Harar in the Eyes of Foreign Travellers during the Nineteenth Century[1]

Ahmed Hassen[2]

Abstract

This article treats the city-state of Harar in the eyes of foreign travellers during the Nineteenth Century. Harar had not been accessible to European travellers and explorers until the mid-nineteenth century. This means that it could be difficult to reconstruct the history of the city-state of Harar, which was prominent for its regional and international trade for much of its history and could not be properly documented using internal sources alone with the exception of a few references in Arabic. Contrary to this, the second half of the nineteenth Century ushered in a new phase for Harar as it attracted European travellers, adventurers, and explorers who properly documented its long history and rich culture. The Egyptian interlude in the one decade of their presence from 1875–1884 also added a fresh input to learning more about Harar under Ottoman-Egyptian rule. Once integrated into the Kingdom of Shewa in 1887, another chapter of Harar's history made its appearance and further attracted foreigners, among whom adventurers and diplomatic missions stand out quite clearly. The objective of this article is to look into Harar's place in the history of the region during the nineteenth century, largely based on the accounts of foreign travellers. Rich sources appear in different European languages. The impressions of those travellers who visited Harar in the nineteenth century stand out and sound quite solid, as well as being in desperate need of proper documentation. In the process of reconstructing the history of Harar, although travel literature plays a key role, it also seems quite logical that secondary sources will also add valuable information. The methodology employed is one of relying on qualitative sources largely tapped from diverse travel literature and existing secondary sources. After careful examination of the source materials, it appears that the main ideas put together from different travel and secondary sources were properly evaluated and justified, indicating that our knowledge about the City of Harar remains solid and even better.

Keywords: Commerce, Harar, History, Travelers/explorers/adventurers, City-State, Amir, Ottoman-Egypt

[1] I would like to extend my thanks to Tsion Aysheshem for her kind support in the course of preparing this research article. My thankfulness also goes to Dr. Amélie Chekroun, Chargée de recherche au CNRS, who suggested the topic and commented on the need for further search for source materials and the improvement of the text for publication.

[2] Associate Professor at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, AAU: ahmedh20019@gmail.com

Introduction

It is a matter of interest to underscore that the city-state of Harar attracted both traders and adventurers in particular during the nineteenth Century. Of those with considerable eagerness in search of the ins and outs of the Emirate of Harar, foreign travellers had been the best. They were predominantly of European origin, except for a few of them counted by fingertips. It is, therefore, quite imperative to study Harar based on the existing travel literature. This is because the current research outputs, be they by Ethiopian researchers or foreign ones, except in some rare cases, are either few in number, thin in their contents, or above all, wallow in generalities. The present attempt in this article is to escape from such limitations as much as possible. This article strongly insists on pursuing this line, as Harar by itself had the experience of an up-down history porting countless events that were almost "mysterious" to quickly grasp and easily capture.

Foreign travellers employed different idioms (for instance, English, French, Italian, German, and what not), and it is important to rely upon their accounts through the very idiom they employed so that everything will be more precise. This could help both general readers and professionals in many ways. Ultimately, we could understand Harar and its environs through a rather clearer lens. As far as evidence goes, the travel literature is unmatched by any other source in an attempt to reconstruct the history of this city-state.

Any historical research could employ different methods and, equally speaking, exploit different sources from different corners. Whenever we embark on historical research, be it at a macro or micro level, it would be advisable to dig into the ocean of the chosen topic in detail by evaluating this or that category of source materials. Such an approach could help interested scholars and general readers in any corner easily grasp how important different categories of sources are to a given topic. This article, as it is, neither claims to be a pioneer in the reconstruction of the history of the walled city of Harar nor does it try to cover the historical developments of it in their entirety. It is rather a note of curiosity that developed about Harar in the eyes of Europeans and a few other foreign travellers, who visited Harar in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. Above all, those who remote controlled it due to physical access and those who later succeeded in visiting physically managed to collect reliable and rich traditions of Harar and its inhabitants.

In the course of its preparation, this article has employed a qualitative research method. Such an attempt included, among others, research outputs and

available primary sources. In order to avoid the vagueness of some key terms, clarifying them is quite necessary. Indeed, the term traveller hereinafter denotes a person traveling from one place to another with specific reasons; an explorer is the one who moves from one geographic space to another in search of physical and scientific information; and above all, an adventurer is a person who moves to distant places and grasps exciting new experiences in a given unfamiliar area. All these senses regarding the term traveller alternatively used to qualify travellers coming to Harar and elsewhere in Ethiopia. To evaluate the role of travel observation with respect to Harar, it would be advisable to capture the state of historical knowledge regarding Harar from the secondary literature.

