CLASS AND TRADE: A CASE STUDY OF ETHIOPIA

By Robin Murray And Richard Pankhurst

Paper For The Conference On Public Choice And Development: The New Institutional Economics And Third World Development, London,

17th-19th September 1993

CLASS AND TRADE: A CASE STUDY OF ETHIOPIA

I

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this paper derives from a proposition of Stephen Hymer's, that all trade should be seen as class trade. Twenty years ago Hymer taught a course at the New School of Social Research on the International Economy which traced the relationship of trade to the reproduction of the power of local ruling classes in a variety of pre-capitalist formations, in ancient Greece, in Rome, in medieval Europe, in the slave empires of the Arab world, and the tributary and feudal empires of Asia and Africa.[1] In each case he was concerned to show how the local ruling classes controlled international trade in order to ensure their monopolisation of particular imports which were key to the maintenance or expansion of their class power. Weapons and other material elements of war were always prominent, as were status items, and in some cases (as with Meillassoux's Guro) dowry goods. In all cases the relationship between the control of trade and class power was direct and evident. Trade was directly administered. Participation in it was restricted, and commonly entrusted to foreigners or dominated castes. In many cases trade was conducted on the margins of empires or in no-mans-land in between. There was therefore a social and a geographical isolation of trade designed to strengthen the monopoly of the dominant class.

Hymer drew much of his material from the work of economic historians and economic anthropologists, and much of his inspiration from the French school of Marxist anthropologists. In these circles the proposition that all trade is class trade was trivial. When it came to capitalist trade, however, and the utilitarian tradition of trade analysis (from classical to neo-classical theory, both hard and soft) the idea was not so commonplace.

In this tradition, the analysis of the economy is separated from the analysis of society. Trade becomes the result of the economic contract between autonomous, socially homogeneous nation states. The states have their own utility functions - and representative governments organise their trade (and later their financial) relations in the light of these functions.

The theoretical relegation of class and power in part reflects the change in the way in which class 'appears'. The evident freedom of the market masks the structural basis for the domination of capital. Thus domination comes about indirectly, unlike the direction domination of the slave master, the tributary king and the feudal lord. Merchants are brought in from the margins to the centre of social economy, as (geographically) are the main markets. The state exercises a looser control over traders, and in the strongest laisser faire states the abolition of controls becomes the central imperative of the dominant ideology.

Hymer wished to go behind this appearance, and counter utilitarian theory by restoring the unity of social and economic analysis. He wanted to show how capitalist trade, like pre-capitalist trade, was class trade, and how - with the development of capitalism - the direct control of the pre-capitalist state over particular use values is diffused into the indirect control of the capitalist state over the accumulation of exchange value.

In the strongest capitalist states the operation of the international market ensures the domination of the national capital without state protection. The role of these states becomes supportive, encouraging or forcing other states to reduce their barriers so that the international law of value can extend and deepen its effects. As Joan Robinson put it, free trade is the mercantalism of the strong. In weaker capitalist countries, the state protects its capital against the international law of value, controlling imports, encouraging exports through local co-ordination, cheapening inputs, reducing the power of organised labour. These measures are, in form at least, <u>general</u>, changing the conditions for categories of firms, but not directly intervening in favour of or against particular firms. In this they reflect the generality of exchange value, in contrast to the particularity of use values, and the particularity of pre-capitalist controls of trade.

With the extension of international firms, however, the relation of trade and class once again become clearer. An ever greater proportion of trade becomes institutional intra-firm trade. Trade policy can be seen to follow the interests of particular firms. Whereas in pre-capitalist formations traders were rigidly controlled by the state, in modern capitalism more and more states find themselves heavily influenced if not controlled by international firms and their capital movements. The relative autonomy of the early capitalist states reflected in trade policy is now restricted for subordinate economies. The margins for import substitution and autonomous accumulation become narrower, the discipline of crisis and restructuring sharper, the requirements for entering into international competition more demanding.

In an earlier article, Hymer depicted one culmination of this process, a world economy dominated by international firms, with head offices and R&D centred in a common latitude, New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Moscow, Peking, Tokyo, and branch plants scattered elsewhere according to the laws of location.[2] He gave a spatial mapping to the organisational distinctions of Chandler. The result was structural and static and did not reflect his later treatment of the development of the world economy. But it did indicate the way in which he saw the world economy moving, with increasingly direct organisation of the economy replacing the hidden organisation of the market.

In this paper we will discuss these themes in relation to the old Ethiopian empire, an area covering what are now the modern states of Eritrea and Ethiopia.[3] This is an area whose insulation from the capitalist world lasted longer than most and which has been discontinuously transformed only since 1945. Its earlier history exemplifies many of the structural propositions about trade and class, and trade and empire, and the following two parts of this paper will deal with each in turn. In the final section, covering the area's more recent experience, we will be concerned with the ways in which structural relations change with the increasing imbrication of the pre-capitalist society and the capitalist world economy, culminating in the overthrow of Haile Salassie in 1974.

II

CLASS AND TRADE IN PRE CAPITALIST ETHIOPIA

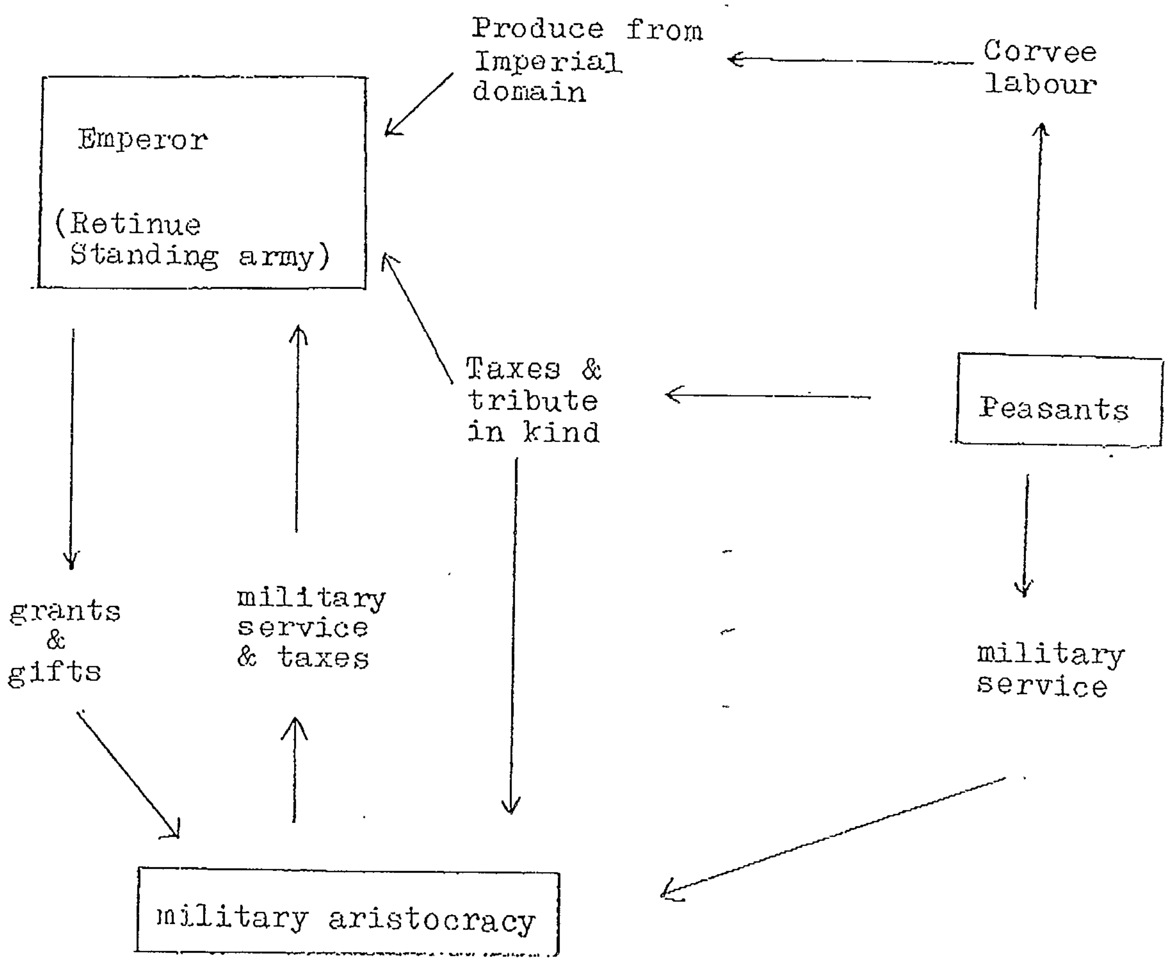
Class and tribute

We shall begin with a characterisation of the class structure of the Christian highlands - the area which has dominated Ethiopian imperial history - and then examine the relationship of this structure and long-distance trade. The main elements of the social economy of the area are shown in Figure 1. There were two principal classes, the peasantry and a military aristocracy. Although some land was tenanted, the majority of the peasants were nominally free, with secure rights to land. But their surplus labour and surplus product were systematically appropriated by the aristocracy a) through forced labour services on the lords domain, and b) through taxes, tribute, gifts or plunder of goods in kind. Of these it was the latter which was the more significant and which set a premium on military force and an efficient administrative system as far as the distribution of surplus product within the aristocracy was concerned.

The aristocracy itself was arranged hierarchically. Each level derived rights, and received gifts from the level above, and was obliged to provide military services in return. Each level had a similar structure with a retinue of soldiers, servants, and administrators funded by appropriations from the peasants. Some of the administrators like the subordinate noble members of the retinue would themselves have rights of tribute, justice and so on. The regular soldiers however remained directly attached and dependant on their particular lord, and were until the twentieth century a minority of the fighting forces. The bulk of the soldiers were the same peasants whose surplus product was ultimately the subject of the warfare for which they were drafted.

This social economy clearly has some similarities to that of Western European and Japanese feudalism. Ethiopian emperors like European feudal monarchs, were forced to decentralise authority, justice and a share of the surplus product to local lords in order to maintain their pre-eminent claim over an empire too large for direct administration. Ethiopian emperors

Figure 1


Produce from Imperial domain
Corvee labour
Emperor
(Retinue Standing army)
Taxes & tribute in kind
Peasants
grants & gifts
military service & taxes
military service
military aristocracy

(from at least the 14th century) claimed the supreme rights over land as they did over justice. But power, like its twin pillars - agricultural taxation and military mobilisation - remained firmly decentralised as it did in European feudalism. Furthermore, and following from this forced decentralisation, the Ethiopian nobility were landed, close to the soil from which they drew their tax, tribute and military levies, and part of which they farmed. They were quite distinct therefore from the absentee landowners of the slave empires of antiquity, or the absentee tax farmers of the Islamic empires of the Middle East: much closer to the agrarian lords of the great feudal empires. Thus, though the Ethiopian system lacked some of the 'forms' of European and Japanese feudalism, notably that of vassalage, it shared much of its substance.[4]

In other ways, however, it was decisively different. First the peasantry were not serfs, but were formally free. It was the land they worked which was the subject of obligations, notably the obligation to pay tribute.[5] Rights to tribute (gult) were the main rights granted to subordinate nobles. It was the state's right to tribute from all land which was more important than its claim to the land per se.

Second, aristocratic and church domains were relatively smaller than in medieval Europe, and this in part explains the tendency for the Ethiopian aristocracy to be concerned with distribution rather than production, with developing new means of taxation and tribute rather than changes in the methods of cultivation.

Nor did the existence of a free peasantry stimulate agricultural innovation and growth. In the South individual peasant holdings remained small, tributes and taxes onerous, and there was only the most limited market for land itself. In the North, land was held communally, which acted as a disincentive to improvements in agricultural methods, and provided a cushion against landlessness and a break on the growth of agricultural wage labour.[6]

Ethiopian agriculture accordingly exhibited no major changes in techniques or productivity until the early part of the 20th century. The surplus product from the land, while much larger than many other areas of Africa, and certainly large enough to sustain a significant unproductive, military aristocracy for nearly a millenium, nevertheless did not grow enough to allow the consolidation of this aristocracy into the apparatus of a centralised state.

