

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HARARI-OROMO RELATIONSHIPS, 1559-1874

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Harari-Oromo relations as observed in the mid-twentieth century (Waldron 1974, p. 293; 1980, p. 253) seemed to preserve a quasi-feudal ethnic stratification, wherein the Harari held the upper hand. This paper will show that the processes relating the two groups were an intricate co-adaptation, and that power in the system was essentially in Oromo hands until the conquest of the region by the Turco-Egyptians in 1875[1]

The setting for the development of Harari-Oromo relations derives directly from the two major events in sixteenth-century Ethiopian history: the jihads of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim (1529-1543) and the subsequent demographic explosion of the Oromo from their homelands in southern Ethiopia. The social, economic, and political disruption that the jihads and their countermeasures caused is well documented. The rapid expansion of the Oromo northward, into the former territory of 'Ifat, and eastward to the region of Harar, certainly reflects the vacuum of protective power in the regions of the Rift, which for centuries had been the locale of both Muslim and Christian principalities (Braukamper 1979, p. 174; Trimmingham 1965, pp. 42-95).

Harar, then the capital of the empire of 'Adal', was perhaps the sole survivor of the principalities and trading centers of this region. "When the exodus was at its peak in the sixteenth century, there were several kingdoms in central and southern Ethiopia that fell under Galla (Oromo) domination. These were the kingdoms of Bale, Fattagar, Hadia, and Dawaro. Today there is little evidence that these societies ever existed There are hardly any island cultures within the conquered territories" (Legesse 1973, p. 8; parentheses added). None, that is, except Harar, which reached a complex *modus vivendi* with the Oromo during the subsequent three centuries. ' This resulted in the encapsulation of the city's society and in the beginnings of a transformation of the Oromo of the region, the Afran Qallo, from independent pastoralists to agricultural peasants; it was managed by personal, political, and economic arrangements between the elite of both groups in contact.

FIRST CONTACTS

The first attack of the Oromo on the Ethiopian highlands took place in 1545 between the Dawe of Borana and, the forces of Emperor Galawdewos, in Bali. Although Galawdewos inflicted considerable losses, he did not alter the drive of the Oromo forces (Trimingham 1965, p. 93). Indeed, defeating the Oromo was a virtually impossible task as long as an Oromo population base provided warriors, for the Oromo attackers were organized not in terms of a conventional military hierarchy, but in terms of the very social organization, which defined their identity.

"Behind this great spread of (Oromo) society there lies an institution-the Gada System -which was at once the basis of their military conquests and which set limits on its demographic antecedents.... The Gada System is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities.... Before assuming a position of leadership the (dominant) *gada* class is required to wage war against a community that none of their ancestors had raided. This particular war is know as *butta* and is waged on schedule every eight years. It is this event that was most directly connected with the pulsating frontier of their dominions in the sixteenth century leading toward the conquest of nearly half of Ethiopia's land surface (Legesse 1973, p. 8)".

The first extensive contact between the Harari and Oromo was initiated by an encounter in 1559 between a gada force and Amir Nur, Imam Ahmed's successor, on the return from his attack on Fatajar, which had resulted in Emperor Galawdewos's death. In the next eight years, the Oromo had reduced the political and trading domain of the 'Adali capital of Harar to such an extent that only the city itself survived. "The Arabic Chronicle of Harar records their devastation of the regions of Sim, Shoa, Najab, Jidaya, Daker, and most of Harjaya. At this time they (Oromo) began to form their famous cavalry by acquiring horses from the Somali. The invasion of Harar was followed by a three years' famine" (Trimingham 1965, pp. 93-94, citing Cerulli 1931, p. 57).

Shortly before his death in 1567, Amir Nur reacted by building Harar's wall as a final barrier between the Oromo and Harari. Within ten years, Harar was reduced from the capital of 'Adal, the largest Muslim empire ever known in Ethiopia, to an isolated amirate, as the Walashma' rulers of 'Adal relocated their threatened capital from the city to the oasis of Aussa in 1577. The Harari who remained behind the new city walls were the sole survivors of a once much wider spread ethnic and linguistic community whose full extent may never be known, but whose last trace is the record of their decimation: "By 1577 (the Oromo) had destroyed more than a hundred villages and besieged the city, 'Until the gates were filled with corpses' (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. iv, citing MS No. 300, Institute of Ethiopian Studies).

MARKET RELATIONS AND TRADE ROUTES

The first mention of a negotiated relationship between the Oromo and Harari is a market treaty arranged by Amir Nur's successor, 'Uthman al-Habashi, where-in the Oromo were given market privileges, specifically the right to purchase imported cloth at a fixed price (Cerulli 1931, p. 54 et seq.). Clearly this treaty was a stopgap measure, preceding as it does the final assault on the city by eight years. Several aspects of this treaty are unclear. Richard Caulk (1977, p. 371) interprets this document, which I did not have access to, as pertaining to the market of Harar. Trimingham, citing the same passage, translates it significantly differently, saying that the treaty "induced them (Oromo) to attend the "markets in Hararian territory." He continues to explain that a dispute, which broke the treaty, arose, not in the city of Harar, but in the Harari-controlled market of Zajrabar in Aussa (Trimingham 1965, p. 96). Since the Oromo of this period were organized strictly along the lines of the *gada* system, with its rotating duties and temporary authorities, it is far from clear whom 'Uthman al-Habashi had selected as having the central power implied in signing such a treaty.

