slaves) who come from the Galla districts near the kingdom of Shoa pass through Edjow and Wochale into the Amhara".

It might be said that the growing demand for Abyssinian slaves especially concubines, in the Arabian markets and all over the Ottoman Empire was probably the main cause for Tajura's economic development in the second quarter of the 19th century. Tajura's economy was geared to supply the needs of the highlands markets in exchange for slaves and occasionally other articles as well. The Tajurans who constantly visited Shoa, Argoba and Arabia were well aware of the changing tastes in the highlands' markets 4) as well as of the growing demand for young Ethiopian girls for the harems of the Muslim world. Fortunately for the Tajurans this demand for slaves coincided with the expansion of the kingdom of Shoa, which opened new routes to trade in the 1)

1) See also: F.O. Abyssinia 1/1. pp. 4, 9. (Hanim-HaraV)
   Valentia. 13.9.1808; Ibid. p. 122. Pearce to Salt. 20.12.1809
2) Probably 1815-1820.
interior. On the other hand the expansion of Shoa created a demand for metals, firearms and foreign products for the aristocracy and the court circle. Although the Tajurans going to Shoa took with them many loads of salt it seems to us that the salt supply of the highlands was mainly in the hands of the nomad Adoimara. One camel loaded with foreign products and metals could buy the same number of slaves bought for a whole caravan loaded with salt. In fact Tajuran merchants who had enough capital brought with them to the highlands foreign products mostly blue and white cotton cloth, copper, beads, metals and other products which were available at Mokha and Berbera 1).

In contrast to slave merchants from northern Ethiopia and Massawa, the Tajurans were prevented from reaching the sources of the trade both by the kingdom of Shoa and the Wollo Galla principalities. As a result, the Tajura merchants either used the services of agents or middlemen, who acquired the slaves for them in the markets of western and southwestern Ethiopia, or they bought their slaves from Galla and Ethiopian Muslim merchants, who arrived at the markets of Abdul Rassul, Dawe and Ein Amba in northern Argoba.

It is hinted by some of the sources that the volume of the slave trade between Tajura and Argoba was greater than that between Tajura and Shoa. But as no European went by that route to the highlands we have only little information about it.

The independent principality of Argoba ruled at this time by Beru Lobo, included parts of the Wollo country. Its markets, and above all that of Dawe, were an important centre for the slave trade. Tajuran merchants who were willing to pay higher prices than customary in other markets of northern and central Ethiopia were always sure of finding here the human merchandise they were after. Moreover, it seems that Tajura merchants had an arrangement with some Wollo slave merchants that the latter should acquire for them "better grade slaves" in southwestern Ethiopia, while they disposed of their merchandise in the markets of Argoba and Wollo. It is probable that the Wollo agents carried with them some of the merchandise brought to the highlands by the Tajurans.

2) Abbadie 21300. pp. 224-225
As to the length of the journey on this route, it seems that it took the caravans about 8 to 9 days to cover the stretch between Argoba and Aussa. In Aussa caravans stopped for a rest and the merchants bought Aussan food stuffs. However, owing to the high humidity of the place which caused many weak slaves to die, the caravans did not stay too long in this place. After the caravans were reorganized the road from Aussa to Tajura was covered in a few days.

There is little doubt that the inhabitants of Rahita took an active part in the slave trade through Aussa and that they co-operated with the Tajura caravans. But as there was a direct route from Aussa to Rahita, European sources had little to say about the Rahitans part in this trade. Thus all we know is that Rahita merchants went with the Tajurans to Argoba and Wollo as they did with Tajuran caravans going to Shoa.

3) According to the Qadi of Tajura it took a loaded caravan 15 days to reach Aussa and 15 more days to reach Wollo. That many slaves reached the coast by this route can be seen from the fact that within a few months that Abbadie was in Tajura a few hundred slaves arrived by this route.
Although Tajura's main sources of slaves were the markets south of Shoa in the Soddo Galla areas and northern Gurague ¹), the Tajurans did not penetrate the highlands beyond the villages on the eastern borders of Ifat. There they waited patiently for slave caravans led by Galla and local Muslim merchants to arrive in the central slave market of Abdul Rassul in eastern Ifat ²).

It is claimed that the borders of Ifat were as far as the Afar camels could get into the highlands ³) and therefore the Afar did not venture any further than the outlying villages of eastern Shoa. However one tends to believe Johnston's version ⁴) that the king of Shoa had strictly forbidden the Afar to enter his territories beyond eastern Ifat. Besides security reasons, the king probably had a very good financial reason. The king wanted the caravans not only to cross his country but he wanted to turn Shoa into an emporium of trade where merchants from different parts of Ethiopia would meet and trade and by that would enrich the Shoan treasury through taxation. It was with

1) The markets of Roggie, Anduodi, Mogher etc.
   See page
this in mind, probably, that the village of Chanoo was allotted to the Tajura and other Afar merchants, to live in while they stayed and traded in Shoa. In the village the merchants and their attendants had huts and in the surrounding areas rich with grass and water they grazed their tired animals 1). Even when a few caravans were detained in Shoa, the number of the Tajurans and Rahitans in Chanoo could not exceed a couple of hundred, but of course their number was augmented by many hundreds of nomad Afar who brought salt to the markets of Shoa 2).

Chanoo was only a few miles from the administrative borders of Shoa. At the same time it was not very far from the capital, Ankobar, but, most important of all, it was just a short distance from Shoa's most important market, Alio Amba, and its neighbouring slave market of Abdul Rasul. From Chanoo the Tajurans could easily reach all the neighbouring markets and there sell the merchandise they had brought from the coast 3). In Abdul Rasul they were sure to

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3) They were compelled to leave their arms behind. Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 18-19.
acquire during the period of their stay in Chanoo all the slaves they wanted. Until a caravan was ready to depart, the slaves bought in Shoa were kept in the merchants houses in Chanoo. Sometimes, when the roads were blocked, over a thousand slaves would be waiting for transportation to the coast in the merchants small and filthy huts 1).

The slaves thus waiting for transportation were frightened into submission and prevented from escaping not only by brutal force, but by good treatment, promises of a better life and especially by stories about the savagery of the border population. They were told that these were cannibals, and that if they escaped, they might be eaten alive 2). The poor slaves, mainly children, frightened out of their wits, were only too glad to cling to their masters and remain under their protection. In Chanoo the slave had actually his last chance to escape with a very slight chance of reaching his far away home. At worst, he ran the risk of being enslaved by somebody else. Beyond the administrative borders of Shoa the chances were that the escaped slave would either die of hunger or thirst or would be emasculated and killed by the Galla or Mudaito along the route 3).

1) L.G. 204. No. 1146. Harris. 6.4.1843.
The slaves acquired by the Tajurans in the markets of Shoa were mostly highly valued Gurague 1) as well as Galla and Sidama coming from the tribes to the south and southwest of Shoa 2). Nearly all of them were under twenty, and most were between the ages of seven and fourteen 3). It seems that the proportion of the sexes in the Tajura caravans was usually over two females to one male. 3

The usual Tajura slave caravan was made of thirty to fifty Afar merchants and attendants, leading an average of about two hundred slaves 4). Of course such a caravan was far too small to travel to Mulloo beyond the Awash by itself, and usually they joined forces with a small Harari caravan and the much larger nomad caravan returning to the Adoimara areas after exchanging their salt for foodstuffs, horses

3) Comparing our sources we found that the proportion of female to male in each Tajura caravan was even higher than among the slaves brought to Massawa. Isenberg. C.M.R. Vol. 1841. p. 4; Bernatz. Vol. I. Plate 9; Johnston. Vol. I. p. 220; Beke. F.O.A. Vol. I. pp. 89, 106; L.G. 165. No. 2316. Haines. 5.7.1841; Kirk. pp. 322, 337; Abaddie 21300. p. 486. In one instance we are told that nine tenths in a slave caravan were females. L.G. 204. No. 1146. Haines. 6.4.1843.
and mules in Shoa 1). Most of the slave merchants did not have on the average more than five to six slaves which represented in Shoa a capital of about a hundred dollars. Probably this was the result of a sale of a camel load of foreign merchandise or a few camel loads of salt. On the other hand some more prominent Tajora merchants, who served as a nucleus for each caravan, were leading a few dozen slaves each 2).

Although very young, and although they had already covered a few hundred miles before reaching Abdul Rasul, the newly acquired slaves had to cover the very difficult, hot and waterless route to Tajura on foot. Each slave caravan had with it a few score of camels, but these camels were carrying provisions for the caravan as well as a quantity of ivory and hides, a little civet and sometimes some gold 3). After some of the food was consumed, water was loaded on the camels for the dryest stretches of the route. Each slave carried either a water gourd or a jar made of an hollowed melon, some food and small stool or

The slave dealers chose from among their slaves the eldest and the strongest to take care of the other slaves. Among the females the ones that were chosen were usually the more beautiful and the more developed, and they served as their master's concubines along the route and handmaids in camp. Some of the males were entrusted with the charge of the camels, while the others were employed in fuel gathering, cooking, preparing the camp for the night and other easy tasks. Four large handfuls of parched grain comprising a mixture of wheat, maize and grain, formed the daily food of each slave; and under the charge of the most intelligent, the respective droves slept huddled together on mats spread upon the ground. On the march the slaves had to walk at the rate of a camel pace in small groups according to their owners and under the care of those who were chosen. The owners did not walk with their slaves but took the front, the rear and the flanks of the caravan in order to prevent attacks and escapes.

A very grim picture of a slave caravan on the Tajura route is given by the artist Barnatz: "Driven for fifty

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4) L.G. 204. No. 1146. Harris. 6.4.1843.
or sixty days, across the almost desert...to Tajura...For
many days they never approach any watering-places...
oblige to carry on their backs the necessary supply of
water for those days. Seldom, even in cases of illness, is
any means of transportation provided, and numbers of them
perish on the way...from fatigue and want of water, or torn
by hyenas when no longer able to keep up with the rest of
the caravan"1).

A very different picture of slave caravans is presented
by Johnston and Beke 2), a picture of laughing, gay and
chatting groups of children walking on the road unconfined
and usually well treated. Furthermore, Harris whose task
was to report on the slave trade and who usually condemns
this trade with strong words, brings the following description
of a Tajura slave caravan: "Children accustomed to bad (hard)
fare and harsh treatment in their own country, they very
readily adapted themselves to the will of their new masters,
whose obvious interest it was to keep them fair and in good
spirits. With few exceptions all were merry and light-hearted.
Recovered from the fatigue of the long march...In general
there was nothing but dancing, singing, and tomapping; and
although many wore an air of melancholy,...might rather have

1) See also: Isenberg description. C.M.R. 1841. p. 4.
pp. 106, 169.
been conjectured to be proceeding on a party of pleasure, than bending their steps for ever from their native land...
Nine tenth were females, varying in age from six to thirteen years and all were clad alike in dirty cotton smocks of Abyssinian manufacture, adorned in some instance with cuffs of blue calico. Their long dark tresses, elaborately greased, were plaited into thin cords with tassels at the extremity, and interwoven about the head with a band of coloured thread to which were suspended a cluster of cowry shells. Bead necklaces, pewter earrings, bracelets and anklets, decorated the persons of a most, and these (ornaments) forming the stock in hand of the trader, are invariably resumed on each bargain effected, to be transferred to some victim hereafter to be purchased. Each slave carried a large gourd, a water flagon, and walked the entire distance with a cheerfulness and display of endurance that was truly surprising in children especially of such tender years. A very few only, became weary or foot-sore when they were mounted either on mules or camels, or provided with sandals of ox-hide which sufficiently protected their tender feet against the sharp lava boulders...Some surly old drivers who preferred the application of the whip to the more gentle persuasion of words; but in the chastisement inflicted... there was nothing to remind the spectator of the horrors of
slavery as witnesses in the western world" 1).

It seems that Bernatz being an artist and not a scholar wanted to make his book as appealing and as colourful as possible. Isenberg was a missionary and as such he could not help himself but describe the slave trade in the darkest colour possible. Slave trade in Ethiopia was very different from the horrible picture painted by many 19th century books about the rest of Africa. One must admit that the Afars were not as gentle with their slaves as were the north Abyssinian slave merchants and that the climate, lack of water and dangers of the Afar desert could not be compared to the north Ethiopian slave route. But considering the very "special merchandise" they handled, young boys and girls, it only stands to reason that the Afar merchants gave them the best of care possible in the circumstances. Remembering that the slaves represented the bulk of their limited capital, the tender age of the slaves and their good spirits softened even the hardened Afar slave merchant and he treated his "children" as gently as he could in the circumstances 2).

On reaching Debene Wema territory beyond Mulloo, the

large caravans which crossed the most dangerous part of the route as a unit, started to disintegrate. The nomad Adoimara returned to their tribes and the Tajuran Rahita caravans parted company from the Hararis who went to Harar by way of Metta 1), as slave caravans had a special problem of ensuring the necessary water for the hundreds of young children they drove along 2). If the caravan was travelling just after the rainy season it was sure not to lack water all along the road, but it also stood a chance of being attacked by the small bands of roving Issa or Mudaito who waited for the chance of carrying off a few slaves or at least obtaining some "trophies" 3). If the caravan travelled in the later part of the dry season, it always stood the danger of finding the most important water-holes dry and they were sure to lose some of the slaves through thirst 4). Sometimes, when caravans heard that all the water-holes along the road to Tajura were dry or when the road from Debene Wema territory to Lake Assal was blocked by Mudaito,

3) "A caravan containing 300 slaves was plundered by the Esa Somal, whose highest ambition is to mutilate a human being and to display the spoil". L. G. 294. No. 158. para. 17. Burton. 22.2.1855; See also: Voyage. p. 99. Rochet.
they turned from Killulu to the old Zeila route through Issa country and under the protection of one of the Wema chiefs 1).

Once the caravans reached Bahr Assal area most of the dangers were over. The Tajura caravan began to break into smaller units comprising the slaves, the camels and the escorts of one or two merchants 2). Those who came from Ambaboo went straight to their village, but the Tajurans waited until evening in order to enter their village so that they would not attract the "evil eye" 3). On entering Tajura, each merchant took his little herd of human merchandise to his own enclosure and the ordeal of the drovers and the slaves was over.

The size of the enclosure of each slave merchant in Tajura depended on the size of the trade in slaves he carried on. The more prominent merchants of Tajura, like Ishak the brother of the sultan, Kasim, his nephew, Mohammed Ali of the Wema, had to have a few huts in their enclosure

2) Kirk. p. 322.
in which they housed the scores of slaves which they brought down from the highlands on each trip. Most of the slaves were kept in the merchant's house only for a short time until they recuperated from the fatigues of the road and until transportation was available for Berbera or Mokha or Hudeida or sometimes all the way to Jidda. "The slave children...live happily enough whilst in Tajourah, far too young to comprehend the evils of their destiny, and their bodily wants being carefully attended to, they soon regain their lost condition and health...They are nearly all dressed in a long dirty frock of very coarse calico." The slave merchants who were interested in the quick recovery of their slaves and their good looks so that they will get a better price for them in the markets, did their best to look after them while in Tajura.

Some of the better looking slave girls became provisional wives of their masters, only to be disposed of when the master was done with them or was in need of ready cash. Some slave boys were left in the huts of their master. The Tajuran in his home could not dream of doing any physical work, even the humblest of the Tajurans had at least a

couple of slaves in his house 1).

A tax of one taller was levied in Tajura only on slaves exported to foreign markets of which ¾ of a taller the sultan had to pay to the Zeila authorities. This regulation did not apply to non-Tajurans who had to pay the full tax and probably other exactions on arrival. The Tajurans probably used the above loop-hole to cheat the Zeila authorities with the full co-operation of the Sultan, who was related to the most important slave merchants. To protect his rights the governor of Zeila had an agent in Tajura 2). But as the houses of the merchants were always full of slaves, and it was probably very difficult to supervise all shipment of slaves from the neighbouring coast, the Zeila authorities had agents also in Tajuras' main outlets Berbera and Mokha. Those agents informed the governor of Zeila on the number of slaves brought from Tajura 3).

At the beginning of the century Somali merchants monopolised most of the little trade of the Afar coast 4). From time to time the active and daring Somali ship owners

and mariners visited this coast, while Arab shipping did not even try to rival them for the little trade of the rundown Afar coastal sultanates. The Tajura slave trade started to grow in dimension probably sometime after the first quarter of the 19th century. The Tajurans and other Afar merchants who wanted a better market for their slaves and cheaper imported goods for their Shoan trade, had to rely completely on those foreign boats which touched Tajura's port occasionally. With the growth of trade the more important merchants of Tajura started to acquire boats of their own at Mokha and in other places. In 1841 Tajurans had about 15 trading boats of up to seventy tons each. Still it seems that this did not answer Tajura's growing needs for shipping and Indian teak wood was brought from Aden while Mokhan ship builders were invited to build new boats on Tajura's coast. "The people of this place who were at first entirely dependant on Zeila and Mokha for boats are now only so in part as many are now boat owners."

5) Beke. F.O.A. Vol. I. pp. 89-90. 28.11.1840; It is interesting that "a firm of packers and shippers" working for the Banyan and Arab merchants at Berbera, had its headquarters at Tajura. Abbadie 21300. p. 430.
Tajuran boats were in this period to be found trading from Jidda to Zanzibar along the coast of Arabia and Africa and Tajuran merchants went as far as the Persian Gulf and India 1).

It seems that in the 1830's and early 1840's part of the Ethiopian slaves reaching the coast were sent to Persia and the Persian Gulf through the intermediary of the Mokha, Omani and other Arab merchants coming to Berbera fair 2). Tajuran merchants who wanted to take part in the Persian Gulf and Indian trade and to avoid the brokerage of the Mokhans, found their way to the Fair of Berbera which took place from October to April each year 3). Thus probably a sizable part of the slaves brought from the highlands by the Tajurans reached the Persian Gulf via Berbera 4). In order to reach the Berbera Fair in time the Tajurans leaving the highlands after the rainy season had to have boats waiting for them in Tajura. Those caravans who left the highlands after the short rainy season in January could not reach the


Fair of Berbera before its end, when the slave trade was always very brisk, unless the necessary transportation waited for them at the coast 1). True enough prices of slaves at Berbera were sometimes lower than in the Arabian coast, but besides the nominal charges of the Abban or protector, the trader was free from all duties and exactions of the authorities in the Arabian ports. The merchandise for the Shoan trade could be obtained at Berbera from Indian and Persian Gulf merchants at a much lower price than paid at Mokha. Moreover, with the steady decline of Mokha in this period the Afar merchants were sure to find a much larger stock of merchandise on the beaches of Berbera than in the stores of Mokha. /In Berbera the Tajurans who imported all the food they consumed could get jowari from Harar, dates from the Persian Gulf and rice from India 2).

When the fair was over Tajuran boats sailed home laden with rice, dates, jowari, coffee, tobacco, pieces of old copper, brass, pewter, zinc, cloth of different kinds, beads, cheap scissors, knives and other manufactured goods 3).

1) Johnston. Vol. I. p. 61; Abbadie (21300. p. 486) tells us, after a slave caravan arrived at Tajura in March 1841, that the slaves would be shipped to Mokha as the season in Berbera is ending at the time.


After exchanging information with merchants just arriving from the interior caravans were quickly formed by some of the merchants in order to reach Shoa before the rainy season. 

Tajuran merchants who missed the Berbera Fair sailed to the Arabian ports Mokha, Hudeida, Confida and sometimes even to Jidda.

Trade with Mokha was always important to Tajura as Mokha served as its main outlet and supply depot. In the late 1830's and the early 1840's Mokha was declining rapidly and only those merchants who missed the Fair of Berbera went to Mokha between the months of April and August. In the late 40's and in the 50's as a result of the growing demand for Ethiopian slaves in the Hijaz and all over the Ottoman Empire and the mounting British pressure on the Persian Gulf slave trade, it seems that a larger proportion of Tajuran slaves were going up the Red Sea. Furthermore, the Yemeni coast traders who were deprived of most of their trade by the growth of Aden, turned to the slave trade in which they did not have to fear competition from the merchants of Aden and British Indian merchants. In April 1847 Lt. Cruttenden reported that nine hundred slaves were brought to Berbera,

2) Before the route from Shoa was blocked by the swelling Awash.
through Tajura and Zeila and that seven hundred others have been sent up the Red Sea while a Kafila of four hundred slaves was on its way from Shoa to Tajura. In 1848 the arrival of slave caravans in Tajura and the expected arrival of a few more caravans at Berbera were reported by a British naval officer. As the Persian Gulf Arabs at Berbera were forbidden from trading in slaves, he heard that most of the slaves would be sent to Jidda and Mokha and from hence they will find their way to Baghdad, Bassra and Mesopotamia by the Haj caravan route. The Persian traders in Berbera, he reported, expected large profits as they would be able to buy the slaves cheaply because of lack of demand. The crews of the Arab boats who reaped huge profit from the slave trade in the past hinted that the Red Sea was big and still open. In 1856 the French consular agent in Aden, Lambert, reported that when he was in Tajura in May, five boats carried from Tajura to the opposite coast 1,200-1,500 children. In Hudieda he found two more Tajuran boats with 800 slaves.

As was said before, the annual numbers of slaves

1) At the end of the Berbera Fair.
3) L.G. 501. No. 371. 20.5.1856.
4) See above page 178.
exported from Tajura in the 1830's, 40's and early 50's was between 1,500 and 3,000. Harris who claims that Tajura exported 3,000 slaves a year says that the annual profit of the Tajuran merchants on the sale of these slaves was 30,000 tallers or an average of 10 tallers per slave. This stands in contrast with another claim of Harris that the profit from the slave trade was 300%. From other sources we know that the price for a young male slave in Shoa was between 10 to 15 tallers and that a female fetched between 15 and 20. The average price of a male slave at Tajura was about 20 tallers and that of a female 25 to 35. At Berbera it seems that the average price for a better class female or male slave was between 40 and 50 tallers. On the Yemeni coast we have claims that exceptionally good looking concubines were sold for between a hundred and a hundred and fifty tallers. Other sources claim that slaves were sold in Mokha for 30 to 40 tallers,

1) We could guess at an average of about 2,000 a year.
50 to 60 tallers or 80 to 100 tallers. It seems it would be safe to assume that the average price for the average slave at Mokha was 50 to 60 tallers and the very high prices were paid only for exceptionally good looking young females.

We may assume therefore that the gross profit of a slave merchant at Tajura was about 100%. If he took his human merchandise to the Fair of Berbera he probably made about, or over, 200% profit on his initial investment. Only when he took the slaves to Mokha did he approach the 300% profit claimed by Harris.

We spoke before of the difficulties, expenses, losses and dangers risked by the merchant bringing his slaves to the coast. In Tajura there was always the danger of sickness among the slaves and the expenses of feeding them while they recuperated. When shipping the slaves to Berbera and Mokha the merchant had to pay a few tallers per head freight and then in Berbera he had to pay his Abban or broker, in Mokha and other parts he had to pay the regular dues levied on slaves and the regular exactions from merchants.


2) Only this can explain how at Sour and Muskat in Arabia a Gurague girl was sold at an average price of 70-75 dollars and at Basra 80-85 dollars. See Abbadie 21300. p. 487.

One might safely say that in the process of buying the slaves in Shoa, waiting for a caravan, taking the slaves to the coast, waiting for the slave to regain his strength and looks at Tajura and then sailing to Berbera or Mokha the slave merchants spent about 6 months. If we consider that the average Tajura slave merchants could not afford to bring more than a dozen slaves, and if we remember all the expenses and losses he incurred on the way, his profits, considering the time spent on making them, were negligible. At the most they might have been sufficient to cover the living expenses of his large family. Accumulation of capital in Tajura must have been very small. The average Tajura merchant could be considered quite poor and working very hard for very small profit in a very dangerous trade.
HARAR AND THE NORTHERN SOMALI COAST.

From the 16th century until the second part of the 19th, Harar was the seat of an important sultanate and an important centre of trade and Islam in the horn of Africa. Even after the disintegration of the great Zeila kingdom Harar was still distinguished as a centre of trade and Islamic proselytism. But the stagnation of the trade in the Red Sea in the 18th century, combined with political and military reasons, had an even more disastrous influence on Harar than on the rest of the region, so that Harar declined steadily throughout the 18th century and part of the 19th.

The town of Harar was surrounded by a wall 12 feet high and about 3 feet thick. The wall was built with stones cemented with mud. It had five narrow gates opening in different directions and many little towers for defence.


purposes 1). The area enclosed by the wall was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long and half a mile wide at the broadest points 2).

In the second quarter of the 19th century Harar had about 2,500 houses. Many of them built of stone with whitewashed flat roofs. Only the amir and a few of the more prominent inhabitants had two storied houses. Some of the poorer element among the indigenous people and newcomers, Argobans, Somali, Galla and Afar who were allowed to settle in the town, lived in huts made of mats and reeds with thorn fences around them 3).

The population of Harar was mostly of Hamitic stock, the original inhabitants, the Adaris, some Somali and Galla. The Adaris had their own language which was written in Arabic script. The number of the population of Harar in the second quarter of the 19th century is said to have been between 12,000 to 14,000 4) which roughly agrees with the


2) Yusuf Ahmed. p. 13. According to Cecchi (Vol. II. p. 618) the approximate area of the town was 380,000 square meters.

3) Barker (L.G. 153. Enclosure in No. 412 Barker 8.12.1840) tells us that the majority of the population were Hararis (Adaris) but there were also some Galla, Danakils, Issa and Arab merchants from the Yemen. See also Cruttenden C.J: Memoir of the Western Edour Tribes. Bombay 1848. p. 181; Barker J.R.G.S. Vol. 12. p. 240; Abbudie 21302. p. 346; Paulitschke. p. 205. In 1876 Moktar claims (p.362) that the town had 9,560 houses and 346 huts.

number of the houses in Harar at this period 1). The percentage of women among the population was much larger than that of men. This is to be explained by the fact that at anytime many Harari men were absent in Ugaden, Gurague, Arusi and Berbera or with caravans going or coming from those places. A few hundred more were always to be found in Alio Amba in Shoa, where they spent a few years before returning home 2). Others were to be found in the different coastal towns of the Red Sea, in Egypt or performing the Haj at Mecca. Polygamy was not widespread in Harar, for not many Hararis could afford more than one wife 3), but many of them, being slave merchants specialising in the

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1) 8,000 as given by Burton (Vol. II. p. 16) for the year 1854-55 seems too small, although it is of course possible that as a result of the continuous wars, the stagnation of trade and the internal instability, many of the original inhabitants had left the town. In 1876 Moktar (Bulletin de la Societe Khediviale de Geographie. Cairo 1816. Moktar M. Notes sur le pays de Harar. p. 362) claims that the number of the population was 35,000; Cecchi (Vol. II. p. 618), a few years later, claims that it was 32,000. This sharp rise in the number of the population is to be explained by the settlement of large numbers of Galla and Somalis in the town in the second half of the 19th century as a result of the complete disintegration of the authority of the last amirs and their complete dependance on outside help (Bulletin de la Societe Khediviale de Geographie. Cairo 1876. Moktar M: Notes sur le pays de Harar. pp. 386, 390; Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 619). Before this period the Galla were hardly allowed to enter the town in numbers and only in special cases were they allowed to stay overnight. No doubt that the renewed prosperity and stability brought to the town by the Egyptian rule also attracted many people.

2) See page 398.

supply of young Gurague concubines to the market of Berbera, probably had always some girl slaves in their household. The higher percentage of women in Harar was further accentuated by the fact that women were engaged in many branches of the local economy 1), while a larger part of the male population of Harar was occupied in agriculture out of town.

The Amirate or Sultanate of Harar included in the 19th century the agricultural areas around the town cultivated by the population and large tracts of land cultivated by the Galla Kottu and Argobans stretching as far as the borders of Shoa 2). True enough the nomadic Galla were constantly waging wars on the town and the amir's authority over the Kottu was nominal. Nevertheless, the Galla chiefs recognised the overlordship of the amir by seeking investiture and by acquiring land from him through the payment of tribute and presents 3).