Thirdly, Ethiopia had none of those independent towns which formed the nodes of accumulation in Western European feudalism. Towns existed as the seats of nobles and their retinue, as centres of local or long distance trade, and as a home for clusters of artisans - but even the largest imperial capitals remained relatively small. Gondar at its height in the 17th and 18th centuries had perhaps 65,000 inhabitants, though it fell to little more than 1,000 by the end of the 19th century. No other town in the empire had permanent populations exceeding 10,000 at the beginning of the 19th century, the main market towns commonly containing no more than a few hundred houses.[7] Ethiopia's mountainous interior and its separation from the sea always limited the development of commodity production, as well as internal and external trade. Towns, like handicrafts and trade, remained firmly under the control of the nobility, dominated by aristocratic rather than mercantile imperatives.

For these reasons - the absence of serfdom, of innovating agricultural structures and of independent towns - it is useful to distinguish the Ethiopian social economy from that of medieval Europe, and to see it as a predominantly tributary rather than feudal mode of production. It never gave rise to that growth of commodity production and primitive accumulation which was so marked in Western Europe from the 11th century. Shut off from intensive agricultural expansion on the land, and mercantile expansion in the towns, Ethiopia's tributary economy turned on another dynamic.

Let us return to Figure 1. Any noble's forces consisted of two elements: his retinue including his bodyguard/standing army, and his levies from subordinate lords. The retinue was more dependable. It had no source of independent power and was commonly sourced from distant areas in order to diminish the likelihood of cross alliances with rival lords. In principle a lord would prefer to substitute retinue for levies, but he faced the constraint of provisions, i.e. he was limited by the quantity of surplus product yielded by his domains. To protect his existing domains (and therefore retinue) and hopefully expand them required levies, and this meant yielding rights over tribute and tax to other nobles.

To some extent there was a cumulative benefit in expansion. New conquests brought in plunder, tribute and tax allowing an increase in retinue and an improvement in the relative power of the victorious lord vis a vis other nobles. Such an improvement might be expected to consolidate allegiances, and encourage further expansion. Yet just as the low level of agricultural productivity acted as an intensive limit to the expansion of the retinue, so the difficulty of the terrain and the rudimentary state of the means of communications constituted an extensive limit to the expansion of power.

The system of decentralisation gave the nobles independent if subordinate sources of power - over a quantity of armed men, over local tax, and over administration. The more distant the territory, the more difficult it was for the suzerain to supervise or discipline subordinates, the greater therefore was the share of the surplus product appropriated by the subordinates, and the greater their relative independence. A dominant lord would always aim to reproduce his position by maintaining a evident military superiority, so that the mere threat of force could be added to actual force (like paper money to gold) as an instrument of continued domination. He would also build alliances, based on the promise of shares in the benefits of expansion and reinforced by inter-marriage and gifts.

In such circumstances much could depend on the military capabilities of individual lords, their capacity for mobilising levies, organising and inspiring armies, planning a strategy of domination. The death of a leader in battle would commonly lead to the collapse of an army. The death of an emperor could signal the collapse of an alliance. Thus while the structure of power in Ethiopia was reproduced over many centuries, there was a fluidity in the range of empire and sub-empires, and in the personnel of power. Lineage offered no single guarantee of succession (titles and status were in principle not formally inherited). A weak son would lose allegiances built up by his father. A subordinate lord who was also a good fighter could upset a disparity of number by better military strategy and organisation.

In summary, the dynamic of this system centred on the pressures on the nobility to increase their control of surplus product in order to fund an improved machinery of power (expanded retinue, more weapons, firmer allegiances). They pursued surplus product extensively, through military campaigns, i.e. force was explicitly at the centre of distribution. But the ossified level of agricultural productivity, the topographical and climatic barriers to mobility, and the absence of any element of production other than land which could be easily monopolised (such as the hydraulic works of the ancient Chinese empires) all made it difficult to sustain a domination and eliminate military competition. Subordinate lords had an irreducible access to their own independent sources of power-armed men and surplus product. This was the basis for the reproduction of competitive relations over so long a period of time.

Trade and class

We are now in a position to see the significance of long distance trade for this system. Long distance trade offered military equipment and luxury articles. If these could be monopolised they would provide the material basis for a more sustained military superiority (through weapons) and firmer allegiances (through gifts). The relationship of trade and the highland social economy as it developed is shown in Figure 2. The right hand side is reproduced as in Figure 1. We now add imports, exports, and traders.

The first point to be made is that the products and practice of long distance trade were separate from the internal system. Export items came from outside the dominant areas of the highlands. From the 13th century onwards slaves came predominantly from Muslim areas particularly the South and South-West (there was indeed a formal prohibition on the export of Christian slaves). Gold came from the alluvial river beds of the West, and civet in the 19th century from Enerea and Kaffa, both Muslim areas in the Middle West. Even ivory, which was widely available in the Christian highlands (requiring wooded areas for successful hunting) seems often to have been brought from non-Christian areas in the South and South-West, as increasingly was coffee.

Traders too, were external. From the 13th century the main merchants were Muslims. From at least the 17th century onwards they were assigned separate villages to live in, and markets, too, took place in specified towns. The routes themselves were often broken up with merchants limited to particular sections of the route, (the king of Enerea blocked the north-eastern-South-Western route at Sakka in the 1830's for example, to force exchanges between South-Western merchants and those from Begemdir and the coast, and the kings of Shoa often imposed similar regulations.[8] Some kings would provide armed escorts for caravans, concerned to prevent not

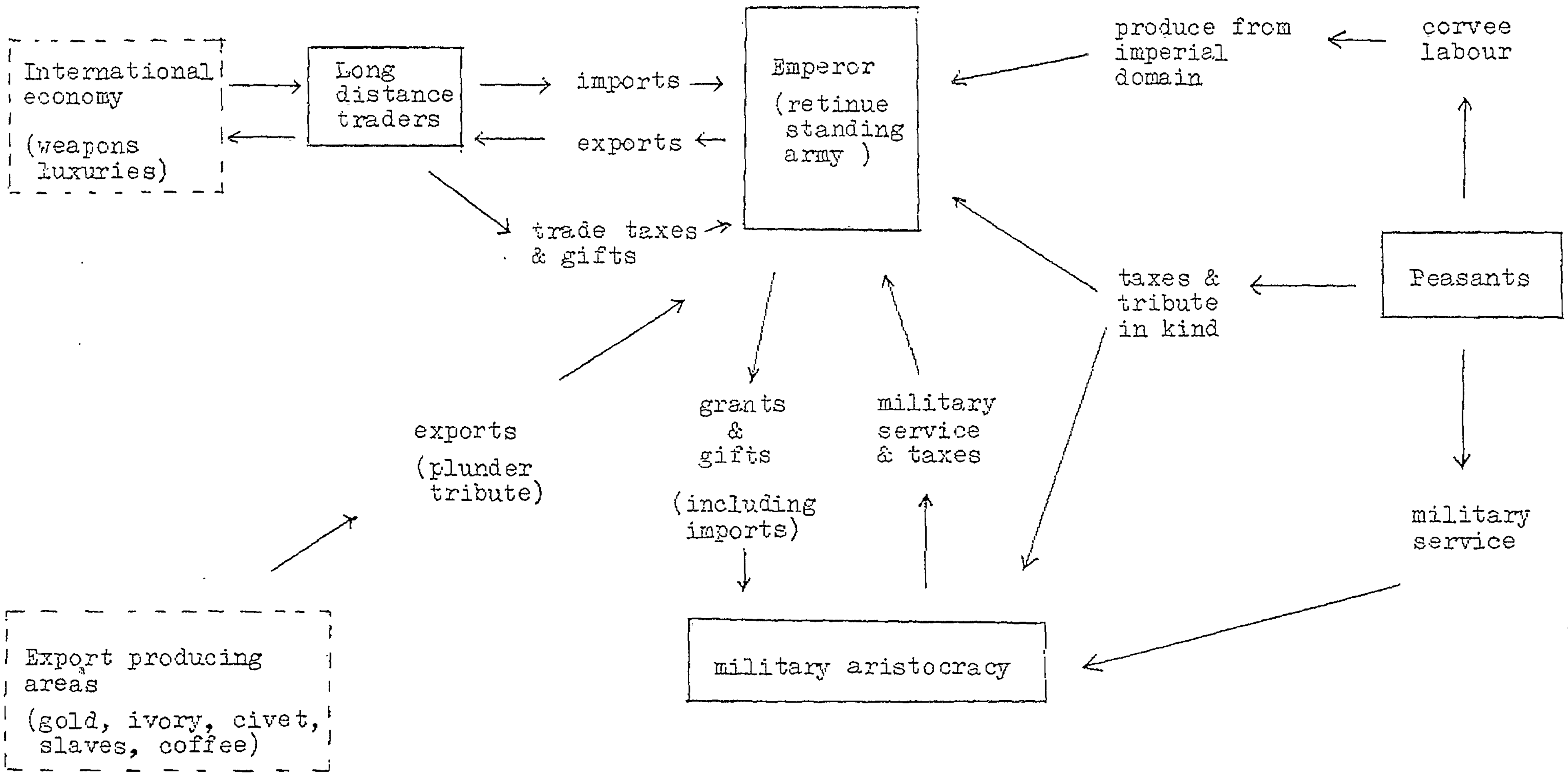

International economy
(weapons luxuries)
Long distance traders
imports
exports
trade taxes & gifts
Emperor
(retinue standing army)
produce from imperial domain
corvee labour
Peasants
taxes & tribute in kind
military service
exports
(plunder tribute)
grants & gifts
(including imports)
military service & taxes
military aristocracy
Export producing areas
(gold, ivory, civet, slaves, coffee)

Figure 2

only robbery but unauthorised exchange as well. Geographical and social separation was thus given high priority. It was clearly much easier to impose duties with trade routes administered in this way. But it would be wrong to see the control of trade routes simply from a fiscal point of view. Of course duties were levied, and many minor lords particularly in the north are best seen as rentiers of the customs post (indeed customs posts were sold or farmed out to the highest bidder in the North of Ethiopia in the 18th century). But many more powerful rulers granted special privileges to long distance traders. Sahle Selassie in Showa in the first part of the 19th century protected foreign merchants, raised only light duties and freed them from the monopolies imposed on local Showans.[9] The concerns of such kings as these was as much to foster trade for 'equal exchange' as it was for taxation, but it was an equal exchange of royal controlled products for restricted imports rather than any generalised trade. The strict isolation of trade was therefore aimed to preserve the monopoly of the benefits of exchange for the royal household.

In some cases there were explicit rules underlining the royal monopoly. In the early 19th century there were royal monopolies preventing Showans from acquiring foreign made fineries, or from owning or selling the chief export goods gold, ivory and civet. The kings of Jimma and Enerea both tried to enforce a royal monopoly on gold from the West in this period. In the last quarter of the 19th century, the Showan king Menelik placed monopolies on ivory and gold, and appears to have controlled a good deal of the civet. These were all monopolies of circulation.

From what we know none of these major kingdoms controlled production. In the early part of the century gold in Wollega was panned by slaves, but there is no evidence that they were the slaves of major kings. Ivory like coffee was gathered 'independently' in the South and South-West - and even civet appears to have been directly controlled once it had reached the 'market'. The exception was slaves, the product which dominated Ethiopian exports for at least six centuries. While slaves were also captured by traders, the major kingdoms of the interior had their own direct source of supply, through specific slave expeditions to the Muslim areas in the South and South-West and from captives taken in the course of more generalised warfare. This is the only case where the major rulers did not depend on traders for their export supplies.