After the crushing defeat of 1577, Harar never again seems to have provided a military threat to the Oromo who had entered the region, the Afran Qallo (Alla, Nole, Obora, and Babile) and the unaligned Anniya. Harar, by this time, had been isolated from the Somali and other former allies of Imam Ahmed and Amir Nur, many of whom had themselves been decimated. In these early years, the amirs of Harar may have had a regional monopoly on firearms obtained in small numbers from Ottoman sources, primarily. However, the trade routes, which might have supplied these and the mercenaries who were recruited to use them, were seriously disrupted, and they probably were not influential in determining the balance of power in this critical early period. The city's survival depended on its tolerance by the Oromo as a convenient market, rather than upon its military strength. Basically, the city was able to withstand localized lineage (*gosa*) attacks at the city wall, relying on the logic of a densely concentrated population to defend itself temporarily from such incursions. The late Bab Haji Mume Bashir stated that in his grandfather's day, in the 1850s, Oromo raids would be concentrated at a single point of attack, and that men from all quarters of the city would converge here to defend the city. Both sets of opponents fought with hand weapons, particularly spears (Interview, 1963).

This account implies an Oromo attack limited to a few hundred warriors, rather than the *gada*-based army, the *Dori*, which the leadership of the governing council of the Afran Qallo was institutionally capable of mobilizing (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 22). Had this total mobilization of the Afran Qallo's

forces been mustered, it would have pitted a force of thousands of Oromo against the city, which the Harari inevitably would have found invincible. Mohammed Mokhtar describes such a force as it faced the Turco-Egyptians in its last appearance, in 1875: "They always advance in a great line of ten or a dozen ranks deep that the first who fall are immediately replaced by other fighters who continue to advance without being in the least demoralized by the fall of their comrades.... They are hardy, brave, facing death with the greatest possible boldness; their attack is terrible" (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 26, citing Mohammed Mokhtar 1877, pp. 386-87).

The task of the Harari leadership in this early period of contact, then, was formidable. They had to find ways of opening the trade routes, which were the lifelines of the market, through Oromo-held territory. They had to attempt to establish alliances with local Oromo to prevent a mass attack upon the city, and throughout this period they and the citizens of Harar had to protect the city and its provisioning outlying gardens and farms from periodic Oromo incursions. During the next three centuries, the Oromo of the Afran Qallo and the amirs of Harar established a series of alliances whose forms and implications shaped the political economy of the region and which conditioned the development and differentiation of ethnic relations between Oromo and Harari. Muhammed Hassan succinctly describes the outcome of this reliance, whose structural implications will be investigated in the following section:

"By the opening of the 19th century, the relation between Harar and the settled Oromo had developed into mutual economic interdependence. The Oromo used the town as their main market for exchanging surpluses of coffee, saffron, hides, and cattle, as well as some ivory, for goods imported or produced in Harar, such as cloth and salt. Harar needed Oromo produce for export. This economic interdependence and political necessity brought a closer alliance between the city's administration and the settled Oromo. From the later 18th century, marriages between some Amirs and the daughters of Oromo chiefs seem to have bound the two together.... Such alliances reflected economic as well as political necessity (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 1)".

Since, at the period of initial contact, the city's survival depended on the convenience of its market for the dominant Oromo, one must ask what these pastoralist invaders may have needed from Harar's markets. As Muhammed Hassan states, cloth and salt were basic. Cloth, as a replacement for leather wraps-still worn by many 'Afar and some Borana-was probably a highly desired commodity and a mainstay of the Harari long-distance trade (Stitz 1975, p. 9). Initially, in the Harari-Oromo trade, it was almost certainly a sumptuary item, not a necessity.

Salt, however, as the most important source of sodium, is essential to human survival, and its control by the Harari may well have been the key to the city's survival. Still a trade good in the Harari open market, the salt in early Harari trade came from coastal evaporating pans, particularly at Zeila (Yusef Muned 1961, p. 37), rather than from the Danakil. Although Lake Ayele, some thirty-five kilometers north of the city, is rich in mineral salts, a fact long recognized by Oromo herdsman, it was not used for the extraction of salt for human consumption.

Throughout the pre-industrial world, market centers, which provided local access, to salt often formed the basis of later urban developments, and control of salt trade was often a basis for centralized political power. "A certain political pattern seems to emerge: where salt was plentiful, the society tended to be free, independent and democratic; where it was scarce, he who controlled salt controlled the people" (Bloch 1963, p. 95). Without adopting such a unicausal weighting, one might accept Harari local monopoly on salt as being a basis for the "market convenience" which permitted their unique survival among all of the early Muslim principalities faced with Oromo expansion.