Secondary Literature and Perspectives

Linguists, historians, and social anthropologists spearheaded the study of Harar and its environs. In order to uncover the state of knowledge in the annals of the city-state of Harar, the rich research outputs are the works of the pioneer Enrico Cerulli (1971). Wagner's piece (1974: 212–223) takes three Arabic documents on the history of Harar. He carefully translated and created access for English reading researchers, related scholars, and other interested ones. The author of the manuscripts was Ahmed Shami. He was a Harari scholar with deep interest in the disciplines of archaeology, geology, ethnology, and history. His work is a mine of knowledge about Harar, as it provides a list of all the emirs of Harar and their tasks from the flourishing times of Habbūbā (283–333 H./893–942 A.D.) until the Egyptian times (1875–1884 A.D.).

The wider range of Harare's history had rich information in Abbas's postgraduate thesis (1992). The totality of this graduate research stands as testimony, covering several aspects of the life of Harar as a city-state. Ben-Dror (2018), on his part, treats the existence of Harar as an emirate, Harar under the Egyptian occupation, and its integration into the Kingdom of Shewa in the final analysis. Caulk (1971:1–20), on the other hand, preoccupied himself in such a laborious way with the occupation of Harar in 1887 by King Menelik (1865–1899) and the fate of Harar in the aftermath. Mohammed Hassen (1973) diligently reconstructed the history of Harar and its surrounding Oromo. His focus, as one understands it here, is more on the Oromo neighbours than the surrounding Argobba and Somali ethnic communities. Despite the fact that Mohammed had been Caulk's student, it seems that after two years the latter (1977:369–386) appeared once again with an excellent analysis, although emphasis is given here to Harar's tie with its environs. We,

therefore, do not see the way travellers perceive Harar. The best out of this is that the path charted by Mohammed Hassen had been properly edified by his mentor, the critical Richard Alan Caulk, but with superior mastery of historical methods in the eye of the time.

Seen from the above perspective and after evaluating available but selected historical works, it appears that the task of understanding the perception of foreign travellers about Harar, in particular their intimacy with or their distance from Harar and its inhabitants, is one that still qualifies Harar as a research terrain as far as the inside story of it is concerned. More important still, the overall effort here is to fill the missing link that created an obvious gap in our knowledge regarding the Harar city-state, based above all on available and reliable travel sources.

The existing secondary literature further guides readers to argue that the 19th century saw some revival in the study of Harar. Perhaps the largest literary production in Harar's history focuses on its political dimensions due to the objective realities of the time. More information is available on the political history of Harar. Ewald Wagner's discussion on the genealogy of the Emirate of Harar provides useful information even for the period before the 19th century (Wagner, 1974).

There are also works that deal with aspects of state formation on the Harar plateau. A number of scholars have written on different aspects of Harar's political history. Tim Carmichael's study (2001) on the administration and its relations with the central government of Ethiopia indicates the unique position of Harar compared to other incorporated lands in Southern Ethiopia. Some legacies of the City-State of Harar continued to function under *Ras* Makonnen and the subsequent governors as they inherited and maintained the long-established administrative structure and official archives.

Waldron (1978) and Mohammed (1980) have produced detailed accounts of relations among the population groups throughout four centuries, exactly from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century, highlighting the mutual but also self-determining nature that they put into action. Another sort of historical material that deals with Harar focuses on its economic history. There are numerous articles and book chapters on this aspect. Yusuf Ahmed's (1965) work on the agricultural and trading activities of the Harari people's lives deserves attention. He discusses agricultural products, agricultural techniques, and post-harvest crop preservation techniques. Works by different scholars properly discussed the trading aspects, commodities imported and exported,

and the role of the Amir in trade affairs. Perhaps the bulk of the materials on economic aspects deal with the commerce of Harar. Harar's geographical position and its political importance as a viable city-state with established connections to both the interior and the coast fostered the growth of Harar as a major commercial hub. For centuries, Harar lay on one of the two major trade routes that linked both the southern and northern spheres of the Ethiopian plateau. In this regard, another work of Waldron (1978), with characteristic attention to the political and economic standpoint, is worth mentioning. Waldron's 1984 piece and Ahmed's 1991 piece on different kinds of Harari coins involved in Harar's long trade relationship are of particular significance.

Looking at the socio-cultural literature, historical and anthropological works have immensely contributed to our understanding of Harar's past. One of these aspects is religion. Harar served as a privileged centre of Islamic civilization in the Horn of Africa. In this regard, Enrico Cerulli's (1941) work on the history of Harar and the Hararis is a pioneering and well-worth-mentioning piece. His work in Italian, translated very recently by Emran (2013), elaborates on the presence of Islam before Abadir. In relation to Islam, Braukamper's (2004) work on Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia deserves due recognition. According to him, the inhabitants of the Harar plateau, from the Charchar Mountains to the Hargeisa region, had been Muslims from the time of the earliest inception of Islam in Mecca. In the process of Islamizing the Oromo on the Harar plateau, Braukamper deliberates on the role the Harari played in spreading the *Da'is* (propagators) who have opened Quranic schools and taught the Qur'an in Oromo land. Reinforcing the same argument, Mohammed (*Ibid*.) elaborates on the shrines and qubbis established by the Hararis in the distant past. Despite the abundance and significance of shrines in Harar, the study of this important centre is still in its infancy. According to Foucher (1994), even in the 1980s, it was difficult to have a complete list of their names. In his 1988 publication, Foucher located *Awach*, but he admitted that it is impossible to know the exact number of shrines in the city. He also tried to indicate the importance and instrumentality of Awach in the spread of Islam from Harar to the surrounding areas. Hence, Harar became one of the most prominent centres of Islamic culture in Ethiopia, and its influence spread one after another to neighbouring regions, especially among the Oromo. Another aspect worth mentioning in the sociocultural literature is social organizations and institutions. Waldron (1974) analyses three fundamental institutions. These are kinship groups, friendship groups, and community organizations, according to Waldron (1980). Taking all these into consideration, Gibb (1996) adds a fourth institution called the