Returning to Figure 2, we see that those with political power had a double access to imports, the first through duties on incoming caravans, the second through the barter or sale of export goods themselves either appropriated directly like slaves (or other booty), or derived from levies on exports. The monopolised imports could then be used to strengthen the ruler's relative power. Guns from the 16th century onwards were the most jealously sought for, and these were usually reserved for the retinue. Sahle Salassie for example had some 500 matchlocks by the early 1840's which were used only by his bodyguard, most of whom were the king's bondsmen or ex-slaves - and even then the muskets were only issued to those on duty, and were collected in every night.[10]

Luxuries were also of importance, glassware, spices, fine cloths, brass, and gradually medical remedies. These too, played a role in increasing a king's relative power because of the privileged character of luxuries in the Ethiopian social structure. Some prestige goods were made locally, the honey wine tej for example, or embroidered shammas, or the craftwork of artisans - and these were explicitly restricted for use by the aristocracy, (in the case of fashioned items craftsmen were quartered in separate villages for the sake of control). The luxury imports had no such restrictions, and did not need to have because of the control exercised on their importation. Those who exercised this control thus possessed the power of the gift, an element in the securing of allegiance.

The monopoly of trade offered to the king or emperor a means for extending and securing power, and thus, indirectly, a means for increasing his surplus product. But trade cannot be considered as a primary element in the explanation of the character of the Christian social economy. The surplus product is derived from the land and appropriated through tribute and plunder. This is the core of the tributary mode of production. The control of long distance trade is neither necessary not sufficient to reproduce the system. We find tributary relations continuing in Ethiopia in times of minimal long distance trade, and in areas with little if any control on trade which does pass by. Similarly we do not find the development of tributary relations among nomadic groups who take temporary control of long distance trade routes. The decisive changes among these groups appear rather to come from their transition to settled agriculture. It is then that new ruling classes develop whose position may later be strengthened by their relation to trade routes.[11]

Wealth or power

This analysis stands at odds with one group of Francophone scholars (notably Coquery and Amin) who attach prime importance to the control of long distance trade in their analysis of aristocratic power in tropical Africa. Coquery sees little surplus product being derived from low productivity agriculture, and what there was came to be used for either ostentatious consumption or 'synthetic' redistribution. The major part of surplus product she suggests comes from trade. African despots 'exploited' neighbouring tribes through plunder or buying goods below their value. The 'surplus value' thus extracted 'enabled the ruling class to be reinforced through the accumulation of prestige goods, sometimes hoarded, more often wasted, in the framework of an economy of ostentation'[12] Amin also saw the control of trade as a means of transferring surplus from one society to another, thus increasing accumulated surplus in the aristocracy.[13]

Emmanuel Terray in commenting on these writers, points out that political dominance and commercial dominance may lie in the hands of distinct groups, and that in areas of competitive trade routes levies (if any) are light. Coquery's case of a monopoly of circulation (which he does not dispute in terms of her own examples) is therefore not generalisable.[14]

We would add a further comment. There is a sense (in Coquery at least) in which she puts her emphasis on exchange value rather than use value, on general enrichment through trade rather than the procurement of particular goods. It is no accident that she refers to goods being obtained below their value, or of surplus value being 'accumulated' in the form of prestige goods. There is a certain a-historic Ricardianism in this use of 'value', each product having taken a quantity of labour time to be produced, and the value of the products being redistributed in the process of exchange (the Ricardian 'exploitation in exchange').

It is surely illegitimate to assume any ratios of labour time in the exchanges which she describes. For the exchange is not about labour time, but about use values.[15] The composition of exports and imports in these kingdoms appears similar to those in Ethiopia, the exports are specific non-staples which are relatively unimportant in local consumption, and the imports are goods which are difficult if not impossible to obtain locally, luxuries, means of production and weapons. To talk about surplus product (quite apart from surplus 'value') in this context is misleading. It suggests utilitarian calculations about labour time expended on exports to exchange for imports which are required for a similarly utilitarian increase in consumption ('economy of ostentation'). Only from this perspective does it make sense to compare surplus product from domestic labour and surplus product derived from long distance trade. In fact it is beside the point whether the product derived from trade is surplus or not. The point is the particular product, its exclusiveness, and this is altogether distinct from local production of basic necessities and the structures of exploitation related to these. It may be that there is an asymmetric transfer of goods from one area to another, through plunder, or simple tax. But this is not necessary for the significance of trade to these military aristocracies to be established. Trade is still important even with 'equal exchange'.

A similar point can be made in relation to Terray's formulation. He rightly insists on analysing the significance of long distance trade in terms of relations of production. But he restricts himself to the production of traded goods themselves. He argues that it was difficult to build a major network of exploitation in a segmented kin-based system because of the difficulty of mobilising large numbers of labourers, and because techniques were simple and materials could be readily obtained.

These limits to exploitation did not however hold true for captives. They could be directly controlled, and accumulated. They could be set to work in relatively productive areas, which tended to be export production. The surplus realised on the sale of the exports would return in the form of imports, mainly luxuries and weapons, of which the weapons could be used to increase the number of slaves and thus the quantity of exports and surplus in the next time period.

All revolved round the 'dictates of the reproduction of the relations of captivity'.[16] Local free men were taxed lightly in order to ensure support for slave campaigns. Military organisations being at the centre of this process was also at the centre of social organisation. The role of the state that grew in these areas was primarily as in instrument of force for the reproduction of captive society.

Trade thus created no wealth, but it was an essential element in the functioning of the entire social formation. Speaking of the Abron and Ashanti aristocracies (exporting gold and kola respectively), he writes, that they 'were anxious to take part in long distance trade because apart from hoarding it was the only means at their disposal for 'realising' the surplus product they extorted from their captives, and so to obtain for themselves on the one hand the luxury goods which serve as materials basis for their social superiority, and on the other hand goods - captives, weapons - which enabled regular reproduction of the social formation.'[17]

In terms of Figure 2, whereas Coquery and Amin emphasised the flows of traded goods and their relations with the ruling aristocracy, Terray brings in to his system the conditions of production of exports, the relationship between the aristocracy and other free men, and the significance of military campaigns. What he neglects in his argument is the right hand side, the conditions of production of the means of subsistence. There is a hint that this is partly the work of slaves too, in which case the area was more fundamentally tied in to other economies than was Ethiopia.

If this is the case the importance of long distance trade is not so much a 'vent for surplus' but rather the provider of labour power, or the means for capturing that labour power, for exploitation in the internal economy. The point is that there appears to be a significant amount of unproductive labour in the societies discussed. These had to be fed, and the relations stemming from the production of the means of subsistence (which were not apparently imported) may well have been more central than those stemming from export production. Terray's tendency not to distinguish sharply between the character of domestic and imported goods, and his consequent characterisation of long distance trade as 'realising' surplus product from captive labour (when it may in fact do nothing of the sort) leads us to question whether trade is central to internal exploitation in the way he suggests.

In contrast, therefore, to both the circulationist, and the vent for surplus theories of trade and class, we see trade as reinforcing theoretically prior relations of production. The main trading concern of dominant aristocracies is less with surplus product, but with the use values of the imports, and their role in strengthening the power of individual aristocrats and the class itself. This is not to diminish the significance of trade in explaining the history and character of a particular social formation. On the contrary, we want to argue that an analysis of the control of trade is central to an understanding of the course of Ethiopian development. Rather we have wanted to establish the nature of the Ethiopian social economy so that we can more clearly assess the significance of changes in the volume, flow and character of the imported use values themselves.

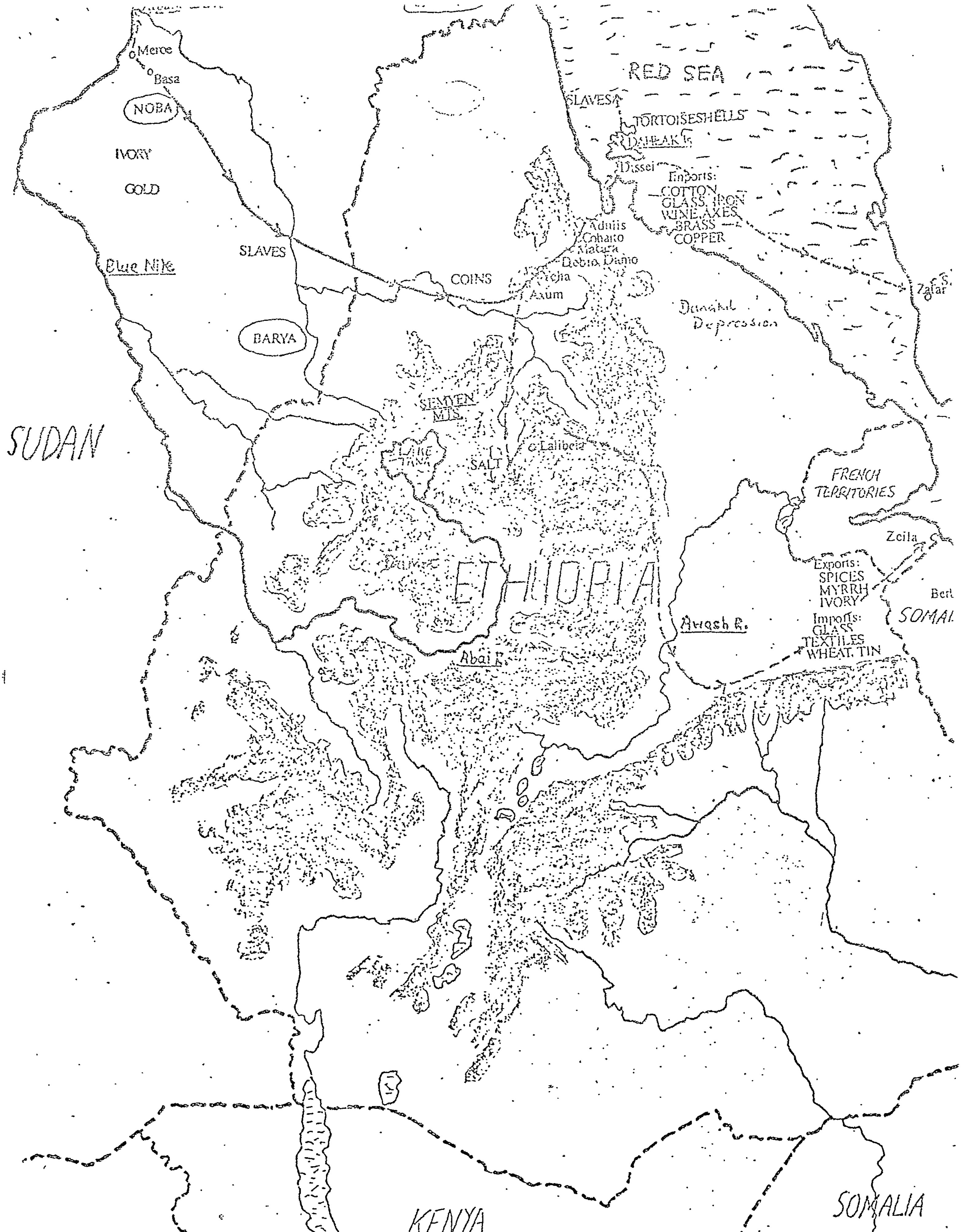
III

TRADE AND EMPIRE

In our earlier discussion of the tributary mode of production we identified a number of variables which determined the locus and range of any single noble's hegemony. They were: i) the level of agricultural productivity; ii) the speed of communication; iii) military ability; iv) the relative level of his military technology; v) his control of luxury goods. We suggest that the first two were the major constraints to the expansion of direct rule, and both remained remarkably constant in Ethiopia over the last millenium. They cannot by themselves, therefore, satisfactorily explain the shifts that took place in the location of empire over this period, (and before) from Axum in the North to Lalibela then further South to Showa, then North-West to Gondar, much later to Tigre in the North-East and finally South once more to Showa (see maps 1 and 2).