TRADE ROUTES AND ALLIANCES

Thus far I have suggested that Harar's survival in the midst of warlike Oromo depended on its marketing specialization, which had probably been part of its 'Adal heritage. Maintaining open trade routes, or devising means for the safety of Individual caravans, were problems, which had been solved, in pre-Oromo times between merchants and the Somali through whose territory they passed. The "conventional means of ensuring safe transit through Somali territories was that of hiring an *abban*.

"Different clans of various tribes had their own *abban* or caravan protector, who would supply the camels, mules or donkeys needed, and the workers to lead the caravan. Whenever a merchant wanted to dispatch his goods, he made his arrangements through the *abban*. Once the goods were loaded and passed to him, it was the *abban* who was responsible for their delivery at the place of destination. This was usually Berberah, Zeyla or Tajura along the coast, or else Ifat, Awsa or Bale in the interior. There, the owner's agent, should there be one, would receive the goods (Yusef Ahmed 1961, p. 37).

If we can assume that the institution of the *abban* was established in the early days and that it permitted regular (if expensive) caravan trade through Somali-populated regions, we might also expect that this type of relationship would provide a model for Harari trying to work out a *modus operandi* for getting their caravans through Oromo territories.[2]

The Oromo, pastoralists and newcomers to the scene, had no such trade specialists, nor did they have an indigenous centralized political structure with which the Harari amirs could make binding treaties. Local organization among the Afran Qallo was defined in terms of a segmentary patrilineal system. Lineage segments, called *gosa*, organized and interrelated all the members of each of the branches of the Afran Qallo. The very term Afran Qallo implies such a patrilineal rationale as the basis of organization of the confederacy as a whole, meaning "the four sons of Qallo (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 23). However, the central and unifying political institution of the Afran Qallo was the Roba Dori, a version of the aforementioned *gada* system. Although the details of the organization of the Roba Dori are discussed by Muhammed Hassan (1973, pp.23-25). certain characteristics of its officialdom will be mentioned here since they affected the nature of the alliances with the amirs of Harar.

Following the structure of the *gada*, the *Roba Dori* membership and leadership "turned over" every eight years. Thus its officials, the Abba Fugug or president, and the Abba Dula, or war leader, were elected anew every eight years by representatives of the constituent lineages, who were regulated by an oral constitution, the *Hera Gosa* (Muhammed Hassan 1973). Undoubtedly, this pastoral republic aptly suited the organizational needs of the Oromo, but it certainly must have provided a basic quandary for the amirs of Harar. In a system of rotating leadership, in which the highest officials are essentially *primus inter pares*, with whom does one deal to attempt to gain protection of trade routes, farms, and the city itself?

Structurally, the quandary of the amirs of Harar seeking a political counterpart for treaty-making purposes is understandable. The amirs represented a stratified society and were administratively connected to that society primarily through a bureaucracy whose major functions were concerned with the collection of taxes from the citizenry. The Oromo, however, were essentially a kinship-based society whose generational system provided an advisory council, but which lacked officials with contractual authority. Since the amirs of Harar were on the defensive initially, they had to respond to Oromo institutions, rather than vice versa. Thus it seems as though the only institutions available to the amirs for pact formation were those defined in terms of kinship: marriage and adoptive brotherhood.

INTERMARRIAGE

The major form of intergroup alliances during the early period of the Harari amirate was intermarriage with the politically influential surrounding groups. A Harari document whose primary concern is the succession of amirs testifies to the early existence of this practice as well as serving to indicate its

complexities. "Amir Abdallah (1671-1700), son of Amir 'Ali ibn Da'ud (1647-1662) whose mother was of the people of Zakkamara-had eight sons: Talha, whose mother was of the Anaj tribe; Amir Abu Bakr Hawa-garad; Mubarek, whose mother was of the Geri tribe; Muhammed, nephew of garad Limay, whose mother was of the Oromo tribe; Jami, whose mother was Arussi; Abdurrahman, called Amir tinabri, whose mother was of the Oromo" (Cerulli 1942, p. 5; my translation). Apparently, the amir's household was a nexus of marriage alliances, and the ramifications in each group so connected must have been considerable, although the specifics are here unreported.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the pattern of alliances between the amirs of Harar and the Oromo of the Afran 'Qallo, the Anniya Oromo, who did not belong to the Afran Qallo, and the Barteri and Geri Somali indicates that the intermarriages of foregoing generations had been integrated into the politics of succession of the amirate. Although the succession of amirs from the establishment of the dynasty of Ali ibn Da'ud (1647-1661) through the last Harari amir, Abdullahi ibn Muhammed (1885-1887) seems simple and orderly, basically progressing either directly from father to son or through a sequence of brothers before descending a generation, the actuality of the successions in the nineteenth century is far from orderly. The synthesis of detail presented by Caulk is conclusive.