3) Further discussion of the relationship between the Galla and Harar see page
In the first half of the 19th century the amir of Harar was still from the line of Nur ibn Mujtahid. The amir was an absolute ruler and did not share his authority with anyone although the religious authorities in the town had some influence over him 1).

The authority of the amir was badly shaken in this period both by the constant wars with the Galla and by internal strife in the ruling family. The succession to the amirate was either hereditary or went to the oldest male member of the family. Each amir tried to prevent an uprising of the other members of the family and to ensure the succession to his son by imprisoning most of his male

relatives in the dungeons under the "palace" 1). Some amirs who wanted to strengthen their rule as well as their relations with the neighbouring Galla and Somali tribes, took wives from among these tribes 2). Nevertheless many wars for the succession broke out, of which we know very little. Amir Abdul Rahman (1821-1825/6) was deposed and imprisoned by Abdul Karim. Later, another pretender brought with him a strong Yemeni force from Mokha laying siege to Harar and causing much damage before he was beaten off 3). As a result, amir Abu Baker (1834-1852) held most of his family in prison and kept a very close watch on everyone arriving from Yemen. He put down any semblance of rebellion with an iron hand. Another pretender in the early 1850's succeeded in completely undermining the authority of

1) Cruttenden Edour. p. 181; Abbadie 21302. p. 15. para. 21; Paulitschke. p. 205; See similarity in the dynasty of Shoa. Page in this essay. A learned Harari by the name of Haj Abdalla told Abbadie in Berbera (21302. p. 15. para. 21., 23.11.1840) that Abu Baker was still keeping his uncle, the previous Amir Abdul Rahman, in prison. Abdul Rahman was deposed by Abu Baker's father (or uncle), Abdul Karim.

2) We are told that for many years the amirs of Harar intermarried with the Bartiri tribe. Cruttendend Edour. p. 198; The grandfather of Amir Abu Baker (1834-1852) was from the Alla Galla. Abbadie 21302. p. 25.

3) Harris. Vol. I. pp. 381-382; L.G. 166. No. 2482. Parait Harris 1841; Paulitschke. p. 227. According to Burton (II.p.18. footnote 2) an Arab force was brought by Abdul Karim to fight the Galla. Abdul Karim and Abdul Rahman were captured by the Galla and the matchlockmen left Harar for Zeyla after the son of Abdul Rahman refused to become Amir.
the amir and upsetting the very precarious relationship with the Galla 1).

The town of Harar was divided into quarters at the head of each of which was a Sheikh, or a Malak, who represented the government in the quarter. A larger unit comprising several quarters was under a Dougin, who was responsible directly to the amir. There was a Malak responsible for each gate who registered the names of all foreigners and traders entering the town 2) and collected taxes.

The smallest unit - Kottu - among the Galla was that of a community or a village under a Malak. The more important Galla chiefs were called Garad. Several Garadach sometimes served a Damin. The Garad or the Damin, each on his own level, were the amir's administrative agents. They administered justice and collected taxes or tithes. The governor of all the extra-mural areas, who was responsible for contacts with the Galla, also had the title of Dougin,

1) L.G. 301. No. 482. para. 5. Playfair, 7.4.1856; Moktar. pp. 385-386.

2) Place of origin, purpose of visiting Harar, the length of time they intended to stay and when they left. This information was given to me by Duri Mohammed who is teaching in the University College, Addis Ababa. According to him the father of an acquaintance of his family Bab Haji Mume Beshir was such a Malak. See also. Burton I. p. 202.
and he was always a Harari. All money due to Gallas and all payments to Galla chiefs went through the hands of the Dougin 1). The other posts were conferred irrespective of origin, as long as the office holder was loyal to the amir. The offices were usually hereditary, but sometimes they were transferred by the amir to someone else 2).

The amir's power lay mainly in a unit of about 200 mercenary Arabian matchlockmen, a few rusty iron guns, a small body of cavalry and a few hundred irregular spearmen 3). As the amir was always fearful of rebellions, the firearms were usually kept in his palace. The amir's palace, under which was the "state prison", was guarded by a body guard unit made of chosen slaves completely loyal to the Amir 4). It was probably the firearms on one hand and the wall of the town on the other, which kept the Galla from over-running Harar in the 19th century.

All agricultural lands belonging to Harar had to pay an Usher, or 10% tax, in kind. Another source of income for the amir were the presents received from the different Galla chiefs in exchange for offices and land granted to them by the amir. The most important source of income, apart from the income of the amir's private domain, was the tax on trade. The taxation of Harar was considered by foreign merchants as very light in comparison to other places. "Even on imports the duty is but trifling, for one ass-load of cloth the duty is one tobe or dress...of about 30 cubits of white cotton cloth, which is generally one cubit wide." However, according to Burton the duty on each donkey load was 8 to 15 cubits of Cutch canvas. As a result of the system of taxation per load, the merchants overloaded their beasts of burden so much before entering Harar, that they had to be supported by the drivers.

Nevertheless, it seems that the usual system of taxation in Harar was an ad valorem duty of 10% on imports and exports,

2) See Shermerki to d'Abbadie 21302. p. 15. para. 20.
while slaves of both sexes entering Harar had to pay about 2-2½ tallers each 1).

Barter was the most usual system of commerce in Harar. Caravans coming from the interior did not understand the use of the coins and had no use for them in the countries where they were trading. This, however, does not mean that coins of some countries were not accepted by Harari merchants. The contrary is true. The growing British interest in the Red Sea and the flow of European trade in the second quarter of the 19th century brought many European coins to the horn of Africa and British golden guineas were well appreciated by native merchants. Harari merchants who were constantly in touch with Shoa and with Banyan merchants on the coast, could always use Maria Theresa Tallers. Furthermore, tallers were used by the silversmiths in Harar for the making of silver jewellery and for the alloy of silver and lead used for the making of local currency. In fact it seems that much of the barter trade in Harar was caused by the shortage of coins as a result of the constant drainage on the supply


2) See Yusuf Ahmed. Ms. p. 44.
by hoarders, by silversmiths and by Heraris trading with the interior.

The amirs of Harar had struck their own coins since the 16th or the 17th century. The smallest coin was a copper coin known as the Mahallk, 22 of which were equal to one silver coin called Ashrafi. The Mahallk, we are told, was very similar to the Diwany of Jidda, on one side it had the inscription "La Illah Illilah" and on the other side the name of the ruler and the year in which it was struck. Three ashrafis were equal to one rial which had originally been made of gold but which in the 19th century was equal to the Maria Theresa taller. Some of our sources claim that 40 ashrafis were equal in the 1840's to one taller, but in 1847 Cruttenden writes that 22 ashrafis were equal to one taller. This confusion is probably explained by the following quotation: "The collection of Harari coins...shows a constant deterioration starting during the 18th century. In the first part of the 19th century the coins were practically valueless. Their value reached the lowest point

6) He might be confusing the Mahallk and the Ashrafi.
during the reign of Amir Mohammed" 1). Considering the fact of their debasement, the use of the local coins in trade was very limited. This was probably another reason why a highly developed commercial society like that of Harar, resorted in the 19th century to barter and why values of goods were given in farazilas of different metals 2).

Although decaying, depopulated and impoverished in comparison to its past prosperity, Harar in the 19th century was still the most important Islamic centre in the area. The town boasted many mosques 3) and as many as 44 venerated tombs of awliya 4) who were supposed to be the invisible defenders of the town and its people 5). The town attracted many Fuqaha 6) and shuyukh (Sheikhs) from Arabia and it had a considerable number of imams and qadis 7). Many of the

1) Yusuf Ahmed. 1856-1875, p. 9 footnote, p. 35. footnote. Although in the 1850's the official rate was 22 Mahallak for a taller, Maktar (pp. 392-393) claims that the metal content of 311 Mahallak was worth one taller only. In the 1830's a farazila of brass was worth in Harar 200 ashrafi. Yusuf Ahmed Ms. pp. 46,50.

2) See chapter on taxation, pages 254-255 above; See; Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 47.


4) Saints, pious Islamic teachers.


6) Islamic scholars.

townspeople visited Mecca and had the right to the title of Haj 1).

Harar had many Kutab where children were given Islamic education and taught to read and write in Arabic. All learnt the Quran by heart in Arabic. Some even studied Arabic literature and poetry. The more orthodox and respectable citizens of the town came in the evenings to the qadi for instruction in Islamic law 2).

The law administered in Harar was in accordance with the Sharia. The judges were the qadis 3) who, like most of the town's people, belonged to the Shafii madhab 4).

Harar took a most active part in the renewed propagation of Islam in Ethiopia from the beginning of the 19th century. Not only were European Christians barred from reaching the highlands through Harar 5), but Harar served as an avenue through which Islamic teaching reached the furtherest corners of Ethiopia.


3) Moktar (p. 364) tells us that the amirs frequently interfered in matters of law and the qadis gave judgement in many cases, according to the wishes of their master, the amir.

4) Most of the townspeople were also the followers of Kadiriya Sufi order.

of southern and southwestern Ethiopia \(^1\). There is little doubt that merchants and religious teachers coming from Harar or through Harar were partly responsible for the Islamisation of the Galla in southwestern Ethiopia since the 19th century \(^2\).

Harar was surrounded by gardens and orchards under constant irrigation kept by the townspeople. Beyond the circle of the gardens lay another narrow belt of agricultural land, cultivated by the Hararis and their tenants. Beyond this belt lay the territory over which the amir claimed some authority and in which he possessed much land. This territory stretched as far as a few days march from Harar and included many Galla villages. The relationship between the amir and the Galla, as well as the authority of the amir over the Galla in the 19th century, is very unclear.

In the second quarter of the 19th century the Galla in the region of Harar were still slowly expanding their territories. Thus they squeezed the Afar out of the last fertile areas which they possessed on the edges of the Harar

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2) See page 117 above.
Valley and near the Awash. In the latter area, they constantly harrassed Afar caravans and attacked Afar villages. Around the town of Harar their strongest pressure was put from the north. They slowly penetrated into lands held by Hararis especially the large tracts of uncultivated lands considered to be the amir's property.

Many Galla tribes in the Harar district adopted Islam at an early period and settled down on land they stole, or received, from the amir. The growing sedentary element among the Galla was called Kottu, while those who remained nomadic cattle breeders were called Prontuma. The Kottu Gallas, who lacked central authority and were at the mercy of the amir's army, recognised the overlordship of the amir. In addition they were ready to pay some tributes against recognition of their rights to the land and the confirmation of the office holders among them. However the Prontuma did not recognise any authority but that of their chiefs. At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th the strong amir Ahmed Mohammed succeeded in keeping the Gallas at bay, and the road to

2) Today all the Galla in the Harar district are called Kottu.
Shoa, which passed through Galla territory, was kept open for trade and travellers \(^1\). But in the late 1820's, probably as a result of internal strife in the amir's family \(^2\), the authority of the amirs was shaken \(^3\). When Amir Abu Baker, the son of Abdul Karim \(^4\), came to power in 1834, he had to carry on a constant war against the Galla and the Somali in order to preserve the little authority he still had amongst them and in order to keep the caravan routes open. In retaliation for Galla attacks and disobedience frequent military expeditions were carried out against the Galla and many Galla villages were burned \(^5\). However, even such harsh measures did not succeed in subduing the Galla. Each night the people of Harar had to abandon their fields and orchards and seek the protection of the walls of their town for fear of Galla bands who were

1) Salt Appendix

2) Amir Abdul Rahman ruled only a few years and was deposed and put into prison by his brother Abdul Karim.

3) If Abdul Karim was the father of Amir Abu Baker whose grandfather is said to be from the Nole Galla it is possible that Abdul Karim was helped by the tribe of his mother. See above page 251


5) A Shoan merchant who lived in Harar probably between 1834 and 1840 told Lt. Barker (J.R.G.S. Vol. 12. p. 238) that during his stay in Harar there were a number of wars between the Hararis and the Galla. According to an informant of d'Abbadie (21302. p. 346) the Galla often made peace but preserved it only for 2 or 3 years.
hunting for "trophies". Herds were driven away in broad daylight from under the walls of the town by fast Galla cavalry. When harvest time approached, the Gallas became even more daring, and military escort had to be given to those who worked in the fields \(^1\). The Galla raiders did not harm or destroy Harars' orchards and fields \(^2\), but Harar trade suffered very badly and the road to Shoa and the coast was very frequently closed \(^3\).

"In former times a large Kafila, called the Ebu, used to travel yearly (to Shoa), consisting of about 600 asses; but since the accession of the present emir (Abu Baker) the country has been in too unsettled a state to permit such a risk of property...Kafilas at present go by stealth, as the emir is averse to their passing through the country of the Galla; but, as they generally return successful, nothing is said to them" \(^4\). If the trade routes were kept open at all, it was by the payment of large quantities of

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2) Abbadie 21302. p. 346; See also: Abbadie 21303. p. 186. Letter from Taurin Cahagne. 2.8.1881.

3) This of course contributed to the development of a new route to Shoa through Tajura.

merchandise to the Galla chiefs through whose country the caravans went 1).

Even in Harar itself the amir did not feel completely secure. The town needed the trade of the Galla and the Somali, nevertheless, the guards at the different gates had strict orders not to let too many Galla and Somali caravans enter the town at one time. Those who were allowed to enter the town, had to leave their arms at the gate. At sunset all the visitors had to leave the town, the gates were closed and the keys were delivered to the amir 2). When on rare occasions foreigners were allowed to stay in town, they were lodged in special houses as "guests of the amir" 3).

Strained relations existed in the period we are covering between amir Abu Baker and Garad Adan, the head of the Ghiri tribe (on the verges of the Harar highlands on the way to Zeila). True enough Abu Baker married Adan's sister, but this did not deter him from encroaching into territory claimed by the Ghiri. Many villages near Harar which were


claimed by Garad Adan were taken by the amir 1). On the other hand the Amirs were on excellent terms with the Bartiri tribes with whom they intermarried for some generations 2) and who were the traditional enemies of the Ghiri. The friendship of the Bartiri was far more important to Harar because the caravan route from Harar to Berbera went through their country 3). In the 1830's and 1840's the income of the Ghiri from the caravan trade going into Zeila continuously diminished, while the revenue of the Bartiris grew from year to year. The jealous Ghiri found in the 1840's an ally in Shermerki, the governor of Zeila, who was interested in diverting into Zeila as much of Harar's trade as possible. At his instigation the Ghiri attacked caravans and planned to block Harar's route to Berbera 4).

In spite of the growing pressure of the Galla between the 1830's and the 1850's, the amirs of Harar kept some sort of an authority over the Kottu and continued to receive tributes from them. It seems that the amir and the town of Harar were an accepted necessity to the Galla of the surrounding

   This happened during the rule of Abu Baker as well as during the rule of his son Ahmed.

2) See Page 251 above.


areas. The Galla did not have a central authority of their own and after living a few centuries in the shadow of the amir of Harar they accepted the amir as part of their own social structure. Therefore their chiefs, like those of the nearby Somali tribes, sought confirmation to their nomination, position and titles to the land from the amir 1). Harar was also necessary to the Galla economy. In the 19th century the Galla had large surpluses of coffee, wars (saffron), hides and other agricultural products as well as some ivory and occasional slaves. They would not go, or were prevented from going, to Zeila and Berbera through the country of their enemies, the Somali tribes 2). Harar was the natural market for their surpluses and the natural source of supply of cloth, beads and other foreign products which the Galla needed. It was therefore in the interest of the Galla to preserve Harar, but at the same time it seems that the Galla wanted more land and a larger share in the town's income 3). Moreover, as a result of the growing


2) L.G. 209. No. 2336. Christopher. 8.5.1843. Last pages of despatch.

3) Paulitschke. p. 228.
dependency of the last amirs on the Galla and their connections with some of the tribes\(^1\), the Galla chiefs sought more influence and more prestige in the court of the amir\(^2\).

The amir had permanent representatives in Shoa and in some of the more important ports of the Somali and Red Sea coasts. Wherever there was a large community of Harari traders, those representatives served as heads of the community and reminded their compatriots of the long arm of their master\(^3\). Usually their position combined the functions of ambassadors and commercial agents for the amir. Thus at the beginning of the century Salt found a permanent representative of this kind in Mokha\(^4\). Similarly in the 1840's most of the Europeans who went to Shoa wrote about the representative of the amir who was the head of the Harari community in Alio Amba\(^5\) and was very much respected by the

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4) Salt. pp. 131,132, 133.
king of Shoa. In Zeila at the beginning of the century merchandise exported by the amir or imported for him was free from tax and it seems that the amir either had a permanent representative (wakil) in this place or sent one from time to time with quantities of merchandise for sale. Another Wakil or representative of the amir stayed at Berbera throughout the fair. He reported to the amir on local conditions and bought and sold merchandise on his account.

When amir Abu Baker came to power in 1834, relations with Zeila became strained. As a result of the support given to a pretender to the throne of Harar just before he came to power, the amir was most suspicious of the intentions of the Yemeni government. Moreover, Haj Ali Shermerki,

1) Salt Appendix V.
2) Yusuf Ahmed P. 37 Ms. p. 43. In the time of Sultan Abdul Karim; See also: Krapf. C.M.R. Vol. 1839. p. 68. Krapf was also invited by another messenger of Sahle Sellassie to come to his country while in northern Ethiopia.
4) We do not know whether this Wakil came with the first Harari caravan to Berbera or whether he came to Berbera from Zeila or Mokha. During the Fair he was sending the goods he bought with the Harari caravans returning home and at the end of the Fair he returned with the last caravan. Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 52. about 1840; See also: Burton. Vol. II. p 26. Wakil of the amir selling ivory at Berbera.
6) To which Zeila belonged. See page 268 below.
the governor of Zeila since 1843 quarreled with the amir over financial matters soon after coming to power 1). The relations between Harar and Zeila continuously deteriorated throughout the 1840's and until Shermerki was deposed in 1855, because Shermerki was trying to consolidate his hold over all of the northern Somali coast and above all over Berbera.

In the 19th century the relations of Harar with Shoa seems to have been quite good. In the first decades of the century, Shoa was largely dependent on Harar for its foreign trade and its connections with the coast 2). However, as a result of Shoa's expansion southwards, the rich markets in the Sodo Galla area and northern Gurague, which were very important to the Harar trade, came under the sway of Shoa. Although the direct route from Harar to Gurague was left untouched, the disturbance created by the frequent Shoa's raids into the area made conditions very difficult for Harari merchants. Although some merchants still continued to use this route, bypassing Shoan territory with the consent of the king of Shoa, most merchants traded with the mentioned area through Shoa. Thus the amir of Harar

1) L.G. 294. No. 158. para. 9. He probably tried to tax the amir's merchandise.
even asked for the co-operation of Shoa in keeping open the route between the two countries. It is clear that the goodwill of the Shoan monarch was very important to Harar, and therefore good relations were kept with Shoa throughout the 1840's, and messengers regularly passed between the two states 1).

Harar had only a little industry and craft, mostly weaving, some blacksmithing, book binding and silversmithing 2). The two mainstays of Harar's economy were agriculture and trade.

A large part of the population of Harar were occupied in agriculture, going out to work each morning in their orchards and fields and returning to the town before sunset. Harar was surrounded by gardens and orchards under constant irrigation growing many kinds of fruits, vegetables and above all coffee, saffron or wars and chat 3). Beyond the circle of


the city gardens the Hararis grew mainly dura, maize and other cereals. The Galla Kuttu areas were mainly under cereals but some Galla, grew large quantities of coffee 1).

The agricultural produce of Harar contributed much to trade, the second branch of Harari economy. Coffee, wars and chat made the bulk of Harar's exports 2) and surpluses from the cereal crop were bartered with the neighbouring Somali tribes as well as with coastal towns and villages.

Although employing a smaller number of Harar's citizens and although it declined greatly as a result of conditions since the 18th century, trade was as important to Harar economy as agriculture.

Of the small trade which was carried in the main market of Harar 3) there is very little to say. This trade was mainly in the hands of the women of Harar 4). It was carried by the different stall owners and small merchants and the

1) There is little doubt that a large part of the excellent coffee exported from Harar came actually from Galla areas. Abbadie 21302. p. 346; Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 624; Burton Vol. II. p. 26.

2) Coffee went through Berbera and Zeila to many countries, above all India. Wars (Saffron) went to southern Arabia and chat mainly to the Yemen. See caravan trade to the coast. Page 283 below.

3) Called today the Magalla.

townspeople and the Galla farmers and Somali nomads who visited the town.

The more important trade was the caravan trade carried by merchants of Harar, who either organised the caravans, or traded with caravan merchants coming to the town. These important merchants had large store houses in which they kept stocks of merchandise which they imported from the coast, or large quantities of products which they acquired from the caravans coming from the interior. The facilities of their store houses were often used by smaller merchants and by the amir. Probably all the crop of coffee, wars and chat was concentrated in those stores before shipment. The key figures in this trade were the Dallalin (singular Dallal) or brokers, who were considered among the most respectable and honoured people of the town. Some Dallalin were entrusted with very high offices and served as public notaries and trustees. All foreign merchants were lodged in their houses and sold their goods through them. They also served as the agents for Harari merchants who were absent from the town and through them the amir transacted most of his business with the surrounding Galla population.

Harar's caravan trade could be divided into two main branches. On the one hand trade with the interior, on the other, trade with the coast and with overseas countries. The interior trade could in turn be divided into short-range trade and long-range trade. The short range trade was carried on by small groups of merchants who visited the markets and the coffee producing centres in the surrounding Galla and Argoba areas. In exchange for cheap cloth, beads and metals, they brought back to Harar large quantities of coffee, some ivory and large quantities of hides and skins as well as other Galla products 1). Large quantities of coffee were grown by the Galla, especially by the Ittu in the Chercher mountains. The coffee season started in October and lasted until January 2). The coffee was carried in leather sacks called Dabule, each containing four farazila or sixty four Kgs, which made a load of a mule 3). In the 1840's and the beginning of the 1850's prices of coffee were steadily falling while the quantities of coffee reaching


2) During that period, we are told by Cecchi (Vol. II. p. 624. about 1880) about 1,000 Kg of coffee that entered Harar daily from Galla areas in addition to similar quantities sent by the Ittu to Shoa.

Harar grew steadily. The amirs tried to control the flow of coffee to the sea in order to stabilise the prices. This, no doubt, was another reason for the strained relationship between the Galla and Harar.

When the supply of coffee diminished to a few farazilas a day about the end of January, the season of the skins started in Harar. Large quantities of skins, packed in units of twenty called Kurjeh, were bought by Harari merchants in all the important Galla markets, for a quarter of a dollar's worth of cheap cloth. As most of the skins reached Harar near the end of the Berbera fair, it must be assumed that the greater part of this item was probably exported through Zeila.

Harari merchants trading with the Galla did not limit themselves only to coffee and skins but also bought all the ivory, gum, ostrich feathers and occasional slaves offered by the Galla. However, part of the Galla products were brought into Harar by many small Galla caravans. In Harar the small Galla merchants were at the mercy of the shrewd Harari traders. Through the Dallalin they exchanged their wares for merchandise in demand in the Galla areas. It was

3) Salt. Appendix V.
only to be expected that they were cheated and taken advantage of in all the transactions. Moreover, all the ivory they brought to the town had to be sold for a pittance to the amir, who had a monopoly on ivory.

The salt trade was another branch of the short range caravan trade. Salt was usually brought by the Issa only as far as Gildessa, where it was exchanged with Harari and Somali merchants for cloth, beads, metalware and cereals. From Gildessa the salt was taken by Harari and other merchants and was sold in Harar or to the Galla tribes around the town.

The long range caravan trade to the interior had several branches. One branch was to Shoa through Galla and Afar country. This route led through the Herrer Valley and Metta to the plain of Mulloo where it joined the Tajura.


2) Moktar. p. 359; See also pages 202-203 above.
route 1). When Harari caravans reached Shoa's borders by this route, they either went to Alio Amba, the centre of an important Harari merchantile community 2) or to Kuldass in southern Shoa, where Harari caravans were organised 3). This route was by far more suited to the caravan trade than the Tajura route. Water supplies and grazing were plentiful along most of the road. Mules and asses could be used as carriage animals and the country was not as broken, difficult and harsh as that of the Afar. Until the second quarter of the 19th century this ancient route was used by all who wanted to reach Shoa from the Somali and southern Afar coast 4). However, from the 1830's onwards, owing to constant Afar and Galla attacks,

1) Large quantities of gum collected by the nomadic Afar were brought to Herrer, especially in July and August. There they were exchanged with Harari caravans on their way from Shoa to Harar weight for weight against tobacco. Johnston. Vol. I. p. 251.

2) See chapter on Shoa. Pages 396-397 below.


it was much less in use than earlier 1). The Shoa branch of the Harari caravan trade probably suffered from Afar competition as well. Even some of the Harari traders occasionally used the Tajura route when the Harar route was closed as a result of wars with the Galla, or in order to avoid taxation on the coast and in Harar 2). Nevertheless, throughout the period we are dealing with, a number of small but rich Harari caravans went regularly to Shoa each year taking with them zinc, brass, copper, beads, cheap cloths, frankinsence and probably tallers 3). The returning caravans brought to Harar civet, gold, Gurague and Galla slaves, ivory, hides and skins, mules, Shoa cottons and other

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1) This is true especially after Amir Abu Baker came to power in 1834. J.R.G.S. Vol. 12. p. 242; Harris. Vol. I. p. 379; L.G. 225. No. 5. Cruttenden. 24.11.1847. If one compares the caravan with which Alaqa Kidanan Mariam went from Shoa to Harar and the coast (Abbadie 21302. p. 346), In the 1830's he was already the head of the Ethiopian clergy in Adowa - see C.M.R. Vol. 1839. p.66. Thus this trip must have been performed many years before) and the one described by the Shoan merchant to Barker (J.R.G.S. Vol. 12. pp. 238, 242), to the small caravans described by Rochet (Voyage. pp. 330-331) and by Barker (L.G. 189. No. 2037) one immediately sees the difference.


3) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Harris. 5.1.1842; Barker (J.R.G.S. Vol. 12. p. 242) claims that small Kafilas went almost monthly to Shoa except during the rainy season. According to Harris (L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. 5.1.1842) four or five caravans travelled annually from Alio Amba to Harar.
The small Harari caravans had to rely on the goodwill of their Afar protectors for which they always paid dearly. Passing through Afar country and through Galla areas, they traded along the road while they were "forwarded from tribe to tribe". Although this route could be covered in one week, it took the Harari caravans usually two to three weeks to reach Harar or Shoa.

The second route of the Harari caravan trade was a very ancient route to Gurague and to southwestern Ethiopia. By this route a number of caravans, or one very large and important annual caravan, arrived at Harar bringing "slaves, gold dust, spices, ostrich feathers, peltry, civet and ivory". Harari merchants were, in the past, very active on this route as they were able to tap the sources of the Gurague, Zinjero and Galla slaves. By this route they reached the important Galla markets near the sources of the Awash where they met traders coming from the furthest

1) Rochet. **Voyage**, pp. 322, 330; Harris. L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. 5.1.1842; Barker (L.G. 184. No. 1129. 28.2.1842) claims that although the Hararis in his caravan were few in number they carried the most important part of the merchandise; See also: Rochet. **Voyage**, p. 302.


4) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Harris. 5.1.1842.
corners of southern and western Ethiopia 1). Even if the Harari caravans did not go beyond the markets of Gurague and the Soddo, Harari merchants could join in this area returning Galla caravans going to the most important sources of the Ethiopian foreign trade in the south and southwest, where they could obtain civet, gold, ivory and slaves 2). There is little doubt that it was by the Gurague route that Muslim propagation and fuqaha from Harar reached the Galla of south and southwest Ethiopia at the beginning of the 19th century 3). However, in the second quarter of the 19th century this route declined in importance as a result of the confusion and insecurity brought to the areas beyond the Awash by the advancing armies of Sahle Sellassie and because more and more trade from the south was diverted into the borders of Shoa. In 1842 Harris wrote 4): "...It is in the power of Sahela Sellassie, by the occupation of the latter country (Gurague) in which he already placed one foot, to close the road to Hurrur...".