Where scholars have offered any more than a serial treatment of these shifts, it has usually been in heroic terms, emphasising military ability. This, as we have seen, is a factor, but tends to be confined in its explanatory power. It will help explain shifts in power within a dynasty, and within an area, but cannot account for these slower sustained shifts across the country as a whole. For a satisfactory understanding we must introduce the fourth and fifth variables, and this means the control of long distance trade.

There were two main requirements for effective control of trade. The first, an economic one, was that the king should have control of the export items which could be exchanged for imports. The second, a politico-military one, was that no one should be in a position to appropriate the key imports by non-economic means. Since most of the exports have historically come from the interior, particularly the South and South-west, the first requirement gave immediate advantages to inland rulers. But in relation to the second point it was those in control of the littoral regions who were in the best position. The history of the Ethiopian state has consisted of movements between these poles.



Land over 2000 metres
Present National Boundary
River

Sana — Settlement
TIN — Traded or Produced Good
Abai R. — Natural Feature
(NOBA) — Tribe

Major Trade route: Meroe-Axum-Adulis 3RD to 7TH Centuries A.D.
Other Trade Routes

Map 1

Ethiopia's geographical cycle - extending as far back as the 3rd century A.D. has run as follows. Internal empires rose in the neighbourhood (though not usually at the centre) of export production areas. They sought outlets to the sea which were independent of monopoly control. But the very development of trade on these new routes led either to the growth of a littoral rival, and/or to the foreign occupation of the trading outlets. Yet none of these three groups - the central empires, the littoral empires, or the foreign enclaves - were able to establish permanent control. Each had their disadvantages which led to their eventual decline and allowed the cycle to continue.

The instability of the central empires lay in their isolation from the source of military advantage - the world market. They were open to squeezing, often in a pincer movement down alternative routes, by rivals who had first pick from the import caravans.

The instability of the littoral empires lay in their lack of power to control the direction of trade from the interior. Massawa (as it now is) always had a geographical advantage. Its section of the coast was the nearest to the Christian highlands, allowing merchants to avoid the alternative desert routes to North and South. Yet these routes continued to exist, sustaining competition and sometimes even dominating Massawa. Secondly the littoral empires suffered from the low productivity of their hinterland, most seriously in the South-East where the aridity of the earth bound the range of kingdoms, but also in the North-East where the fertile areas were subject to constant devastation by war. These empires, too, were open to attach from larger foreign empires. Their proximity to the world market always had a double edge.

Finally, the foreign empires - in spite of their clear military advantages - were restricted to enclaves. Their difficulties were of course partly geographical, but more important was the fact that they came from outside the social system. To have established positions in the interior would have required settlement and none before the Italians put a high enough priority on the products of the plateau to warrant that. Foreign coastal settlement tended to yield little for the colonial power. Trade would dry up with the collapse of the Ethiopian kingdoms and with the search by internal traders for alternative outlets. Again and again we find the foreign ports delegated to mercantile rentiers, concerned with the pickings of a customs post rather than the development of a trading empire.

These considerations explain the sustained spatial dynamic of Ethiopian imperial history. But what is important for our argument is not so much the explanation of particular movements but the links between the control of trade and the extension of state power which these movements imply. It is these links and the direction of causality which we want to establish by looking more closely at the historical development of trade and empire in Ethiopia.

Axum

The first major empire that is recorded is that centred on Axum in the North. It rose from around the 3rd century A.D. and flourished particularly from the 4th-7th centuries. Its origins lie in the development of an inner kingdom, that of Meroe in what is now Sudan, (see map 1). Meroe grew from about 500 B.C. on the basis of exports to Egypt of slaves and elephants (for fighting). The products were sent North up the Nile, until Meroe - concerned to establish an independence from Egypt - diverted the exports eastwards to the region of Suakin. The Egyptians responded by taking Suakin and in doing so provided an incentive to move to a South-Eastern route via Adulis.

Axum, straddling as it did the passes from the Highlands to the Red Sea was in a position to control any such new route, as well as trade coming from or going to what is now the South of Ethiopia. We know that by the 3rd century A.D. Adulis had a growing export trade, partly of littoral products (tortoise-shells from the Dahlak islands for instance) but mainly of products of the interior, particularly ivory 'from beyond the Nile'.[18] In return came imports, prestige goods such as cotton cloth, glassware and wine, and means of production brass, copper, iron and axes. Of these it was the iron and axes which were of major importance in a period of axe, sword and spear warfare. Iron had been introduced by the Ptolemies a little before the birth of Christ and offered decisive military advantages to those who could control it. Thus by the 3rd century we have a growing trade, the major part of it stemming from the interior, and a use value composition of imports which offered the controller clear advantages in prestige and military equipment.[19]

In the following century (4th c. A.D.) the Axum kings moved to tighten their control. King Ezana undertook a series of campaigns, against the Bega inland from Suakin (this would have allowed him to increase his control on the competitive route to the North), against tribes who had been attacking trade caravans, and against the Meroan kingdom itself. The first two speak for themselves. The attack on the Meroans (Nobas) is less straightforward. The Axumites did not appear to want to control production. They destroyed the Nobian cotton plantations, and the towns, including Meroe itself. They then withdrew, satisfied to control the trading outlet.[20]

Axum remained strong for three centuries. Merchants from Akaba, Sokatra and Alexandria were reported as regular visitors. At one time it even surpassed Arabia and attacked the flourishing empire in the Yemen. It crossed the Red Sea to Zafar in 525 and established Sana inland. But this was the period of the fall of the great Marib barrages in the Yemen and the shift of economic activity from Southern to Northern Arabia. (Engels in fact suggested a link between the Ethiopian invasion and this Southern decline).[21] Axum could not or would not hold their Yemeni position, and a century later it was the Arabs from the North who came back and undercut Axumite dominance. They took the Dahlak islands and Adulis in c.640, having already captured Suakin. Some of the inland trade 'from beyond the Nile' was now probably diverted back to Suakin, while the Arabs at Adulis were able to screen the imports to Axum. At the end of the century in c.700 Axum lost their last purchase on the Suakin route when the Bega successfully rebelled.

<u>Lalibela</u>

The centre of gravity of trade then shifted South. There had always been some Southern trade, both North-South (carrying salt from the Danakil area into the highlands) and East-West with an outlet at Avalites, later called Zeila (where in the 3rd century exports of ivory, tortoiseshell, spices and myrrh were exchanged for glass, textiles and wine - the prestige goods - as well as wheat and tin). Several of the Axumite campaigns in the 4th century were to the South, some explicitly concerned with trade routes. After the fall of Axum, these southern routes grew in importance. By the last quarter of the 9th century, Zeila had become more important than Dahlak and Adulis. Ivory was still important (drawn, according to later evidence, from the North-West and other areas of the plateau- see Map 1), but by the 12th century slaves and silver were reported as the leading export, as well as fresh fruit and cereals for towns on 'both sides of the Red Sea'. What appears to have happened is a Southern 'fanning' of the sources of supply feeding the Zeila route, with the source of slaves shifted from the Christian highlands to the pagan South (see Map 2).

The flag of political power followed trade. In the late 9th century, exactly at the time of the growth of the Zeila route, a number of Muslim sultanates established themselves in the hinterland behind Zeila. By the 10th century Muslim influence had penetrated into the Christian highlands. But divided among themselves (the lack of contour and the aridity of their land base is important here), they never succeeded in establishing their control backwards. Instead the new imperial centre was established by Christians at Lalibela.[22] From Map 1 one can see that Lalibela is in a central position on both North-Western supply routes to Zeila, and North-Eastern salt routes to the Central plateau. Its position and its timing strongly suggest a trade-based power.

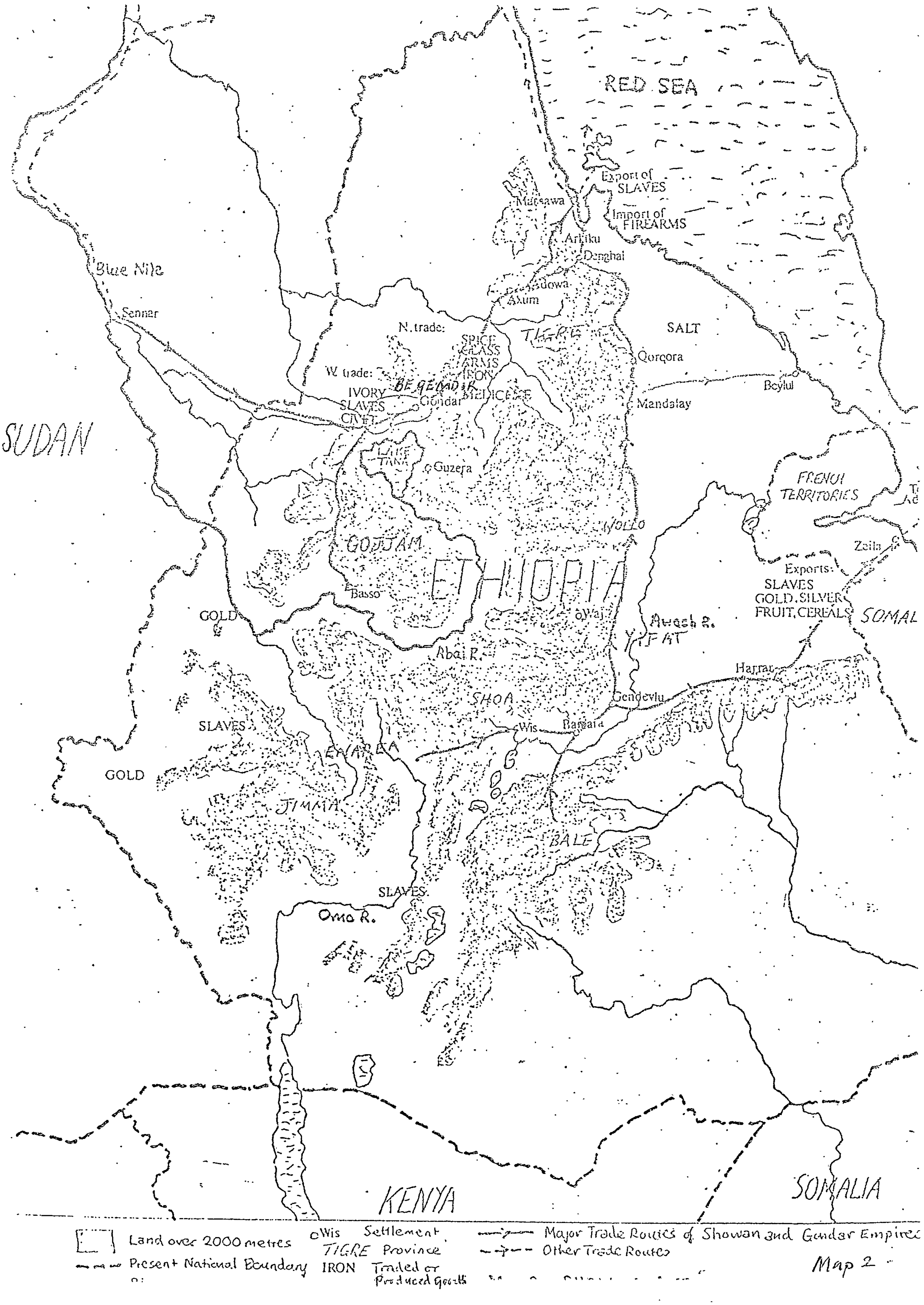
So does the timing of its decline. For the great Zagwe dynasty of Lalibela (1150-1270) loses its way at precisely that point in the 13th century when gold from the West starts passing through Zeila, and the slave trade switches its source of supply to the South. As Lalibela's control weakens, the Muslim sultanate at Hadya expands as the gathering point for slave caravans from the South. The lowland Sultanates are centralised by the Sultanate of Ifat, which in the reign of Umar Walasma from 1260-80 extended its control from the Gulf of Aden to the Showan plateau, particularly (and significantly) along the major trade routes.[23]