As the Oromo (led by the usurper Muhammed ibn 'Ali) arrived to lay siege, the Amir Ahmad Abu Baler died in August 1856. The eldest of his sons, Yusuf, was still a minor. In the emergency, a town assembly at first appointed a certain Abdallahi Abd al-Mejid. He was related to the Alia, and his appointment may have been intended to appease these clans. Three hours after his election, Abdallahi was pushed off the throne by a cousin of the late amir, one Khalifa Citra, whose father was the same Abd al-Rahman whom Abd al-Karim had deposed in 1825 and whose alliance with the Babile seems to have made him so unloved by the townspeople. This event may have reflected rivalries among the surrounding Oromo and related factions in the town.... The very evening of Khalifa Citra's succession ... the beleaguered citizens abandoned their choice and called in Muhammed ibn Ali (Caulk 1977, pp. 378-70; parentheses added).

Two important types of documentation are lacking for drawing the full implications of the alliances of intermarriage between the Harari amirs and the Oromo. Cerulli's (1942) document cited previously indicates that some amirs had numerous sons, who were not involved in the direct line of descent, and thus who may have gone unrecorded, but whose marriages were nonetheless important in tying together political arrangements between Harari and outsiders. Also missing until the nineteenth century is mention of the marriage partners of amirs' daughters. Probably these were married within the Harari ethnic group, but, in fact we know little about their existence.

The picture which emerges in the nineteenth century, but which probably functioned fully blown for several generations earlier, is one in which an amir would inherit a body of Oromo (and Somali) alliances from his predecessor. He could strategically arrange his later marriages and probably could direct the marriages of his children. At the same time, his brothers and paternal cousins, potential successors, could assess his blocs of allies and counterbalance their strength by making mutually exclusive marriage pacts with other Oromo groups.

The price paid by the amirs for the pacts consummated through marriage seems to have been considerable. Burton comments on the special privileges extended to Oromo within the city under the reign of Amir Ahmed (1852-1856)(Burton 1966, p. 189), although we have no evidence concerning the identity of these Oromo nor their alliance status. As Caulk and Muhammed Hassan prove in the case of Amir Muhammed (1866-1875), the latter's extremely close relationship with the Oromo completely alienated him from the people of the city. Muhammed was probably the grandson of Anniya Oromos. His second wife was Ala, and she was the sister of another very wealthy Ala Oromo, Kormoso. He cemented his relationship with the Ala after his marriage to Kadija, daughter of Amir Abdul Karim (1825-1834), by entering into a brotherhood with the Abado Ala, whose locale was in the Gara Mullata region, south of

Alemaya, to the northwest of the city. Muhammed thus utilized another Oromo institution for this pact, that of the *ilman gosa* ("son of the lineage"), which involved him in direct reciprocal relationships with the lineages with which he was allied: "Muhammed became the son of the gosa for the three great Bokkus ("ritual leaders," Legesse 1973, p. 69; "spokesmen," Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 24) of the Afran Qallo (Kormoso [his brother-in-law] Balla Buba and Chamma Nur). As their son, he was entitled to protection but was under an obligation to keep the laws of the gosa including those regarding hospitality and sharing wealth" (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 13; translations and citations regarding the term Bokku added).

The logic of the reciprocal exchanges mandated by the *ilman gosa* is egalitarian in its reciprocity as it functioned among pastoral Oromo. A "brother" in need could demand goods, property, or privilege from his adoptive lineage mates. Normally this would function as a leveling mechanism within the lineage. However, as extended to Muhammed, it placed the wealth of the city at the demands of the Oromo.

"By becoming a member of a gosa, Amir Mahammed exposed Harar to the exactions of Oromo hospitality. The Oromo expected liberal treatment when they were in Harar and gifts on their departure" (Muhammed Hassan 1973, p. 13).

The Abado and Muhammad's numerous other fellow clansmen came in relays by the hundreds to stay for weeks on end in the town and were in their rights when they demanded gifts of cloth on taking leave of the hosts to whom the amir assigned them (Caulk 1977, p. 379)".

Beyond this obligatory hospitality, Amir Muhammed had to pay regular tribute to the Bokku in honor of the Afran Qallo. In short, the connection established through the *ilman gosa*, traditionally functioning as a way of equalizing herd strength and other subsistence resources among Oromo pastoralists, took quite a different form. The brotherhood provided access to the wealth of Harar for the Bokku and the hundreds of lineage members he represented.