1) Rochet, (Voyage, pp. 301,322) tells us that the routes to Zinjero, Cambat and Gurague met at "Hemelelle", an important village and market on the northern borders of Gurague not very far from the important markets of Roggi, Anduodi and Kabiena; See also: Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 628.

2) According to Cecchi (Vol. II. p.628) the slaves carried on the return trip to Harar gold in bars and in dust, a little coffee and other merchandise.


4) L.G. 189. No.2060 G. para. 24; Harris. 5.1.1842.
Two other branches of the Harari caravan trade led to Arusi 1) and to the Ugaden, where first class gum, myrrh, rhinoceros teeth and ostrich feathers were obtained 2). Harari merchants frequently visited the Webi Shebelli 3), and from time to time they even traded as far as the Banadir coast 4) through which they might have sold some of the merchandise they brought from the Ethiopian highlands 5). It is to be expected that those routes and their trade were of some importance to Harar's economy. Nevertheless, taking into consideration that caravans went to Berbera directly from the Ugaden and Arusi country and that those areas were visited by Banadir merchants as well 6), one tends to believe that these branches of the Harar caravan trade were not as important as those of Gurague and Shoa 7).

4) Ex Italian Somali land. See Krapf. p. 113, on Banadir caravans visiting Harar.
6) See below page 333.
7) It is to be regretted that no more source material is available on these trade routes.
The natural outlet and source of supply for the land-bound merchantile town of Harar was the coast lying between Tajura and Bander Ziyara 1). Thus Zeila which was the only town with permanent government on the northern Somali coast served for many generations as the port of Harar. In the first decades of the 19th century as in the past, whenever the stores of the Harari merchants were bulging with the products of the interior and their stocks of foreign merchandise were diminishing, the merchants organised a caravan going to Zeila. Sometimes such a caravan would be organised around the retinue of an ambassador or a messenger sent by the amir. Another time merchants would join the caravan of a wakil (representative). Wakils were usually sent to Zeila with slaves, ivory and other articles from the stores of the amir in order to exchange them against metals, cloth, guns 2) or other foreign goods which the amir needed. Thus between April and October a number of small caravans were travelling on the Zeila-Harar road 3).

Very little is known about the route from Harar to Zeila in the first half of the 19th century. There were two

1) Called Sahil - coast in Arabic.
2) Yusuf Ahmed. Ms. p. 44.
3) See below page 304.
practical routes between the two towns. The easier and the one mostly in use, was through Nole Galla territory to Gildessa 1) and from there through the Issa Somali country 2). Gildessa was the border between the Issa and the Galla territories. While the country between Zeila and Gildessa was a semi desert with low hills, from Gildessa to Harar the country was rich with grass and water, but mountainous, and the path narrow and very difficult. As a result, camels could be used from Zeila to Gildessa and in Gildessa they were usually exchanged for asses and mules supplied by the Galla 3) and visa versa. The other route went through Jarsi (Galla) territory to Darmy and through Gadabursi country (Somali) to Zeila 4). As the authority of the amir did not stretch far beyond the walls of Harar, caravans going to the coast and coming from the coast, had to rely on the goodwill of the tribes through which country they had to travel. When in Galla country it was the Galla who supplied the merchants with the beasts of burden and the Abban

1) According to Cecchi (Vol. II. p. 612) Gildessa was the gate through which all the caravans carrying Harar's export and import went. In Gildessa lived the chiefs of the caravans and the owners of large herds of camels.

2) Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 44. Of Issa Somali Abban


4) Moktar. p. 382.
(protector) 1). Reaching Somali territory 2) the loads had to be transferred to Somali camels and a new set of Abbans had to be hired.

In the first half of the 19th century conditions in the area between Harar and the coast were very difficult, especially as there was no form of central government among the tribes and the power of the amir was declining 3). In order to afford some measure of safety to Harari caravans travelling to the coast, the amir and the traders used to pay regulated tributes to the Galla and Somali tribes along the route 4). Besides the payment to the Issa abbans there was some sort of relationship between the amir and the chiefs of the Issa. The amir of Harar "annually confers upon each Eesah chief a conical skullcap and turban, in recognition of his alliance" 5). Nevertheless, all our sources agree that in the second quarter of the 19th century the Issa made the route between Harar and Zeila very dangerous if

2) Usually in Gildessa.
4) These tributes were paid to the clans who supplied the abbans. They are called in Yusuf Ahmed's Ms. "Marafat al Abbabin hak al safar". The list of the Abbans, the right of travel. See p.44., for payment to Issa abbans. pp. 44-45, payment to Galla abbans.
not nearly impractical 1).

The distance between Harar and Zeila is nearly 200 miles. It could be covered, we are told, in less than one week 2), but usually it took a caravan going from Harar to Zeila up to 20 days. The caravans travelling in the heat of the day and through a very difficult country did not cover even 10 miles a day. When they met nomad tribes, they stayed with them and exchanged merchandise against goods and whatever the nomads had to offer 3).

In addition to Harari traders returning to their town, Zeilan, Somali and Arab merchants organised caravans to Harar as well. Those merchants took with them to Harar cheap white and blue calico of Indian manufacture, beads, metals and cheap metalware from Europe and India and dates and rice from Arabia and India. From Harar the merchandise taken to the coast was coffee, wars (saffron), slaves, hides, ivory and other items available on the Harari market at the time.


2) L.G. 209. No. 2336. 8.5.1843. Christopher (Last pages of despatch).

It is very difficult even to guess what was the volume of Harar's trade with Zeila in the period covered in this essay. It is only obvious that in the second quarter of the 19th century the trade between Harar and Zeila was dwindling, as Zeila was becoming less and less important in the coastal trade \(^1\). This process was hastened when the governorship of Zeila fell into the hands of the Somali trader Shermerki and relationship between the last and the amir of Harar quickly deteriorated \(^2\). It seems that the most important part of Harar's trade went to the fair of Berbera which took place between the months of October and April.

It was not a simple matter to transport to the sea coast all the produce of Harar and its district, and all the merchandise imported into Harar from the Ethiopian highlands and the neighbouring countries. True enough the gold and the civet brought from Shoa and Gurague did not present a difficult problem of transportation. The slaves not only did not need any transportation but probably carried a little merchandise with them. It was the coffee, which probably weighed hundreds of tons, the quantities of ivory

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1) See below, page 309.
2) See below, pages 314-315.
brought from Shoa and collected from the Galla, the cat, the wars, the many courjas of skins, as well as tens of tons of other Harari agricultural products, which presented the difficulty. Most of our sources agree 1) that three very large Harari caravans arrived at the Berbera fair each season. The first entered Berbera in December, the second in January-February and the third closed the fair at the end of March or the first days of April at the latest. We have little doubt that besides those great caravans numbering thousands of camels and men organised by the amir or having his help, many small caravans left Harar for Berbera during the fair season. As the three main Harari caravans were so large and so rich, the small caravans probably escaped the attention of our European informants.

Although the fair of Berbera opened at the end of October, the first great Harari caravans did not enter Berbera before the middle of December. This was only to be expected as the caravan brought with it a large part of the coffee crop 2) and the coffee around Harar and in the Chercher


2) In the last days of December 1840 Abbadie writes (21300. pp. 427, 434) that the Harar caravans brought most of the slaves on sale at Berbera and about four thousand camel loads of coffee out of about ten thousand loads which arrived annually from all sources.
area did not mature sufficiently before the middle of October. By the time that this coffee was husked and collected and made ready for shipment, it was probably late November. We are told that it took the great caravans over 30 days to reach Berbera. Other sources claim that the road was covered by a Kafila in about 10-14 days. In either case the first rich Kafila carrying a large part of Harar's coffee could not enter Berbera before the beginning of December. Furthermore, this Kafila and the second one carried nearly all of Harar's crop of wars, (saffron), and this also had to be prepared after being gathered at the end of October or November.

We have no idea how much a camel load of chat was worth. A camel load of wars was probably worth in Berbera

3) Burton. Vol. II. p. 27. The wars or the saffron was used mainly in southern and southwestern Arabia where men dyed their dresses with it and women and children used it to stain their skin into light yellowish colour. As the Persian Gulf boats had to leave Berbera quite early owing to the Monsoon winds, the wars had to be in the market not later than January or February.
4) The chat crop probably did not exceed a few hundred small camel loads. Today the chat exported by Ethiopia from the Harar district to the Yemen is worth three to five million Ethiopian dollars, according to Duri Mohammed, a native of Harar, lecturing at the department of Economy, University College, Addis Ababa.
a few hundred tallers 1) and a camel load of coffee about 50 2). The first Harar caravan was carrying in addition to coffee, wars and chat, also much ivory, gold and other merchandise belonging to the amir 3). It is quite clear that such a caravan not only needed ample protection but good organisation and command. The best protection was in numbers and thus one hears of caravans numbering thousands of people and thousands of camels 4). The caravan was commanded by one of the important officers of the amir having the title of Ebi - leader - and it probably had with it an escort of matchlock-carrying soldiers 5). The second caravan going to Berbera was probably organised around the nucleus of the caravans coming from Shoa when it was possible to ford the Awash after the rainy season, from the month of November. These Shoa caravans brought with them to Harar a

1) According to d'Abbadie (Abbadie 21300. p. 429) who was in Berbera (1840-1841) the price of wars was about 3 tallers per pound.; Burton, (Vol. II. p. 27., in 1854) says that a pound of wars, when cheap, was worth in Harar ¼ taller.

2) Abbadie 21300. pp. 430, 434. Three or four times the worth of a camel load of ghee, another product brought by the Somalis.

3) A wakil of the amir was already waiting at Berbera to sell the property of the amir and buy with the proceeds the merchandise ordered by the amir. Yusuf Ahmed. Ms. p. 52.


number of slaves and a quantity of gold, civet and ivory. The second Harari caravan to Berbera which reached the fair about the end of January or the beginning of February, was not very different from the first one. Besides the merchandise brought from Shoa, it also carried a few thousand camel loads of coffee, wars, chat and other agricultural products which were not sent with the first caravan 1).

The last caravan is described as the richest of all Harari caravans 2). It led to the coast about 500 slaves, and large quantities of gold, civet and ivory 3). This caravan usually reached Berbera about the end of March when the fair was about to be closed. Although some of the sources 4) claim that the slaves brought by this caravan came from Shoa, one tends to believe that many came directly from Gurague 5). It is reasonable to suppose that some of the merchants who left Shoa after the short rainy season (in January) could be in this caravan, but much of

1) Burton. Vol. II. p. 28; Abbadie 21300. p. 431.
3) "The principal caravan conveying slaves, mules and other valuable articles, enters Berbera a few days before the close of the season. It numbers about 3,000 souls and is commanded by one of the Emir's principal officers who enjoys the title of Ebi" Burton. Vol. II. p. 28.
4) See footnote 3 above.
the merchandise if not many of the merchants of this caravan probably came with the caravan arriving in Harar from beyond Gurague 1). This rich caravan could not start before the end of the rainy season (about October), it had a long and dangerous road to cover and it is doubtful whether it could reach Harar before January. Most of the merchants of this caravan probably exchanged their merchandise with the great Harari merchants and then returned to their respective countries. Some, however, might have stayed behind and joined the caravan which carried among other things the merchandise sold by their comrades. Such a caravan would not be organised before the end of February or the beginning of March after the arrival of rich caravans from Shoa.

It is only possible to guess at the value of the merchandise exported from Harar to Berbera during the fair season. It is probable that most of the coffee offered in Berbera 2) came from Harar 3). This coffee might have been

1) Of which we spoke in the previous chapter; See also: Edour. pp. 186-187 on Harar and Gurague slave merchants.

2) According to Abbadie (21300. pp. 430, 434) 10,000 camel loads worth about 50 tallers per camel load. According to Rochet (M.&D. Vol. 13. p. 284) 1,500 bales or 2,400 cubic meters of coffee annually at Berbera; Harris (Vol I. p. 383) speaks of 2,000 bales. A bale according to Abbadie (21300. p. 423) 10-15 farazila. Christopher (8.5. 1943. L.G. 209. No. 2336) 15 farazila is equal to bahar equal to bale; Cecchi (Vol. II. pp 622-624) Harar farazila of coffee equal to 16 Kg. Bale therefore 225-250 Kg. Prices according to Rochet (M.&D. Vol. 13. p. 284) in Berbera 3½ dollars per farazila first class, 3¼ second class and 2½ third class.

3) Although much of it might have been coffee grown by the Galla.
worth a few hundred thousand tallers in Berbera. We have
no idea of how large the wars crop was 1), but even if it
did not exceed a few hundred camel loads each worth over 500
tallers 2) it was probably worth over a 100,000 tallers.
Burton 3) estimated the chat consumed at Aden alone about
280 "small" camel loads each of a number of parcels worth
1½ rupee each. The quantities consumed all over southern
Arabia and especially in the Yemen must have been enormous 4).
We would not even dare to estimate the quantities and the
prices of the ivory, skins, gold, civet and cereals that went
with the Harari caravans to the coast. We guess that all
together probably about ½ a million tallers worth of merchan­
dise was shipped from Harar to the coast annually.

According to Burton, Harar in the middle of the 19th
century was "still as of old the great half-way house" for
"slaves from Zangaro, Gurague and the Galla tribes" 5). Never­
theless, very little is known of the slave trade in Harar,
in the period covered by this essay. Europeans were excluded

1) Burton (Vol. II. p. 26) claims that it was grown in
considerable quantities.
2) 3 tallers per pound. According to d'Abbadie. 21300. p. 429.
4) See footnotes 3-4 on page 286 above
from this town until its conquest by the Egyptians \(^1\) and Hararis were very careful not to take any Europeans with their caravans \(^2\). However, one can assume that at least Harari slave caravans were not very different from the Afar ones.

All Harari caravans arriving from the interior brought with them a number of slaves \(^3\), especially young girls suitable to become concubines. It is true that in the 19th century, owing to circumstances mentioned in this chapter, the number of slaves coming to Harar with the Shoa caravans was not very great \(^4\). However, a large number of slaves were also coming to Harar with caravans from Arusi and especially the Gurague country. Slave girls were considered a very good investment and were an accepted coin in the markets of Harar \(^5\). The houses of Harari merchants and the towns' people were always full of slaves. Even those

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1) But for the short visit of Burton.
4) "The Southern or Hurrur Route being the only road available, and the number of slaves annually being brought down that way being comparatively small". L.G. 255. No. 5. para 11. Cruttenden. 24.11.1847.
merchants who could not join the caravans going to the interior entrusted sums of money to the waki (representative) of a great merchant, or to the merchants themselves, so that they would acquire for them slaves in the markets of the interior 1). Slaves not only paid a handsome profit in Harar and on the coast, but they did not require transportation, and they helped to carry the lucrative goods acquired in the faraway markets 2). The amir himself took an active part in this trade. In addition to slaves which he received in payment of tribute and taxation, his agents acquired for him choice slaves in the interior 3).

The price of slaves in Harar was different according to age, sex and quality. The Hararis carefully differentiated between Jaria Khidama, a girl for service and Jaria Wasifa, intended as a wife or a concubine 4). Burton 5) tells us that female slaves fetched from 100 to 400 ashrafis (1854) and males from 9 to 150. According to Yusuf Ahmed's Ms. a

3) Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 49. in the time of Amir Abdul Karim taxation paid with slaves. See also: sale of slaves and presents of slaves by the amir. Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 43.
4) Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 49. We heard in Harar that the sale of slaves had to take place in the presence of witnesses and according to customary rules.
slave girl was sold for 3 farazilas of copper 1), another for 200 ashrafis 2), another for 4 farazilas of copper 3) and another for 6 farazilas of zinc 4). It seems that the price for better quality slave boys and girls in Harar was between 20 and 30 dollars while the average price on the coast 5) was 40 to 50 dollars. A handsome profit of 100% for the short trip to the coast.

We have no information as to the number of slaves exported from Harar annually. The last Harari caravan to Berbera "the slave caravan", usually led about 500 slaves 6). A large number of slaves were also exported through Zeila between April and October 7) and it is possible that a small number of slaves was sold on the Banadir 8) coast.

Considering all the above, it is probable that the

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3) About 35-40 dollars.
5) See chapter on Berbera. Page 341 below.
7) According to Salt (Appendix V) 900 slaves were exported through Zeila in the three years before 1810; See also: Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 43. Shipment of slaves to Zeila.
8) Ex Italian Somaliland.
number of slaves exported from Harar annually was about one thousand. Even if this number was larger or smaller by a hundred or two hundred this would not change the fact that slaves were not a decisive factor in Harar's economy, as they were in Tajura's. The slave trade was popular among Harari merchants because slaves not only brought high profits but also helped with the transportation of other merchandise. The number of slaves exported through Harar was limited by the extent of the demand on the coast and especially by the fierce competition in this branch of trade presented by the Tajura merchants.

Most of Harar merchants could be considered as small merchants with limited capital 1). It took a score or two of such merchants to organise a caravan 2) strong enough to protect itself from small bands of robbers 3). Caravans organised around the caravan of a political delegate or a wakil sent by the amir to trade on his account 4) were

1) According to Burton (Vol. II. pp. 24-25) he who has 20 pounds of capital is considered a wealthy man. The greatest merchants may bring to Harar 50 pounds worth of goods.


3) Of the difficulties of organising such a caravan comprising of so many merchants, See: Burton. Vol. II. p. 24.

probably more prompt in starting, and better organised and more orderly along the road, as its leader had the authority of the amir behind him. It was not unusual that merchants who did not go with the caravan would entrust the wakil of the amir with money and merchandise which he was supposed to sell, and with the proceeds of which he was to buy whatever merchandise they ordered. Harari merchants staying in foreign countries used returning wakils of the amir and the facilities of their caravans to send merchandise to Harar to be delivered to their families and correspondents or to be kept by the amir until their arrival 1).

Other caravans were formed by the more important Harari merchants who could afford to organise a caravan of their own or together with some of their fellow traders. It is doubtful if the more important merchants actually risked the hardship and danger of the road. It was customary to entrust the caravan or some merchandise to the hands of an

1) Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 47. Thus we hear that numbers of slaves, who probably arrived with one of the amir Kafilas from the interior or were given to the care of one of the amirs' ambassadors, were lodged in the houses of a few brokers until claimed by their respective owners. (Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 52). We are also informed of a quantity of unclaimed merchandise in the stores of the amir, being sold before they completely deteriorated. (Yusuf Ahmed Ms. p. 47).
experienced professional caravaneer or a wakil who looked after the interests of each merchant. These professional caravan traders were famous among the Hararis and the names of the most important among them 1) remained a legend among the Hararis 2).

It would be a mistake to conclude that the caravan trade to and from Harar was completely monopolised by Hararis. Somalis, Afar, Shoans and a number of Arab traders went as well with the Harari caravans 3). It is also possible that the large caravans coming to Harar from Gurague, Arusi and Ugaden, and the so-called Harari caravans coming to Berbera, were not composed only from Harari merchants. They might have started as small or medium Harari caravans but on the road they snowballed into the huge caravans of thousands of camels and men which arrived in Harar and at Berbera. However, the fact remains that Harar was the most important centre for the trade of the area, and many caravans made Harar the terminal of their

2) Sum Abdi Wanag, one of the most famous according to Yusuf Ahmed is probably Abd el Yonag. Harris. Vol. I. p. 379 and Abdoonarch, (Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 247-248) who is described as the head of Harari merchants community in Alio Amba.
route. The Harar market was always full of rich products of the interior and large quantities of merchandise from India and Europe. True enough, owing to Galla pressure, Hara could not take full advantage of the revival in the trade of the Red Sea and the Ethiopian highlands in the first part of the 19th century 1). Nevertheless, it seems to us that agriculture around Harar was flourishing 2) and the trade in Harari agricultural products developed to some extent, since the second part of the 19th century. The volume of Harari products arriving at Berbera and described by eyewitnesses 3) only shows that Harar still played an important role in the economy of the area throughout the period we are covering.

1) Especially since the time of amir Abu Baker, who was constantly at war with his neighbours.

2) True enough the share of the Galla was growing constantly.

3) See pages 286-290 in this essay.
ZEILA.

In the first half of the 19th century Zeila was just a shadow of its past glory as the seat of a great kingdom. Still it was unrivalled along the Afar and Somali coast as the only town with permanent government, a small army of matchlockmen and trading facilities.

Zeila was a dependancy of the town of Mokha in Yemen and usually farmed for a small sum to one of the more important office holders at Mokha. A governor having the title of amir or Hakim represented the authority of the imam of Sana in Zeila and with the help of a small troop of matchlockmen he defended the town and collected the taxes. It seems that the amir of Zeila had a claim to a shadowy authority all over the Sahil. Moreover, although he had under his command only a small army, he was a power to be reckoned with, because he represented the Yemeni government and because of the decisive power of the firearms in the hands of his soldiers.

1) L.G. 165. No. 2276. Christopher. 11.6.1841.
3) It seems that the amir of Zeila meddled from time to time with the inter tribal politics both in Somali and in the Afar areas; See chapter on Tajura, and the Afar coast. Page 186 above; See also: L.G. 294. No. 158, para. 9. Burton, 22.2.1855.
Like many other Ottoman-Arab coastal towns Zeila had an amir (or Nagib) commanding the troops, amir el Bahr, entrusted with the supervision of the port and the defences of the town towards the sea and a Bash Kateb, who was something between a chief clerk and a secretary for the government. Although Zeila did not have a proper mosque until 1847 it had all the usual Muslim clergy: a qadi, shuyukh and ulema.

Zeila is described in the period covered by this essay as a small decaying town surrounded by a low mud wall with a few low towers, five gates and seven rusty iron guns pointed landwards, a dozen white washed stone houses and about 200 huts. The so-called port of Zeila was not suitable for anchorage of any but very small boats. Even the larger Arab boats had to anchor at some distance southwards of the town.

Water was brought into the town from the wells of

Takusha, a few miles from the town where a tower and a few matchlockmen protected the water supply 1).

Of the number of Zeila's population we have conflicting reports. While some 2) claim that the town had a population of about a thousand other sources speak about a population of three thousand to four thousand 3). The solution to this contradiction lies in the fact that like other trading centres in the area, Zeila had a large floating population. The Issa nomads who roamed in the surrounding neighbourhood visited the town in great numbers in order to sell their surpluses and buy whatever they needed, but in the dry season they returned inland in search of grazing. Many Somalis came to Zeila from the interior during the period of the Haj "to perform their pilgrimage there, which among them is considered quite as efficacious as a pilgrimage to Mecca" 4) and a large number of small caravans came to the town during the local fair between October and November 5).

2) Isenberg. p. 3; Cruttenden Edour. p. 182.
This fair also attracted Arab, Afar and other merchants who wanted to procure merchandise from the interior during the dead season in Berbera.

With the opening of the Berbera fair in November the nomads dispersed in the interior and nearly half of Zeila's permanent population moved to Berbera. Thus when Isenberg and other people visited Zeila and claimed that it had less than a thousand people, a large part of the town's population was probably busy trading at Berbera. Burton who visited Zeila in 1854 and estimated its population at the time of his visit to be between three and four thousand justly writes: "Besides a large floating population, Zayla contains about 1,500 souls".

Zeila was essentially a merchants' colony with a mixed Arab, Somali and Afar merchant population. Most of Zeila's merchants could be considered petty merchants whose capital did not exceed 200-300 tallers and who became traders or settled in Zeila completely by chance. The more

3) Offenders from the Yemen were also sent to Zeila from time to time. L.G. 155. No. 830. Haines. January 1841.
important class among the merchants were Arabs who came from the Yemen and Hadramut and settled in Zeila 1). A few had considerable capital, owned a number of boats and traded with Jidda, the Persian Gulf and even with India. To this class belonged Ali Shermerki, a Somali, who was exporting to India about 300 tons of coffee annually in two of his larger boats. Shermerki was also actively engaged in the slave trade and his boats were carrying for many years a large number of slaves to the Persian Gulf 2).

The economic activity in Zeila could be divided into three branches: Trade with Somali nomads and caravans coming to Zeila from Harar and other places in the interior. Caravan trade with the interior. Trade with Berbera, Arabia and India.

Zeila had a few very important assets. It was the only "town" on the northern Somali-Afar coast which had tolerable maritime connections and a permanent trading community. It was the natural port for Harar and it had land routes leading to the latter town as well as to the kingdom of Shoa. It was not only a short distance by sea

1) Paulitschke. p. 49.

from Berbera but it also had a good land route to that important fair in the Somali coast 1).

Zeila and Berbera complemented each other on the "Sahil". For many centuries the Somali tribes held their annual fair at Berbera. This fair was one of the most important, if not the most important, commercial event in East Africa. From November to April all trading activities on the coast were concentrated at Berbera where the nomad Somalis and caravans from Harar and other places from the interior brought their products for sale and were met by Persian Gulf, India, Arab, Somali, Afar and Zeilan merchants 2). Between April and November all the trade and caravans had to come to Zeila which was the only merchantile centre along this coast frequently visited by Arab, Afar and Banyan merchants. Until the second quarter of the 19th century the Banyan who had a near monopoly on the trade of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden used Zeila as their trading headquarters for the Somali coast 3). Through Zeila the interior was supplied with different kinds of Indian cloth, above all blue surat calico, Cutch cottons and Bafta and other Indian and European products including copper,

2) See chapter on Berbera Pages 318-355 below.
brass, tin, lead, scissors, looking glasses and huge quantities of beads of many colours and sizes.

It seems that until sometime in the first quarter of the 19th century the old established route from Zeila through Harar to the highlands was the only one used extensively between Shoa, the provinces south of Shoa and the coast. "Zeila a port under the imaum of Sana or the dola of Mocha. This is of some consequence as being the only point of communication with the Mohammedan kingdom of Hurrur and through that to the kingdom of Shoa and Efat" 1).

Probably Zeila's importance was derived from the fact that it was the port of Harar. The amir and the traders of Harar had used Zeila for centuries as the point of contact with the outer world 2). "Aftel (Zeila)...que frequentent de preference les jens de Harar..." 3). Thus Zeila became an outlet for a large part of Harar's products and the merchandise of the interior brought by caravans to Harar 4).


3) Alaqa Kidana Mariam according to Abbadie 21302. p. 346. Aftel is what Abbadie probably heard instead of "Audal"; See Burton. I. 47.

Zeila was a source for merchandise used by Harari merchants for their trade with the interior 1).

Besides the Harar caravans many other less important caravans used to come to Zeila from the interior 2). The Zeila fair between October and November also attracted a large number of nomads and caravans. Although it was quite small in comparison to the Berbera fair it was important enough to bring to Zeila many foreign merchants 3).

As in many places in the highlands and on the coast 4) the system of the Nazil (host - broker) was prevalent at Zeila. Each merchant visiting the town had to have a Nazil from among the town's merchantile community. When he came to Zeila he stayed in the house of his host, the Nazil, and all his business was transacted through his Nazil 5). In addition to the presents he had to give to the Nazil, the visiting merchant had to pay a certain brokerage fee for all the business transacted through his Nazil - broker.

Trade in the town was carried on chiefly by barter,

1) See page 303 in this essay.
4) See system of Nazil in Massawa and in Basso. Pages 67-68, 93.
5) Burton. Vol. I. p. 87. A Nazil could be changed only after a very difficult procedure.
especially with the nomads. Cloth was purchased from foreign traders with money and then exchanged for corn and "...in lieu of corn anything may be procured" 1). The bargaining in Zeila again like many other places in the interior 2) was done under a cloth. "Both parties sit opposite each other, holding hands: if the little finger for instance be clasped, it means 6, 60 or 600 dollars, according to the value of the article for sale; if the ring finger, 7, 70 or 700, and so on." 3).

The opening of the Berbera fair was not only a signal for the local fair to be closed and for the nomads to disperse into the interior but it was also a signal for the mercantile community of Zeila to hurry to Berbera where they could always be among the first merchants to arrive. During the fair season in Berbera we are told 4) that actually half the population of Zeila moved to Berbera. Here, no doubt, the Zeilans were able to acquire large quantities of products of the interior. Here also Zeilans met many Persian Gulf and Indian merchants from whom they were able to buy dates

1) Isenberg. p. 5; See also: L.G. 153. Barker. 1.1.1841.
2) See same procedure described by Beke at Basso in Gojam. Pages 97-98 above.
and rice as well as the items they needed for their trade in Zeila and in the interior. No doubt the special geographical position of the town enabled the Zeilans not only to arrive among the first but also to stay with the last merchants at the fair of Berbera 1) Thus they were able to buy from the departing foreign merchants at a cheaper price whatever was left on their hands while they were also able to wait for the last and rich Harari caravans which arrived at the last days of the fair.