neighbourhood *toya*. These scholars almost unanimously agree that these institutions produce conformity and homogeneity. They grasp the very survival of an individual Harari. According to them, the mystery of the survival of the History of Harar and the Harari Civic largely rests on these institutions. Wilding's (1975) work on the Harari domestic architecture in terms of Harari House building is worth mentioning and covers archaeological veracity in fact-finding of the distant past.

The focus of the present article is to look into the ins and outs of travel literature, and further understand Harar in the eyes of foreign travellers. It is evident that much still remains for researchers regarding the long history of Harar and its Harari. Indeed, in order to document the observation of foreign travellers, this article contains three major components: the travellers' observation regarding Harar in pre-1875 times; the travellers' impressions in the course of the Egyptian Occupation of Harar (1875–1884) and the aftermath; and the integration of Harar into the Kingdom of Shewa until the close of the nineteenth Century. The presentation of each component follows one after another.

Harar in the Eyes of Foreign Travellers to 1875

Major Cornwallis Harris's three volumes (1844) shed some light on the trading communities of the 'Hururi,' as he mentioned the Harari frequenting the Harari – Shewa route and residing there for a season in. He used the term 'Hurur' for Harar as a commercial partner of the commercial capital of Aliyu Amba in the Kingdom of Shewa. He delivers information on the relationship the Harari had with the surrounding communities, such as the Oromo and the Somali. According to Harris, who remained for some time in Aliyu Amba, the Amir of Harar thrived in establishing friendly relations with the king of Shewa and secured the opening of a connection office that could supervise and follow up on the affairs of the Harari living there. He also sheds some light on the trade ties between Harar and Shewa (Harris I, 1844:365; Idem, II, 1844:324).

Impressions about Harar and an attempt to execute its visit had exactly been the projects of different foreign travellers and adventurers. Nevertheless, before the 1840s, there was no real source regarding the names of European travellers who had clear information about Harar. Adventurous travellers, who had touched the soil of the Horn of Africa since the late 1830s and early 1840s, however, had decided to embark on an enterprise to visit the historical city-state of Harar. We do not really know whether all travellers had such strong ambitions or dreams as in the case of Lieutenant James D. Barker. On

the one hand, for instance, it is a matter of concern that some of his colleagues neither thought about Harar nor even properly identified Harar by its correct name. The name Harar had been misspelled, and its history was poorly understood. This was a fact more evident than in the account of R. Kirk, who had been one of the members of the British Mission visiting the Kingdom of Shewa in the 1840s. In his article, he mentioned the historical city-state as "Hurrur" and a fragile distance estimation or location as if it were located three days journey from the Kileleu River, a tributary of the Awash, in the Afar desert (Kirk, 1842: 221-238). It is not surprising that Harris, Kirk's contemporary, has also repeated the same misspelled story of Harar when he pens the Emir Nur ibn Mujahid as "Noor, the Ameer of Hurrur!" (Harris, II, 1844: 238). Emir Nur Ibn Ali (d.1567) was the successor of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim (d.1543). According to the German scholar Kurt (1935, IV: 488), he was also an Emir of Harar and built the five gated walls of the city-state.

The rather resolute and adventurous member of the British mission to the King of Shewa in 1841 was Lieutenant James D. Barker. He was later promoted to the rank of Captain and became a member of Her Majesty's Indian Navy. When he set out from his home and joined the captain's (later Major) Harris's team, he seemed to have an agenda of peculiar interest: to visit the walled city-state of Harar. Barker, in the course of his sojourn in the Kingdom of Shewa, had published two articles on his career and that of his mission: the one already well exploited above in 1842 and another of better quality much later in 1868 (Barker, 1868: 4–77). From Barker's narratives, it appears that he gallantly attempted to visit the walled city of Harar. The British mission, Captain (later Major) Harris, was optimistic of Barker's success to the extent that he secured for Barker the assistance of the King of Shewa, Sahlä Sellasé (r. 1813–1847), who promised on his turn to assist him with letters to the contemporary Emir of Harar, Emir Abu Bakr ibn Abdalmnān (r. 1834–1852). Although Barker attempted an enterprise to visit Harar, it is clear from his narratives that he was compelled to abandon it because of impediments thrown along the route by his guides and the rapacity of those around him (Barker, 1868: 4).