Amir Muhammed's access to resources within the city was not defined by lineage claims but by his power of taxation. His normal income was derived from a 10 percent tithe on Harari farm income, on taxes collected on the goods of merchants as they entered and left the city, and on the profits from his own considerable farmlands and herds (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 32). Amir Muhammed may have innovated his claims to a royal monopoly on the ivory trade and certain other commodities (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 38), which further enriched his coffers. However, even though he parceled out his obligatory hospitality in the manner cited, the claims of his *ilman gosa* were still so extensive that he further drained the Harari economy by devaluing the currency of the city's markets (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 35) and by instituting a special hospitality tax, the *mahalaq al-Galla*. In short, Amir Muhammed purchased his alliance with the Afran Qallo at the expense of the city's economy. He seems to have been the first amir to have accomplished a totally comprehensive pact with the Afran Qallo (Caulk 1977, p. 380), but he did so by impoverishing the city and so alienating the citizens that they invited in the Turco-Egyptian forces of Rauf Pasha. His entry into the city in 1875 ended the three centuries of independent negotiation between the Oromo and the amirs of Harar.

HARARI COMMONERS: AN UNDERSTRATUM

In effect, the marriage alliances of the amirs bought the freedom of the city, or at least permitted its survival. The price paid by the people of the city was considerable, although little documentation concerning their lot is available until the nineteenth century. Not all of the alliances made by the early amirs were defined by kin-based ties, and even those that were effectively served to channel tribute from the city. Caulk mentions that Amir Abd al-Shakur, in 1783, "went with a friend to the Jarso and other Nole clans, taking bales of sheetings for the first time to those Oromo in order to civilize them" (Caulk

1977, p. 372). However defined, the pacts with the Oromo were expensive to the citizenry of Harar, who may be considered an understratum vis-à-vis the amirs.

"According to a preliminary analysis of early nineteenth-century Muslim court records by the late Volker Stitz, most Harari were poor and powerless, as the following extracts indicate.

"Ownership of land by the townspeople did not exceed a radius of five kilometers (from Harar) (Stitz 1975, p. 5; parentheses added).

From these documents, the survival of the town is something of a mystery. There was no natural population increase recorded. Food production could not have been very great from the small gardens which appear here as the only town-owned land (Ibid., p. 11).

Considering the value of properties listed at death for individual townsmen, the Somali and Oromo must have found these people poor indeed.... in material terms townsmen were not rich. Their advantage over their neighbors must have been in their ability to think in economic terms and to organize trade" (Ibid., p. 9).

The influence of the townspeople at large upon decisive issues such as succession appears to have been negligible. As has been noted, whatever the internecine disputes, the amirate stayed essentially within the upper class, which the Harari call Amir Garach ("Amir's household"). In only one instance is the opinion of the community cited, that being the dispute following the death of Ahmed in 1856. Caulk says: "In the emergency, a town assembly at first appointed a certain Abdallahi Abd al-Mejid Three hours after his election, Abdulla was pushed off the throne" (Caulk 1977, p. 379). Presumably, the town assembly was constituted by one of the very infrequent meetings of the combined community organizations (afocha) in the type of meeting called "Hammisti Beriach Afochach," or "the Afochas of the Five Quarters" (see Koehn and Waldron 1978, p. 35).

CONVERSION TO ISLAM

Harar's long-standing role as a regional center of Islamic learning is too well documented to require discussion here (Trimingham 1965, p. 93 et seq.). Its traditions include a strong Sunni orthodoxy inside the city, shari'a courts, and an Islamic educational system ranging from quranic schools to teachers of quranic interpretations. Coexisting with this orthodox tradition, and characterizing the perception of Islam in Harar, is an elaboration of Muslim saints, called *awach*. I have identified more than 150 saints' shrines in and around the city (Waldron 1979b, p. 79). Ewald Wagner has documented the traditions of many of these (1976, p. 269). Elsewhere, Wagner has commented on the probable time of origin of many of these saints' traditions in the city, suggesting that they can be traced to 1216 (1978, p. 136), or well before the 'Adal empire moved to the region of Harar. To its citizens, Harar is a holy city (Waldron 1979b, p. 26). If those who married into the family of the amir did become Muslims, however nominal, the implication for the structure of Harari-Oromo relations would be considerable. For, as the next sections will discuss, these Oromo marriage partners, and the families established thereby, seem to have been pivotal in the gradual orientation of the Oromo toward the city. Conversion of these marriage partners, if it took place, would deeply imbed the new elite of the Oromo—for such they were, I will claim—in the religious and ethical system of Islam, whose regional heart was Harar, dar-es salaam (Waldron 1979a, p.241).

However, an accurate summary is that, until the forced conversion of the Oromo by the Turco-Egyptians after 1875, most of the Oromo of the region retained their traditional religion. Islam during the early centuries of contact seems more to have fortified social and economic bonds among the Oromo already under the influence of the city than to have been the institution which itself brought the Oromo under Harari hegemony.