As to trade with the interior Zeila was fortunate in having not only a direct route to Harar and through Harar to Shoa 2), but also a second route going through Issa country as far as Herrer and there joining the Tajura route to Shoa 3).

The Issa Somali whose territories stretched from the coast near Zeila to Gildessa and from Ghubat Harab to Herrer, were divided into three main branches under chiefs called Ugaz. The Issa owned large herds of camels, asses, horses and cattle 4). Issa chiefs were frequent visitors in Zeila and it seems that the governor of Zeila had some influence.

2) About this route see above, pages 274-277*
and authority over them 1). Most of our sources agree that the unruly and treacherous Issa made the route to Shoa dangerous and nearly impractical 2). If the direct Zeila-Shoa route was used at all, it was thanks to the Wema Adoimara tribe which was closely connected, in the second quarter of the 19th century, with the Issa of Rer Guleni under Ugaz Farah. The Wema used Issa horsemen and bowmen in their wars against the Mudaito and the Galla. They married Issa women and they co-operated with the Issa in the protection of caravans going through Issa countries to Zeila and to Shoa 3).

Zeilas' merchants took advantage of the two important trade routes going from their town into the interior. From time to time a number of local merchants, sometimes together with other Arab and Somali merchants, organised small trading caravans which went to Harar and Shoa and to other places as well 4).


No doubt, the decline of the Indian trade and the decline of trade in general in the Red Sea in the last quarter of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, had very serious effect on the trade of Zeila. But although there was a revival in the trade of the Red Sea after 1814 1), the process of decline continued in Zeila in the first half of the 19th century. Harar, which was the main supplier of Zeila's business, was under growing Galla pressure which strangled its trading activities. This had of course an immediate effect on Zeila 2). At the same time Zeila also suffered from the opening of a direct route from Tajura to Shoa, a route which brought about the birth of an Afar merchant community in direct competition with Harari and Zeilan merchants. Tajura, no doubt, took away from Zeila a large part of the slave trade which in the past was probably in the hands of Zeilan merchants. Although Tajuran merchants continued to pay the governor of Zeila a tax on each slave exported through their port, the town probably suffered a considerable loss from this diversion of an important branch of the trade 3).

1) See Introduction chapter.
3) A further loss was probably the gold, ivory and little civet trade which accompanied the slave trade.
As a result of the constant fall in the trade and revenue of Zeila since the last quarter of the 18th century, the government and the merchant community of the town tried to supplement their dwindling income by exaction and deceit. The unscrupulous Zeilan merchants and Nazils took advantage of the nomads who had to sell their merchandise for whatever the merchants chose to offer. Somali nomads and caravaners were so badly treated by the authorities of Zeila that many preferred to make the longer journey to Berbera even if this necessitated waiting for the opening of the fair. The long range caravans and above all the Banyans suffering from the growing exaction and heavy hand of the government turned their backs to Zeila in the second quarter of the 19th century.

Caravans from Harar still arrived at Zeila but they were less frequent and less important. As to the route leading to Shoa it was used by Afar merchants only when the

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2) When nomads caravans arrived from the interior the arms of the nomads were taken at the gate, the men were treated harshly and were punished seriously for the smallest offence. L.G. 153. Barker. 1.1.41.


Tajura route was blocked by the Mudaito or by Issa raiding parties 1).

The process of the decline of Zeila was further hastened during the late 1830's, when the Egyptians who ruled the Yemeni coast introduced their monopoly system in the Red Sea ports and tried to divert their trade from India to Egypt. It seems that about this time heavier custom duties and port dues were introduced in Zeila 2). However, the result of those measures was that foreign merchants and the caravans of the interior completely avoided Zeila.

The loss of Zeila was the gain of Berbera, the fair of which attracted more and more of the trade which in the past went to Zeila. Combes, who visited the northern Somali coast in 1840-1841 claimed that Berbera had completely ruined Zeila. Zeila according to him was of no economic importance especially during the season of the fair at Berbera 3).


Excluding the imperfect list given by Salt in the early part of the 19th century, we have no information as to the extent of the annual trade going through Zeila in the first half of the 19th century. Salt was told that 900 slaves went through Zeila in the 3 years preceding 1810, or about 300 slaves per year. Burton who visited Zeila in 1854-1855 was told that about 300-1,000 slaves went through Zeila each year, while a Frenchman, Lambert, estimated that the annual exportation of slaves from Zeila in the mid 1850's was 400.

From the very insufficient source material it is difficult to estimate the number of slaves going through Zeila each year, but it is reasonable to assume that in the 1830's and early 1840's the average number was probably about 500. In the late 1840's and 1850's when the Tajura route was often blocked and many Tajuran slave dealers

1) Salt. Appendix V. Salt does not mention at all the quantities of gold, civet, chat and wars that probably went through Zeila; See M. & D. Vol. 63. p. 32 (1839); Lefebvre. Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge. p. 33.

2) L.G. 294. No. 158, para 29. February 1855. One informant claimed 300, while another, 1,000.

3) L.G. 301. No. 571. 20.5.1856. He claimed that Tajura exported 2,200 slaves annually.

4) One Tajura caravan which went to Zeila in 1840 because of the above mentioned reason brought with it about 200 slaves. L.G. 185. No. 1440. para. 21. Barker. 7.1.1842.

made Zeila their headquarters the number of slaves going to Zeila probably doubled or tripled.

In the 1830's and the early 1840's Zeila was farmed by Sayyid Mohammed el Barr, the head of an important Yemeni family who served during this period in different capacities in the government of Mokha. Sayyid Mohammed ruled Zeila himself, or sometimes was represented in Zeila by an amir whom he nominated himself. When the Egyptians conquered the Yemeni coast and as a result became the masters of Zeila, they did not think so much of their new possession and they continued to farm it out for a very small sum 1). After the Egyptians withdrew from the Yemeni coast Zeila remained in the hands of the Al Barr family until 1843 when Haj Ali Shermerki, the most important Somali merchant on the coast bought from the Al Barr family all the rights for Zeila for a lump sum 2).

When the governorship of Zeila passed into the hands of Haj Ali Shermerki in 1843 the whole situation of the

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"sahil" started to change. For the first time the executive power and authority were in the hands of a successful and ambitious merchant. Shermerki was far from satisfied with the income he received from the dwindling trade of Zeila. He tried his best to divert as much of the trade of the coast into "his" town where it was at his complete mercy. Being a slave trader himself, he was jealous of the flourishing Tajuran slave trade. He watched Tajura exports closely and incited the Issa to attack Afar caravans in order to have a stronger hold over this trade.

Before becoming the governor of Zeila Shermerki was trading extensively with Harar. Although relations between Amir Abu Baker and the Yemen authorities at Zeila were not too good it seems that Shermerki had friendly relations with this amir. However, just after getting the governorship of Zeila, Shermerki got into a quarrel with the amir because of unsettled accounts with his Harari

1) Shermerki paid the Al Barr family 600 tallers but it seems that the annual tribute he had to pay was raised from time to time. L.G. 240. No. 1746. Haines. 18 October, 1845.


4) L.G. 294. No. 158. para. 9.
One tends to suspect that the bad relations between the two rulers was probably the result of Abu Baker's aggressiveness and his suspicious character on one hand and of Shermerki's ambition and new policy at Zeila on the other. Moreover, not satisfied with the meagre income of Zeila, Shermerki had an eye on Berbera. Using the shadowy authority which the governor of Zeila was supposed to have over Berbera, he took advantage of the constant wars between the branches of the Haber Awal tribe who claimed the right of Abbanship \(^2\) at the Berbera fair. In 1845 he joined forces with the Eyal Ahmed of the Haber Awal in an effort to take over Berbera. In this he succeeded only in 1846-1847 when taking advantage of the dead season at Berbera he built four little fortresses in which he put 50 matchlockmen \(^3\). The amir resented Shermerki's action as he justly feared that if the latter held both of Harar's outlets he would be able to exact whatever taxation he wished, even at Berbera, where taxation was unknown. The amir also feared that Shermerki, being a merchant, would use his authority for his own advantage in trade, as he probably did in Zeila. After a few years of

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2) See chapter on Berbera.
constant feuds the Haber Awal encouraged by the amir of Harar, drove Shermerki out of Berbera. In the meantime Zeila completely lost the trade of Harar, and Shermerki plotted with Garad Adan, the chief of the Ghiri, who also suffered from this turn of event, to divert the trade of Harar to Zeila by force 1).

In the late 1840's Zeila was enjoying more and more of the Afar trade and more Afar slave caravans were arriving in the city as a result of the frequent closure of the Tajura route by Mudaito and Issa attacks. The Afar trade filled part of the gap left by the disappearance of the Harar trade and with the frequent arrival of Afar caravans this element grew in importance in Zeila. The Tajura and the Ambaboo slave merchants were very suspicious of Shermerki's ambitions and economic rivalry, they also suspected that he incited the Issa to attack their caravans. As a result they frequently complained against Shermerki to the Mokha authorities. The latter were glad to accept their accusation, which they used to extract from Shermerki higher payments. In 1855 Shermerki was arrested in Mokha and the governship of Zeila was given to Abu Baker, the son of Ibrahim Shehem Abli, a slave

1) L.G. 294. No. 158. para. 9. Burton. 2.2.1855.
merchant and the chief of the village of Ambaboo. Abu Baker ¹) and his sons opened a new era in the slave trade of the "Sahil" ²).

¹) Later the Pasha of Zeila under the Egyptians.
²) L.G. 301. Enclosure in 482. 28.11.1855;
   L.G. 297. No. 697. 14.10.1855;
   L.G. 294. No. 158. Burton. 2.2.1855.
BERBERA.

The fair of Berbera, which took place between the months of October and April, was in the first half of the 19th century one of the most important commercial events on the east coast of Africa ¹). The season of the fair was probably the result of two main factors. The migration of the northern Somali tribes in the dry season from the Haud to the coastal plain (where water was available) and the southwesterly Monsoon which blows from the end of September to April. The Monsoon made it possible for boats from the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and India to reach Berbera just at the time when the caravans of the tribes gathered on the coast. The excellent port of Berbera afforded anchorage and shelter even to large ships and the gradually rising shore made it possible to pull the boats on the sandy beach for maintenance and repair.

Berbera had no permanent population. During the season of the fair the sub-tribes of the Haber Awal gathered on the coast of Berbera and provided the nucleus for the temporary town which was built overnight on the empty coast. From October to April many caravans coming from the different Somali tribes, from Harar and from other places in the interior constantly arrived and departed. The caravans

¹) F.O. Abyssinia 1/1. Valentia. 1808. pp. 4-12.
brought with them the materials necessary for the construction of the light mobile huts in which the people lived throughout their stay at the fair 1). The people of each caravan built their huts in the same area, but in doing so no attention was paid to position "They (the huts) being in some places thickly clustered together and in others detached and straggling" 2). There were no brick or stone houses in Berbera, however, the more important traders had larger and higher huts in order to accommodate their merchandise.

Berbera did not have enough water for the large number of people and animals which passed through the place during the fair, but excellent water was brought from nearby Bunder Ziyara. As for food, each caravan usually brought with it sufficient provisions for the time of its stay in the fair. Some commodities like dates and rice were purchased from the traders. Meat was available in unlimited quantities. Only vegetables and fruit were unobtainable 3).

1) Those huts, round or oval in shape, were not more than 8 to 10 feet square and frequently they contained up to 10 people each.


Contrary winds did not allow shipping to enter the harbour of Berbera before the second part of October. Some Zeilan merchants who wanted to meet the first caravans, went to Berbera by the land route in the beginning of October. The more important Zeila merchants and merchants from the Arabian ports near Aden waited for the wind to change and came to Berbera two or three weeks later. Next to come were the vessels of the Yemeni traders who were anxious to arrive at Berbera a few weeks before the larger boats from the Persian Gulf. With the Yemeni fleet came, in chartered boats, Banyan merchants who lived temporarily in the ports of South Western Arabia. The larger boats from Jidda, Muscat, Sur, Ras el Khyma, Bahrein and Basra came to Berbera in the month of December, when the more important caravans arrived from the interior. The height of the season in Berbera was in the months of January and February, when the wealthy Banyan traders from Porebunder, Mangalor and Bombay came directly from India in their clumsy Koitias.

While Indian and Red Sea boats left Berbera at the beginning of March, before the Red Sea was closed to shipping by a northerly wind, boats from the Persian Gulf, south Arabian coast and Zeila waited until the close of the fair.

in the first days of April in order to meet the last important Harari caravan. This caravan usually arrived in the second part of March and sometimes even in the first days of April, just before the Monsoon winds changed and made it impossible to return to the Persian Gulf. When the Harari caravan departed and the last boats sailed from Berbera in the beginning of April, the coast was left deserted until the next season started in October.

Very little was known by Europeans of the Berbera fair in the first decades of the 19th century. Banyan and Arab merchants who were concerned with the trade of this fair closely guarded all information that could help new competitors. Actually through their machinations European merchants were strictly forbidden from taking part in the fair 1).

From the last quarter of the 18th century the trade of Berbera was nearly monopolised by Banyan traders. The Red Sea countries and southern Arabia were drained of coin owing to continuous unfavourable balance of trade with India and were suffering from the unstable political situation in the area 2). Aden for centuries a centre for the trade with

2) See Introduction.
the Somali coast, was at the end of the 18th century completely dilapidated and its trade with Berbera and the highlands was nearly at a standstill 1). Cash in Arabia was becoming more and more scarce but Arab merchants had little to offer at Berbera in exchange for slaves and the products of the interior besides tallers or Indian merchandise which was obtained against tallers 2). Thus Indian merchants had very little competition from the Arabs who in the past used to frequent Berbera. Moreover, the Banyans temporarily settled in the ports of the Yemeni coast had representatives in Aden. These monopolised the trade with the opposite Somali coast which was carried all the year around 3), and were among the first to arrive at the fair of Berbera. They were able to supply the caravans and the nomad Somalis with the items most in demand 4) and at the cheapest prices.


2) "From the fair of Berbera Arabia draws her supply of ghee, and a great number of slaves, camels, horses, mules and asses", but the profit on these articles is much less than on the sale of Indian goods, which is the return made to the inhabitants of Africa, for the whole produce of the country thus brought to Berbera". Valentia. Vol.II. p. 375.


4) Carrying with them merchandise which they received annually from the Indian trading and Haj fleet going to Jidda from Surat, Bombay and Mangalor each February or March.
From the beginning of the 19th century the Banyans had new partners in the trade of Berbera. Those were the Muscat and Suri merchants who brought to Berbera from the Persian Gulf dates and some Indian goods, which they acquired through their commercial connections with India. The Persian Gulf merchants were mainly interested in slaves and wars (saffron). Moreover, they were no match for the Indians when it came to stocks and capital. In consequence they did not constitute a threat to the near monopoly of the Banyans and other Indian merchants who were mainly interested in the gold, civet, ivory, coffee, gum and specie.

In 1799 Colonel Murray was informed by the Aden authorities that the articles required for the trade of Berbera and the highlands were "silk and cotton cloths of all sorts and all colours - handkerchiefs, fine and coarse, surat goods, shawls, kincobs, gunpowder, lead, iron in bars, cutlery ware and timber...Raw cotton is a commodity in great request although this article is produced in the country it is not of good quality - In return they inform me that they can supply coffee of the best quality, myrrh, frankincense, aloes, senna leaf and ivory. But I suppose Dollars will be the principal returns".

2) Widely in use for tainting parts of the body in southern and southwestern Arabia. L.G.255.No.5. Cruttenden. 24.11.1847.
Some more information concerning Berbera in the first years of the 19th century is supplied by Lord Valentia who describes Berbera as the source of the second most important items in the Red Sea trade: gum and myrrh. Lord Valentia had the following to say about the fair of Berbera: "The first caravan is always the largest, it brings down of gum Arabic, generally about 15,000 bahar (320 lb) also all the myrrh that is consumed, about 2,000 bahar: the former brings 15 dollars an half per bahar, the latter 22 dollars per bahar. The other caravans bring ivory, slaves, camels, horses, mules, asses, raw hides, ghee...") We are further told by Valentia that if the trade in Indian goods with Berbera is not larger, the blame falls on the unreasonable profit of the Banyan as well as on the limited quantities of gold and ivory available in Berbera. It is interesting to note that Valentia does not mention the Harar coffee as being an important item in the Berbera trade. In this period the Banyans acquired the limited quantities of coffee they needed from Mokha and the Berbera coffee trade became important only in the second quarter of the 19th century.

1) F.O. Abyssinia 1/1. p. 4. Valentia. 1808.
2) See also: Valentia. Vol. II. p. 88; H.M. 494. p. 511. 8.12.1807. The merchant William Jacobs expects to get from "the country near Berbera" gold dust, elephant teeth and drugs.
Since the beginning of the 19th century a new element appeared in the trade of the Red Sea. American ships sailing from Zanzibar "discovered" the coffee of the Yemeni coast and large quantities of coffee were taken each year by those boats to America \(^1\). This trade did not develop to the proportion it could owing to the discovery and insecurity on the Yemeni coast. In fact it probably even diminished in the second decade of the century as a result of piracy. In the meantime, more Indian traders turned their attention to Berbera, where they could escape the exactions of the Red Sea rulers, and where large quantity of excellent coffee was available \(^2\). The Banyan and Arab merchants who made large profits from the sale of the coffee to American and other European customers, prevented "strangers" from attending the Berbera fair \(^3\). When a British boat, the "Mary Ann", tried in 1825 to trade at Berbera it was pillaged and some of its crew were killed \(^4\).

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4) Range 385. Vol. 61. No. 20-22 from 25.4.1825 -Registered 6.7.1825. Vol. 60. No. 66. Registered 15.6.1825. This was the beginning of the friendship between Haj Ali Shermerki, the future governor of Zeila, and the British after the former saved the life of some of the crew members.
At this time (1825) the fair of Berbera was flourishing while the trade on the Yemeni coast was constantly declining. "The peculiarly prosperous state of this trade can only be attributed to the total absence of all import or export duties excepting a trifling allowance made to the abban... This trade is entirely in the hands of the Arabs and Banyans from the different coasts of Arabia, a hundred of their boats at least from one hundred to five hundred candies (about 20 to 100 tons) leaving it annually with good cargoes"\(^1\).

As a result of British retribution \(^2\) and two or three rainless years in the interior \(^3\) and above all as a result of large quantities of cheap American coffee which had reached the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire since the late 1820's \(^4\), Berbera fair sank temporarily to its previous dimensions. However, in consequence of the British intervention the fair was opened to European trade. Americans soon took advantage of this turn of events and

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1) Range 385. Vol. 61. No. 20-22 from 25.4.1825. While the "Mary Ann" was in Berbera at the end of the fair in 1825, 20 Banyan and Arab vessels were in the port. Range 385. Vol. 60. No. 66. 8.5.1825. Registered 15.6.1825.

2) The British demanded compensation and when in 1827 the sum was not paid, part of the town was burnt and a damage of at least £5,000 caused. Range 386. Vol. 21. No. 62 from 25.4.1827.


4) Wellsted Arabia. Vol. II. p. 277. Wellsted claims that in 1830 the Yemeni and Aden coffee trade came to a complete standstill as a result of the above.
their boats sailing from Zanzibar to Mokha traded with Berbera as well 1).

Between 1834 and 1838 Mohammed Ali conquered the whole of Arabia's Red Sea coast including the Yemen 2). Already in 1836 the Egyptian authorities started to introduce the monopoly system in the Yemeni coast. In July 1836 Ibrahim Pasha, who was the governor of the Yemen, forbade the sale of coffee to American and British traders 3). Later on in the same year British subjects (Indians) were forbidden from trading in iron, lead, sulphur and hides 4). This was part of the Egyptian effort to divert to Egypt the trade of the area which had been going for centuries to India. As a result, more American and Indian trade was transferred to Berbera and Zeila was completely abandoned by the Banyans.

It seems that since the first years of the 1830's the fair of Berbera started to recover and to grow in importance. In a short time Berbera became an important

1) Annales Maritime. 1er semester 1853. p. 246.
centre of the coffee trade of the whole area 1). About 1835 Lt. Wellsted writes 2): "The Banyans of Mokha, Hodeidah etc., have each a partner residing here (Berbera), to whom the various articles are consigned, and in their hands is the whole of the trade of the port... At Berbera... they have enjoyed silently and unnoticed the enormous profits of its trade during several years". Now that it was accessible to foreign merchants, many American boats which came to Bombay to acquire ivory, gum, coffee and turtle shells transferred their activities to Berbera in order to escape the duties of Bombay and the heavy profit of the Indian merchants 3). Yet it was especially after the conquest of Aden by the British in 1839 that the importance of the fair of Berbera reached its peak. Indian traders based in Aden and relying on British influence and power, could now tap the trade of Somaliland and the Ethiopian highlands at Berbera with very little interference. Furthermore, the demand for the products offered at Berbera was growing steadily throughout the 1830's

1) M. & D. Vol. 63. p. 30; In 1840 Abbadie (21300. p. 427) was told by a Harari merchant in Berbera that about 10,000 camels loaded with coffee reached the fair annually. If each camel was loaded with about 150 Kgs. it would have meant that 1,500 tons of coffee reached Berbera annually; According to Rochet (M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 284) writing at the same time as Abbadie, 2,400 cubic meters of coffee reached Berbera annually.


the 1840's and the 1850's.

In the mid 1830's the average daily number of boats in Berbera port during the season was, according to Wellsted 1), 30 to 40. Some of these boats made 3 trips to Mokha during the season. Wellsted reckons that throughout the fair 250 boats of 40 to 100 tons each, exclusive of 2 to 3 square rigged vessels, left Berbera carrying about 15,000 tons of merchandise.2) In the 1840's the number of boats visiting Berbera grew steadily, but although in some cases we are told that 60 vessels were at Berbera at one time, one has no way of knowing the numbers of vessels which visited the port each season 3).

At the close of the season of 1826-1827 the population of Berbera was estimated at about 2,000 4), but in the mid 1830's the population of Berbera was already estimated at 7,000-10,000 5). At different times in the 1840's and early 1850's the number of people at Berbera is estimated to be

2) Ibid.
between 10,000 to 20,000 \(^1\). It is obvious that Berbera's population was constantly changing with the coming and going caravans. The number of the people in Berbera at the beginning of the fair was probably by far smaller than the number at its height or just before the end. This number also depended on conditions in the interior and on the relations between the tribes along the coast. Nevertheless, it might be said that at least during the height of the season in the late 1830's, 1840's and the early 1850's, the average number of people at Berbera was between 12,000 to 15,000 \(^2\). As caravans came and went all the time, most of them not staying more than two weeks at the most, one may assume that probably about a hundred thousand people annually visited the fair of Berbera in the 1840's and first years of the 1850's. It is clearly seen that the importance of the fair of Berbera grew by many times from the first quarter of the century to the end of the second quarter. In 1853 the British resident in Aden estimated the trade of Berbera to be worth above 30 lacs

\(^1\) Abbadie 21302. p. 400. 1840 - 12,000-15,000; L.G. 167. No. 2710. 26.4.1841 - 10,000; L.G. 278. No. 445. para. 20. Cruttenden. 7.4.1852 - 12,000; Cruttenden Edour p. 187 - (1847-8) - 20,000; Johnston. Vol. I. p. 22 (1842) - 5,000 huts; Rochet. *Second Voyage*. p. 286 - 4,000 - 5,000 huts.

\(^2\) This is further strengthened by reports on caravans numbering thousands of people. See: L.G. 167. No. 2710. 26.4.1841; Burton. Vol. II. p. 94; Cruttenden Edour. p.195; Abbadie 21300. pp. 426, 430-431, 434.
of rupees \(^1\) and this after trade had fallen sharply as a result of the long quarrels between the sub tribes of the Haber Awal and Shermerki, and this estimate is probably a conservative one for the 1840's.

If one compares the articles required at Berbera from abroad at the end of the 18th century to the articles imported into Berbera in the 1840's one sees that the changes were quite minor and were probably due to the neglect of the writer and not to changes in the demand on the coast \(^2\). The main imports were metals \(^3\), cheap metal products, large quantities of beads of different colours and sizes, glassware, gunpowder, tobacco, rice, dates and above all cloth of different kinds, silks, cottons, woollens and kashmir shawls. Until the early part of the 19th century cheap Indian cotton cloth of different colours, especially "blue surat" was sold at Berbera in great quantities, but from the second decade of the 19th century American white

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3) Copper, lead, zinc, steel, iron in bars.
sheeting of different qualities used for the making of tobes (dresses) was imported in growing quantities. Small quantities of better grade articles like the shawls, the more expensive cloths and metals as well as the gunpowder and the occasional matchlocks were usually destined for Harar or for Shoa.

The items brought by the caravans from the interior to the coast did not change at all after the beginning of the century. The Somali nomads brought sheep, camels, skins, ghee, horns, quantities of ivory, aloes, a little timber and above all gum, myrrh and frankincense for which Somalia was well known. On the other hand merchant caravans coming from the interior, from Arusi, Gurague, Shoa and other places brought with them slaves, gold dust, civet, ivory as well as some of the articles offered by the Somalis. The Harari caravans in addition to the various luxury goods and slaves from the highlands brought the products of their country, mainly huge quantities of coffee, wars (saffron), chat, cereals, large quantities of hides and ivory.


2) The exportation of chat and wars is not mentioned by our sources until the late 1830's. Nevertheless (Abbadie 21300. p. 429) Harar was the source of all the wars for southern Arabia for many centuries. Chat is said to have originated in Harar and until today chat is exported in very large quantities from the province of Harar to the Yemen and southern Arabia. One may suppose that the above items which were intended for Arabia alone were ignored by European informants.
Besides the caravans of the Haber Awal the caravans coming to the Berbera fair could be classified into two categories. Caravans of Somali nomads coming from all over Somalia and the Ugaden and the large traders caravans from the Webi Shebeli, Agadur, Arusi and Harar 1).

Of the Harari caravans we have spoken in another place 2). No doubt they were the most important at Berbera and supplied a significant part of the trade of this fair. Next in importance were kafilas coming from the Webi Shebeli, from the province of Gunana, south of river Gunana and from Agadur. Those kafilas frequently numbered more than 2,000 camels. They were accompanied by many people and were heavily guarded. They brought with them ivory, ostrich feathers, musk, myrrh, frankincense, some gold and slaves. It took a kafila 24 days to reach Berbera from Gunana, from the Webi Shebeli, 19, and from Agadur 5 days. Large caravans reached Berbera at the beginning and at the end of the fair from the Ugaden as well. They brought with them slaves from Arusi, cattle, great quantities of gum, ghee, ivory, ostrich feathers and rhinocerus homs 3).

1) Including merchants from Shoa and Gurague.
2) See above Page 284 onwards.
In addition to the large caravans which were probably mainly composed of professional traders, Berbera attracted hundreds of small caravans belonging to the different Somali tribes 1). Those caravans brought huge quantities of ghee (a kind of butter) valued at about 15 tallers per camel load 2) and exported to India and Arabia. Many hundred tons of myrrh valued at 20 tallers per camel load. Even larger quantities of gum, large quantities of wax, ostrich feathers, skins, sheep, cattle, camels 3) and some wood. The wood came from the west. It was worth about 40 tallers per camel load at Berbera 4) and some of it was exported to Aden 5).

The Somali caravans usually numbered from a few score of camels to a few hundreds. The merchandise on each camel was covered with skins. A number of camels in a line would be led by a woman while the other people accompanying the caravans marched in groups at the side of their loaded camels.

When approaching Berbera each caravan, large or small, sent horse riding messengers to announce its arrival. A strong

escort of the Haber Awal was then despatched to accompany the caravans through the robber infested territory near the fair 1).