Lieutenant Barker, while in Shewa, indefatigably solicited to have at hand a letter from the Shewan king for the Emir Abu Bakr of Harar. The Shewan king had treated him with the following friendly words: "a traveller, when in a far country, has no father, no mother, and also no relatives, it is, therefore, becoming in the watchmen of kingdoms and in the kings and rulers of provinces that they should protect travellers and assist them in all that they

desire..." (Barker, 1868: 49–50). From his above words, it was quite evident to Barker that the Shewan king, without reservation, offered him a letter sealed by himself and written in Arabic to extend respect to the Muslim Amir of Harar. Lieutenant Barker made it clear that whenever the Shewan king could write the Christians at all levels of governorship, the King's seal would be in Amharic characters. It was in that situation that a letter from the King of Shewa, Sahlä Sellasé, written on November 24, 1841, reached Barker. The intention was to hand over that very letter to Emir Abu Baker of Harar. Barker had thought that carrying this letter would avert everything odd and that all difficulties could vanish. The Harari merchants then found in the Kingdom of Shewa captured Barker's assistant, probably an Argobba named Seid, strongly beating him and disapproving that he accompanied Barker to Goncho, the seat of Walasma Mohhamed Abegaz, a key personage of Sahlä Sellasé on the eastern frontier of Shewa (Barker, 1868: 49–50).

Moreover, the Harari merchants further raised the point that they did not want to see Seid, with Barker suspecting that the latter could guide him to Harar. Barker once more tried to appeal to the king, although the intention to favor him failed due to Seid himself, for if the King Sahlä Sellasé punished any of them, the Harari merchants would kill him (Barker, 1868: 50). It finally appeared that Barker could not travel to Harar without joining the caravan heading to Harar from Aleyyu Amba. Barker, however, tapped into some information on January 9, 1842. It was a day before the 8th of January when the meeting was convened by the Harari merchants, who finally decided that they would not travel with Barker. In addition, in case he would join them, they would remain at the rear—an auto-decision severely affected and approved the fiasco of Lieutenant Barker's attempt and hope to visit the city-state of Harar was looming large on the horizon (Barker, 1868: 53).

The contemporary of Barker without physically visiting Harar was the French traveller Rochet d'Héricourt. Rochet was different from his contemporaries. This was in the first place; he painstakingly befriended the people of the Kingdom of Shewa, starting from the grassroots level (farmers and merchants of short and long-distance trade) and moving up to King Sahlä Sellasé and his courtiers. Secondly, he had executed two big enterprises by visiting Shewa between 1839 and 1842, a chance that no doubt granted him the chance to carefully understand the inside story of the people and lands in between the Kingdom of Shewa and the seacoast. With much superior quality, he had close deliberations with the merchants and caravan leaders from Harar before entering the commercial capital of the kingdom, Aleyyu Amba. It seems

because he did not disclose, unlike Barker, to the Harari merchants his attempt to visit it. Indeed, the Harari merchants did not hesitate to enrich Rochet's information on the walled city-state of Harar. The following lines genuinely epitomize Rochet's assessments about Harar:

> *la route commerciale la plus fréquentée, la plus importante, est celle qui lie la province d'Efat Argouba [i.e. Argobba] à Harar, ville centrale du pays d'Adel, habitée par des Saumalis, et ouvre aux productions de l'Abyssinie méridionale le débouché maritime de Berbera... la population d'Harar est sans contredit la plus industrieuse de l'Afrique orientale, celle dont les aptitudes sont appliquées au négoce avec le plus de succès : les habitants d'Harar sont même les véritables facteurs du commerce de cette partie de l'Afrique... ce petit peuple offre donc un immense intérêt à la science et au commerce de l'Europe, car il sera sans doute très utile aux voyageurs qui s'efforceront d'arriver par l'est dans le centre du continent africain (Rochet d'Héricourt, I, 1841: 302).*

This English Translation:

> *The most frequently used and important one had been the one connecting Efat Argouba [Argobba] with Harar, a commercial town in the Adal country inhabited by the Somali. It leads the Abyssinian products to the seaport of Berbera. The population of Harar, without any different fact, is the most highly industrious in Eastern Africa, whose attention was oriented to commerce, with successful careers being the veritable makers of commerce in this part of Africa. This small population shows immense interest in the science and commerce of Europe, which is without any doubt very useful for visitors who could arrive from the eastern direction on the African continent.*

From the rich information, detailed in content**,** it seems that the French traveller has left a vivid and rich tradition he collected on Harar, indicating with personal integrity that he did not touch the soil of Harar but, in such optimistic words, inviting fellow European travellers, any time in the future, to accomplish a task to visit Harar. Rochet further consolidated this fact during his second visit to the Kingdom of Shewa in the following manner:

> *La ville est située dans l'intérieur du désert des Saumalis [Somalis], à peu près, à moitié chemin entre l'Océan et le royaume de Choa. Aucun Européen n'a encore visité Harar. Les renseignements que j'ai*

> *recueillis sur la ville et ses curieux habitants m'ont été données par le représentant que l'émir d'Harar a envoyé au roi de Choa...Je luis dis que j'avais eu l'intention d'aller à Harar, mais que j'en avais été détourné par la crainte mal accueilli par l'émir... (Rochet, II, 1846:263).*

The English translation:

> *The city of Harar is situated in the interior of the Somali desert, about halfway between the Ocean and the Kingdom of Shewa. No European had yet visited it. The information that I collected on this city and its curiousities was obtained from a representative of the Emir of Harar who was sent to the King of Shewa...said to him that I had an intention to go to Harar, but I was ignored and maltreated by the Emir.*

Rochet relates the intimate commercial enterprise between the commercial agents of King Sahlä Sellasé of Shewa, which could set out from the commercial hub of Aleyyu Amba for Harar. And also those of Emir Abu Bakr, whose Harari veterans of the caravan route from the commercial center of Harar are, by all standards of evaluation, superior compared with his contemporary European travellers visiting this part of the country in the course of the 1830s and 1840s (Rochet d'Héricourt, 1841: 300–303).

First Footsteps in Harar: Richard Burton's Actual Visit Achievement

Richard Burton had accomplished both Barker's, Rochet's, and other contemporaries' hopes within the range of time, almost a decade apart in 1854. The following quotation proves his adventurous enterprise to discover the ins and outs of Harar at the time:

> *I doubt there are many who ignore the fact that in Eastern Africa, there is scarcely a counterpart of the ill-famed Timbuctoo in the far west. The more adventurous Abyssinian travellers, Salt and Stuart, Isenberg and Krapf, Barker and Rochet, not to mention divers Roman Catholic Missions, attempted Harar, but attempted in vain... It is, therefore, a point of honor for me… to utilize my title of Haji by entering the city, visiting the ruler, and returning in safety after breaking the guardian spell (Burton, 1894: I, 1-2).*

The above lines are by the British Captain, Sir Richard Burton, who courageously visited Harar and turned the aspiration and optimism of his predecessors European travellers into an achievement. A professional

observation that deserves due attention here is that the story of the "First Footsteps" of Richard Burton is more in very complete congruence with Harar than Burton's assertions fingering at the mega-geographic space of "East Africa". It, indeed, goes without saying to endorse the contribution of Richard Burton that if there was another adventurous and such a resolute and determined foreign traveller of either European or other origin other than the above-mentioned name, both the Horn of Africa in general and that of Ethiopia in particular must have forgotten such a name. There had been, however, several travellers whose first footsteps preceded Burton's, but not in the case of Harar. Hence, Burton's Footsteps in Harar instead of the highly exaggerated phrase he coined as the "First Footsteps in East Africa".

Burton, on his part, seems to have carefully learned from his predecessor travellers that it was not only impossible but also unthinkable to enter the gate of the walled city-state of Harar. According to Burton, the Emir of Harar and its inhabitants could not allow non-Muslims who could try a project to enter the gate of the walled city. Burton further emphasized that amongst the inhabitants of Harar, there was a feeling that Harar's prosperity would not be realized unless foreigners were excluded, which could logically be followed by interdiction. In a rather wider context, it can be inferred from Burton's report that such interdictions against foreigners had been quite common to almost all African rulers and also the same elsewhere due to and under different circumstances. It was natural that the Emir of Harar and his inhabitants used to close their doors to strangers and foreigners (Burton, 1894: vol. I, 1). In fact, this took a sense of personal perception of Burton. Nevertheless, it should be understood that Burton was not an exception to this argument, as his predecessors such as Isenberg and Krapf (1840:455), Barker (1868:238–239), and Rochet (1846:263), in the case of their perception towards the Emir of Harar, made quite a strong remark in indicating the Emir's notoriety even more than that of Burton.

The account transmitted by Burton about the ins and outs of Harar is quite original, lucid, and informative. Let alone intensely dealing with the description of the city's administration and folk life, Richard Burton did not hesitate to go the extra mile in expounding the actual size and topographical extent of Harar. His travel literature is quite solid. Here is the detail of Harar that would merit the meritorious performance of Burton's pen:

> *The present city of Harar is about one mile long by half that width. With five large gates and supported by oval towers of artless*

> *construction. The materials of the houses and defences are rough stones; the granites and sandstones of the hills are cemented...The only large building is the Jami Cathedral, a long barn of poverty-stricken appearance with broken-down gates and two whitewashed minarets of truncated conic shape. The Turkish architects built them from Mocha and Hodydah... There are a few trees in the city… The streets are narrow lanes, uphill and downhill, strewed with gigantic rubbish heaps, upon which repose packs of mangy or one-eyed dogs, and even the wells are encumbered with rocks and stones. The habitations are mostly long, flat-roofed sheds, double-storied; the principal houses have separate apartments for the women and stand at the bottom of a large courtyard ... the poorest classes are called "Gambisa," the thatched cottages of the hill cultivators. The city abounds in mosques, plain buildings without minarets ... graveyards stuffed with tombs... (Burton, 1894: II, 13-14).*