THE EMERGENCE OF AN OROMO ELITE

The alliance partners sought by the amirs were selected (or would offer themselves) from the Bokku (lineage spokesmen and ritual leaders) of the Afran Qallo, whose reign was traditionally limited by the eight-year span of the *gada* system. Whatever else it involved, intermarriage with the amirs provided access to new forms of wealth for the families concerned through income from trade protection and through the various forms of tribute, all of which might be rationalized as part of the marriage alliance and the rights established thereby. A sufficient motivation for Oromo patrilineal families' participation in transgenerationally continuous intermarriage would be continued access to this wealth and the privileges thus established. This, in turn, created permanent differences in wealth and thus a nascent class within the local Oromo populations, which had been strongly egalitarian upon initial contact with Harar.

Wealth in cattle was one manifestation of these alliances. Caulk reports (1977, p. 374) that Oromo in the region of Adele had established a clientship (perhaps better understood as a balanced reciprocity) whereby they herded the amir's cattle. By the mid-nineteenth century certain Oromo controlled vast herds. Amir Muhammed's grandfather, Mayu, an Anniya Oromo, is remembered in local proverbs. "Oromo tradition even makes Mayu the most famous in the whole of Afran-Qallo in general and Anniya in particular. Mayu was famous because of his uncountable wealth in cattle. People now say, 'Qufa aka Mayu' rich as Mayu)" (Muhammed Hassan 1973). Certainly it is not coincidental that Mayu's son, 'Ali, was a client of Amir Abd al-Shakur, and that the relationship was sufficiently strong that Mayu's grandson, Muhammed, was able to legitimize claim to the amirate by claiming descent from Abd al-Shakur. Such wealth in cattle suggests two factors indicating change from the Oromo traditional economy. First, it implies a control over Oromo herdsmen well beyond the family labor resources of such a man, although labor probably could be contracted among close lineage members. Second, aside from prestige purposes and exchanges involved in lineage politics, such wealth would be of utility primarily as it could, upon occasion, be translated into goods obtainable through the markets the city. The slow but definite spread of agriculture among the Oromo during period may have been partially initiated by such wealthy Oromo, although once again documentation is lacking. We may conclude, however, that the Oromo marriage partners of the amir were also economically related to the wealth of the city, and in furthering their interests may well have served to involve their kinsmen in the Harari economy. Their possession of positions of prestige and transgenerational wealth made more sense in the Harari system than in the egalitarian system of the Oromo, although their wealth certainly assisted their prominence and increased their influence in the *Roba Dori*.

By the mid-nineteenth century the Oromo had become closely tied to the market economy of Harar, and almost certainly the emergent Oromo elite was the connection for the Oromo majority.

"Oromo frequented the town's markets with additional supplies of milk and butter and with ghee which was exported. The Alia west of Harar supplied part of the coffee, tobacco and safflower, which the town's merchants sent to the coast. Others hunted elephant in the valleys south of Harar ...; in exchange they received cloth imported from India or perhaps the finer variety which was woven in the town Grain grown by the Qottu was traded by the Harari to the pastoralist Afar and Somali, ...Issa-owned camels carried ... gums and ostrich feathers brought to Harar from the Ogaden "(Caulk 1977, pp. 373-74).

EXTENSION OF THE HARARI ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Members of this nascent class of wealthy Oromo were further rewarded by land grants, which incorporated them, as officials, into the amir's administrative system as well as increased the conversion of the regions nearer the city to agricultural production.

The administrative system of Harar was probably a part of the city's 'Adal heritage, since the titles involved are similar to those in use throughout the 'Adali domain, far beyond the limited region controlled by Harar. The city is divided for administrative and taxation purposes into five "gates" or quarters, each of which during the time of the amirs was under an official termed *malaq*. Each quarter was further subdivided into neighborhoods, groups of which were administered by an official under the *malaq*, the *garad*.

An extension of this system was used for the taxation and supervision of farming regions under the amir's control. "A *garad* is the chief of a village, or sub-village; the *damin* is the chief of a whole tribe. Several *garadach*, sometimes five or six, come under one *damin*. The *garad* or the *damin*, each on his own level, is the Amir's administrative agent; he distributes justice, and collects taxes or tithes. At the head of the above-mentioned chiefs is the *dogin*-the governor of the outer districts" (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 23). Although the highest officer of the outlying regions, the *dogin*, was always a Harari, the other echelons could be-and often were-Oromo.

"The Amir could grant land or estates to those who proved loyal to the throne, or had rendered some sort of service to the state. Such persons usually were the tribal chiefs, military leaders and religious heads. With the donation of land a person was promoted to chieftainship if he were not already a chief. But as a rule the beneficiary would be the chief of a locality or clan who perhaps already owned large areas of land. In such cases the Amir simply recognized the position of the chief and might, sometimes, bestow more land on him (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 23).