A large number of pilgrims, Muslims and Christians, came each year to Berbera with the caravans in order to find passage on boats heading for the Red Sea. On the other hand returning pilgrims came with the boats from the Red Sea in order to join the caravans going to the highlands. It is to be expected that many of the outgoing and returning pilgrims carried with them quantities of merchandise in order to cover their travelling expenses 2). Thus the fair became richer and even more colourful.

Most of the trade at Berbera was carried on by barter 3). Nevertheless, large amounts of coin, mainly tallers, came into the hands of the Banyan traders throughout the fair 4). True enough, the Indian merchants acquired at Berbera all the ivory, the limited quantities of gold and civet which

reached the fair from the highlands 1) and since the second quarter of the 19th century also large quantities of coffee. But the coffee, the lucrative items and some other goods could not repay for all the merchandise supplied by the Indians or which was of Indian origin 2). The gap was probably filled by large amounts of cash brought by Red Sea merchants, after the revival of trade in the Red Sea since the conquest of the Hijaz by Mohammed Ali. Another source of cash were the British authorities who since the conquest of Aden spent large sums for the maintenance and supply of the British garrison in this town.

Until the 1850's cheap blue cloth imported from Surat in India served in Berbera as the main medium of exchange. In the mid 1830's this cloth was sold at Aden at 20 yards per taller while in the Somali interior, we are told 3), it was worth 3 times this price. The basic unit called Souda was 2½ feet long by 7 inches wide. In the beginning of the

1) Range 386. Vol. 21. No. 62. 25.4.1827; Rochet Voyage. p. 340-341; M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 284; Rochet 1840; Arnauld Abbudie. pp. 579-580. Of gold and civet there is only little information as the trade in those items was carried on in secrecy.

2) In the second quarter of the 19th century the Indian merchants being under strict supervision of the British, were very careful not to trade in slaves.

fair 16 Souda were the equivalent of one taller, but towards the end of the season the rate of exchange rose to 28-30 Souda per taller 1). By this time the market was saturated and the merchants wanted to dispose of whatever merchandise they still had and convert it, if possible, into tallers.

Since the second quarter of the 19th century American white cotton cloth was gaining popularity in the whole area. In the beginning of the 1840's, all transaction of coffee in Berbera were made against this white cloth which was now used for the making of the tobe 2).

There was no regulated system of weighing and measuring in Berbera and the very naive Somali nomads were always taken advantage of by the traders, especially the Banyans 3). "To barter his coffee for cloth...the wild man starts up to find a friend with an uncommonly long forearm. The latter... manages during measurement to advance his elbow and to slip forward his fingers so as to gain at least 2 cubits in 20... the crafty Banyan...produces a leaded stone nearly double what it is supposed to weigh and as the Beduin is ignorant of such arts, the buyer gains upon coffee 5 times what he lost by cloth" 4).

3) Rochet Voyage. p. 341.
Berbera was the source of supply of the so-called "Abyssinian slaves" (Habasha) for the Persian Gulf. Nearly every boat leaving Berbera for the south Arabian coast or for the Persian Gulf had some slaves on board 1). It might be said that Berbera specialized in the supply of female slaves of high quality destined for the harems of South Arabia, the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia and to a lesser extent Persia and India 2).

The slaves carried from Berbera could be divided into two distinct groups. The first, the less important, was made of Somali women sold by their tribes or kidnapped by Arab seamen visiting the Berbera fair. It seems that many such girls were lured into the boats by promises of presents or marriage. Some were fictitiously married only to be later sold as slaves in the Persian Gulf. In some cases the girls were brought to the boats by people from their own tribes or from a related tribe. When on board, those people sold the

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girls to the captain 1). Although the numbers of slave girls of this category was not very large 2) it is interesting to note that Muslim merchants from the Persian Gulf were not averse to enslave Muslim girls.

In the 1840's the British government succeeded in persuading most of the Arab chiefs of the Persian Gulf to sign a treaty forbidding the importation of Somali slave girls. This was not very difficult considering the religious argument that the enslavement of Muslims was forbidden by Islam. Nevertheless, Somali girls were still taken as slaves to the Persian Gulf until the 1850's. In 1847 Cruttenden 3) reported that the treaty "...is but laxly observed, and every year young girls are kidnapped and carried away into slavery by the Soor-Muscat, and Gulf boats...".

The second and the more important group of slaves exported from Berbera were the Gurague, Galla, Sidama and occasional Amhara slaves brought by the caravans from the highlands of Ethiopia. "An occasional group of dusky and travel-worn children marks the arrival of the slave kafila


2) Nevertheless, in one instance it is mentioned that 233 Somali girls were carried to the Persian Gulf in one season. Range 388. Vol. 50. No. 5641. 1837.

3) L.G. 251. No. 537. para. 18.
from Hurrur and Ḫat. At Berbera, the Gurague and Hurrur slave-merchant meets his correspondent from Bussorah, Bagdad or Bunder Abbas. Berbera was the centre of the trade in Gurague slaves and concubines who were much in demand for the harems of the Persian Gulf and Arabia. It was the beauty of the Gurague girls, their light colour and plumpness, and above all their moral qualities, which were considered higher than those of other races coming from Ethiopia, which pleased the Arabian so much.

A large number of slaves were brought to Berbera by the Arusi and Ogadur caravans and by Zeila and Tajura merchants. Most of the slaves were probably from Gurague origin. Still a number of Galla and Sidama slaves were brought by the Tajurans from the market of Basso through Argoba and the Wollo country. Thus, although the Gurague element among the slaves brought by the Tajurans to Berbera from Shoa was predominant, Galla and Sidama slaves reached Berbera through Tajura as well. But as the Gurague element was strengthened

1) Cruttenden Edour. p. 186.
2) Abbadie (21301. pp. 23, 26; 21300. p. 487) was told that the Gurague slave girls are the best in the Adjami (Somali) countries. It is interesting that the general name of slaves in Berbera was ḥaj (Kuraka); Abbadie 21303. p. 23; See also: Range 387. Vol. 10. p. 600. Wilson 1831. of slaves from Berbera serving in armies of Persian Gulf rulers. para. 26-29.
by a large number of Guraguen slaves brought by Harari
caravans directly from Gurague and from Shoa 1), it looked
to the outsider as if all the slaves at Berbera were from
Gurague origin. Thus Berbera acquired the reputation of
being the market and the source of the Guraguen slaves 2).

The average price for a slave at Berbera in the 1830's
and 1840's was between 40 and 50 dollars, while an exception-
ally good looking slave girl brought even 65 to 70 dollars3). We are told that the slaves bought at Berbera brought a
profit of 150% on the Arabian coast 4). This is probably an
exaggeration. In 1842 the price of an Ethiopian female
slave in the Persian Gulf was on the average 75 tallers
while a male was sold for 70 tallers. Edwards, an employee
of the British Persian Gulf residency who gave this
information 5) claimed that "it has been known for a pretty
Abyssinian female slave to be sold at 100, 150 or 200 German
crowns, but girls of so dear a value are very scarce" 6).

Burton. 12.4.1855; Cruttenden Edour. pp. 186-187; Barker.
4) Wellsted Arabia. p. 367; Abbadie 21301. p. 23;
21300. pp. 424, 487.
6) The same source claims that female slaves brought from
Zanzibar were sold at the same time for an average of
40 German crowns.
It was only natural that the extreme cases of high prices obtained for exceptional slave girls were reported from mouth to mouth, but the usual profit on slaves obtained by traders in Arabia probably did not exceed 50-75 per cent.

We have pointed out ¹) that the demand for Ethiopian concubines in the Ottoman Empire grew continuously from the beginning of the 19th century. As a result of that, and as a result of the growing trade with the Persian Gulf, the numbers of slaves exported from Berbera grew steadily in the second quarter of the 19th century ²). The Muscat and other Persian Gulf traders were paying the Ethiopian slave dealers with dates which were so much in demand by the nomad tribes ³). Slaves were carried to the Persian Gulf by every Arab boat departing from Berbera and also by boats of the important Somali merchants ⁴).

In 1831 the British Resident in the Persian Gulf reported ⁵) that from the 1,400-1,700 slaves annually

¹) See page 11-12 above.
⁴) In 1847 6 bugalos loaded with slaves from Berbera were captured by the Indian navy in the Persian Gulf. Among the boats was one belonging to Ali Shermerki, the governor of Zeila (L.G. 255. No. 5. para. 10, Cruttenden 24.11.1847). Shermerki claimed that he has been exporting slaves on his boats to the Persian Gulf for many years.
imported to Muscat one fourth were Abyssinians 1). An employee of the Persian Gulf residency reported in 1842 2) that "slaves are generally seized by the people of Berbera... and are sold to traders visiting their port, whence they are imported to several ports of the Red Sea such as Hodeida, Judda and Mokha, from which last place as well as from Zanzibar and Berberah the slaves are brought to Muscat and Soor - Thence they are brought to the Persian ports of Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Congoon and Bushire. About 3,000 slaves of both sexes arrive at Bushire annually....of which no more than 200 or 300 are Abyssinians". Colonel Robertson, the resident in the Persian Gulf estimated in 1842 that about 20 to 30 thousand slaves were imported to the Persian Gulf annually through Muscat 3). Later on Robertson agreed that his estimate might have been much exaggerated 4). However, even if the number of slaves imported into the Persian Gulf was half of what Colonel Robertson reported and the proportion among those would have been one Abyssinian out of every 10 slaves as in Edwards report and not ⅓ as in the Wilson report from 1831 5), this would have meant that over 1,000

1) Wilson did not mention the slaves brought to Soor and other places in the Persian Gulf.
3) L.G. 188. No. 1821. para 5, Robertson. 4.3.1842.
5) See above pages 241-242.
Abyssinian slaves, mostly coming from Berbera, were imported annually into the Persian Gulf.

During the fair of Berbera, Tajuran merchants brought their slaves for sale to Berbera where they exchanged them for the products of India and Arabia. It was only between the months of March and October, including the dead season in the caravan trade with the interior, that the slaves arriving in Tajura and Zeila were exported to Mokha. The period of the fair in Berbera between October and the end of March paralleled the dry season in the highlands (not counting the short rainy season) when slave caravans made their way to the coast. It would be only reasonable to assume that a large part of the slaves brought to Tajura, which we estimated at 1,500-3,000 annually, went to Berbera. At the close of the Berbera fair in April 1847, Lt. Cruttenden estimated that the number of slaves brought from Shoa to Berbera through Tajura and Zeila in the 1846-1847 season was about 900. There is no mention in this report of the slaves imported through Harar and the other places, but we have already pointed out that Harari caravans usually brought to Berbera over 500 slaves. Therefore, the average annual

2) L.G. 251. No. 537. para. 18.
number of slaves exported from Berbera in the 1830's, 1840's was probably between one thousand and two thousand. A few hundred slaves sold at Berbera found their way into the Red Sea through Mokha, but most of the slaves, probably over a thousand, were taken by the Muscat and Soor boats to the Persian Gulf.

"Abban...Mogasa of the Gallas, Akh of Al-Hijaz... the word denotes the protégé as well as the protector... The Abban acts at once as broker, escort, agent and interpreter and the institution may be considered the earliest form of transit dues. In all sales he receives certain percentages, his food and lodging are provided at the expense of his employer, and he not unfrequently exacts small presents from his kindred. In return he is bound to arrange all differences, and even to fight the battles of his client against his fellow-countrymen. Should an Abban be slain, his tribe is bound to take up the cause and to make good the losses of their protégé... According to the laws of the country, the Abban is master of the life and property of his client. The traveller's success will depend mainly upon his selection if inferior in rank, the protector can neither forward nor defend him; if timid, he will impede advance..."

1) L.G. 294. No. 158. para. 29. Burton. 22.2.1855.
The right of abbanship, especially in areas crossed by trade routes, was an important source of income to the nomads and semi settled population in the horn of Africa. Each tribe had a right to supply abbans to travellers in the area which was claimed by the tribe. The traveller going through countries belonging to different tribes had to have a whole series of abbans and was forwarded from one to another.

The Somali coast was divided between the different Somali tribes. Berbera, of course, was the plum. Although the fair of Berbera served the different Somali tribes, the area of Berbera and its port were recognised as belonging to the Haber Awal and therefore it was accepted that the Haber Awal had the right to supply abbans to all those who came to the fair of Berbera. Considering the amount of trade going through Berbera and the number of strangers coming to the fair, the possession of Berbera meant a very important income to whoever held the place. This income grew continuously in the second quarter of the 19th century as a result of the growth in trade at Berbera. The right of abbanship at Berbera caused many bitter wars among the sub-tribes of the Haber Awal and between the Haber Awal and the Haber Jerhajis which owned the area adjacent to the Berbera coast.

There was no form of government in Berbera other than the questionable authority of the tribal chief over his people 1). It is of great interest how some sort of order and security was kept among the thousands of people crowding the fair of Berbera. The Somali tribes appreciated that to attract the merchants to Berbera they had to provide them and their property with some security. Caravans and merchants were many a time attacked by bands of robbers on their way to the fair. Boats going out of Berbera were from time to time set upon by pirates and sometimes the neighbouring Somali maritime tribes took advantage of the confusion at the end of the fair at Berbera to raid the place 2). Still the Haber Awal and other tribes who used the Berbera fair did their best to keep the security and order throughout the fair. In order not to disturb the trade they even had their fights out of the area of the market which was considered a sanctuary where the defeated side always took refuge without being followed 3).

3) Wellsted Arabia. p. 371; L.G. 200. No. 104. 20.12.1842. Christopher. In all the source material we have examined we hardly found any instance in which merchants were robbed at Berbera during the fair.
The institution of the abban among the Somalis and at Berbera is probably very ancient. But the first mention of this system existing in Berbera we found in a report from the British resident in Mokha in 1825 1). "...The abban who is generally the head of the family and at once performs the duties of protector and broker to the foreign merchants".

Only in the late 1830's and early 1840's is a clearer picture of the abbanship system at Berbera emerging from our sources. Any stranger not belonging to the Haber Awal had to take an abban at Berbera 2). There were no duties on exports and imports at Berbera other than the trifling duty paid to the abban, who was supposed to protect his employer from injury or outrage 3). If a stranger was not trading but just visiting or passing through Berbera he had to feed his abban and on leaving he had to give him a small present 4). The abban on his side was responsible for the safety of his protégé and his protégé's property while he was at Berbera 5).

2) Of the branches of the Haber Awal who demanded a right to the abbanship in Berbera see below pages 550–551.
5) M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 229. Combes 1.9.1841. It is claimed that the abban usually neglected his part of the bargain.
In addition to the protection fee called Abbunghur any person trading at Berbera had to pay the abban a certain percentage on all transactions, called Dullala (brokerage)\(^1\). The Dullala on each article was different according to the item. For instance, in the 1840's the abban received on the sale of sheep and goats one souda (about \(\frac{1}{16}\)th of a taller) and the same amount for each farazila of coffee. On the sale of frankincense and gum the abban received half a taller per camel load in kind \(^2\).

The Dullala taken from the foreign merchants was different according to different classes of merchants and so was also the Abbunghur. In the 1850's we are told that the small merchants from India and Arabia had to feed their abbans and at the end of the season to present them with the tobe and five to ten tallers in cash. The prize catches for the Haber Awal abbans were the rich Indian merchants who besides a continuous stream of presents were supposed to present their abban at the end of the season with fifty to two hundred tallers. The lowest Dullala (brokerage) from foreign merchants was taken from the Muscat and Soori traders.

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1) L.G. 165. No. 2316. Para 8. Haines 5.7.1841. The seller paid Dullala to his abban while the purchaser paid to his.
2) Abbadie, (21300. p. 425) claims that on items from Somali origin there was a special low rate paid only by the seller; See also: M. & D. Vol. 13. p. 229. Combes 1.9.1841.
who had to pay one percent on most articles and between half and two tallers on each slave. Indian merchants probably paid more according to the avarice of their protectors 1). However, it seems that the profit made by the traders on the sale of foreign goods in Berbera and the sale of the Ethiopian and Somali products abroad was so large that more and more foreign traders were attracted to Berbera in the period we are covering. Some Indian merchants found it even profitable to hire abbans on an annual basis.

The ties of the merchant with his abban could not be dissolved. No one could change his abban, even if he was proven disloyal and incompetent. Each trader had to take the abban of his father and when the abban died the merchant had to employ his son 2).

Four sub tribes of the Haber Awal claimed the right to the abbanship of Berbera. They were the Eyyal Ahmed, Eyyal Yunis, Eyyal Jedid and Eyyal Hoch 3). The strongest

1) On each bale of cloth about half a dollar in coin was taken. On gum and coffee one pound in every twentyseven pounds purchased. Cow hides paid half a dollar each. Sheep and goat skins, one sixteenth of a rupee (one rupee equals two shillings) and on the purchase of ghee, one per cent. L.G. 294. No. 158. Para. 14. 2.2.1855; L.G. 301. No. 493. 19.4.1856; Burton. Vol. II. pp. 79-80. Footnote 2.


among the four was the Eyyal Ahmed which had the abbanship of the Banyan traders and which for many years received the largest share from the income of the abbanship of Berbera. Next in importance were the Eyyal Yunis, abbans to the Indian Mahmum traders, the competitors of the Banyans. Although they received some income from their protégés it was in no proportion to the growing income of the Eyyal Ahmed from the Banyans who nearly monopolised the fair of Berbera. The Eyyal Jedid and Eyyal Hoch were abbans to some of the Somali tribes and to very few of the foreign merchants. Therefore their share of the income of the abbanship was the smallest and it is doubtful whether they enjoyed very much of the increased prosperity of the Berbera fair from the 1830's on. In the late 1830's and the 1840's, when the income from the abbanship grew enormously, the three last branches of the Haber Awal became very jealous of the great profits which fell into the hands of the Eyyal Ahmed and they demanded a fairer share in the profits of Berbera.

In the first part of the season of 1841-1842 a fierce battle took place between Eyyal Yunis and Eyyal Ahmed, after the Indian Mahmum traders incited their protectors to break the monopoly of the Eyyal Ahmed and the Banyans. Later in the season Eyyal Jedid and Eyyal Hoch decided to take advantage of the disorder and to plunder the boats in the
harbour 1). The situation was so explosive that Haj Ali Shermerki was called to mediate between the tribes.

Since the "Mary Ann" was plundered in 1825 Shermerki served as the abban of all the English who visited Berbera, although he did not belong to the Haber Awal, but to the Haber Jirhajis who had no right in Berbera proper 2). Being among the richest merchants in Berbera and the most important personality along the "sahil", he served in the 1830's and early 1840's as a mediator between the different tribes and between the tribes and the merchants when disagreements arose. When he bought the governorship of Zeila in 1843, he already had an eye on the income of Berbera and just waited for a chance to implement the authority which the governor of Zeila was supposed to have over Berbera. In 1844-1845 war broke again between Eyyal Ahmed and Eyyal Yunis and after Eyyal Ahmed was driven out of Berbera, Shermerki, by now governor of Zeila, was called upon by Eyyal Ahmed to help them against their foes. An agreement was reached and Shermerki sent some of his matchlockmen to Berbera and the Eyyal Yunis were driven out of the place. As agreed with Eyyal Ahmed, Shermerki erected in the area of the fair four


towers in which he placed thirty of his soldiers 1). The Eyyal Yunis now out of Berbera opened a new fair on the coast of Bulhar. To this fair came the Mahmuns and other merchants who were under the protection of the Haber Yunis in the past. Bulhar's coast was very dangerous for shipping and in the seasons of 1845-1846 and 1846-1847 many boats drowned when trying to approach the shore 2). In 1847 an Issa raiding party finding the Kariya (encampment) of the Haber Yunis unprotected, killed many women, children and old men and took others as slaves. As a result of this catastrophe, the Haber Yunis called upon Eyyal Ahmed for help and the combined force inflicted a severe defeat upon the Issa. This brought the two Haber Awal sub tribes together again. In the meantime the Banyan merchants and the Amir of Harar, who resented the high handedness and competition of Shermerki, incited the Eyyal Ahmed against Shermerki, who, they claimed, wanted to transfer the abbanship of Berbera to his tribe the Haber Jerhajiš 3). The two sub tribes of the Haber Awal, now in peace again, wanted to get rid of the unwanted patronship of Shermerki, but Shermerki was too strong for


them 1). For a few years there was a tense peace at Berbera, but in 1851 the different clans of the Haber Awal, encouraged by the amir of Harar, united to put a siege on Berbera and to force Shermerki and his soldiers out. In the beginning of 1852 the Haber Awal sub tribes succeeded in driving Shermerkis' men out of Berbera and they demolished the towers he had built on the coast. As a reprisal Shermerki gathered his small trading fleet, armed it and blockaded Berbera 2). When the 1852-1853 fair was over and the tribes left the coast, Shermerki landed his men on the Berbera coast and with men from Haber Jerhajis he rebuilt the towers and garrisoned them again with matchlockmen.

By the end of 1853 it became apparent to all the Somali tribes who used Berbera, including the Haber Jerhajis, that they were all losing from the continuous wars. In the beginning of 1854 an agreement was reached between the Haber Awal and the Haber Jerhajis by which Shermerki, who was blamed for all the troubles, was banned from Berbera 3).

Owing to the continuous disturbances, trade at Berbera in the early 1850's nearly came to a standstill. Burton

who visited the fair in the 1854-1855 season reported that trade at the fair was only a fraction of what it used to be in the past and was not worth more than £10,000 1).

1) Burton. Vol. II. pp. 79-80. Footnote 2; L.G. 294. No. 158. para. 12. Burton. 22.2.1855. For some years after the visit of Burton the fair of Berbera continued to suffer from disturbances and from British retribution for the attack on Burton's party and the murder of one of his companions.
PRIMI STUDI LITOLGICI E GEOLGICI
DELLLE REGIONI PERCORSE NELL'AFRICA ORIENTALE
DALLA SPEDIZIONE GEOGRAFICA ITALIANA
secondo la costruzione del Cap. ANTONIO CECCHI
disegnati dall'Ing. Prof. ROMOLO MENGARONI
Scala 1:300,000
After being overrun by the forces of Gran and divided from the main body of the Ethiopian Empire by the Galla invaders in the 16th century, the kingdom of Shoa disintegrated into a number of Christian principalities surrounded by Galla and Muslim provinces. The ruling house of Shoa was left with only a small area in the northern part of the Shoan highlands.

In the first half of the 18th century a descendant of the Shoan rulers, Abbeie, annexed the province of Mens to his territory. He ruled for 25 years and died in the 1740's fighting the Karaye. He was succeeded by his son Amha Yessus who reigned for over 30 years. It might be said that it was during the reign of Amha Yessus that the reunification of Shoa started. He imported from Gondar a number of matchlocks and with their help he was able to reconquer many of the provinces which were in Galla hands.

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including Kabiena and Tegoulet 1). When he conquered the province of Ankebar, he built a town there and ploughed the surrounding area. Ankebar became his official residence while his family lived in Harr Amba, which was his private residence 2). When Bruce met him in 1771 at the court of Gondar 3) Amha Yessus was received with great honour more like an ally sovereign than a vassal.

On the death of Amha Yessus his son Asfa Wessen II succeeded him to the throne and reigned for 33 years 4). In his day all the plains of Shoa held by the Galla were reconquered and the Galla inhabitants were put to the sword 5).

1) The pagan Galla spread as far as Tora Mesk between Ankobar and Debra Berhan - Sellassie. Vol. I. pp. 62,63.

2) Sellassie. Vol. I. p. 59. According to Isenberg (p. 87) it was Abbeie who conquered Ankobar.

3) Bruce. Vol. IV. pp. 93-95. It is strange that Bruce calls him "Son of the governor of Shoa" when he was already the ruler unless Bruce actually met one of Amha Yessus's sons. Amha Yessus died a few years late and must have been an old man in 1771.

4) Morié. Vol. II. p. 411 - from 1775 to 1808; Cecchi. (Vol. I. pp.240-242) claims that he reigned from 1774 to 1807. The editor of Sellassie thinks (Vol. I. p. 66, Note 8, p. 69, note 8) that it will be more correct to reckon the death of Asfa Wessen as the year 1809 as Wessen Seged, his son, ruled only for 4 years and his death in 1813 was reported by N. Pearce. Asfa Wessen married a princess of the Solomonie line. Morie. Vol. II. p. 411. Soliellet. p. 270.

The province of Marhabit as well as other provinces were annexed to Shoa by the sword or by diplomacy. The greatly enlarged kingdom was divided by Asfa Wessen into 4 provinces and 39 districts. Some of his sons were nominated as governors of the border districts. For example, Wessen Seged, was the governor of the province of Gedem, where he continuously fought his Muslim neighbours. In one of those wars he was taken prisoner by a Yeju Galla chief and later was ransomed. He married a princess of the Solomonic line and thus strengthened his claim to the throne as well as the connections between the dynasty of Shoa and the Imperial house. On his father's death in 1807 or 1808, Wessen Seged became the ruler of Shoa which was now a sizable kingdom. There is little doubt that Wessen Seged was the greatest of Shoan rulers until his time. He enjoyed a brief

1) Sellassie. Vol. I. p. 64; According to Cecchi (Vol. I. p. 241) this was done by Wessen Seged in the name of his father.


3) According to Harris (Vol. III. pp. 36-37) until the time of Asfa Wessen, the Shoan rulers were occupied with the subjugation of the small Amhara dynasties in the area. The Galla were left alone in the area they conquered, but after Asfa Wessen subdued his rival Christian rulers his forces began to invade the Galla territories.


5) According to Harris (Vol. II. p. 340) this Muslim area was conquered in the time of Asfa Wessen.

but exceedingly active reign of 4½ years, during which he extended his kingdom to the south, but especially to the west, far beyond the limits bequeathed to him by his father.  

In the 18th century the king of Shoa was considered a vassal of the emperor of Ethiopia and his title was that of Merdezmatch. Like other local rulers, the ruler of Shoa paid a tribute to the emperor or to the ras who was in power in Gondar. With the disintegration of the central authority at the end of the 18th century, Shoa's connection with the Ethiopian throne became even more shadowy than before. Although the ruler of Shoa still recognised the overlordship of the emperor and rare presents were still sent from time to time to the emperor or to the ras in power, "all further connexion had for a long time been broken off between these provinces and Gondar." Being very powerful and rich, after coming to power, Wessen Seged adopted the title of ras. He continued the war against his Wollo and Yeju neighbours although they were dependants of Ras Guksa.


2) Salt. p. 133; M. & D. Vol. 13. pp. 9-10; Abbadie 14.7.1839. This is the title of the Ethiopian crown prince today.

3) According to Lejean (Rapport sur l'Abbysinie. M. & D. Vol. 61. p. 153) the king of Shoa used to send the Emperor a quantity of gold dust cast in the form of a mule as a sign of his vassaldom.

4) Salt. p. 337.
of Gondar. His army sacked the Wollo country, put to death many Muslims and burned a large number of villages \(^1\). He was on friendly terms with Ras Walde Sellassie of Tigre, whose headquarters were at Antalo \(^2\), and co-operated with him in the war against the Wollo and the Yeju Galla who were a thorn in the flesh of both \(^3\). The fame of Wessen Seged and his reputation spread all over Tigre and Begamder \(^4\) and it seems that the Ethiopian clergy in Gondar, resenting the rule of Ras Guksa \(^5\), who was of a Galla-Muslim origin \(^6\), applied to him for help. Wessen Seged prepared an expedition against Gondar, but this expedition did not materialize either because Ras Guksa came to terms with Wessen Seged \(^7\), or more likely because Wessen Seged was murdered before he was able to start his attack \(^8\).