Finally, credit should go to Richard Burton, whose rich account also covers the educational life of the city-state. It appears that there is no institution of this kind for learning, including endowments, to the extent that students struggle without encouragement. Shortages of books and the high costs related to them were the order of the day. Religious education is, however, highly refined. The principal Ulama' had been the Kabīr Khalīl, the Kabīr Yunis, and the Shaykh Jamī. While the first two were heavily involved in their professions, with study and tuition remaining in their houses, the latter one used to be actively involved in politics. Moreover, the instructors teach Islamic literature using the Harari language (Burton, 1894: vol. II, 14–15).

Harar during the Egyptian Times (1875-1884)

The fall of Harar under Egyptian rule (1875–1844) was due to the then Egyptian leader Kehdive Ismail Pasha (1865–1879), whose grand plan was that of creating and building up its military power for Egypt’s mega expansion in Eastern and Central Africa. Egypt decided to conquer Ethiopia in 1875, though it faced a fatal and disastrous debacle by Ethiopians under Emperor Yohannes IV (1872–1899). Only the Egyptian force led by Mohammed Rauf Pasha marched to Harar from Zaila and Berbera. By mounting heavy arms, his force encircled the Horn of Africa's city-state of Harar and threatened its social and political-economic fabric as well as its settlement sense of the word. Egyptian forces also disarmed the Harari public. There is information taped by Alfred Bardey (1897 and reprinted in 1901) from a certain Hassen Osman, one

of the Egyptian commanders who arrived in Harar with the occupying Egyptian force. It was not surprising that Egypt executed Mohammed Abd el Shekur, then Emir of Harar, during the occupation. Though he submitted to the Egyptians, they suspected him and afterwards eliminated him, justifying that he conspired against the Egyptian interest in Harar.

Once Harar fell into the hands of the Egyptians, Mohammed Rauf Pasha, the first Egyptian governor of Harar, conducted a series of military expeditions against the surrounding Oromo clans. In his diary of April 17, 1878, Colonel, later General Charles Gordon, remarked on the personal characteristics of Mohammed Rauf Pasha as a tyrant (George Barbeck Hill, 1969: Series Gordon, 1876–1879). Radwan Pasha succeeded Mohamed Rauf Pasha, the first Egyptian governor of Harar. Nevertheless, his term was short, and Nadi Pasha quickly replaced him as a third Egyptian governor over Harar. Egyptian forces numbered 4000 to 5000 strong men. These forces were never able to win the support of the surrounding Oromo clans in the vast space outside the walled city of Harar. Harar was in an unsafe security situation as its environs had been quite shaky during Egyptian times.

The Egyptian officer and explorer named Muhammed Mukhtar visited Harar in the course of the Egyptian Occupation. He underlined the teaching and learning situations: « l'instruction est très développée chez eux [i.e., the Harari]; les enfants apprennent à lire dans des petites écoles pendant la journée, les adultes au contraire se rendent le soir chez les Kadis pour y étudier la législation musulmane...» (Mukhtar, 1876: 366). The English translation says that the teaching instruction was highly developed in their country [Harar]. Children were learning how to read in small schools during the day, whereas, on the contrary, adults used to join the Kadis and study under him the Islamic law [the Fiqh]. Mohamed Mukhtar (1876:364–366) further elucidated that wider interaction in that commercial city of Harar, as even cross-cultural marriage was also highly evidenced.

Whatever and wherever particular exceptions could occur, Mukhtar underlined that, as usual, the highest majority of the city, the Harari, and other Muslims in the surrounding area used to perform marriage arrangements based on Islamic law with the strict presence of the Kādi (Ibid.) The overall intention of Mukhtar seems to have been that the Emirate of Harar had immense cultural interactions within and outside of the wall. Within the wall, cross-culture could exist, as in some cases; the Harai could form marriage ties with the surrounding Somalis above anything else.

The Egyptian Aftermath and the Integration of Harar to the Kingdom of Shewa in 1887 and After

European travellers, in the form of adventurers, merchants, and wealth hunters, are another group of writers who have also contributed in their own right to the enrichment of knowledge about Harar. Their information dominates our knowledge of this period. The best examples among this group are Alfred Bardey, Arthur Rimbaud, Julies Borelli, and Robecchi Bricchetti (an Italian Engineer who constructed the Medhane Alem Church in Harar on the forcibly demolished mosque of the Sheikh Bazikh Mosque). The short list throws some light on the socio-economic fortunes and benefits Harar could provide through trade. A few words on Alfred Bardey, who was the first French trader to come to Harar from his base in Aden and wrote in detail about aspects of architecture, commerce, clothing, religion, people, and the history of the region, including a detailed chronology of the rulers of Harar from 1500 to the time of Egyptian occupation in 1897. He also introduced A. Rimbaud, another Frenchman, to Harar in the 1880s (Bardey, 1897: 142).