Showa

The overthrow of the Zagwe dynasty came, however, not at the hands of the centralised Sultanate, but of the Solomonic kings of Showa. Showan power had grown with the Southern trade. Their location took in the main routes from South and West and part of the main route North. In 1270 they defeated the Zagwe rulers, and by the middle of the 14th century they had extended their control to the East (having reduced the Sultanates by 1332) and to the North (taking Massawa and the North-East by the end of the reign of Emperor Amda Sion in 1344). They had thus secured the two main routes for trade with the international market (see Map 2).[24]

For two centuries this control held. By the early 16th century trade on both courses was reported flourishing. Massawa was now the main Northern outlet, and fed the route South. From Denghal 2,000 people a week came by caravan to Arkiko - the principle feeder market to Massawa. Further South Qorqora (near the salt sources) had two fairs a week, and Mandalay had markets every other day with merchants from Morocco, Jeddah and Cairo (Alvares 1520). Mandalay was probably a cross roads, with a route going West connecting to the Sudan and the South West (the Basso market) and a route East to Beylul (whose capacity was always limited however because of a bad harbour). Down in the South was the hinge on which the Showan empire was based - saddled on the two trading entrepots of Barrara and Wis. Both had large warehouses (c.1520), receiving goods from Jimma and points South-West and from Bali and points South. From there they could be taken either up the Northern route to Mandalay, or on the Eastern route via Gendevlu and Harrar to Zeila. Whether Zeila had by this time lost its primacy to Massawa we do not know. It certainly maintained its importance, handling the traditional exports, ivory, gold and slaves

But by the second quarter of the 16th century the structural weakness of an internal trading empire was once more exposed. The first attack came on the South-Eastern route which had never been entirely secure. From 1520 guns began to be imported and the Harrarians kept them.[25] In 1527 they rebelled against Showa and won. Only in 1543 were the Showans able to defeat Harrar (under its leader Gragn) through using their Northern route to import Portuguese firearms and troops. The renewed ascendency was temporary. Showa now faced a wave of attacks not from the coastal areas but from the 'production' areas in the South and South west. Oromos from the South swept North. To the east of Showa they encircled Harrar; to the West they came up through Enarea to be stopped only by the Nile. From both positions they then pushed up to Wollo, threatening to cut the Northern route as they had cut the South-Eastern. The Showans were forced North. Emperor Galawadewos (1540-50) who had defeated Gragn, moved his centre up to Waj, but in 1557 the Turks cut the Northern route by taking Massawa. The Solomonic kings were left with only one outlet, previously a minor one, that to the West, to Egypt via the Sudan. Basso was still protected from the Oromos by the Nile, as were the tracks of this Western route through


RED SEA
Export of SLAVES
Import of FIREARMS
Massawa
Arkiku
Denghal
Adowa
Axum
TIGRE
SALT
Qorqora
Beylul
Mandalay
Blue Nile
Sennar
N. trade:
SPICE
GLASS
ARMS
IRON
MEDICINE
W. trade:
BEGEMDIR
IVORY
SLAVES
CIVET
Gondar
SUDAN
LAKE TANA
Guzera
FRENCH TERRITORIES
WOLLO
GOJJAM
ETHIOPIA
Zeila
Exports:
SLAVES
GOLD, SILVER
FRUIT, CEREALS
SOMAL
Basso
Waj
GOLD
Awash R.
YFAT
Abai R.
Harrar
Gendevlu
SHOA
SLAVES
Wis
Bamara
ENAREA
GOLD
JIMMA
BALE
SLAVES
Omo R.
KENYA
SOMALIA
Land over 2000 metres
Present National Boundary
Wis Settlement
TIGRE Province
IRON Traded or Produced Goods
Major Trade Routes of Showan and Gondar Empires
Other Trade Routes

Map 2

Begemdir. Over the course of the century we find the Emperors moving their capital to Guzara (to the East of Lake Tana) to Gorgora (to the North) and finally under Fāsidadas (1632-67) to Gondar.

Gondar

The Gondarine empire (1636-1850) was founded on the western trade route. Its rise and fall is mirrored on the Sudan side of this route by the rise and fall of Sennar. For both capitals the route ensured an independent source of firearms, and with firearms and forts the Gondar emperors were able to obtain a stable centre from which to conduct slave raids to furnish the export market. By 1700 the Gondar route west was handling ivory and civet as well as slaves (the civet suggesting trade relations with the Oromo held Jimma area to the West of Showa) and importing a more varied list of the traditional import items, prestige goods (spices, Venetian glass, Mahaleb) means of production and destruction (iron, brass, and guns) as well as some early medicaments (mercury sublimate for syphilis, antimony and arsenic).[26]

But Gondar held its position at a time of subdued international trade. The Ottoman Empire declined in the 17th century, and there was constant disruption in Egypt and the Red Sea during the 18th. By the last quarter of the 18th century the Red Sea economy was stagnant. Not until Mohammed Ali reconquered Hajiz in 1811 and united the coast of the Red Sea in the decade following, did the economy of Ethiopia's penumbra once more flourish reaching its peak by the 1830's.

Once this happened, as it had happened to Lalibela during the revival of the 12th and 13th centuries, the structural weakness of the middle kingdom was more sharply exposed. Gondar's hinterland was limited. It could not provide agricultural surplus for its imperial apparatus as well as slaves for its international exchange. It controlled no direct trade route to the sea, nor did its urban cousin Sennar. While the South, South-West and the Centre were disorganised by the Oromo settlements, and while the North-East route was uncoordinated (in the 16th century there some 10 internal tariff posts between Massawa and Adua, and a similar number between Adua and Gondar) there was elbow room for a trading empire in the north-west. But within a century they were facing renewed power from the north-east and within two centuries they saw the rise of a string of kingdoms in the South. With Sennar itself facing direct attack from the same Mohammed Ali whose expansion had revitalised Red Sea trade, Gondar found itself totally enclosed at the very time that the revitalisation of trade was at its peak. In spite of the late flourish of the Begemdir ruler, Emperor Tewodros, the battle for the control of trade and thence for the imperial crown in the second half of the 19th century was to be between the two areas of historically greater structural power - Tigre and the Showan plateau.

Tigre

During the 18th century, in spite of the decline of Red Sea trade and the segmented political structure, caravans still passed along the Northern route. They took slaves from Sidamo and other Oromo areas, as well as gold, ivory, some musk, skins and coffee. Faced with the provincial customs posts (they were down to perhaps a dozen between Gondar and Massawa in the 18th century) the caravans expanded in size and arms to improve their bargaining power in the haggling of circulation.[27]

Among these provincial rulers those in Tigre had an advantage. They had first refusal on imports coming through Massawa, and also controlled the salt trade originating in the Danakil. This control they translated into relative military strength, and thus political power.

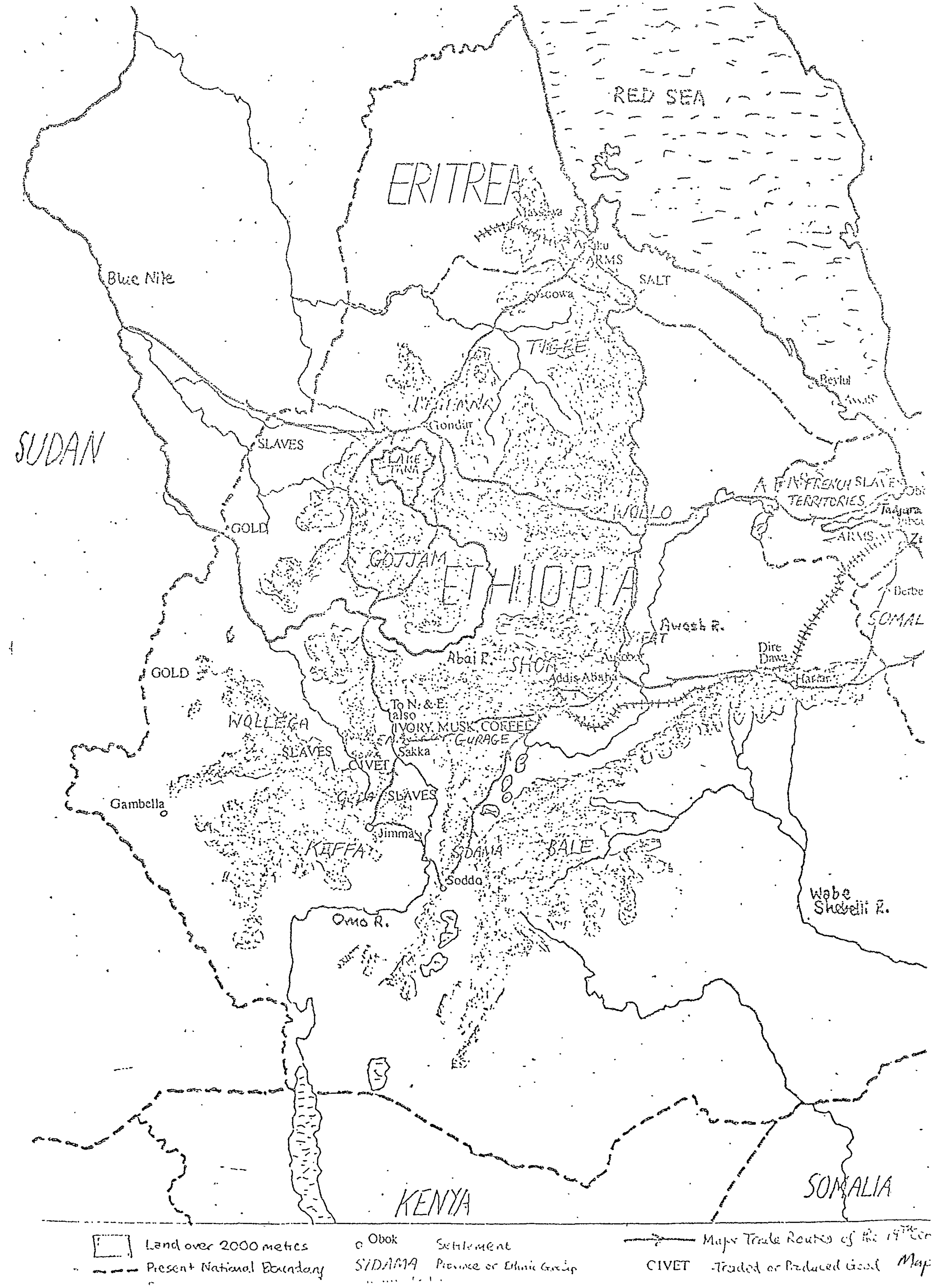
For more than a century firearms were never to be entirely decisive. The slow loading guns could still be beaten by the speed and organisation of the Oromo cavalry and the sudden assaults of massed infantry. Ras Michael Suhul, the Tigrean conqueror of Gondar in 1750, was beaten by an Oromo - Amhara coalition in the 1770's. So was his son in 1788. Even half a century later the Tigrean advantage in firearms was not sufficient. The Tigrean leader Seb'agadis was defeated by Oromo cavalry in 1831. His successor Wube who expanded the Tigrean arsenal by an attack on the control of the coast, of trade and thus of arms, and who won a temporary victory against the Oromo in 1842, was nevertheless unable to realise the potential of those arms and was finally defeated by the horse and foot of the Begemdir leader Tewodros in 1855.[28] In each case the Tigreans had an advantage in firearms and a disadvantage in cavalry, and they lacked the organisation and strategy to make the former count.