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2) Salt. p. 337. From time to time he sent Ras Walde Sellassie presents.
3) A wollo chief Imam Liban, arrested messengers going between Ras Walde Sellassie and Wessen Seged, claiming that both were his enemies; Range 383. Vol. 52. pp. 2912-2914. Pearce. Adowa. 15.2.1814; Combes Vol. II. p. 293; On caravan trade between Antalo and Shoa see: F.O. Abyssinia 1/1. p. 215. Pearce Antalo 29.12.1810.
5) Who ruled in the name of the Emperor Tekle Haymanot.
In 1815 Wessen Seged was stabbed to death by one of his slaves 1). Messengers were sent to announce this news to his sons ruling the outlying provinces. The galla, hearing of Wessen Seged's death, rose in rebellion. Thus Becurrege, Wessen Seged's eldest son, was not able to reach his late father's court as he was kept busy fighting the Galla rebels. In the meantime the younger brother Sahle Sellassie, who was at the time 18 years old 2) presented himself before the elders and leaders of the country and was proclaimed the Ras of Shoa. After subduing the Galla rebellion Bacurrege tried to drive away his younger brother. He was beaten and imprisoned in the state prison in Gonchoo together with some of his brothers and other main supporters 3). However, continuous wars with different pretenders weakened the central government. Many provinces conquered by the previous Shoan kings took the opportunity to reassert their independance and the Abitcho Galla even conquered Debra Berhan. In those dark times Sahle Sellassie proved himself to be a great leader. By means of diplomacy he succeeded in winning over some Galla chiefs, with the help of which he reconquered the

2) Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 244; According to Isenberg (p. 87) and Harris (Vol. III. p. 11) he was only 12 years old.
lost territories and subdued his rivals. He rebuilt Debra Berhan, Angolala and other places which were burned by the Galla and erected a fortified village in the heart of the Abitcho country near the Chia Chia. When later his Galla supporters rebelled, Sahle Sellassie defeated them and again pushed further his borders and built a large katama (fortified village) on the Entoto 1), in order to pacify the Galla of the area 2). Moreover already at an early stage, Sahle Sellassie recognised the importance of firearms in his battles against the Galla. In consequence he started to acquire as many firearms as he could, Those firearms proved to be decisive in the continuous wars against his enemies 3).

Sahle Sellassie's policy was to turn the conquered Galla into loyal subjects of his kingdom. He befriended the more important chiefs, gave them titles, land and sometimes even his daughters in marriage. The conquered Galla not only contributed to his treasury but also to the strength of his army, as he used their excellent cavalry against their brethren, the other Galla tribes 4).

To the north of Shoa, Sahle Sellassie fought the Muslim Wollo and Yeju tribes (Galla) and brought under his sway some

1) Overlooking Addis Ababa of today.
of the Wollo principalities and parts of Argoba. However, at least from the 1830's he abandoned the aggressive policy of his father towards his Muslim neighbours. His wars in the north and northeast were mainly defensive wars accompanied with acts of appeasement. No doubt he might have feared the combined power of Ras Ali and his Muslim Wollo and Yeju relations and allies 1). Moreover, it was essential to keep open the trade routes to Tigre and Gondar, as the Tajura route was often closed, and the Aussa route to Dawe was in the hands of Beru Lubo, a longstanding enemy of Shoa and a dependant of Ras Ali 2). Thus the routes to the north, although unsafe, were always open to caravans against a small payment 3), and through his connections with the north Sahle Sellassie managed to acquire a small number of the firearms which were so important to him 4). Above all, being separated by Galla areas from northern Ethiopia saved Shoa from the constant wars which brought ruin and devastation in the north.

"Fortunately it is for His Majesty as well as for his dominions, that the surrounding Galla tribes, united with natural defences, should have so completely shut him out from participation in the intensive disturbances which have ravaged and laid waste every other province." 1)

Although Sahle Sellassie did not send any tribute to Gondar it is claimed that he was on friendly terms with Ras Ali who ruled in the name of the puppet emperor Sahle Dengal. It is further claimed that Ras Ali on his side had much esteem for Sahle Sellassie 2). Towards the late 1830's the king of Shoa adopted the title of Negus without the endorsement of Gondar 3), thus declaring his complete independance. Of the position of Shoa in the early 1840's Major Harris writes the following 4): "The kingdom of Shoa, which was

1) Harris. Vol. III. p. 34. See Bruce's claim (Vol. III. p. 255) that it was the policy of the Shoan ruler in the 1770's to let the Galla conquer the surrounding provinces in order to ensure his independance.


3) In 1839 d'Abbadie wrote (M. & D. Vol. 13. pp. 9-10) that the Mariodazmatch Sahle Sellassie is in fact the independant master of Shoa. He took the title of king which is not recognised by the clergy and nobles of Gondar; See also: Morie. Vol. II. p. 415; Combes. Vol. III. pp. 17-18. Calls Sahle Sellassie king; Soleillet (p. 272) claims that the title of Negus was adopted by Sahle Sellassie after he was approached by the clergy of Gondar who became disturbed by the Muslim tendencies of Ras Ali and his relationship with Mohammed Ali.

4) Harris. Vol. III. p. 35.
formerly a portion of the empire, still continues in general estimation to form an integral part thereof; and Sahela Sellassie is therefore, but in name only, regarded as vassal of the puppet Emperor of Gondar, notwithstanding that he is, de facto, an independent monarch.

Sahle Sellassie devoted most of his energy and attention to the pagan Galla areas to the south and southwest of Shoa. The great additions to Shoan territory throughout his reign were made in those directions. No doubt Sahle Sellassie chose the direction of least resistance, as the Galla of those areas were disunited and possessed no firearms. At the same time the south and southwest promised much richer rewards than the north or the east. Furthermore, it is possible that Sahle Sellassie was also driven by nobler reasons.

"Throughout his long reign, it has been the king's favourite project to reunite the scattered remnants of Christian population which still mark the extent of the dominions of his forefathers. The countries to the south and southwest have therefore always received the largest share of His Majesty's attention...Three annual expeditions, made, throughout a period of thirty years" 1).

In the mid 1840's the boundary of Shoa to the north was the upper sources of the River Wancit and the kingdom included a few Wollo principalities. In the northwest they reached the Abbay and included the province of Marhabit up to Abitchu Galla country beyond the River Chia Chia 1). In the southwest they reached the Soddo Galla and beyond the sources of the Awash, and they included most of the Tuloma Galla country 2). To the southeast the border reached beyond the River Kasim and included the province of Bulga and to the east it was bounded by the desert of the Afar and included Ifat and part of Argoba 3). It might be said that Shoa was made up of three main blocks. The first was the eastern range facing the Afar country, it was inhabited by Muslims, (called Argoba) and by visiting Muslim merchants with occasional Christian villages. The second block was the central range including Ankobar and Debra Libanos as far as Mens, was inhabited by Amhara Christians. The third was the western block which was occupied mainly by Galla. The newly acquired areas south of Ankobar stretching beyond the sources

of the Awash were populated solely by Gallas and ruled by a meselene (representative - deputy) of the king of Shoa. The population of Shoa in the early 1840's, including Christians, Galla and Muslims was estimated to be about a million and a half. The recognised capital of Shoa in the 1830's and in the 1840's was Ankobar with a population of about 10,000-15,000 people. But it seems that Shoa had more than one capital. In 1837 Krapf was told that the capital of Shoa was Marfood. In fact, the centre of the government moved from time to time to Angolala, to Debra Berhan and to other places as well. This was the result of the fact that the king had palaces in different places in his country and he moved his residence from time to time from one palace (or enclosure) to another. As the king was the centre of the government and as the court and its officials moved with him, all government activities passed to the place where the king resided. Nevertheless, the recognised capital of the country remained all the time Ankobar, which was

3) Graham, Douglas C: Glimpses of Abyssinia, London 1867. p. 8. (1842); Combes. (Vol. III. p. 25) says that in 1836 there were 5,000 inhabitants in Ankobar; Ibid. Vol. III. p. 11.
4) C.M.R. Vol. 1839. p. 68.
5) Actually the capital of Upper Ifat - Machfood.
the only town or the nearest thing to a town existing in Shoa.

Shoa was an absolute monarchy. The king had complete power over the life and property of his subjects. Although the administration of the country was organised on a somewhat similar system to European feudalism, the great lords or governors did not constitute a check on the king's authority but were completely in his power. Only the king was recognised as the legitimate owner of all the land and property which he could take or give at his pleasure. The government of Shoa was highly centralised. The different governors were given only very limited authority and in all matters out of the ordinary they had to consult the king. The burden of responsibility was carried mainly by the king, who was the head of the state, the administrator, the judge and the commander of the army. The king was helped by the intricate organisation of the court. The courtiers and protégés were constantly in touch with the king and were


3) Krapf (J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 472) says that even a cup of wine could not be given to a stranger without the permission of the king.

entrusted with the different fields of government. A typical
court official was Serta Wold, who in the late 1830's and
the beginning of the 1840's was entrusted with all contacts
with foreigners, supervision of royal domains, royal
messengers 1), supply of food to the court and other tasks 2).
Other important personalities were the commander of the
royal bodyguard, the governor of the capital, the head of the
police and, of course, the Malafia or Dej Agafari, who it
seems was the chief of the king's personal servants and
attendants 3).

The only check on the king's power besides the church 4) was the king's mother. As in Sidama and Galla kingdoms she
was considered next to the king, the most powerful personage
in the country "she rules in comparative independence nearly
half of Shoa in the name of her son" 5). All the king's
male relatives were kept in the state prison at Goncho under

1) The messengers (Affrotch) 300 in number, accompanied
foreigners and carried messages and other tasks for the
king within the borders of Shoa and also to the neigh­
bouring rulers. Isenberg. pp. 77-78, footnote.

2) Rochet. *Voyage*, p. 288; Isenberg. pp. 77-78, 85-86, 134-135;

3) Possibly chief eunuch responsible for Sahle Sellassie's
many concubines. See next page; Harris. Vol. III. pp. 13,

4) L.G. 185. No. 1440. para. 34. 20.3.1842; L.G. 159. No. 1486 B
Krapf 1840.

5) Krapf. p. 88; See also Combes. Vol. II. p. 332.
the care of the Walasma Abagaz, the governor of Ifat 1).

There is little doubt that this cruel practice contributed to the stability and prosperity of Shoa during the lifetime of each king 2) as it prevented rebellions and civil wars 3).

The succession to the throne of Shoa was hereditary. As soon as the king died the Malafia Agafari 4) brought the eldest son from the prison and presented him before the chiefs of the country and then crowned him 5). The new king immediately imprisoned all his brothers and most of his kinsmen 6).

In the late 1830's and 1840's Shoa was divided into four provinces 7). Each province was again divided into a number of districts, each under a governor called Abagaz.

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1) During the reign of Sahle Sellassie it was Walasma Mohammed. See also practice in Harar, pages 250-251.

2) As can be seen from the long active reign of the forefather of Sahle Sellassie. The only exception was Wessen Seged who was murdered by one of his slaves.


4) The first door keeper.


6) This process did not always work so smoothly as can be seen from the rise of Sahle Sellassie and the crowning of a new king was probably accompanied with a lot of activity and intrigue and among the leaders of the country.

(guardian of the frontier). The districts were again divided into a number of parishes, or Shumaments. The Shumament being the smallest administrative unit comprising of a village or a number of villages under a headman called Shum. Altogether there were 40-50 Abagazoch and about 400 Shumaments in Shoa. The Shum was chosen by the villagers and appointed by the governor for the duration of one year against the payment of 20 amoleh. While in office, the Shum was exempted from taxation for the first two years of his office but on the third nomination he forfeited this right. Moreover, his land was cultivated with the help of the peasants in his Shumant as long as he was in office. The Shum was charged with the collection of taxes from the villagers and was responsible for the organisation of the corvée gangs for public works and for the cultivation of the

1) According to Cecchi (Vol. I. p. 248) the province was called Negarit and the title of the governor was Balambaras or simply Ato.

2) Harris. Vol. III. pp 29-30; Isenberg. pp. 90, 280-281; J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 479; Rochet (Voyage, p. 288) claims that there were two classes of governors. The more important called Hadjedjeh, two of which were on each side of the king in every battle. The less important called Cheleka under which came the officers who ruled a village or a small number of villages. It is possible that the Hadjedjeh of Rochet is the Hazajes, the chief assistants to the king very near to ministers; See Soleillett. p. 116, footnote 3; Ferret. Vol. II. p. 333. As for the Cheleka, Rochet probably means Chialeka, chief of a thousand which might have been the title of the Abagaz, whose junior officers were the Shums of his province.

estates of the governor and the king 1). He supplied food and lodging to the king's guests 2), but he could deduct the expenses he incurred from whatever taxes were coming to the governor 3). The Shum had to inform the authorities of everything that passed within the limits of his Shumant. When war broke out and he got orders to do so from the governor, he gathered the able-bodied men and brought them to the governor's camp. In short, he represented the authority of the king in his area in times of peace and was a low ranking officer in war.

The Abagaz or the guardian of the frontier was nominated by the king. Although a few of these posts were hereditary, the majority were purchased by the highest bidder, and the tenure was at best extremely precarious 4). The Abagaz had a right to retain part of the taxes he collected and was given an estate for the duration of his office. The land he received was cultivated by the villagers of his Abagazoch 5) and the income from this estate served as part of his salary.

2) Accompanied by a special representative. (Affroch).
He had to defend the borders against all enemies and to administer his province. When a foreigner arrived at the border the Abagaz had to inform the king, and he had to hold the foreigner in one of the border villages until he received instructions from his master what to do with him 1).

One of the most important duties of each governor was to lead his men to battle in time of war. The military system of Shoa, says Harris 2) is "entirely feudal, each governor in the realm is required to furnish his contingent of militia in proportion to his landed tenure - the peasantry being at all times ready for the foray, and expected to purvey horse, arms and provisions, without payment from the state" 3). When the king contemplated a military expedition, or when the country was attacked by enemies, the king called upon his governors to bring their armies to a certain place on a certain day. The peasants who finished their agricultural tasks came eagerly looking forward to a good fight and loot. They

1) Krapf. p. 22; Lefebvre. Vol. II. p. 192; Isenberg. p. 90. The governor of Ifat, Abagaz Walasma Mohammed, might have been a descendant of the Muslim dynasty which ruled Ifat until it was conquered by the kings of Shoa. See: Cerulli. Documenti Arabi per La Storia dell'Ethiopia; Johnston (Vol. II. p. 7) calls Abagaz Walasma Mohammed "hereditary prince or Governor of Ifat".

2) Harris. Vol. II. pp. 177-178.

3) According to the feudal system of Shoa each subject was not only the serf of his master working the land, but a part-time soldier as well. Rochet. Voyage. p. 288.
brought the necessary provisions for a few days march and the fodder for their horses. The officers of the army were the governors of the different ranks 1).

The only standing army the king of Shoa had to keep, feed and clothe was his bodyguard, made of a few hundred matchlockmen who were his bondsmen and who received 8 amoleh per year besides their keep 2). In this way the king of Shoa was able to raise a large army whenever the need arose, without harming the prosperity and economic stability of his country. This military system saved Shoa from the complete ruin brought upon the northern parts of Ethiopia by the large standing armies kept by each lord. Such armies lived on the country and devastated the agricultural and rural areas 3).

The military expeditions carried by the Shoan kings were usually short and decisive, in order to enable the farmer's soldiers to return to their land. Three annual expeditions took place in January, June and October 4).

2) Harris. (Vol. II. p. 177) - 400; Rochet. *Voyage*. p. 283; Johnston. Vol. II. p. 77. According to Johnston (Vol. II. p. 75) - 1,000. They were divided into three shifts and after serving for a week had two weeks leave.
4) L.G. 206. No. 1600. para. 46; Graham 8.5.1843; Krapf. p. 27; Isenberg. p. 195.
object of each expedition was kept a secret until the army began to move. Sometimes the army would march to punish a Galla tribe which had neglected to pay the annual tribute. Another time the expedition would be against Wollo Galla or Afar tribes who had invaded the borders. Most of the expeditions were part of the slow expansion of Shoa southwards and southwestwards into Galla territories. "In this manner he (the king of Shoa) has enlarged his dominions. The country which he has taken in war, is said to be thirty times greater than Shoa itself" 1).

The king of Shoa did not annex the large areas which his armies overran, because he could not garrison them. He preferred to eat into Galla territories piecemeal. Each year he advanced his effective borders by building in newly conquered areas, villages called Katama, giving the land to Amhara settlers or to loyal Galla tribes 2). "On commencing a new city he causes a long trench to be dug round the place where he means to build, then raises a wall, builds several houses of wood, and appoints a governor, under whose command a number of soldiers are placed. By these means he hopes to secure his frontiers against the inroads of the Gallas. Thus

1) Isenberg. p. 65.
has Angolala itself arisen: new settlers come, a church is
built by the king, and in a short time, a large village
springs up" 1).

The fast moving Shoan army, mostly cavalry strengthened
by matchlockmen swooped upon the adjacent Galla territories.
The Galla tribes to be spared were those who offered their
submission and paid tribute before their country was reached
by the army. All the others were put to the sword, their
women and children taken prisoners, their villages burned
and their herds of cattle taken 2). The new Galla tributaries
not only enlarged the king's income but also added excellent
Galla cavalry to his troops. Those Galla units were only
too willing to take part in the next expedition against their
neighbouring Galla tribes which were not yet under the
dominion of Sahle Sellassie 3).

Rochet d'Hericourt 4) thought that the raids on the
Galla territories were prompted by a thirst to revenge upon
the Galla the humiliation brought on Shoa in the past. The

L.G. 185. No. 1440. 20.3.1842; Combes. Vol. III. p. 24;
3) F.O. Vol. II. p. 172, Beke. 15.12.1841; Harris. Vol. II.
p. 83; Harris. Vol. III. pp. 36-37, 41; Combes. Vol. III.
p. 18; Rochet. Second Voyage. p. 179.
war against the disunited Galla tribes, he claimed, could not be called war as there was no serious force which could oppose the large army of Sahle Sellassie with its firearms. This might have been true about the time of Asfa Wessen and Wessen Seged 1), but it seems to us that Sahle Sellassie was methodically executing a well conceived plan to bring Shoa back to the size it had reached before the catastrophe brought about by Gran 2). Sahle Sellassie preferred to have the submission and co-operation of the Galla rather than to slaughter them. His armies ravaged the areas that resisted his advance, but at the same time he brought security and prosperity to those who submitted to him. It is doubtful whether Sahle Sellassie thought of reconquering all the southern part of the Ethiopian highlands. The Galla in those areas were far too numerous to be held and assimilated by the Shoan Amharas alone. His armies reached Gurague, the sources of the Awash and the Abbay 3), but did not penetrate beyond, before the newly annexed Galla areas became an integral part of Shoa 4).

The area south of Ankobar, from Gurague to the sources of the Awash, was one of the most important in Ethiopia from a commercial point of view. It was the junction of the caravan routes coming from the western Galla areas, Enarea, Kaffa, Eastern Sidama and Gurague 1). Here the traders from the Galla and Sidama countries met their counterparts from the north, from Harar, from Zeila and from Tajura. Markets of outstanding importance like Roggi, Mogher, Eimelele, Anduodi, Chakka and many others took place in this area 2).

By bringing the borders of Shoa to the Awash and to the Abbay, Sahle Sellassie achieved his first goal. He included in his country the rich markets and trading centres of the south, and diverted into Shoa a sizeable part of the important caravan trade of southern and southwestern Ethiopia, which until his time had avoided Shoa altogether. 3)

Harris speculated that "The influence of the king, if properly directed, will have the effect of drawing thither (to Shoa) all the rich Kafilas from Enarea, Caffa, Godjam,  


2) On the lively trade and the many markets taking place in one corner of this area, see: Abbadie 21302. pp. 330, 333.

Damot and other unexplored regions, which, laden with coffee, civet, myrrh, frankincense, ivory, gold dust and costly peltries, at present leave the dominions of Sahla Sellassie to the eastward, on their way to the sea port of Massawa" 1).

In the late 1830's and early 1840's Sahle Sellassie succeeding in bringing his borders beyond Anduodi 2). The Muslim traders from the north, from Harar and the coast, found it impossible to deal directly with the Galla and with the traders from the Galla countries, as they had done in the past. They now had to meet them within the borders of Shoa. The armies of Sahle Sellassie brought some security to the much disturbed and raided caravan routes to the south and west, and by that means he probably succeeded in attracting even more traders and caravans to the markets on his new borders 3). Shoa thus became the source of supply for slaves and lucrative merchandise for many foreign merchants, who paid Sahle Sellassie for the privilege of trading in his country, and who brought to the country guns

1) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Para 23. 5.1.1842. Harris; See also para 24 and para 6 in Report on Trade.
2) Abbadie 21302. pp. 316-317. "Andode and Awas" are part of Shoa for sometime.
and many foreign goods which were needed by the people and especially by the court.

Sahle Sellassie died in 1846. Very little is known of his last years besides the fact that he was very sick and that he tried to abdicate. It is claimed that only the pleading of his close friends and advisors prevented him from doing so. He was succeeded by his son Haile Malaket, who came to power in 1847 after a short internal struggle. The death of the king was as always, a signal for the many discontented chiefs and Galla tribes to rebel. The new king was not popular and neither did he have the authority of his father. Throughout his reign he was occupied in putting down many rebellions. Before he succeeded in reuniting the kingdom he inherited he clashed with the Emperor Theodoros and died from a grave illness in the year 1854. Shortly afterwards Shoa was conquered by Theodoros (1855).

The expansion of Shoa in the first half of the 19th century coincided with the foundation and consolidation of


the Galla kingdoms in the Gibe and Omo basins 1). Throughout the first half of the century both Shoa and the Galla kingdoms were expanding at the cost of the unorganised so called "republican" Galla tribes. As a result of the competition for supremacy which ensued between Enarea and Jimma in the 1830's, Abba Jifar, king of Jimma, tried to break the monopoly which Enarea had on trade, by opening a direct outlet to Shoa 2). Shoa, as shown above was trying to get a larger share of the trade of the south and thus it was to the interest of Jimma and Shoa to "pacify" the Galla tribes living in the area, or to conquer their territories. In the early 1840's the borders of the kingdom of Jimma were brought as far as Botor. By this time Shoa's borders reached the sources of the Awash beyond Anduodi and the Shoan armies penetrated to Agabja 3). It might be said that most of the important markets to the south and southwest of Shoa were

1) See above chapter "Enarea and southwestern Ethiopia".
2) See above pages 125-126.
3) According to d'Abbadie (Athenaeum 1847. No. 1042, p. 1078) Enarea had three commercial outlets, one of which was to Shoa or rather to Wari Haimanet by way of Agabja. The trade through Agabja was, according to d'Abbadie, most regular and almost all the coffee of Enarea went by this road. The importance that Sahle Sellassie attached to the coffee trade can be seen from the special expedition against the Zamettia Galla in the southern part of Shoa who attacked the coffee caravans coming from Enarea and Kaffa. Rochet. Voyage. pp. 223-224.
within Shoan territory or were under Shoan influence 1). Thus the borders of Shoa and those of Jimma were brought nearer to each other and the trade route between the two countries made much more safe than in the past. In the 1840's owing to constant wars between Agalo Nonno and Enarea the Enarea-Kaffa trade to Soddo turned also to the Jimma route, which was much frequented by small caravans carrying a large part of the trade of Jimma. Although this meant a long detour, the traders found this route much safer than the direct one 2).

The importance of the "southern markets" was not derived only from the southwestern Galla and Sidama trade. Afkala traders, (small Galla traders) from Lofe and from as far as the important market of Gondal Waqo on the borders of Wallaga found their way to Anduodi, Roggi, Eimelele, Mogher and other markets in the area, bringing with them slaves, gold,

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2) The merchant Mohammed Ibrahim of Derita told Abbadie (21303. p. 218) that he went from Limmu Enarea to Shoa by the direct route in 12 days, but the route was full of robbers and was very unsafe; See also: Abbadie 21303. p. 365, para 184, November 1843; pp. 327-328, para 330, 331; L.G. 184. No. 1098, Harris 1.1.1842. (Particulars concerning the Great River Jochob).
ivory, musk and other products of western Ethiopia 1). These markets were also the terminus of the very important caravan routes from Gurague, Jinjero and the eastern Sidama kingdoms. Through Eimelele and Roggi went each year the thousands of Gurague slaves highly in demand in Arabia 2).

The market of Roggi could probably be considered as typical to the more outstanding markets of the area. It was in the 1830's, 1840's among the most important outlets to the Galla-Sidama trade of Southern Ethiopia. Owing to its geographical position, Roggi was probably an important commercial centre and the terminal of the trade routes coming from Jimma, Enarea, Leka and Gurague, even before the expansion of Shoa in the 19th century. Nevertheless, the creation of a large strong and well organised Shoa and the security brought to the trade routes leading to Shoa, no doubt contributed much to the development of Roggi and the adjacent markets.

All we know of Roggi from the late 1830's and 1840's is that it was a considerable slave market for slaves coming from Gurague, Jinjero, Kaffa and many other provinces and

2) It seems that since the late 1830's the majority of the Gurague slaves went to Harar, Berbera, Zeila and Tajura through Shoa.
that one could buy a slave in Roggi for 5 tallers. In addition to slaves, Roggi offered coffee from Kaffa, horses, mules, cattle and skins of lions, leopards and panthers. As the knowledge of our informers about Roggi was very limited, the picture of it given above does not reflect the true importance of this market. This can be seen from a far fuller description of Roggi and its trade as presented by Cecchi and Bianchi during the late 1870's.

Roggi was then a village of about 10,000 inhabitants, mostly Muslim slave merchants claiming descent from a Muslim immigrant from Tigre. The area around Roggi was denuded of wood, and water was very scarce. The village owed its existence to the market which took place each Saturday and which was inferior only to that of Basso in Gojam. Besides a large number of slaves one could get here ivory, gold, musk, coffee, cattle, locally made cloth, tobacco and many other agricultural products. The coffee, about 30 to 40 tons annually, came from the surrounding Galla

2) We do not even hear of the quantities of gold, civet, ivory, skins and other lucrative merchandise which came with every caravan from the rich South. See: L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. paras 23, 24. Harris. 5.1.1842.
4) Bianchi. p. 88.
Galla tribes, from Arusi and from Gurague. The musk and the gold probably came from Enarea, Kaffa and Leka and Jimma. While the three to four thousand slaves which were sold in the market annually came from all over the south and the west. The products in demand by the Galla were salt, copper in sheets and in pieces, cloth, small coffee cups (fanagin), incense and beads of different sizes and colours used by the Galla for ornaments and for decorating their cloths. The market itself was frequented only by the Galla and the poor merchants. The more important merchants preferred to trade in the huts of the village, where all transactions in slaves, ivory, gold and civet were carried on in privacy. The merchandise was rarely weighed, and very primitive scales were used only for copper and sometimes for the smaller beads.

2) Especially red.
4) Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 490; Ibid. Vol. II. p. 60; Bianchi. p. 484; It is of course possible that in Roggi as in many other trading centres we have the system of the Nazil - broker - by which the trader had to choose a broker, stay in his house and carry all transactions through him. Compare to Yejubi - Basso. p. 93 in this essay
6) Larger beads were counted.
Everything else was measured by sight or by the length of the arm. While in many places in Ethiopia the Rotolo of 12 taller's weight was in use 1) in Roggi the Rotolo of copper was 18 taller's weight and 17 for everything else. Copper in large quantities was sold by the farazela of 20 Rotoli 2). For ivory the great Wakia of 40 Abyssinian Rotoli 3) was in use and for gold and civet the small Wakia of 1 taller weight 4). The description of Roggi representing all the markets of the area would be misleading if we would not add that besides the trade in imported goods and merchandise suitable for export, a huge trade was carried in the market in agricultural products and in crude utensils and implements manufactured by the indigenous people. This trade by far surpassed the foreign trade and attracted on each market day many thousands of Galla from all the neighbouring tribes 5).

It is only to be regretted that our information about the "southern markets" in the 1830's and 1840's is so limited. When Cecchi and Bianchi visited the area in the late 1870's

1) Approximately a third of a Kg.
2) Of 18 taller's weight.
3) Of 12 taller's weight.
4) Bianchi. pp. 483-484.
5) See description of market of Kabiena attracting about 15,000 people each market day. Cecchi. Vol. II. pp. 50-60; Bianchi. pp. 348, 484-486.
and early 1880's they found it dotted with flourishing Muslim trading communities. Most of the merchants were from Gurague, many claiming Tigre origin, but there were also a number of merchants from Northern Ethiopia, Harar and the coast 1). This was, of course, just a short time before the great expansion of Shoa towards the south and west, and most of the traders communities owed only nominal allegiance to Menelik. Thus, Ato Turro, a Muslim merchant of Galla origin was the chief of an area including Roggi and other markets. The so-called "Imam" Omar Bexa built a little empire in the area of Kabiena with the market of Mogher in it. Eimelel was also under a Galla chief, while Anduodi was the limits of the area under Menelik's plenipotentiary 2).