The foregoing statement, it should be noted, tacitly recognizes individual land ownership, conventional among the Harari but alien to Oromo pastoralists, and the existence of permanent Oromo representatives, whose emergence was discussed above. Such appointees, besides receiving an estate in land from the amir, were also given regional monopolies in taxation, of which they could retain a certain amount. Moreover, "the bearer of the office enjoyed the free service rendered to him by the peasants under his *garadship* or *daminship*" (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 24). For the Harari amirs, this process of awarding titles and rights of taxation to important Oromo was an effective means of bringing the Oromo further into the Harari sphere, virtually establishing a system of indirect rule, although it should be reiterated that the amirs probably never had anything approaching a monopoly on the power entailed in this system. It thus approximates a small-scale feudal system.

A note in Yusuf Ahmed's text implies that those Oromo who were thus appointed were already "chiefs," a concept which is alien to the original Afran Qallo structure except in the sense of Bokku, "lineage spokesman." "Each clan or *gosa* had its own chief, to whom homage was paid" (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 23). If the developmental sequence traced in this discussion is anywhere near correct, these chiefs would, in fact, be the alliance partners of the amirs who had begun to concentrate wealth in the manner discussed above. The incipient stratification of the Oromo, then, would be greatly accentuated by this incorporation of the Oromo wealthy into the Harari ruling cadre.

The amirs of Harar benefited from this system in economic and political terms. Part of the taxes collected by Oromo *garads* and *damins* would be retained by them, thereby increasing their wealth and, indirectly, increasing their ties with the market economy of the city. Part of the taxes would also be transmitted to the amir's treasury, and this would be one of the payoffs. Politically, there were overt and covert implications. If marriage and other personal alliances were the original connection between Oromo leaders and Harari amirs, the awarding of *garad* and *damin* titles was a bureaucratic routinization of these alliances (which nonetheless had to be actively sought and retained). Such Oromo officials thus had dual structures of obligation, with the position in the amirate counterbalanced by Roba Dori based obligations. Perhaps the amirs could use such positions to negotiate military and political alliances within the Roba Dori, as based on these overlapping interests of the Oromo officials. Certainly, the establishment of

outlying administrative units provided a buffer zone vis-à-vis the majority of the Oromo whose interests were not thus co-opted.

PEASANTIZATION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE QOTTU CULTIVATORS

In this administrative and political context, the undocumented but highly significant transformation of the Oromo in many regions around the city from pastoralists into agriculturalists can be understood. Although the Harari and their predecessors had been agriculturalists, part of whose production was oriented toward market exchange, the arrival of the Oromo, as we have seen, virtually extirpated the outlying agricultural production system. By the mid-nineteenth century, at least, this situation had changed. Richard Burton describes the approach to Harar from the Marar plains as being agricultural and inhabited by "the people of the Kutti" or "cultivated districts" (Burton 1966, p. 155), and he goes on to describe an Oromo population of agriculturalists and pastoralists who are fully involved in market exchanges with Harar. "In the lower (Erer) valley, a mass of waving *holcus* (sorghum), we met a multitude of Galla peasants coming from the city market with new pot lids and the empty gourds which had contained their butter, *ghi* and milk (Burton 1966" p. 170; parentheses added).

Burton's "Kutti" certainly represents the term Qottu, as agricultural Oromo of the region are still conventionally described, a term meaning "tiller of the soil"; "In each tribe the Galla are divided into two classes-one of farmers called Kottu or Argata, and one of cattle breeders called Prontuma "The Kottu are hard-working people and enjoy fame as good farmers" (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p.21, citing Mokhtar 1876, pp. 381-83).

The adoption of Harari agricultural practices by adjacent Oromo was a gradual process, which derived from both demographic pressure and the growing interdependency with the markets of the city. I feel that the conversion of Oromo from independent pastoralists to agricultural peasants was largely a managed process, and that the impetus for this managed transformation can be speculated upon as a two-part phenomenon. The first motive for converting Oromo to sedentary agriculturalists can be suggested as stemming from the interests of the wealthy Oromo, particularly those who had been awarded land and titles under the amirate. The land they were awarded was arable land whose revenues could be maximized only through agricultural use. This first aspect of the transformation of Oromo economy, then, would be the product of efforts of these Oromo landlords. Closer to the city were lands controlled by the amir, by his officials, and by ordinary Harari citizens. In the early nineteenth century, most Harari farmed their own lands (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 24; field notes 1962-1963). Some ordinary Harari and many of the amir's household and officials utilized Qottu labor under one of two systems of land tenure: "These two systems were known as *oyna* and *harta*. Of the two *oyna* is the older system and regulated the shares of tenants and owner on the basis of a division of the farmland that was cultivable. The second, called *harta* ... by the Kottu and *garaban garab* by the Harari was based on a division of the proceeds of the whole area cultivated" (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 25). Thus, in the Harari controlled lands directly outside the Harari-farmed region, there existed a true Oromo peasantry, directly dependent upon Harari landowners.