Not until the later Tigrean leader Kassa - impressed by British tactics at Magdella in 1868 - had re-organised and trained his army with the help of an English sergeant, did the balance change. Against greatly superior numbers he defeated his main rival for the throne with the help of drilled rifle fire in 1871 and became Emperor the following year. But though it took so long to translate the advantage of weapons into imperial titles, those weapons had still made the Tigreans one of the strongest powers during 'the Era of Princes'. As Caulk (who would never be one to advance the simple equation of guns and power) has put it, 'Shifts in the political centre of gravity from the later 18th century seem in part to reflect control of the new military technology exemplified by the musket and then the rifle'.[29]

Tadjura and the Oromo Kingdoms

In the South, the ascent of trade, the control of weapons and the claim to empire were all slower in gestation than in Tigre, but were more soundly based. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Southern route had even less significance than that to the North. Harrar had been surrounded by increasingly strong Oromos in the late 18th century, who had cut off Harrar from Showa and had appropriated Harrari land near the town. Zeila, too, had suffered from this disruption and the stagnation of the Red Sea economy. When the latter expanded again in the early 19th century it was Berbera to the South East , and Tadjura to the North which became the trading centres rather than the rapacious Zeila. Tadjura was particularly important. A town insignificant in the 18th century and with only two or three hundred huts in the 19th, it had 1,500-3,000 slaves exported through it annually in the second quarter of the 19th century equal to if not exceeding the number going through Massawa. The main route inland had been consolidated by the Afars (Adoimarans and Aussans), and ran through Yifat as in the 13th century, onto the plateau and West (see Map 3).

At the other end of this route a new set of Oromo kingdoms arose from the second decade of the century. At first they reflected the directions of the Northern route, gold, slaves, ivory and civet as well as some coffee came up from the South and South-West through Gojjam, Begemdir and on to Tigre and Massawa. The 'bulb' of this route contained the new kingdoms: at first Enarea, Guma and Goma, later, moving south to include more sources of supply, Gera and Jimma. Enarea was originally the strongest of these. In the early twenties, war between its Western neighbours had diverted all trade through Enarea, and Abba Bagibo (its ruler between 1825 and 1861) strengthened the kingdom by making alliances and marriage ties with areas


RED SEA
ERITREA
Massawa
Arkiku
ARMS
SALT
Adowa
TIGRE
Blue Nile
SUDAN
SLAVES
Gondar
LAKE TANA
Beylul
Assab
FRENCH
TERRITORIES
SLAVES
Tadjura
ARMS
WOLLO
GOLD
GOTJAM
ETHIOPIA
Berbera
SOMAL
Awash R.
IFAT
Dire Dawa
Harar
Abai R.
SHOA
Ankober
Addis Ababa
GOLD
To N. & E.
also
IVORY, MUSK, COFFEE
GURAGE
WOLLEGA
SLAVES
CIVET
Sakka
SLAVES
Gambella
Jimma
KAFFA
SIDAMA
BALE
Sodda
Wabe
Shebelli R.
Omo R.
KENYA
SOMALIA
Land over 2000 metres
Obok
Settlement
Present National Boundary
SIDAMA
Province or Ethnic Group
Major Trade Routes of the 19th Cen
CIVET
Traded or Produced Good

right down to the South and with Guma. Sakka became the central market of the area, operating all the year round and providing a meeting place for the small Southern caravans, and the merchants from the North, including ones from Massawa and Arkiko.

In the 1830's the law of trade routes asserted itself. Merchants began to pass straight through Enerea to avoid the exchange duties, or to by-pass it altogether. Some now went from Kaffa straight through Gera and Guma to Gojjam. Enerea replied by blocking the route at Sakka and forcing merchants to meet there, but Jimma (unified after 1830) in turn sought to preserve its strength by opening out the route to the East, to Soddo and Showa. In 1847 Jimma finally conquered Badifolla, her gateway to the East, and Enerea was immediately forced to drop all her prohibitions and monopolies save that on gold.[30]

These kingdoms were always to be subordinate units. Their proximity to production was more than offset by their distance from international ports. Not until the British opened Gambella after the turn of the century was a nearby outlet available, (principally for Kaffa's coffee and Wollega's gold) but the route was intermittent and limited. Rather the monarchies performed a useful administrative function over areas whose overall control was sought by the larger powers.

Showa

Of these Showa had the advantage. It had potential access to the sea independently of Tigre or Egypt, and was (with expansion) adjacent to the South-Western kingdoms. Showa's revival under Sahle Salassie (1815-1847) coincided with (indeed was based on) the upturn in Red Sea trade, and was interwoven with the expansion of Tadjura and the monarchies. For a time, however, Sahle Salassie's power was limited. The major trade ran north through Gojjam and he had few weapons to forcibly divert it. Instead he followed a double policy: attracting merchants for the East-West trade by light duties, special privileges and protection, and using the force he had to expand his control to the South and West, that is to areas which were even weaker than he was.

The policy had a cumulative effect. By the beginning of the 1840's, Showa had greatly expanded from Wollo to the desert of the Afars and down to Soddo and the Gurage. The control of the trade routes had been expanded as had the number of guns (from a few score to 500). By 1842 the firearms numbers had risen to 1,000 plus a few cannons, and this increase in arms allowed then a further extension of Showan control to the borders of the Oromo kingdoms and the lakes of the Gurage and Sidamo.

In the North guns were not decisive for a century. In the South, Sahle Salassie used them to expand the Showan kingdom in a quarter of the time. Sahle Salassie's grandson, Menelik, continued this policy from 1865. His problem was how to revive the cumulative relationship of trade route control and guns. He used what power he had against his weaker neighbours, reconquering Showa as far as the Awash before 1875, and taking over most of the Gibe basin in 1876. His Gurage campaign the same year, and that to Gondar were failures, however, and Menelik's weakness was exposed when in 1878 he was forced to submit to the Tigrean Emperor Yohannes (with heavy tribute).

Yet Menelik's control of the trade routes allowed him to refurnish his stock. He monopolised gold and ivory, and Marcus describes him as the largest slave entrepreneur in Ethiopia at the time. Using the private ambition of European traders, and the imperial rivalry of their mother countries (notably Britain and France) Menelik sent caravans down through the East in the 1880's to pay for increasing quantities of guns. Whereas in 1878 Menelik had perhaps 10,000 armed infantrymen (and most of those had slow loading or outdated arms), by 1887 he had some 50,00 and had built up a military force equivalent to that of Yohannes.[31]

This power he used to take over Harrar in 1887. Through the governorship of his cousin Ras Makonnen, Menelik was to turn Harrar into a centre of the arms trade in Ethiopia and a base of operations to the South-East. Makonnen in 1890 conquered the Ittu Oromo, plundered the Ogaden in 1891, and took control of the Haud in 1892. As for Menelik himself, during much of the 1890's his main concerns were with subduing the Tigreans and resisting the Italians in the North, but after the Battle of Adowa in 1896 he once more turned to the West, taking Kaffa in 1898, and enforcing his control over the gold producing area Beni-Shangul the same year. This period saw a further massive increase in arms imports. Between 1899 and 1901 nearly 400,000 guns were imported from France. By 1903 Marcus estimates that Menelik controlled 600,000 men, all armed with rifles, including 90,000 in his own standing army.[32]

From 1898 Showa was once more the seat of Empire. In the past we have seen that such inner empires were doubly unstable, giving rise to littoral empires on the one hand, and foreign occupation of those littoral empires on the other. Menelik's discontinuous accumulation of men and weapons meant that both tendencies were resisted. In the north it is true the Italians held Eritrea, but they had been repulsed from expansion into Tigre by Menelik's victory at Adowa, and the main trade could thus still be filtered through the more southerly Red Sea and Gulf of Aden ports. The shift to the South weakened the Tigreans, coupled as it was with the exhaustion of a territory that had acted as a battlefield and a nutritional hostess for so many decades. While the princes of Tigre continued to show a traditional independence, from Mengesha onwards they no longer had the power or the access to support a serious threat.

On the South-eastern route the situation was different. There were now a number of outlets, Assab, Obok, Djibouti and Zeila, held respectively by the Italians, the French, the French and the British (after 1886). Between these was a competition which reduced their individual significance. The key lay rather in Harrar. After 1887 Harrar grew. Its governor, Ras Makonnen, like his predecessors in Harrar in the 16th century, collected duties, and built up an arsenal from his pickings of the imports. As with Menelik himself, Makonnen's household contained a number of European arms smugglers, and his position also gave him a diplomatic leverage which he translated into arms (in 1893 he received 'in a form as confidential as possible' 14,300 thalers from the French and 2,000 rifles with accoutrements).[33] By 1902 he commanded perhaps 60-70,000 riflemen.

Harrar became and remained a source of financial and military accumulation. Yet unlike the earlier periods, this source was directly controlled by the Showans. Makonnen was Menelik's first cousin and one of his closest advisers. Far from threatening the Showan centre, Harrar was used to strengthen the centre's power and continued to do so after Makonnen's death. Where its importance did lie was in determining the succession in Showa. It is no accident that the opponents of Makonnen's son and designated heir, Ras Tafari, should wish to keep him from the Governorship of Harrar, and no accident that Ras Tafari, with the control of Harrar (and Dire Dawa) after 1909 should win the battle for succession to Menelik and become Emperor Haile Salassie.

Weapons and the state

We have argued that there has been a strong correlation in Ethiopian history between the direction of trade routes and the location of empire, which together have contributed to a geographical cycle from the Axumite empire onwards. The prime mediating link in this relationship was imported weapons. It was these particular use values which gave the controller of trade a major advantage. We suggested that Axum's control of iron and axe imports from the 3rd century was an instance of this advantage. Later the crucial weapons were guns. They played a decisive role in the battle for the Zeila route in the 17th century, and were of increasing importance in Tigre and Showa during the 18th and 19th centuries.[34] These modern weapons were not always immediately effective but in the long run they tended to be decisive and were seen as such.

We find guns were the subject of constant restrictions because of their acknowledged importance. Foreign powers with an interest in Ethiopia would be simultaneously reluctant to furnish arms to a potential subject, but realised the diplomatic value of doing so. The same applies to internal rulers in Ethiopia. Our evidence is best for the 19th century. In 1872 Egypt invaded Bogos in the North and prohibited all arms and ammunition imports via Massawa. They resisted Yohannes' demand for an Ethiopian port and even for the duty free import of arms, because of their concern to limit Ethiopia's relative power. Not until the British took over was this right of arms transit through Massawa allowed in 1884 - presumably because of Britain's confidence in her own military strength. The Italians - who had similar grand designs to Egypt - were also notably slow in supplying the guns asked for by Menelik save when strategy towards Yohannes dictated it. Like the Egyptians they disliked the French development of Obok which they saw as a potential break in the arms blockade, and in the 1890's they organised an arms blockade (observed by Germany, Austria and to some extent Britain) with some success. Imperial rivalry and the relative ease of smuggling was always tending to erode the effectiveness of blockades, however, and internal rulers faced similar difficulties. In spite of occasional diplomatic successes (Britain's gift of munitions to Yohannes after Magdella, or Menelik's exclusive rights to Italian arms under the Treaty of Wichale in 1887) the surest way to build up dominance of arms was through a dominance of exports, and the exclusive control of the traders who brought in the imports.

The evidence we have presented is still suggestive rather than conclusive, particularly for the early periods of Ethiopian history. But it is sufficient to say two things which have been the subject of debate in the study of West Africa. First, there is a clear link between control of trade and the rise of 'the state', with the rise of the state being determined by the increase in relative power of the local rulers, rather than any general requirement of trade for a stable state. In this we agree with Terray against Yves Person that trade is perfectly possible without strong states, and that traders indeed often avoid strong states if they can when the tributes levied from them are too high.[35]

Second, the evidence supports the general argument of this paper that the increase in relative power from trade was due to a control of weapons (and probably luxuries), i.e. particular use values, rather than an increase in generalised 'wealth'. On this distinction rests our thesis on the significance of trade, namely that it was not in itself the basis for the tributary class structure, but rather determined the range of individual power, or put another way the degree of centralisation in the tributary mode. We have noted that there was a decline of centralised power in the system when trade was low (the Era of Princes), and a renewed centralisation when trade flourished.