It is possible that as early as the beginning of the 19th century, Muslim traders retreating before the advancing border of Christian Shoa, started to build small trading principalities in Gurague among the Soddo and near the sources of the Awash, with the help of local chiefs. These principalities were situated on the terminals and crossroads

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of the trade routes leading to south and southwestern Ethiopia. Each had an important market (or markets) to which were brought thousands of slaves and the lucrative products from the Galla and Sidama countries 1). There is little doubt that at the end of the late 1830's and the beginning of the 1840's those trading principalities were either conquered by Shoa or owed allegiance to the Shoan king 2). The governor of Mogher and the area around it, was the Galla chief Abba Mooalle who fought the Shoans but in the late 1830's became the vassal of Sahle Sellassie and adopted Christianity. "The valuable presents which he is enabled to make to the throne, owing to his proximity to the high caravan-road from the interior, preserved him a distinguished place in the estimation of the Negus" 3).

Although the king of Shoa claimed sovereignty over the "Adael" (Afar) 4) it seems that his authority did not even extend to the Awash in the southwestern corner of Shoa and not beyond eastern Ifat to the east of Shoa. The Karayu

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2) Isenberg. p. 216, of the governor of Roggi and Eimelel; See also: Rochet. Voyage. p. 301.


around the Kasim 1) could hardly be called tributaries of Sahle Sellassie and the Arusi and the Itto Galla were constantly raiding Shoa as far as eastern Ifat 2). The semi-settled Afar in the Koki valley paid some tribute to the king and recognised his authority, but they received regular presents of arms and food to keep them happy 3). To the north, Anbassa Ali, the powerful chief of the Gibdossa tribe owed some nominal allegiance to Sahle Sellassie, but this did not prevent him from continually raiding into Shoa 4). On the whole it might be said that the Afar nomads on the western bank of the Awash recognised no authority but that of the chiefs. The actual border of Shoa to the east was Dinomali, four caravan stations 5) west of the Awash 6) well within the eastern Ifat highlands. Only there was the authority of the Shoan king felt for the first time 7).

No doubt relations with the Afar were of utmost

1) Tributary of the Awash.
2) In December 1841 Lt. Baker (L.G. 189. No. 2037) reported that all the villages near Chanoo were empty because of Afar attacks; See also: Harris. Vol. III. p. 258; Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 4-5; L.G. 193. No. 2917, 17.4.1842.
5) Or 2 days march.
6) At Mulkikuyu crossing.
7) Rochet. Second Voyage. p. 107; Isenberg. p. 55; J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 467; See also
importance to the kingdom of Shoa. The shortest and most
natural outlet to the sea lay through the country of the
Afar, and thus Shoa's foreign trade depended very much on
their good will. Moreover, most of the salt used in Shoa
was brought by the different Afar tribes from Lake Assal 1). Sahle Sellassie could of course try to break this dependancy by conquering the Afar country, but fighting with the fierce Afar in the dry, hot, unhealthy desert did not appeal to the Shoan king, and when a show of force against the Afar was suggested to him by Harris, he answered: "It will not do. My grandfather tried his arms with the people below, but he was surprised, and lost four thousand men and six thousand oxen in the bed of dry ravine". Naively he added "Adail is... an old dependency of the empire of my ancestors; but the men are brave, and stand firm in battle. They will not run away" 2). It seems that the best description of the situation on the southeastern and eastern border of Shoa could be found in Harris's words 3). "Although frequently invaded, no portion of the wide plains of the Hawash has been reconquered; and notwithstanding that many important

1) Sahle Sellassie told Harris the following: "...There is no salt in my country. I feared a rupture with the Adail who bring it from below, and I therefore stored up large quantities that my people might never want". Harris. Vol. III. p. 343.
2) Harris. Vol. II. pp. 226, 228.
hostages are held in close durance by Sáhela Selássie, the boasted influence of the Abogaz over the wild denizens of the plain is principally supported by conciliation, and by the annual presentation of cloths and specie to the various chiefs and elders - it being of importance to preserve the avenues to the sea coast - and to the Bahr Assál whereon Shoa and Ifat are almost entirely dependent for foreign wares and for salt".

The relations with the Afar and the other Muslim neighbours of Shoa to the east was left in the hands of the governor of Ifat who in the 1830's and 1840's was Walasma Mohammed Abagaz hereditary Abagaz and chief of the Argoban Muslim community of eastern Shoa ¹). The Abagaz lived on the amba of Goncho, four miles northeast of Alio Amba or six miles from Farre ²). His house was surrounded by a double stockade as it served as the state prison of Shoa. The state prisoners among whom were the nearest relations of

¹) Johnston. Vol. II. p. 7; Harris. Vol. I. p. 316; Bom. Geo. Soc. Vol. II. May 1839, p. 34; F.O.Á.Vol. I. Beke. 3.3.1841. Although called hereditary Abagaz he was deposed, and reinstated many a time according to the pleasure of his master Sahle Sellassie; See Harris. Vol. I. p. 316. His sister was one of Sahle Sellassie's 500 concubines and according to custom had to become a Christian which did not perturb the Abagaz or the Argoba population. Harris. Vol. III. p. 17.

the king of Shoa were kept in the dungeons under his house 1).

The Walasma could be considered one of Sahle Sellassie's most important governors. No doubt he derived a lot of influence from being the royal jailor, but he was also head of the Muslim population, governor of one of the most important provinces and responsible for relations with the Afar and contacts with the coast 2).

The province of Ifat was divided into upper Ifat, with the village of Machfud as capital, and lower Ifat, with Alio Amba as capital 3). The inhabitants of Ifat were mainly Muslims called Argoba. Apart from agriculture, the Muslims were weavers of cotton cloth 4) and to a lesser extent merchants. The small Christian population of Ifat (Amhara) were occupied in agriculture, growing cotton and cereals 5).

In many instances Christians and Muslims lived in the same village. The Muslim population enjoyed a full religious freedom. They had their own sheikhs, qadis, Muslim schools and many went on the pilgrimage. It seems that even the


3) L.G. 146. Krapf 9.10.1840; Rochet Voyage. p. 132.


salaries of some of the religious functionaries were paid by the government 1).

Caravans coming from the coast entered Ifat at Dinomali, and were met by the customs authorities and sometimes by the Abagaz Walasma Mohammed himself 2). At Dinomali all the camels were unloaded, the merchandise was closely inspected by the customs authorities, the "secretary of the salt trade", their scribes and servants. An inventory was made and all goods including specie paid a duty of 10% ad-valorem 3). Only then were the caravans allowed to proceed to Farre.

"Everything is conducted in quiet and order, even the wild Dankalli...appeared to be affected by example, and in Farre endeavoured to assume civilized airs and conduct" 4). As in other frontier villages strangers were obliged to stay in Farre while "inquiries are set on foot regarding their character and the object of their journey" 5). During the time, until the will of the king was made known, the owners of the houses at the village were called upon, each

on his turn, to supply part of the food for the visitors\textsuperscript{1}). At Farre the caravan dispersed and the camels were sent to graze in the meadows between Farre and the village of Chanoo. The merchants went to the different villages allotted to them in the province of Ifat. Afar merchants and nomads went to Chanoo and the Hararis to Alio Amba.

Tigrean and Gondari merchants coming through Wollo areas or with Afar and Harari caravans were much welcomed in Shoa and were allowed to live both in the capital, Ankobar, and in the village and slave market of Abdul Rasul near Alio Amba. The infrequent caravans from Tigre, Gondar and Derita brought to Shoa foreign merchandise imported through Massawa including cloth, glassware, mirrors, and occasional firearms, on all of which they made a great profit. From Shoa they took slaves, Shoan cloth and blankets, horses and mules.

Of the village of Chanoo allotted to the Afar merchants and nomads while staying in Ifat we have spoken somewhere else \textsuperscript{3}). No doubt the most important commercial centre in

\textsuperscript{1) Johnston. Vol. I. p. 486; Vol. II. p. 43; Isenberg. p. 56.}
\textsuperscript{3) See above pages}
Ifat, if not in the whole of Shoa, was the village and market of Alio Amba allotted to Harari merchants.

In the second quarter of the 19th century Alio Amba was the centre of the foreign trade of Shoa. One cannot even guess whether the merchant settlements in Eastern Ifat were centered around Alio Amba because of its commercial importance, or whether it was the merchant villages which made Alio Amba into what it was. Be it what it be, Alio Amba was the terminal and the crossroads for many caravan routes coming from the north, from the south, from the east and from the west. It was connected with Massawa, with Enarea, with Tajura, with Basso in Gojam and with Gondar 1). The importance 2) of Alio Amba was not derived only from its own market, but also from the number of smaller markets clustered around 3). Moreover Alio Amba and its satelites had semi-permanent foreign commercial communities 4). Those communities enhanced the importance of the markets of the area and were sending trading caravans to different provinces of Shoa. However, there is no doubt that the most important


3) For instance Abdul Rasul where about 3,000 slaves were sold annually besides quantities of gold and civet.

4) See below
important community in the district of Alio Amba was that of the Hararis who lived in the village of Alio Amba itself. When one discusses Alio Amba one has to distinguish between the village and its inhabitants, and the market which took place near the village.

The village of Alio Amba was situated only about 5 to 6 miles southeast of Ankobar. Nevertheless, it was 2,000 feet lower than the amba 1) of Ankobar and thus much more suitable for the merchants coming from the lowlands 2). The village was built on an amba with two little rivers at its feet. It had about 300 huts and a floating population of between a thousand and three thousand 3). The majority of the population of Alio Amba consisted of Muslim merchants, but there were still some Christians who lived in the village as well. The Muslim community was composed especially of Harari merchants, but there were also some Wollo, Yeju and Argoban merchants. Apart from the active merchantile community there were quite a number of retired merchants and slave merchants who made Alio Amba their

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1) The flat top of a hill.
2) Ankobar about 9,000 feet above sea level and the merchants from the coast were probably much bothered by the altitude.
The number of Hararis in Alio Amba was not stable, as caravans were coming and going all the time. Nevertheless there is little doubt that there were a few hundred Hararis in Alio Amba at all times. The Harari merchants had some sort of autonomy in the management of their affairs. It seems that the amir of Harar nominated the leader of the Harari community in Alio Amba and the authority of this man, usually an important merchant, was recognised by the Shoa government. He was invited to the presence of Sahle Sellassie and was greatly honoured and from time to time he was even made the governor of the area. The tolerance of the Shoan government to its Muslim citizens as a whole was even more accentuated regarding the Muslim community of Alio Amba. The village had an impressive number of sheikhs, mulas and Muslim schools. Teachers received a certain payment from the

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2) According to Burton (Vol. I. p. 208, footnote 1) three hundred Harari citizens were arrested in Alio Amba in 1847; Harris (Vol. I. p. 355) who claims that the Muslim population of Alio Amba numbered one thousand says that ¾ of this population were Hararis and Danakils. On the other hand, Johnston (Vol. I. p. 350) and Barker (L.G. 185. No. 1440. 7.1.1842) claim that Alio Amba was mainly inhabited by Hararists and ArgoBans.

3) See p. 266 above.

government ¹ and the qadi and the sheikh el Islam were greatly respected ².

Unlike the Tajuran merchants who stayed in Chanoo only a few months at the most, the Hararis made Alio Amba their home for a few years. They either lived promiscuously with local women or married them provisionally for the duration of their stay in the highlands ³. Some of the Hararis came to Alio Amba after a visit to the Arabian coast where they acquired a stock of foreign merchandise ⁴. Others came straight from Harar with one of the annual Harari caravans bringing with them merchandise which they bought at Berbera. All stayed in Alio Amba while they slowly disposed, in the local markets, of the merchandise they brought. The proceeds of the sales were invested in slaves, which were acquired in the nearby market of Abdul Rasul. The Hararis then organised small caravans and with their slaves travelled to the province of Gedem, two or three days from Alio Amba. At Gedem they sold their slaves to Wollo and other merchants at a profit of 30 to 50 per cent. They then invested their capital in salt amoleh, sold at

Gedem by Galla merchants at the rate of 23-25 per taller. The same amolehs were afterwards disposed of at Alio Amba at the rate of 18 to 20 amoleh per taller. As the hire of an ass per trip cost only 5 amoleh, the profit on each trip was very handsome. Such trips were repeated by each merchant a few times. After a year, two, or three, the merchants invested their capital in prime slaves, organised a caravan and returned to their town. Their place was taken then by other Harari merchants who came in a caravan with a new representative sent by the amir of Harar 1).

The market of Alio Amba took place every Friday in a flat field surrounded by a low stone wall on the southern half of the amba on which the village was built 2). From the early hours of the day all the surrounding villages emptied and the villagers, leading all kinds of domestic animals and carrying their agricultural products, could be seen walking along the path leading to the top of the amba. The governor used to sit at the entrance to the market surrounded by his servants. Everything brought to the market was taxable in kind or in salt pieces. Grain was brought before the governor who determined the amount to be taken as toll. Such toll was measured by single handfulls.

One of the governor's servants examined the butter which was usually brought in gourds, scooping a quantity with his fingers, which he then put into a receptacle which stood by his side. The salt merchants, cattle sellers and all dealers, paid for the convenience of bartering their goods, thus large heaps of amolehs and of market produce quickly accumulate around the feet of the governor 1). In the market thousands of Amhara peasants, Argobans and Galla were noisily selling, bargaining for and inspecting agricultural products and domestic animals. In a special area sat the amoleh traders behind the mountains of amoleh. They were mostly Christians and they brought the amoleh from the province of Gedem, usually in caravans of 50-60 asses. Next to them sat the merchants of the shamas with huge rolls of locally made cotton cloth and in another corner were exposed for sale many piles of skins 2). Hundreds of loads of coffee coming from Enarea and Kaffa lay side by side with tobacco from Gurague, musk from Jimma and ivory which only the foreign merchants could buy. The foreign merchants were squatting beside the foreign wares, cloth of different kinds, shawls, copper, brass, zinc, beads of different sizes and

colours, coloured thread, cheap scissors, mirrors, needles, knives and other foreign products 1).

Most of the trade in Alio Amba was carried by barter, but there were many items which were sold against amoleh. Moreover, the presence of many foreign merchants who came to acquire in the area slaves, ivory, musk, coffee, gold and skins, made specie quite common in Alio Amba and the neighbouring markets. In fact the king received thousands of tallers in custom dues from the transactions of the foreign merchants. Lt. Baker estimated that the government income from Alio Amba alone was 3,000 tallers in cash and about 2,000 in kind 2). This seems to us a very conservative estimate considering the fact that Alio Amba was the centre of all the amoleh and foreign trade in Shoa 3). However, it should be kept in mind that Barker's estimate was

1) Of the different articles, locally made and imported, exposed in the Alio Amba market and their respective prices in amoleh and in English money, see: Harris. L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. 5.1.1842. Tables one, two, three and four. For further sources on the Alio Amba market. See: Harris. Vol. I. pp. 370-385; Lefebvre. Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge. pp. 31-32; Rochet. Voyage. p. 299; Bianchi. p. 208; Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 303; The fullest description is found in Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 227-238, and Barker (L.G. 185. No. 1440. 7.1.1842) from whom harris probably received most of his information as Barker lived in Alio Amba for a few months waiting for a caravan to depart for the coast.


3) The tax from amoleh was 20% and not the usual 10%. L.G. 185. No. 1440. 7.1.1842.
concerned with Alio Amba only, and not with the markets near it. A considerable tax must have been collected at Abdul Rasul where at least 3,000 slaves were sold annually in addition to large quantities of ivory, civet and gold 1).

The market always reached its peak about noon. In the afternoon the people started to return to their villages and by the evening the great market place was again empty.

Agriculturally Shoa could be considered a rich country. The land is fertile, water is plentiful, the climate is suitable for many different crops and the large areas covered with pasture can support herds of horses, mules, donkeys and cattle. Nevertheless, from the point of view of foreign trade Shoa of the 19th century was considered a poor country. Most of Shoa's agricultural surpluses were not worth while exporting because of the great difficulties and the cost of transportation. As far as there was a demand for them they served only for internal trade.

Besides the royal workshops, employing a number of gunsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers and other artisans 2), there was only very little industry and craft in Shoa. The only

1) See below, page 422.
branch worth mentioning was the weaving of cotton cloth and woollen blankets, which were famous in all the neighbouring districts. But owing to their high prices only a limited quantity could be exported to the surrounding areas 1).

As in the rest of Ethiopia, internal trade in Shoa was carried in weekly markets. Besides the hundreds and thousands of peasants, each market attracted a number of merchants, who displayed for sale metals, cloth, beads and other cheap European and Indian products. They either sold their merchandise against salt or tallers (the last only in the larger markets) or preferably exchanged them for products which could be further bartered or exported to the coast. Every sale took place in front of witnesses. The business was concluded when the two sides swore by the name of the king and touched hands 2).

Most of the trade was carried on by barter as the peasants had very few amolehs and never tallers 3). Nevertheless there were some items, especially live stock which were sold only against amoleh and in a few instances against

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1) Rochet. 
2) Cecchi. 
3) Johnston.

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tallers. For this purpose in the more important markets of Shoa were to be found the amoleh changers, usually Christians, sitting behind piles of amoleh \(^1\). The payment in salt amolehs were made according to the rate of exchange in each market which depended on the season and on the distance from the salt mines \(^2\). Maria Theresa tallers were accepted only in the most important markets frequented by foreign merchants, defective tallers were accepted at a discount \(^3\).

The weights used in Shoa's markets were the Wukut or Wakia, the amoleh and the Rotul. The weight of 12 tallers was considered a Wakia \(^4\). The Wakia was used for weighing all merchandise, including gold, but excluding ivory, the Wakia of which was of 48 tallers weight. The amoleh was the weight of approximately 21 tallers, or nearly 500 grams.

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2) See above, pp. 30-31.
   See also: L.G. 185. No. 1440. 7.1.1842; J.R.G.S. Vol. 10. p. 480, Krapf; Rochet. *Second Voyage*, p. 260; Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 232-234. In 1839 a taller was exchanged in Alio Amba for 17-20 amoleh. Sometimes the rate of exchange fell to 12-15 amoleh, and even to 8-10. See also: Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 305. Taller depreciated in 35 years by 50%; A quantity of amoleh worth \(\frac{1}{2}\) taller was called Aliad, \(\frac{1}{2}\) taller was called Drim. \(\frac{1}{4}\) taller was called Tmugu. The amoleh itself was divided in half called Ghemash and in quarters called Curman; Cecchi. Vol. I. pp. 305-306.

3) Krapf, p. 71; Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 305; See also above, pp. 21-22.

There were two kinds of Rotul, one of 12 Wakia and a large Rotul of 18 Wakia. As for measures of capacity there were the Kuna, the Wanchoo and the Zinjan. Kuna varied in different villages but on the average it was about 8 lbs, 20 Kuna made a Daula. The Wanchoo or the Horn contained nearly a quart and the Zinjan somewhat more than a gill 1).

Every market was presided over by a representative of the government, who collected the taxes from everyone who had a place at the market 2) and on every sale taking place. In the less important markets the "inspector" would be just a servant (Gerachie) of the Nagadkas 3), but at the more important markets it would be the Nagad Ras himself who would sit at the entrance to the market place, preferably under the shade of a lonely tree settling disputes between the traders, while his servants piled the customs dues (in kind) around him.


2) People in the habit of attending the market paid a regular weekly payment and were allowed to bring whatever produce they chose. Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 230-231.

3) The title Nagad Ras in Shoa was given to the official responsible for one or a few markets. Like other officials he did not receive any salary but enjoyed the income of a certain estate attached to his office. He usually governed the town near which the market took place and was the head of the customs in the area. Soleillet. p. 97; See also: Johnston. Vol. II. pp. 229-230.
Most of the foreign trade of Shoa was actually transit trade. The merchants from the coast and northern Ethiopia exchanged imported goods, tallers and salt against slaves and lucrative products of the south and southwest, brought by Galla traders. There were, however, some exceptions. Afar nomads exchanged salt from Baher Assal against cereals, mules, horses and cattle which were all from Shoan origin. Harari merchants exported to their town hides, skins and excellent Shoan shamas. The merchants from the north brought the same Shoan items as the Hararis with the addition of mules and horses. Nevertheless, most of the merchants came to Shoa mainly to acquire slaves, gold, ivory, coffee and other products of the Galla and Sidama countries.

In the first half of the 19th century coffee was still forbidden to Christians in Ethiopia 1). Nevertheless, huge quantities of coffee were imported into Shoa. Caravans coming from Shoa reached Enarea and 2) returned with a large part of the coffee crop of the area 3), while the Ittu Galla


3) Abbadie (21300. p. 569) claims that 40 tons of coffee are exported from Enarea to the north annually while 80 tons to Wari Haymanot in northern Shoa on the borders of the Wollo.
from the Chercher valley brought to Shoa large quantities of their coffee crop 1). It is quite clear that the coffee was not intended for the Christian population of Shoa, but mainly for the Argobans and for the Wollo and other Muslim Galla to the north of Shoa. Coffee was also taken by the Tajurans when the supply of slaves at Abdul Rassul was not sufficient 2). However, coffee was not popular among the coastal merchants as it was not of very high quality and the profits on it were negligible as a result of the high cost of transportation 3).

Very little is known of the volume of the trade in the main lucrative items, gold, civet and ivory, which were brought by every caravan reaching Shoa from the interior. The gold and civet were small in volume and the trade in them and in ivory was carried only by slave dealers in the huts in which they lived 4).

1) O.M. C.F.D.S. Carton 129/4 consideration etc. Rochet claims that when he visited Alio Amba he saw between 1,500 and 1,700 camel loads of coffee displayed in the market.
2) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Para 27. Harris. 5.1.1842.
3) Ibid.
4) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Report on Trade. Harris 5.1.1842; M.&D. Vol. 13. p. 282, Rochet 1840; See also: Market of Abdul Rassul in this essay. Lefebvre (Vol. II. Appendix Mer Rouge. pp. 31-33), who is sometimes most inaccurate, claims that the annual export of ivory from Shoa to the coast was about 300 mule loads of 80 Kgs. each, or about ¼ of the export of ivory of Ethiopia. He estimates the export of civet (through Zeila) at 200 horns a year of 5 Kgs. each sold at 168 Fr. per Kg. Shoa, according to him exported 1/5 of the whole civet export of Ethiopia.
Trade activities in Shoa were hampered by the fact that gold, ivory and other lucrative items, as well as most of the imported goods, were state monopolies and could be sold or bought only by the king. The foreign merchants could exchange their goods with one another, but the Shoan market itself, being limited by the monopolies, did not permit the merchants to widen their activities, and most of the merchandise they brought with them was actually destined for the consumption of the Galla and Sidama beyond the borders of Ethiopia. True enough, the king of Shoa thus succeeded in having a favourable balance of trade with the outside world, but at the same time the monopolies no doubt hampered the economical development of the country and the growth of an indigenous trading class.

If conditions rendered it difficult for the Christians of northern Ethiopia to take an active part in trade, in Shoa Christian traders were nearly nonexistant. While the route of the northern Ethiopian trade to Massawa lay on the

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2) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Para's 22,24. Harris. 5.1.1842. The king had a pre-emption on everything.

3) See above, page 17-19.
highlands until the last few stages, and while the Ethiopian trader was very much welcomed by the coastal population \(^1\), the Shoan merchants had to cross the Afar desert, where the unfriendly population only looked for a chance to 
emasculate the infidel and get his property. The Afar coastal population, whose livelihood depended upon its monopoly of the trade with the highlands, were only too glad to encourage their kinsmen to fall upon the Shoans who tried to trade with the coast. Thus Beke writes \(^2\). "The self interest as well as the bigotry of the latter (the Muslim coastal trader) is an effectual bar to the Christian Abyssinian". And to this Harris adds \(^3\). "In consequence of the utter terror and abhorrence which the Abyssinians entertain towards the low country and its attendant dangers, the Danakil tribe have nearly the whole trade exclusively in their own hands". Moreover, in Shoa as in the rest of Christian Ethiopia Christians were strictly forbidden from trading in slaves, and thus the Muslim foreign traders always had a great advantage over every Christian who tried to compete with them. Some Shoan traders, probably Muslims, found their way to the coast with Harari and even Tajura caravans \(^4\).

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1) Although badly treated and fleeced.
3) L.G. 189. No. 2060 G. Para 12. 5.1.1842 (Report on Trade)
Nevertheless it might be said that nearly all of Shoa's foreign trade was in the hands of foreign merchants, northern Ethiopians, Hararis, Tajurans and others.

Although Shoa's foreign trade was mainly transit trade, Shoa and the king's treasury benefited greatly from the passage of caravans. Besides direct taxation there was the income from sale of food, carriage animals and local merchandise to the merchants, not to mention the fact that Shoa's market was supplied with great quantities of foreign merchandise, which otherwise would have not been available in the country.

Sahle Sellassie had a personal interest in developing the foreign trade. On one hand he needed large quantities of metal, cloth and other luxuries for himself, for his large court, for his bodyguard and as presents to high ranking officials and neighbours. Moreover, Sahle Sellassie, appreciating the importance of firearms in his battles against the brave and fast moving Galla cavalry, wanted to buy as many firearms as he could lay his hands upon. He sent commercial representatives to Mokha, Zeila and Gondar 1) who probably acquired for him some of the materials he needed 2).

On the other hand he had large quantities of ivory, musk and gold 1), which accumulated in his stores as a result of the monopoly on all lucrative merchandise and the taxation in kind on caravans arriving from the west and the south. He tried to trade on his own account, sending caravans to the coast, but when his caravans were pillaged by the Afar 2) he became convinced that the best way to foster commercial relations with the outside world would be to encourage foreign traders to visit Shoa.

In preference to his own subjects, the foreign merchants had many privileges and were not bound by the monopolies imposed upon the Shoans. Grievances of foreign merchants against Shoans were summarily dealt with, usually to the disadvantage of the Shoans 3). The taxation on foreign merchandise, usually 10%, was not too heavy, and it was well regulated. The moment the merchants entered Shoan territory they were sure of the safety of their bodies and property. Special villages were assigned to the different groups of merchants, Abdul Rassul and Ankobar to the Tigreans, Alio Amba to the Hararis, Chanoo to the Tajurans and the southern markets to the merchants of the Galla countries. The representatives of the different groups and especially the

Hararis and the Tajurans, were much respected. The merchants ran their own affairs and once a year an audience was granted to the whole merchant community and presents and food were distributed \(^1\). Above all by means of politics or by the sword the king diverted into Shoa a large part of the products of the interior in which the coastal merchants were so much interested and this made Shoa the meeting point between Galla merchants of the south and those of Tajura, Harar and Northern Ethiopia.

The source of the slaves sold on the Shoan markets were not the military expeditions undertaken by Sahle Sellassie \(^2\). Slave trade was strictly forbidden to Christians \(^3\) and it was not likely that Sahle Sellassie's Christian soldiers would sell their captives openly. Moreover, when after being raided, a Galla tribe came to terms with Sahle Sellassie, the captives from this tribe were released. Those captives who were kept as slaves \(^4\) were emancipated

\(^3\) Harris. Slave Report. Para 17; Krapf. p. 41. Although they could own slaves.  
\(^4\) Mostly by the king.
according to customary law after seven years and were never sold.