The French journalist Mondon-Vidailhet (1892:18) mentions the presence of the Muslim Harari clerks and numerous Shaykhs serving in the administrative divisions of the city. He further mentioned that diverse Roman Catholic missions constituted part of those travellers who attempted to visit Harar (Ibid.). Although that was the case, it does not necessarily mean that we could not find sources on the city-state from European Catholic missions who had come and settled in Harar. Taurin de Cahagne (1826–1899) was the Capuchin ordained on June 20, 1849. Being an Apostolic vicar of Oromo areas in Ethiopia, he used to live in Harar. He transmits rich information in his work written in Afan Oromo (Taurin de Cahagne, 1880: *Passim*)[3]. The British mission head, Count Glichen (1897:50), applauded Taurin for his personal kindness and precious experiences shared with him and his mission. The hardworking Capuchin religious figure lived by then in Harar and informed his experience of 27 years for Glichen and his team. Taurin, in another report, transmits that the social status of the merchants of Harar crossed all boundaries, among who were the Amirs themselves, particularly in the second half of the 19th Century. (Taurin de Cahagne, 1882: 262) Cattles' breeding was also another form of the Harar economy; according to the Italian soldier, geographer, and explorer Giulietti, there was a case to the extent that taxes were paid in some cases on calves. (Giulietti, 1881: 435–436). This Italian

[3] I am grateful to my former mentor, Prof. Merid Wolde Aregay, for the translation of the text.

explorer, as Nesbit (1935:300–326) remarked, collected the rich traditions of Harar and the wider environment before he and his team were massacred in the Afar depression by the members of the Afar upon his return trip in 1881.

The Austrian explorer Paulitschske, according to Neumann (1902: 374), had pushed as far as this place in the year 1884 and recorded rich traditions in and around Harar. His work has rich information on Harari life, particularly in their interactions with the surrounding Oromo and Somali. He has stated that besides the mercantile ties they could exercise with their intermarriages, there were also ties between the Harari Amirs and the relatives of the Gari and the Bartäri Somali clans. (Paulitschke, 1886: 195). Moreover, Harar in the late nineteenth Century had strong ties with the surrounding Oromo. According to the French commercial agent also engaged in exploration tasks, Xavier Alfred Bardey, who was born in Besancon on September 24, 1854, and died in Vaux-les-Prés on January 16, 1934, had his two works (Bardey, 1897: 143–144; idem, 1885/1886: 415–443) further consolidate our knowledge of Harar during this period.

In this exercise of reconstructing a modest history of the celebrated city-state of Harar, the role of foreign travellers in unearthing its history remains higher. Harar's in-and-out story, in as much as they could, in such a multiple dimension. Their witness also serves as an immortal testimony that those travellers who visited Harar could not only exercise adventurous endeavours such as games and hunting alone but also tried to fetch knowledge of variable status and intelligently enrich their literature to such a level that could satisfy readers of any background, be they amateurs or professionals. Their accounts, overall, stand out as valuable human bold exercises when it comes to a search for better knowledge. Their accounts pinpoint that Harar was not only the center of a Muslim city state and a strategic emporium of international trade in the Horn of Africa, but also the hub of such a dynamic plural culture intertwined with its surrounding diverse communities. A reputable center of Islamic activities and a magnetic pool of commercial legacy, with intimate international ties via the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean coast, Harar served the role of an unbroken bridge between the Ethiopian hinterlands and the coastal areas all through the nineteenth century.

Bibliography

Abbas Ahmed (1992), "A Historical Study of the City-State of Harar, (1795-1875)". Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, History.

Ahmed Hassen Omer (2001). "Some Notes on Harar and the Local Trade Routes: A report on the View of the Ex-Merchants of Shewa (1835-1935)". *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Vol.XVII, pp.135-147.

Ahmed Zekaria (1991). Harari Coins: A Preliminary Survey", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies Vol. XXIV*.Addis Ababa Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

Annales de la propagation de la foi, Tome 14." Lettre de Mgr Taurin de Cahagne, Zeila, le 9 mars, 1882.

Bardey A., 1885/1886, " Notes sur le commerce du Somal, du Harar et du pays des Gallas,",*Bulletin de la Société de géographie commerciale*, 1885-1886, p. 415-43

Bardey A., 1897, Notes sur le Harar, *Bulletin de Géographie Historique et Descriptive*, I, 5-55.

Barker J.D., 1842, Extract Report on the Probable Geographical Position of Harar: With Some Information Relative to the Various Tribes in the Vicinity, *the Journal of Royal Geographical Society of London*, 12.

Barker J.D., 1868, *Narrative of A Journey to Journey to Shoa and of An Attempt to Visit Harar*, Bombay, Byculla.