The argument also suggests an explanation for the remarkable stability of the tributary mode as such. The exports from Ethiopia were never enough to provide the quantity of imported use values required for permanent centralisation of power and a shift to a qualitatively different mode of production and historical dynamic.

IV

TWENTIETH CENTURY ABSOLUTISM

Under Menelik and then Haile Salassie the interplay of trade routes and empires within Ethiopia nears its end. From then on the main trade routes were controlled from the centre. This transition is to be explained in international terms, but not those of violence as was true of so many forced-colonial transitions, but those stemming more directly from international accumulation. The technical condition of the transition was Menelik's accumulation of guns in the 1880's. His increased arsenal allowed him to sweep across large parts of the Southern half of Ethiopia, increase his direct share of surplus product through appropriations, increase his retinue and force of 'unproductive' labourers, and as a consequence increase the range of empire. He granted much of the annexed territory to his victorious generals or other nobles in his immediate retinue, some to his household, and some was directly administered by lower officials of the retinue on behalf of the emperor. In accumulating the number of guns he did, Menelik broke through one of the major constraints that had limited the range of empire and direct rule in Ethiopian imperial history.

We have seen that most of these guns were obtained through trade rather than as gifts. They were exchanged for the traditional exports of the South, slaves, civet, ivory and gold, though already the slave trade was under pressure from the European powers. The volume of this trade probably increased, particularly once Menelik established direct control in the South and South-West, but the decisive factor was the cheapening of guns.

Guns had been one of the first products to be submitted to the technique of flow line assembly in the early nineteenth century. This form of production greatly lowered their cost, and became more generalised as the century progressed. Technical change had also quickened the process of obsolescence. By the late 1870's these factors had led to the availability of large numbers of cheap second hand rifles. While the rates of exchange between Ethiopia and the international market still had large ranges of indetermination, the development of international trade and competition allowed at least some of the cheapening of rifle production to be passed on to the Ethiopian importers. They now received more imported use values for the same quantity of the traditional exported use values, and it was the quantity of imported use values which were to be decisive in the passage towards the centralisation of the tributary mode. The transition in short came about not only 'peacefully' but as the result of 'equal exchange'.

The centralisation introduced by Menelik and carried on by Haile Salassie was for some time frail. They both attempted to use their enlarged retinue and military advantage to reduce other limits of the tributary mode. One of these had been the difficulty of communications. Menelik pioneered a postal system, two telegraph and telephone systems, and began the building of modern roads. He also allowed the railway from Djibouti to be started in 1896, though it was not to reach Addis Ababa until the early years of Haile Salassie's regency in 1917.

Haile Salassie continued this policy in communications. He also sought to increase his sources of surplus product, not merely extensively but intensively as well. Concessions were granted to foreign mining companies, capitalist salt production was started by the French in 1924, there was a brewery, a printing press and a manufacturer of cigarettes. Haile Salassie also built a road from Dire Dawa (on the railway) to Harrar and charged tolls.

Yet though these pushed out the limits, and though Haile Salassie preserved a military superiority, the stable centre still only just held. On Menelik's death there was a desperate fight for succession, and it was not until 1930 that Haile Salassie was finally crowned emperor, having crushed an uprising in Tigre with the help of his new airforce shortly before. Moreover, Ethiopian equal exchange no longer allowed Ethiopia to keep up with the military power of the colonialists. The age of air suddenly reduced Ethiopia's topographical defences against foreign forces, and in 1936 Mussolini successfully occupied the whole of Ethiopia.

The pace of primitive accumulation had not been sufficient in short for the establishment of an absolutism resistant to attacks from colonialist forces as well as regional barons. It was not until the limits of equal exchange itself were surpassed that the full potential of Menelik's bequest could be carried through. The occasion came about as the result of post-war international expansion of the United States. The era of air, which had allowed Mussolini to revenge the Italian defeat at Adowa, also gave new significance to Ethiopia internationally. For it was one of the few countries in Africa to lie outside the colonial influence of the allies, and was immediately seen as a suitable link in the new international communications network built up by the Americans after the war. It was also an area of potential mineral wealth, a source of use values for American accumulation without the burden of colonial rent attached.

For 20 years the U.S. made Ethiopia the centre piece of their expansion in Africa, and were the instruments of forced accumulation. In 1945 Ethiopian GNP was estimated at E$19m. Between 1946 and 1972 the US provided military and economic aid to the declared amount of E$1,213 million. The military aid of E$468m was itself almost half of all US military aid given to underdeveloped Africa (including the Mahgreb) over this period. The World Bank contributed quantities of economic aid similar to the US over the same period, and allowed the Emperor to surpass the historical limits to the range of empire, viz. poor communications, low rates of exploitation, small retinues and an inadequate standing army.[36]

This aid also freed him from the foreign exchange limits previously determined by the narrow range of exports. Aid allowed a sharp expansion of imports. In communications the improvement was discontinuous. Roads, internal air services, the telephone and postal system all expanded by orders of magnitude, as did the stock to use them (aircraft and motor vehicles in particular with their accompanying requirement, fuel oil). All these depended on imported use values.

A second line of policy was to increase the intensive appropriation of surplus product. Trade, which was no longer so crucial because of the use values it yielded, (since arms came in with military aid), was now increasingly seen as a source of generalised wealth. Thus in 1943 Haile Salassie and a small group of his retinue intervened directly in trade as traders. They set up a firm called the Ethiopian National Corporation which monopolised textile and sugar imports and cereal exports. The profits of this firm are estimated at £1¾m in 1945, or nearly half the GNP. However this firm was increasingly undercut by smugglers, and by the mid 50's the Emperor had abandoned direct intervention.

The one product he continued to dominate was gold. This was a royal monopoly, and was exported, principally through smugglers. The value of these exports in the early 1970's with gold priced at an average of $100 an ounce was $425 million a year, Most trade was left to foreigners. Their mercantile accumulation constituted no threat to the throne. In 1974 only two of the top 25 exporters from Ethiopia were Ethiopians. On the import side the figure was 4 out of 25, and at least two of these were government firms. From these traders the Emperor would raise cash through formal and informal methods.

He also used tariff policy as an increasing source of revenue. Tariff rates rose appreciably from the early 1950's. This was partly to raise revenue directly via duties, and partly to protect new manufacturing industry (effective rates of protection ran to over 500% for leading locally-made products). The latter protection yielded revenue indirectly: either through the sale of a concession to the foreign import substituter, by a direct shareholding being taken by the Emperor, or by periodic gifts.

Ethiopian industry indeed became increasingly important as a source of revenue for the Emperor from the end of the 1950's. Some firms - notably those inherited from the Fascist occupation - the Emperor owned himself. Others he took shares in or sold 'rights' - land for instance, or franchises and other permissions. As with his tariff policy, the Emperor related to industry as a landlord to land i.e. as a rentier. Production was another matter. This was mainly in the hands of expatriate businessmen - Armenians, Lebanese, Egyptians, Greeks, Italians - and, increasingly, of international firms. As with foreign traders, these foreigners were not seen as a threat. They were as politically neutral as a carefully selected retinue. The result was that manufacturing industry, which by 1972 had increased ten fold over two decades, came to be dominated by international firms, either as investors, suppliers of inputs or recipients of outputs. It was these firms that administered trade (and prices), as the imperial government administered tariffs and licences. The result was high rates of profit, much of which was expatriated, some re-invested, and some paid over as 'administrative rent'. [37]

Lastly an agricultural revolution, controlled by the nobility and based on imported machines, seeds and fertilisers, yielded increasing quantities of surplus values.

In line with this increase in revenue went an increase in retinue (which took the form of a civil service). One part of it was the standing army composed of police, a security service and the three armed services. In numbers this standing force bore comparison with those of Menelik and

Makonnen at the end of the 19th century. Haile Salassie had about 70,000 in his forces in the early 70's. But in fixed equipment and method there was of course no comparison. It was one of the largest and most effective armies in Black Africa. It remained the dominant priority. Its upkeep took about 2/5ths of total government expenditure. Its composition was rigidly controlled. Perhaps its more important function was intelligence: it gave the Emperor an unparalleled access to the intentions and movements of possible opponents.

If the change in the armed forces was in equipment and method, that in the administration was in numbers. The ability to rule directly, the development of 'intensive' appropriation, the expansion of the communications system, all required administrators. They were recruited, as had been the older retinue, mainly from the trusted nobility at the top, and 'unattached' men of humble origin. The latter were increasingly brought in via the educational system, particularly after the opening of the University in 1960. The Emperor aimed to control both groups in ways traditional to the Ethiopian tributary lords. "Royal favours are bestowed on the faithful with dependable regularity, often in disregard of all other considerations. Every specific demonstration of loyalty or service rendered is promptly and generously rewarded. In addition to promotion, titles, land grants, salary increases and other conventional forms of administrative remuneration, the Emperor makes gifts of money, houses, automobiles, and other luxury items to his officials. He may also order that goods imported by officials be exempted from import taxes, grant scholarships to their children and relatives, pay for medical treatment given in the state hospitals, cancel debts or fines owed to state agencies, suspend or overrule decisions of state courts against them, and even pay for their vacation travel abroad... Conversely, disloyalty incurs serious punishment".[38] Haile Salassie's ability to do this, to bind people to him in this way, was directly linked to the increased surplus product appropriated by him in the post-war years.

This process represented the liberation of the tendencies of the tributary mode. Primitive accumulation which had been impossible autonomously within that mode was now induced by foreign capital. The result has often been described as 'modernisation'. In fact it was the passage to absolutism, as the Western European feudal states had passed to absolutest monarchies in a previous epoch. In Europe the development of capitalism provided the technical and economic means for centralisation by feudal aristocracies. The feudal lords were now commonly drawn from the land into the newly expanded bureaucratic apparatus. Though the basis of their new power was early capitalism, they used that power for traditionally feudal ends, until, that is, capital became economically and socially strong enough to sustain a bourgeois revolution.

In Ethiopia the same process has taken place in compressed form. The development of absolutism brought with it the growth of new classes: a tributary tenantry in the South, a travelling agricultural proletariat, a small but distinct urban working class, a petit bourgeoisie, a growing middle class of administrators with an attendant intelligentsia, and finally a technocratic army based on modern weapons. To these we should add foreign capital and its representatives. When the revolution came therefore in 1974, it originated not from rival nobles but from the social apparatus of the 'neutral retinue'. Sparked by students, school teachers, and the urban working class, it was carried through by the standing army: all united against the conduct of tributary rule.

V

CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of points about trade and trade 'policy', which have become clear from this history. First long distance trade in pre-20th century Ethiopia was clearly class trade. It did not form the basis for society - that was rather the existence of surplus product. Rather it determined the extent, the location and the degree of direct rule of successive empires. For this reason trade was strictly controlled by the military aristocracy, and kept geographically and socially insulated from the tributary economy itself.

Second, the transition from a decentralised tributary mode into an absolutest state which itself supervised and encouraged primitive accumulation and the development of capitalism in Ethiopia, was effected in relation to the world economy not through violence but through exchange. There was considerable internal violence, but as far as external violence is concerned Ethiopia itself (as defined by today's boundaries) was one of the few African countries which successfully resisted a major colonial military force, and which remained uncolonised save for the five years of Italian occupation. Our paper thus provides strong support for Barbara Bradby's thesis about Equal Exchange and the transition to capitalism.[39] In the Ethiopian case the destruction of traditional employment is not significant until the post-2nd world war period. Rather it is the imported guns which were to be decisive. The effects in the long run however were the same.