How, in time, were these Qottu recruited? If I may jump abruptly to the conditions of the city observed in the 1960s, it may be possible to extract processes by which the emergence of the Harari-controlled Qottu peasantry can be understood. At that time, in numbers varying from a dozen to a hundred, destitute Oromo men, women, and children congregated in the Faraz Magalla in the center of Harar. Although these Oromo were not on the established rounds followed by pilgrims and other religious alms-seekers, they survived by begging. It was from this standing labor pool that Harari in the 1960s recruited watchmen and farmers, both termed *harashi*. Such persons would be established on a Harari farm, if they were reliable. In payment they would receive meals and shelter but would not receive shares from annual harvests. They were always free to return to their village of origin. These Oromo were largely local

refugees, driven to the Faraz Magalla by the collapse of their household economy, usually due to crop failure. If a similar process existed in earlier days, whereby disenfranchised Oromo congregated at conventional sites in the city, then this seems a likely source of recruitment for the labor, which became the peasantry under Harari control, the Qottu.

Certainly the basic importance of this process is to indicate that demographic pressures could have systematically culminated in unaligned (and desperate) Oromo labor sources. The pressures implied might have been manifested in a gradual but accelerating 'manner as population increased in the pastoral regions.

They certainly would be considerably aggravated by the irregularities in rainfall which characterize this region, and which are now manifested in localized crop failure as well as generalized famine. The peasantization of the Oromo seems to have been a progressive but limited process under the reign of the amirs, whereby the Harari were able to derive an almost free source of labor from starved-out Oromo seeking survival in the city.

Part of the peasantization entailed the adoption of Islam. At least in the twentieth century, the term Qottu, as well as implying a farmer, also distinctly means, in the region of Harar, "an Oromo who is Muslim."

CONCLUSION: INCIPIENT STRATIFICATION AND THE HARARI-OROMO RELATIONSHIP

A society is said to be stratified, in anthropological parlance, if one segment of a population-usually a minority elite-dominates and rules the majority of that population by virtue of its control over productive resources, for example, vital water supplies or agricultural lands (Friend 1957, p. 24). Stratified systems are viewed as an intermediate phase of political evolution, developing from kinship-based societies and culminating under certain circumstances in fully developed state structures. The concept of stratification, in this usage, is clearly parallel to the Marxian concept of feudalism, but is framed without the latter's historical particulars.

By 1875, Harari-Oromo relationships, developing within the region's political-economic context, had resulted in the appearance of a bi-ethnic ruling class, comprised of the amirs of Harar as one faction and the emerging Oromo elite as the other. However, the resulting pattern of stratification can only be deemed incipient, rather than total. Although the market, agricultural, and religious patterns, which underlay the changes, experienced by the Oromo centered on Harar, the power and control of the vast majority of the productive resources of the region, necessary for meeting the defining conditions of stratification, ultimately rested in Oromo hands.

Harari amirs, in effect, purchased the continued existence of the city and its trade lifelines through kinship-based alliances and concurrent economic rewards. The drain on the wealth of the city deriving from these pacts was considerable and partially accounts for the virtual impoverishment of the Harari citizenry. The political implications of the alliances were of paramount importance in determining the outcomes of succession disputes within the Harari amirate. However, instead of becoming resolved in a consolidated ruling class structure, they existed as tentative links between two ethnic groups, negotiated by the amirs who justly feared Oromo military superiority.

Had Amir Muhammed ibn 'Ali (1856-1875) been successful in his attempt to consolidate his interests with the Oromo elite, as seems to have been his intent, a true stratification would have resulted which might have provided the ensuing Harari-Oromo political system with the stability, control of resources, and military strength that would have made it a significant power in the Horn of Africa.

However, Muhammed's machinations alienated the Harari populace, who, although locally powerless, were tradesmen in contact with outside political powers. By inviting the Ottoman Turco-Egyptians to Harar, they took the step, which effectively terminated the independent development of the region's political economy. From 1875 onward, Harar and the surrounding Oromo were subjugated to the position of a secondary periphery in a contest between the expanding Ethiopian empire, on the one hand, and a succession of overseas powers, on the other. The incipient stratification which had developed over three centuries of Harari-Oromo contact provided a preadaptation for the consequent social and political fate of these populations, a subject which will be treated in a later publication.

NOTES

1. This article is stimulated by Muhammed Hassan's *The Relation Between Harar and the Surrounding Oromo Between 1800-1887*. My own fieldwork in Harar (1962-1964, 1975, 1977) concentrated on the inner workings of the Harari populace. Only after obtaining access to Muhammed Hassan's important work was I able to reconsider the historical development of Harari-Oromo relations. Richard Caulk's excellent article has also synthesized material from Muhammed Hassan and other sources from this period from an essentially historical perspective.

2. Probably the institution of the *abban* was the means by which certain Somali lineages became merchandising specialists themselves, either selling goods derived from caravans in local Somali markets or redistributing them at the demand of lineage claimants. It would be extremely interesting to know more about the *abban*, particularly how such a person managed to establish safe passage through his own territory. It should be noted, also, that by the early nineteenth century, the institution of *abban* had been established at least among the Nole Oromo (Yusuf Ahmed 1961, p. 10).

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