Ben-Dror A (2018). *Emirate, Egyptian, Ethiopian: colonial experiences in late nineteenth-century Harar.* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Braukamper Urlich (2004). *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia, Collected Essays.* Lit Verlag Munster.

Burton R.F., reprint 1894, *First Foot Steps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar*,2 vols, London, Tylston and Edwards.

Cahagne, T. de *(1880), Katekismos joki barsisa nama kristian, bia Oromo (Galla) gedêti abunni Jacobi. - Catechismus, seu Instructio hominis christiani, quem scripsit ad usum regionum Oromonicarum* . Parisiis. *http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb301840872/ BnF-GG 910.*

Caulk Richard Alain (1971). "The Occupation of Harar: January 1887". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies.* Vol. 9, No. 2. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

Caulk Richard Alain (1977). "Harär Town and Its Neighbors in the Nineteenth Century.''*Journal of African History*, 1977, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1977). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carmichael Tim (2001). “Approaching Ethiopian history: Addis Ababa and local governance in Harar, c. 1910 to 1950.” Ph.D. Tthesis, Michigan State University.

Cerulli, Enrico (1941). "L'Islam Etiopico" e "Harar, Centromusalmano in Etiopia", *L'Islam di Ierie di Oggi*. Roma: Instituto per l'Oriente.

Ceruli, Enrico (1971) tr. Emran Mohammed Waber (2013).: Islam Yesterday and Today. Addis Ababa.

George Berbeck Hill, D.C.L (1879). *Colonel Gordon in Central Africa*, 1874-1879. New York: Kranus Reprint Company.

Gibb, Camilla C. T. 1996: “In the City of ‘Saints’: Religion, Politics and Gender in Harar, Ethiopia” PhD Dissertation, Oxford University..

Giulietti, G. M., *'Viaggio da Zeila ed Harar (1879)', Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana (1881), 435–6.*

Gleichen, C. (1898). *With the Mission to Menelik, 1897*, London, Edward Arnold.

Harris, C.W., 1844, *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, vol. 2, London, Longman.

Harris, C.W. (1844). *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, vol. 2, London, Longman.

Kirk, R. (1842), Report on the Route from Tajoura to Akkober, Travelled by the Mission to Shewá under Charge of Captain W.C. Harris, Engineers, 1841, *The Journal of Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 12, pp. 221-238.

Kurt, Wendt (1935). "Amharische Geschichte eines Emirs von Harar im XVI. Jahrhundert". *Orientalia, vol. 4 ed. JSTOR 43581078.*

Miran Jonathan (1993). « L’occupation égyptienne de Harar (1875-1885) », Mémoire de maîtrise, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales.

Mohammed Hassen (1973). “The Relations between Harar and the Surrounding Oromo, 1800-1887”. B.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, History.

_____. (1980). Menelik’s Conquest of Harar, 1887, and its effect on the Political Organization of the Surrounding Oromo up to 1900. Cambridge.

Mondon Vidailhet, C., 1892, Vainqueurs et Vaincus, Harar, July 1892, *Le Temps*, le 6 Décembre.

Moktar M. 1876) « Notes sur le pays de Harrar », Bulletin trimestriel de la société khédiviale de géographie du Caire, no 4.

Nesbitt, L.M. (1935). *Hellhole of Creation: The Exploration of Abyssinian Danakil,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Neumann, Oscar (1902). "From the Somali Coast through Southern Ethiopia to the Sudan."The Geographical Journal. Vol. XX, No. 4.

Paulitschke, P. (1886). Note per la Storia Del Harar, *Bollettino della Sezione Fiorentina della Società Africana d'Italia*, II, p.195.

Paulitschke, P. (1889). 'HarrAr', Bollettino della Societa Africana d'Italia, VIII, 5-6, 146, p.4

Rochet d'Héricourt, C. F.X. (1841). *Voyage sur le côté oriental de la mer Rouge dans le pays d'Adel et le Royaume de Choa*, Paris, Arthus Bertrand.

Rochet d'Héricourt, C. F.X., (1846.) Seconde *Voyage sur les deux rives de la mer Rouge dans le pays d'Adel et le Royaume de Choa*, Paris, Arthus Bertrand.

Salt, Henry (1967 reprinted). *Voyage to Abyssinia and Travels into the Interior of that Country*, Frank Cass & CO. LTD.

Swayne, H.G.C., 1900 (Second Edition), *Seventeen Trips to through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia: A Record of Exploration and Big Game Shooting,* London, Rowland Ward Limited.

Wagner Ewald (1974). "Three Arabic Documents on the History of Harar." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

Waldron Sidney Ralph.1978. *Harari: the Muslim city in Ethiopia*. Chicago.

Wehib M. Ahmed (2015). *History of Harar and the Hararis*. Harar: Harari people Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureau.

Wilding, Richard, 1975: "Pre-history in Harar" *Conference on Historical and Associated Studies in Harargey,* Archaeology Unit History Department, Addis Ababa University

Yusuf Ahmed (1965). "Afoca". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. III (2).