Thirdly, the transition to absolutism and the incorporation into the world economy was not a transition from a pre-trade to a post-trade situation, but rather one of shifting from pre-capitalist 'use value' to capitalist 'exchange value' trade, from the particular to the general. The classical treatment of this transition as an opening of an economy to trade and an ensuing increase of income misses the point about the specific role that trade plays in the transition. Certainly the increased income derived from taxes on trade with the world economy was significant for absolutism, but it was in no way a generalised income but an income to a dominant class to be used in specific ways. The 'gains' from expansion of trade should rather be seen in terms of the strengthening of a class and the intensifying of the historical transition from one mode of production to another.

There was a striking disjunction between the kind of trade policy generated from utilitarian trade theory and the role and structure of trade in absolutest Ethiopia. Successive missions of the World Bank, followed by other international agencies such as the ILO, and supported by the Harvard Advisory Group, urged a general policy of rationalising the import tariff structure, dropping protection and expanding exports through subsidies. The old regime was not surprisingly uninterested in the perspective of classical efficiency which lay behind these suggestions. Import tariffs, as we have seen, served specific purposes, notably protecting firms in which the local ruling class had a direct interest. They were a form of internal tax, and often raised against the advice of the visiting missions even in the face of revelations of large profits hidden by transfer pricing or transfer accounting. To urge absolutism to drop import tariffs was equivalent to asking them to drop taxes - that is to go against the grain of Ethiopian tributary history. Moreover, on the export side the efficacy of subsidies as canvassed by the advisers was called into question by the structure of manufacturing trade. The majority of exports were intra-firm and underpriced by orders of magnitude. Subsidies would merely have increased profit rates already running into the region of 650-850% p.a. making no difference to quantities exported.

We have returned to a thesis of Stephen Hymer's. In the post war period the control of Ethiopian trade increasingly passed to international firms. On the import side the control took the form of intra-firm trade by foreign import substituters, or managed franchise trade on behalf of branded final goods importers. On the export side most manufacturing trade was intra-firm. Under absolutism the new controllers of trade were formally controlled, though in fact it would be more accurate to see their relationship to the Imperial court as one of alliance.

With the revolution in 1974 and the assumption of power by the military regime, the question of control was newly posed. The new regime - of an ambiguous class position - was strongly resistant to the power of international capital that they inherited from the period of absolutism. They attempted to change the structures of class and power internally, through nationalisation and the expansion of direct state control of the economy, and turned to the world market for privileged access to the military use values which would give them the physical power to do this. This entailed a state monopoly of foreign trade (and aid) directed to the support of an increasingly militarised economy. The direct links between trade and class and trade and empire were as evident as they had been under absolutism, but in a different form.

These correlations, however, proved no more sustainable for the Dergue than they had been for the Emperor. The spatial dialectic of Ethiopian history re-emerged with new force. The Eritrean challenge to Amhara domination which had begun in the early 1960's, gathered force in the 1970's. A parallel liberation movement emerged among the Tigreans, so that once more the north eastern littoral areas, with support from the Oromo, were contesting the Showan centre.

Even in this modern period the geographical co-ordinates remained significant. In the case of Eritrea, its proximity to the Red Sea and the Sudan was important as a source of provisions for the EPLF army and the civilian population of the liberated zones. Some of this trade was directly organised by the EPLF, but much was left to traders whom the EPLF licensed and controlled. Yet though the link between trade and power is again direct - the EPLF always treated the economy as a central part of its polity and not separate from it - the use values were quite different. Imports consisted largely of food and basic materials. For their arms supply, unsupported as they were by international powers, they relied almost entirely on what they captured from the Ethiopians. In May 1991 the Dergue fell, the Tigreans took over in Addis Ababa, and the EPLF in Asmara. In May 1993 the Eritreans formally achieved their independence.

Within the space of twenty years the area of Imperial Ethiopia has witnessed two revolutions. As with the absolutest order they succeeded, each has had a different vision of social and class relations, and, as with absolutism, each established a regime of foreign trade designed to help realise this vision.

Thus, whether we consider the foreign trade strategies of Ethiopia's successive tributary rulers, or the trade policies followed in Ethiopia in the post war period, the conclusions are similar. As Hymer himself argued, trade policy cannot be treated adequately as a technical economic issue, judged in terms of an aggregated national interest, abstracted from the social relations of which it forms a part. Rather its direction and institutional structures are shaped by the material interests of class and the strategic requirements of the reproduction of political power.

Note:

We would like to thank Adi Cooper, Richard Disney and Patrick Gilkes for many valuable discussions on the substance of this paper, and Richard Disney for his help in drawing the maps.

1 Stephen Hymer died in 1974. He left no published version of his argument, though the course outline was reprinted in the Union of Radical Political Economist's first set of collected course outlines in December 1971

2 Stephen Hymer, The Multinational Corporation and the Law of Uneven Development, in: ed. J.N. Bhagwati, Economics and World Order from the 1970's to the 1980's, McMillan, 1972

3 In this paper we refer to this area as Ethiopia, the word used by successive emperors, whatever their geographical origins, in diplomatic letters and royal chronicles. It refers not to a homogeneous nation or culture, but a political and economic space in which different nationalities have contested for power and autonomy, and from which the Eritreans have now successfully separated to form their own independent state.

4 For a discussion of feudalism (concentrating, perhaps too much on forms) and of the slave empires of antiquity see Perry Anderson's magnificent essay Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism, New Left Books 1974. The companion volume lineages of the Absolutest State contains an equally interesting discussion of the Islamic empires and Japanese feudalism.

5 For this point and a survey of the class situation in the Northern Highlands, see J. Markakis, Ethiopia, Anatomy of a Traditional Polity, O.U.P. 1974. Chapter 4. See also Patrick Gilkes, The Dying Lion, Feudalism and Modernisation in Ethiopia, Friedman, 1975. A. Hoben, Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia, University of Chicago Press, 1973, and D. Crummey, Abyssinian Feudalism, Past and Present, no 89, 1980.

6 R.Pankhurst, Economic History of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa 1968 Chapters IV, and XV

7 For a description of contemporary markets in the Gondar area see: Simon Messing, the Abyssinian Market Town, in P. Bohannen and G. Dalton Markets in Africa, North Western University Press, 1962

8 M. Abir. Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, Longmans, 1968 p.90

9 Ibid. p.172-3

10 Ibid. p.175

11 This argument runs broadly in line with Donald Crummy's conclusion that " long distance trade was never fundamental to the interests of the nobility and the social order was not basically modified by its fluctuations; nor was it basically modified by periods of weakness vis a vis neighbouring strangers... The Abyssinian ruling class was rooted in and drew its support from the peasantry." op.cit Past and Present, 89, 1980, p.126. But Crummy underestimates the significance of trade for the exercise of aristocratic power.

12 C. Coquery, "Recherches sur un mode de production africain," La Pensee, 144, pp.61-78

[13] S. Amin. "Sous-development et dependence in Afrique Noire" Partisans 64, pp.3-34

[14] E. Terray, "Long distance exchange and the formation of the State: the case of the Abron kingdom of Gyaman", in Economy and Society Vol 3 3 August 1974, pp.315-345

[15] Meillassoux underlines this distinction and the accidental nature of the rates of exchange in his introduction to C. Meillassoux (ed), The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa, Oxford 1971 p.68

[16] Terray, op. cit. p.333

[17] Ibid. p.335-6

[18] R. Pankhurst, An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia. London 1961 p.17

[19] The chief source for this paragraph is the Periplus, a trading manual in Greek translated by W.H. Schoff, Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, New York 1912. We also have evidence of the economic activity from coins minted in Axum from the 3rd century A.D. We assume these were principally to act as means of payment for international trade. Some of the inscriptions are in Greek and the coins themselves are reminiscent of those of the Roman Empire. What is interesting is that within Ethiopia, the coins have been found almost entirely at Adulis and Axum, and very few have appeared in other trading centres. One hoard was found in Somalia, another in Egypt, and some were discovered in Arabia from the period of later occupation. The range of circulation was therefore limited, but within this range there was clearly a need for these coins (earlier, coins had been imported at Adulis) and an authority strong enough to issue them and secure their currency. See R. Pankhurst, op. cit.

[20] The evidence for these campaigns comes from a series of inscriptions. See Arkell pp.166-72, and E.A.V. Budge pp.248-9

[21] Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence pp.82-3 and J. Spencer Trimingham Islam in Ethiopia. Oxford 1952 pp.40-41

[22] There is evidence that the Axumites moved South towards Lalibela seeking perhaps renewed control of the interior trade route. The geographical diffusion of the Northern Semitic language suggests a gradual Southwards move, and Axumite stonework has been found just North of Lalibela. But the oral tradition suggests that the Lalibelan empire originated as a result of a revolt against Axumite domination

[23] For this period see Tadesse Tamrat, "Islam and Trade in Ethiopia c.900 - 1332" in Provisional Council for the Social Sciences in East Africa, 1st Annual Conference. Vol 3 Dec 1970, and Richard Pankhurst, An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia. op. cit.

[24] Tadesse Tamrat interprets the Eastern expansion as explicitly economic. "When the Christian kingdoms of Ethiopia revived in the end of the thirteenth century, the 'Solomonic' kings strived to control, and participate in this lucrative trade which was almost exclusively

handled by Muslim merchants. This was the most important reason for the Muslim-Christian wars of the fourteenth century." op. cit. 7 See also the Showan period, the same author's Church and State in Ethiopia. 1370-1527, Oxford 1972 pp.80-89

25 It is interesting that Harrar developed at about the same time as the Showan kingdom, and the Sultanate of Hedya in the 13th century. It occupied a central position on a Southern route which by-passed the Sultanate of Ifat on its way to Zeila, and was constantly threatening independence from Showa during the 14th and 15th centuries - perhaps because of its privileged position in relation to imports

26 For this period see R. Pankhurst, An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia op. cit

27 M. Abir op. Cit. pp.50-53

28 ibid. pp.108 and 120

29 R.A.Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power in Ethiopia in the Nineteenth Century" Journal of African History, xiii, 1972.

30 M. Abir op. cit. p.90

31 H.G. Marcus. The Life and Time of Menelik II. Oxford 1975 p.66 Yohannes had received a large gioft of rifles and canons from the British as a reward for collaboration with them at the time of their expedition against Tewdros.

32 ibid p.218, and for greater detail Richard Pankhurst's article on firearms, op. cit. footnote 27

33 Marcus op. cit. p.148

34 In the case of Gragn they were particularly decisive, Muslim armies of a few hundred riflemen routing Christian armies of thousands. Unfortunately we cannot yet extend our discussion to Lalibela and the rise of the Solomonic dynasty of Showa because of the lack of evidence on methods of warfare between the 10th and 15th centuries. We can only infer a link from the continued correlation of trade and empire

35 E. Terray op. cit. p.313. See also Meillassoux op. cit. p.74-75

36 For the background to the US involvement in Ethiopia see: US, Ninety First Congress, second session. Hearings before the sub-committee on United States Security Agreements and commitments abroad, Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Part 8 1st June 1970

37 For details of the relationship of foreign capital to Ethiopian manufacturing industry, see UNCTAD, Major issues arising from the transfer of technology: a case study of Ethiopia. TD/B/AC.11/21. June 1974. For a historical study of HVA, the Dutch sugar firm which was the largest manufacturer in Ethiopia, see: Robin Murray, "Draketanden. HVA en de ontwikkeling van het imperialisme" in F. Crone and H. Overbeek, Nederlands kapitaal over de grenzen, SUA, Amsterdam, 1981.

38 J. Markakis op. cit. p.213

[39] Barbara Bradby, "Equal exchange or the Imperialism of Trade". Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, no 11 Autumn 1975