The thousands of slaves sold on the Shoan market were brought alongside with gold, ivory, musk, coffee and skins by the many caravans coming from south and southwestern Ethiopia. Unfortunately owing to the fact that no European visited the area south of Shoa before the late 1870's, we do not have any description of those "mixed slave caravans" in the 1830's and 1840's. The nearest thing to a description of how slaves were imported into Shoa from the south and southwest is the "autobiography" of a slave who was in the service of the missionary Krapf. Dilbo, the son of Bello was kidnapped by a Galla band while looking after the herd of his father near Sappa in Enarea. At the time he was 20 years old and as his captors feared that he might escape they bound his legs and hands. After 5 days he was sold to a Muslim trader in the market place of a nearby Galla tribe for 30 amoleh. His new owner

1) Beke. F.O.A. Vol. I. p. 169; Harris. Slave Report. Para's 15, 17, 20. In para. 15 Harris claims that moral standards in Shoa had deteriorated and the slaves who did not accept Christianity were sold.

2) F.O. Abyssinia 1/3. p. 54. Krapf. 3.7.1840.


4) Worth in Shoa about 2 tallers. According to Dilbo because of the scarcity of salt in this area two male slaves could be obtained sometimes for a tallers worth of salt - probably according to Shoan rates where the taller brought between 15 to 20 amoleh.
kept him bound for a week in his house and then took him in a large slave caravan to the market of Meegra in the Nonno Galla country 2 days journey away. Before starting he and his companions were assorted according to age and size. They walked in double files but only the stout and able-bodied had their hands tied behind them 1). At Meegra he was sold "privately" to a Nonno Galla for a few ells (?) of blue calico. After being confined for 6 weeks in one of the huts of Meegra, Dilbo was sold by public auction to an Agamcho Galla trader for 40 amoleh and the last took him to a market in the Awash valley beyond Seguala. There he was sold for 70 amoleh to a Soddo Galla merchants who brought him to Roggi, the great slave market in the Yerrer district, where he was sold for 100 amoleh. From Roggi he was taken to Alio Amba 2), where a Muslim subject of Sahle Sellassie bought him in the market for 12 tallers 3). Not counting the time he spent confined in huts in the different markets he walked altogether 15 days until he reached Shoa. The food he was given was tolerable and he was not maltreated. All the merchants through whose hands he passed were Muslims, and until a short distance from Alio Amba, he was always bound at night and found no opportunity to escape 4).

2) Probably to Abdul Rassul near Alio Amba.
3) 180-240 amoleh, according to the season.
A description of a "mixed slave caravan" from Jimma camping near one of Shoa's southern markets in 1878 is supplied by Cecchi ¹) and we think that this description might be applied to the period we are covering as well. In addition to ivory, civet, and other merchandise, the caravan brought with it 400 slaves. The merchants, all Muslim Galla ²), camped in perfect order. Their camp had the form of a great circle. Within the circle the slaves, most of them children of both sexes, were crouched on the ground in groups of 30 to 40, watched by their guards, who held the outside perimeter. Each group of slaves had some water gourds, wooden plates and bunches of rods, which placed together and covered with skins, served as a shelter during the night and in rainy days. All the transport animals, horses, mules and asses were in the middle of the circle, tended by the slaves. The food and the merchandise including many piles of skins, lay around the tents of the slave dealers which made the centre of the camp.

It is reasonable to suppose that when Shoan trade with the kingdom of Jimma and the southwestern Galla and Sidama started to grow in the 1830's and 1840's, the number of slaves brought by the many small caravans grew as well ³).

²) According to their names.
Nevertheless, throughout this period the most important source of supply for the slave trade was the area directly south of Shoa, Jinjero, Kambat, Wolamo, but above all Gurague 1). The Guraguens were highly in demand and were considered by the slave merchants of the coast as being of the "best quality".

"Gurague: cette race fournit les plus beaux esclaves di l'Ethiopie; j'en ai vu un grand nombre dans les marches, et toujours je les ai vus rouges" 2). Shoa acquired the reputation of being the source of the Gurague slaves, and probably owing to the large percentage of Guraguens among the slaves coming from Shoa 3), all the slaves coming from this country were called Gurague 4). "...Gurague whence are obtained the "red Ethiopians" so much prized in Arabia. Kidnapping has consequently been there carried to an extent so frightful as to impart the name of the unhappy province as a designation for slaves generally" 5).

It seems that slave hunters took advantage of the disunity

4) Until recently "Gurague" was the word used in Shoa to denote manual worker. This was changed by Imperial order to "coolie".
and lack of authority among the Guraguens to conduct a merciless hunt for human beings in this province. In that, they were actually helped by the greedy Guraguens themselves. 

"...Many on their way from one village to another are stolen and sold by their own relations, and houses are frequently set on fire at night and the inmates, endeavouring to escape are seized and sold" 1). To this sad picture of conditions in Gurague Isenberg adds the following: "These fellows (the kidnappers) break through the walls at night, put a large stick upon the necks of the parents, and take away their children: if the children make an outcry, they put a rag into their mouths. In many houses, children sleep on beams placed across, in the upper part of the house; but kidnappers penetrate also to that place" 2).

The weak and divided Guraguens who continuously fought among themselves 3) were surrounded by the fierce Arusi to the east, by the aggressive Soddo to the west and by Muslim tribes who specialised in slave hunting to the south. To the north beyond the Galla tribes there were the Shoans to whom the Guraguen claimed kinship. However, it was claimed that

1) Krapf. p. 46.
Sahle Sellassie refrained from conquering Gurague 1), because, if the Guraguens would become Shoan subjects, he would lose a very important source of income as well as the supply of Guraguen slaves for his household 2).

One tends to believe that the deplorable state of disorganization was not the main reason why Gurague became so dominated by the slave traders and so morally corrupted 3). In this it was not so very different from many other parts of southern and southwestern Ethiopia. The main reason lay probably in the great demand for Gurague slaves and especially concubines 4) which could not catch up with the normal supply. Of course if Gurague would have been one kingdom instead of the tens of little units which existed in the country, the rulers might have afforded some protection to their citizens, but the disorganised situation of Gurague and the constant wars between the villages and provinces supplied the opportunity to slave dealers and slave hunters. The greatest incentive was, of course, the knowledge of the quick sale and the large profit made on

2) Isenberg. pp. 120-121; Krapf (p. 46) estimated that about 3,000 Guaraguens were imported annually into Shoa. Isenberg. p. 162. Krapf saw a caravan buying 500 slaves from Gurague.
the Guraguens 1). Thus hundreds of Gurague slaves were led into Shoa by each caravan in order to supply the demand of the coastal caravans waiting in the markets of Ifat 2).

In most cases the Galla traders did not go as far as Shoa's northern and eastern markets, but they were met at Eimelel, Roggi, Anduodi and other markets in the area by the Muslim Shoan and northern slave traders. The slave trade was carried for some reason in secrecy and most of the transactions took place in the houses or the tents of the merchants.

The slave dealers had a very elaborate classification and price list for slaves according to their age, origin, sex and qualities 3). In the late 1870's the classification and prices of slaves at Roggi were according to Cecchi 4) as follows:

Very young children. Four span high called MAMUL 7-8 taller
Very young children. Five span high called Mamul 10-15 "

4) Cecchi. Vol. I. p. 490. A similar table is supplied for the market of Kabiena (Cecchi. Vol. II. p. 60), but it is interesting that while in Roggi the prices are given in tallers for Kabiena the prices are given in matters of copper.
A youngster 10-16 years old called GURBIA (Gurbe) 15-20 taller

A young man 20-24 years old called CADDAMA (servant?) 12-15 "

A girl for house work called CONGIO 17-18 " 1)

A fine virgin (concubine) called WASIFA (Wasif) 30-40 "

An old man called SCIAMSCIANO 7-8 "

An old woman called SCIOROCCOBIE 4-5 " 2)

Only rarely were slaves sold for tallers in the southern markets, usually they were exchanged for copper, beads and salt, which were highly in demand in the Galla areas 3).

On entering into Shoa the king's representative collected the tribute on every slave 4). Furthermore, the king had a right of pre-emption 5) and all slaves were brought before his representatives for inspection. Only after "the king had his choice" could the merchant proceed to the Shoan markets 6).


2) Compare to prices in the 1840's in market of Abdul Rassul. See below, page 424.


From the southern and southwestern markets the slave kafilas carrying with them lucrative goods like gold, ivory and civet ¹ crossed Shoa by two routes. The first went through Ankobar to the northeastern markets clustered around Alio Amba, where the merchants from Tigre, Gondar, Tajura and Harar anxiously awaited their arrival ². The other route was through Debra Libanos to the markets of Antziokia, Dawe and the other small markets on the borders of the Wollo Galla, where caravans coming from northern Ethiopia, Aussa and Tajura were waiting to take the slaves to the sea ³.

Of the slave caravans passing through Shoa we have the following description: "The slaves that pass through Shoa in caravans consisting of from one hundred to one thousand individuals of all ages, being chiefly young boys and girls, many of them quite children, are unfettered and driven in single or double files along the road,...the generality are in good spirits, all being well fed and taken care of although the majority of both sexes arrive in a state of perfect nudity.

At the termination of each day's march, the males and females being separated, are made to sit in detached groups, consisting of from ten to fifteen souls, who are deterred from wandering by the exhibition of the whip; but this is rarely used except for the chastisement of those refractory adults who seek to affect their escape. ¹)

It is very difficult to determine the number of slaves entering Shoa annually in the 1830's and 1840's. The estimates range from 3,000 to 20,000. ²) We tend to accept the estimate of Beke ³) that 5,000-6,000 slaves were exported through Shoa. ⁴)

Dilbo, the slave in the service of Krapf, was sold at Roggi for 100 amoleh and after being taken to Alio Amba he was sold for 12 tallers. ⁵) We have no information regarding the rate of exchange of the amoleh at Roggi. 100 amoleh which might have been worth in Alio Amba between 5 to 6 dollars. ⁶)

³) Usually very meticulous.
⁴) According to our estimate Shoa did not export more than 2,500-3,000 slaves annually via Tajura and Harar. The export through Debra Berhan and the North was even smaller and only a few hundred slaves were sold in Shoa for local consumption mostly for the king.
⁶) Usual rate of exchange was 17 to 20 amoleh per taller at Alio Amba.
might have been worth 7-8 tallers at Roggi ¹). If Dilbo was sold at Alio Amba for 12 tallers, it meant that the Shoan intermediaries made a profit of over 50% on the slaves which they transferred from the southern markets to the northern and northeastern ones. Thus, by diverting the slave trade to Shoa and preventing the coastal merchants from going beyond the villages allotted to them, the king received annually a handsome tribute of a few thousand tallers in cash and in kind. Moreover, he had a continuous supply of slaves and the sizeable profit made by the local merchants enriched his country and probably found its way to his treasury as well.

The market of the village Abdul Rassul ²), 2-3 miles south of Alio Amba specialised in the slave trade. It was attended by Muslim traders from Harar, Tajura, Rahita, Wollo and northern Ethiopia who came to buy slaves from Galla slave merchants arriving from the markets of southern and southwestern Shoa ³). For some reason the slave merchants


2) We have no information regarding the slave markets to the north and northeast of Shoa besides what we have already brought in pages 223-224 above.

preferred to wrap their trade in mystery although the trade was completely legal and it was encouraged by the government.  

The sale of the slaves took place in the huts of brokers or of local merchants in Abdul Rassul. "...Examined like cattle by the purchaser, the sullen Shankela fetches a price proportioned to the muscular appearance of his giant frame; and the child of tender years is valued according to the promise of future development. Even the shame-faced and the slenderly-clad maiden is subjected to every indignity, whilst the price of her charms is estimated according to the regularity of her features, the symmetry of her budding form, and the luxuriance of her braided locks..."  

Between 3,000 to 4,000 slaves from Gurague and the Galla countries were sold annually at Abdul Rassul. In Abdul Rassul as in other places prices of the slaves varied according to age, sex and qualities. Girls between the age of 8 and 14 were sold for 12, 15 and 20 tallers, while very beautiful girls fetched even 40 tallers. On the average it seems that the price for a girl slave was about 15 tallers. Boys of the

same age were sold for 10 to 20 tallers and on the average for about 12 \(^1\). The Galla slave merchants bringing the caravans from the south would not accept tallers and some of the merchandise brought by coastal merchants. The latter usually sold most of their goods in Alio Amba and invested the proceeds and their tallers, if necessary, in salt amolehs, beads, copper and certain types of cloths which were in demand in the Galla areas and which were current in Abdul Rassul \(^2\).

A certain trade in gold, civet and ivory took place in Abdul Rassul as well. Merchants coming from all over the south and the west usually brought with them quantities of civet, ivory and skins. Gold dust was brought mainly by merchants coming from the west, enclosed in hollowed bamboo canes. All the lucrative items brought to Abdul Rassul were state monopoly and the inhabitants of Shoa were not allowed to acquire them. The foreign merchants were excluded from the monopoly system, but the king had a pre-emption on acquiring whatever was offered at market price. The price of ivory in the late 1830's was 20 tallers per tusk of the best quality and 12-15 tallers for second quality. Musk


was sold at half a taller per ounce of 31 grams and a taller weight of gold was sold for about 10 tallers. Whenever there was a shortage of slaves in the market those slave merchants who could not wait for the arrival of special consignments from the south loaded their camels with coffee which was offered at an extremely low price and in huge quantities but which was far less profitable than slaves.

Slavery was very common in Shoa but there was only a limited market for slaves in the country. The ordinary people were in a state bordering on serfdom and they could not afford slaves. The different governors and officials had all the labour they wanted through the Gabar system and all they needed were a few slaves for their household. The largest slave owner was Sahle Sellassie who employed about 5,000 slaves, males and females. The women slaves

4) Similar to European serfdom.
5) Harris. Slave Report. Para 34; Rochet (Voyage. p. 283) speaks of 2,000–3,000; Beke (F.O.A. Vol. I. p. 168) estimates that Sahle Sellassie had 2,000 slaves in Angolala alone. Johnston. Vol. II. p. 80; According to Ferret (Vol. II. p. 334) the number of female slaves in Ankobar court were not less than 1,800.
were mainly employed in water drawing, cooking and weaving while the men slaves in cutting wood and in other manual tasks. The most privileged among the king's slaves were those of the bodyguard unit made of a few hundred bondsmen who received a small pay besides their keep 2). Many slaves came to the possession of Sahle Sellassie as a result of the frequent raids into the Galla country. Some as a result of punishment inflicted upon defaulters and law breakers and others from the tax 3) on all passing caravans. Nevertheless, the king was an important buyer of slaves and every slave caravan was scrutinised by his agents for the best slaves before it was permitted to proceed to the slave markets 4).

There was no distinction in Shoa between the income and the expenditure of the state and that of the king. The revenue of the kingdom going into the royal treasury came from four main sources. The taxation of the population, income from the king's private domains, income from trade

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1) 200-300 were concubines.

2) According to Johnston (Vol. II. p. 75) and Krapf (p. 36) their number was 1,000; Harris (Vol. II. p. 177) claims 400. See page 374 above.

3) Ashaer 10%

and the tribute or war booty collected from the Galla tribes.

The governors were entrusted with the collection of taxes from the agricultural population. Each village paid according to the number of inhabitants and the land allotted to it 1). It might be said that part of this taxation was the duty of each village to work a certain number of days on the governor and the king's estates bordering on his village 2). The frontier governors, through which territories trade routes entered the country, were also entrusted with the collection of 10% duty 3) ad valorem on every article entering the kingdom including specie. The different governors were further entrusted with the collection of the special sales tax in every market place. As most of the payment was made in kind, ample storage was necessary and thus storehouses and granaries were built to hold all the agricultural produce, the merchandise and the salt which were paid to the king's agents 4).

2) Ibid. p. 286; Rochet. Second Voyage. p. 248.
4) L.G. 189. No. 2034. Para 5. 2.12.1841; Harris. Vol. III. pp. 222,343. At least in Allo Amba there was a provincial treasury called "Gimjon Bait" in which were held all the revenues until the annual accounting with the king's representatives were done. Johnston. Vol. II. p. 250.
Rochet estimated that the kingdom's revenue in specie and in kind was over half a million tallers of which nearly 250,000-300,000 were paid in cash \(^1\). Foreign importations; medicines, cloths, metal, utensils, beads, paper and, above all, firearms, were paid in cash \(^2\). Most of the specie brought into the country by foreign merchants was used for tax payment and thus found its way to the king's treasury besides the cash received directly from the traders as customs \(^3\). As the revenues by far surpassed the expenditure, the king's treasuries were bulking with ivory, gold, civet and with tallers.

The unperishable lucrative goods and the coin were stored in special treasuries reputed to be in caves. Rochet, who claims to have visited one of these treasuries, a cave near Ankobar, writes that the silver was kept in jars standing in two lines on the two sides of the cave. He saw about 300 jars containing 5,000-6,000 tallers each. The tallers in them were cast into blocks while coins were kept in leather sacks, hanging from a beam \(^4\).

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1) This seems to us exaggerated and we tend to accept Harris's estimate of 80,000-90,000 tallers in cash to be nearer to the truth. Harris. Vol. III. p. 28; Rochet. Voyage. p. 286.


The revenue in kind which must have been very great 1) was used by the king for the upkeep of his huge court, the thousands of slaves he owned, the hundreds of concubines and the standing army of about 1,000 matchlockmen. Moreover, dirge 2) or a daily allotment, was given to thousands of officials, priests and other deserving people according to their importance.

Some of our sources describe Sahle Sellassie as a selfish tyrant interested only in his own welfare 3). However, one has to point out that although he was an absolute despot, the population of Shoa loved their king and they were happy, secure and well fed. The king looked after the poor of the country and in years of famine opened his granaries to his subjects 5). He kept special stores of salt so that his "people might never want" 6). From time to time the Shoan monarch divided the accumulating agricultural products in his stores among his people and on public holidays thousands of

1) Including agricultural products, domestic animals and cloth.
2) Isenberg. p. 77; Beke. Commerce. p. 18.
5) Sellassie. pp. 70-71; Harris. Vol. III. p. 33. According to Cecchi (Vol. I. p. 245) after the great famine which occurred in 1834 he gave each farmer an ox and a plough
oxen were given to the population 1).

Sahle Sellassie wished to reunite and modernise Shoa by adopting European firearms and techniques. He might have succeeded in his first aim - reuniting his country. But it was next to impossible to modernise Shoa and to bridge the gap of centuries in a lifetime. With all his enthusiasm for innovations and for crafts 2) he could not change the fact that the Shoans were not yet ready to adapt themselves to the new techniques and to a new way of thinking. Moreover, the king himself was a product of the Ethiopian society and environment and he could not overcome his fears and suspicions towards anything foreign and strange. Nevertheless, even if all that Sahle Sellassie built collapsed soon after his death, it might be said that it was Sahle Sellassie who paved the way for future developments in Shoa and for the rise of his grandson Menelik.


CONCLUSIONS:

In the first half of the 19th century the Amhara and Tigrean Christian ruling class faced the danger of submersion as a result of the possible fusion between Galla and Muslim interests all over the Ethiopian highlands. Islamic propaganda had been revived in Ethiopia, with great success, especially among the Galla, since the beginning of the 19th century. After the conquest of the Sudan and parts of the Red Sea coast by Mohammed Ali Ethiopia was surrounded by an aggressive Muslim power on three sides. At the same time, Muslim Galla elements with chiefs, some of whom had been converted to Christianity, were making the last bid for predominance in Ethiopia. Throughout this time the Christian nobility of what remained of Christian Ethiopia were much too occupied with their own petty quarrels to realise the great danger which they faced.

It might be said that two factors saved Amhara Christian Ethiopia from being completely overrun by the Galla and from Islamisation. The first was the dawning of the realisation for the need of unity. The beginning of such a realisation is to be found in the growing power of the Rases of Tigre who led the struggle against the "converted" Galla aristocracy and the resentment of the clergy and Christian
population of northern Ethiopia for the rule of the Galla lords in Begamder and elsewhere. It is clearly to be seen in the rise of the house of Shoa and in the great expansion of that principality from the end of the 18th century onwards. The second factor was the reappearance of European power in the Red Sea after the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, and especially after the rise of Mohammed Ali. This brought about a renewed contact between Ethiopia and the Christian world. It restrained and confined the Muslim power around Ethiopia and on the coast of the Red Sea and it brought large quantities of firearms into the hands of the Amhara with the help of which the tide was turned.

From the end of the 18th century until the time of Theodros the Galla were considered by some leaders of the Amhara Christian ruling class to be the immediate and most dangerous enemy. This apprehension was especially enhanced as a result of the outstanding successes of the Galla in the late 18th century and the first decades of the 19th. Thus throughout this time the renewed Islamic threat was nearly ignored. However, there were clear indications of the revival of the Amhara power from new centres since the beginning of the 19th century. Not only did the Amhara Christians succeed in containing Galla expansion into Gojam, but they actually transferred the war into Galla territories
beyond the Abay and extensive areas of historical Shoa, were recaptured by the Amhara rulers of Shoa. The Amhara, no doubt, were much helped by the relatively greater unity of their society when compared to the highly fissiparous Galla society. Moreover, already at an early stage, they realised and appreciated the importance of firearms in the war they were carrying on against the numerous and brave Galla. Thus Amhara rulers made great efforts to acquire considerable quantities of firearms in which they invested parts of their revenue from the revived trade. With those firearms the whole balance of power in Ethiopia was changed in the Amhara favour. However, while firearms and better organisation were used by Sahle Sellassie to reconquer historical Shoa and to subjugate extensive Galla areas, in Gojam the firearms were used mainly to throw back Galla attacks from beyond the Abay and in northern Ethiopia they were used in the extensive internal wars between the different lords. The culmination of this period was the rise in power of Kassa-Theodros, who was the first to realise fully the importance of unity and the great danger of a fusion between the Galla and Islam at a time when aggressive Islam was surrounding Ethiopia from three sides.

There is little doubt that since the second decade of
the 19th century, trade in Ethiopia has undergone great development. The extensive hoards of tallers in the treasuries of some rulers and in the hands of merchants from the second quarter of the century on, compared to the scarcity of silver in the previous period, were a definite indication of this trend 1). The new Afar route to Shoa, the expansion of the Berbera fair, the growth of Massawa, the emergence of new classes of merchants, Afar, Afkala, Christian and Muslim, and to some extent the establishment of the Galla states of the Gibe, were some of the symptoms of this development as well. However, the unstable political situation, the insecurity all over the highlands and above all the lack of a strong centralised authority were not at all conducive to the development of large scale trade.

Ethiopia is an agricultural country, but agricultural exports hardly developed there during the first half of the 19th century. This was mainly due to the cost of transportation and to the many difficulties and the insecurity the merchants had to face all over the highlands. Taking into account the many risks they had to take, the caravan merchants preferred to trade in articles of small bulk, which brought great profits, and not in the bulky unprofitable agricultural products. As the exportation of agricultural products did

not develop and only a limited internal trade was carried on in the self sufficient societies of the Ethiopian highlands, the poverty-stricken masses of the Ethiopian people could hardly afford, and were hardly interested, in the "luxury" products imported from abroad, although the prices of those articles had been greatly reduced since the second decade of the century. Except for cheap beads, metals, and above all copper and cheap dark blue Indian cloth, the market for foreign goods remained limited to the ruling classes in the different parts of Ethiopia.

The sources of the most important items in the foreign trade, namely, gold, ivory, musk, precious skins, slaves and coffee, were to be found in one end of the country while the outlets for this trade were in the other. As a result of the long distances which the caravans had to cover, the Ethiopian caravan trade was especially vulnerable to wars and instability. Furthermore, the northern provinces and Shoa which hardly contributed anything to the exports of the country, financed their consumption of foreign goods through heavy taxation on the trade going between the coast and the southern and western provinces, thus, making imports and exports even more costly than they originally were. Moreover, the volume of trade in the lucrative products of the south and west in the period we are covering, was relatively static and probably
could not be developed beyond the limits it reached in the second quarter of the 19th century. The quantities of gold which could be extracted from the different sources in western, and to a lesser degree in southern, Ethiopia were limited. Ivory exports depended on the number of elephants killed annually and accelerated hunting would have meant only the speeding up of the annihilation of the elephant population of Ethiopia ¹). As for musk, the demand for this product was not unlimited and when large quantities of musk reached the coast the price of this article became greatly reduced ²). The only branch of Ethiopia's exports which could be further developed in the period we are covering was coffee. However, coffee was bulky, its transportation complicated, and the profits it brought were proportionally small. Thus very few important merchants took part in the coffee trade. More and more, the short-sighted merchants of Ethiopia mixed the better varieties with the poor quality coffee coming from most of the Galla provinces in southwestern Ethiopia. In consequence the Ethiopian coffee reaching the coast was considered of poor quality and could not compete with the better grades available on the Yemeni coast and at Berbera. The Harari coffee was of fine quality and it reached the coast with relatively little

¹) The same could be said about the precious skins.
difficulty and expense. However, Harar suffered greatly in the first half of the 19th century from the disturbed situation around the town and from the disintegration of the Amir's authority and influence. As a result coffee planting and coffee exportation were not developed to the extent which they could have been.

The Ethiopian slave trade expanded considerably in the second quarter of the 19th century. As a result of the growing demand for Ethiopian slaves throughout the Muslim world, about 6,000-7,000 slaves were exported annually, in the period we are covering, through Matamma, Massawa, Tajura, Zeila and Berbera. Most of the so-called Abyssinian slaves, were actually pagans of Galla and Sidama origin. Amhara Christians were protected from being sold into slavery by civil and ecclesiastical laws and the Jabarti Muslim traders were strictly forbidden by their religion from enslaving their co-religionists. As in the past, the Ethiopian slave trade was mainly geared to supply young concubines for the harems in the Muslim countries and thus the largest proportion of slaves exported from Ethiopia were females. While Tajura and Berbera were the main outlets for the Guraguen and east Sidama slaves going mostly to southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf, Massawa and Matamma were the outlets for the Galla and Sidama of southwestern Ethiopia going mostly to Egypt, to
the Hijaz, even to Turkey. However, the supply of Galla, Sidama slaves was not inexhaustable while the demand for the expensive "Abyssinian slaves" was also not unlimited.

The great development of the slave trade in Ethiopia in the second quarter of the 19th century was in fact "the beginning of the end" of this trade. The British became actively interested in this branch of the East Africa slave trade already in the 1830's. When Aden became a British base in 1839, ships of the Indian Navy coming from this port started to visit the Red Sea and Somali coast much more frequently than they had done in the past. They could not help but notice the slave trade actively carried on in all the ports in the area 1). Thus one of the aims of the Harris Mission to Shoa was to study the problem of the Ethiopian slave trade 2). British interference with the slave trade became more noticeable in the late 1840's as a result of the policy of the British government, and of a new anti-slavery treaty with Seyyid Said, the sultan of Muscat and Zanzibar.

1) L.G. 165. No. 2316. Haines. 5.7.1841.

2) Fearing the reaction of the inhabitants of the Red Sea coast and not being too secure in Aden, the board of governors of the East India Company, decided to act cautiously in the matter of the abolition of slavery in the area and for the time being not to press the issue. See: L.G. 182. No. 837, 6.2.1842; L.G. 182. No. 836, Haines. 22.12.1841.
However, although Omani citizens were legally prevented from exporting Ethiopian and other slaves, there were still many other merchants from the Persian Gulf and especially from the Red Sea who could not be legally prevented from dealing in Ethiopian slaves 1). Nevertheless, the exportation of Ethiopian slaves to the Persian Gulf diminished while the number of slaves exported to the Yemeni and Hijazi ports grew. The final legal loophole in the battle for the abolition of the slave trade in the area was closed when the Ottoman sultan, under British pressure 2), issued in 1854/1855 a firman outlawing the slave trade all over the Ottoman Empire 3). In fact at the same time Theodros, at least in theory, forbade the slave trade in the Ethiopian highlands 4) and some Somali chiefs were coerced into signing an anti-slavery agreement 5). True enough, in reality the Ethiopian slave trade continued to exist, on a very large scale, even in the time of Menelik. It was, however, the last convulsions of this trade which had been in the past an important factor in the social and the economic life of the Ethiopian highlands.

2) Crimean war.
and of the ports of the Red Sea.

When one considers the circumstances, one understands why the foreign trade of a large and relatively rich area like the Ethiopian highlands, in the period covered, did not exceed a million and a half tallers annually ¹).

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¹) About £300,000.
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