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ACTA ÆTHIOPICA VOLUME III

INTERNAL RIVALRIES AND FOREIGN THREATS 1869–1879

EDITED BY SVEN RUBENSON



Seals of three contenders for supreme power: Tekle Gīyorgīs, Minīlik and Yohannis

INTERNAL RIVALRIES AND FOREIGN THREATS 1869–1879

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EDITED BY SVEN RUBENSON

CO-EDITORS AMSALU AKLILU, MERID WOLDE AREGAY AND SAMUEL RUBENSON

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Preface

The background and aim of the series ACTA AETHIOPICA was explained in the preface and introduction to the first volume, *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854*, published by Addis Ababa University Press and Northwestern University Press in 1987. The second volume, *Tewodros and His Contemporaries 1855–1868*, was published in 1994 by Addis Ababa University Press, with Lund University Press as co-publisher.

Co-editors of the first volume were Getatchew Haile, Collegeville, and John Hunwick, Evanston. The second volume, *Tēwodros and His Contemporaries 1855–1868*, was co-edited by Amsalu Aklilu, Hamburg, Merid Wolde Aregay, Addis Abeba, and Samuel Rubenson, Lund. They have also assisted me in producing the present volume, *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869–1879*. Without their cooperation and untiring efforts it would have been impossible to for me to complete the volume.

Many are the friends and colleagues who have shared their skills and knowledge with us as we have dealt with the archival research, with Arabic and Ethiopian philology, and with details of biography, history and geography. Ahmad Shouk, Ahmed Hassen Omer, Bairu Tafla, Sevir Chernetsov, Ezra Gebremedhin, Fisseha Mekuria, Hussein Ahmed, Kevin O'Mahoney, Richard Pankhurst, Tekeste Negash, Alessandro Triulzi, Gregory Tsypkin, and Zewde Gabre-Sellassie are but a few of the many who have assisted us in various ways and deserve to be mentioned with gratitude. For the clarity and readability of the English translations I am deeply indebted to our English language editor in Lund, Bengt Ellenberger. Where several translations are possible, or at least seem to be so, the final choice has been made largely on contextual grounds. It is thus only fair that I accept the ultimate responsibility for all shortcomings of the volume, linguistic as well as historical.

We are grateful to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, to the *Conservateur en Chef* of the diplomatic archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the authorities of the archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Archives of Egypt, as well as to the librarians and keepers of all other archives concerned, for their kind permission to have documents in their possession published in ACTA AETHIOPICA. Our gratitude goes to librarians and archivists who have generously assisted us in our search in Cairo and Jerusalem, in Athens and Rome, in Paris, London, Stockholm, Moscow and St. Petersburg. They are too many to be listed by name. Madame Sawsan of the National Archives of Egypt, however, deserves special thanks for her tireless efforts to find documents for us in a most complicated archival situation.

The generous financial aid of the Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is acknowledged with deep gratitude. We are also very grateful to the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences for a publishing grant.

S. R.

Introduction

The third volume of ACTA AETHIOPICA, covering little more than a decade from the fall of King Tēwodros until the end of the 1870s, has received the title *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats.*

'Internal rivalries' refers to the fact that the first three years after the death of King Tēwodros are best described as an interregnum with three contenders for the throne. As early as 1867 Minīlik in Shewa had made known his claim to the supreme position by using the title 'king of kings' in his correspondence (ACTA II, nos 216–218). After the death of Tēwodros he added 'of Ethiopia'. *Wagshum* Gobezē, the leading rebel against Tēwodros during his last years, lost no time before declaring himself 'king of kings of Ethiopia' at the old capital of Gonder, assuming the name Tekle Gīyorgīs. The third regional ruler involved, *Dejjazmach* Kasa of Tigray, did not make his claim explicit, but neither did he declare his allegiance to Tekle Gīyorgīs, his brother-in-law, still less to Minīlik. When Tekle Gīyorgīs tried to force Kasa into submission, he was himself defeated and eliminated from the contest. Although Kasa was then crowned King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia by a new bishop, Minīlik showed no sign of giving up the independence of his domain in the south. It was only towards the end of the decade, in 1878, that he accepted Yohannis as his suzerain and refrained from using the title 'king of kings'.

The foreign threats were of two kinds: Egyptian encroachments on Ethiopia's frontiers, culminating in the full-scale war of conquest in 1875–76, and European missionary and commercial activities, which tended to undermine the allegiance of the Ethiopian people to the Ethiopian church and monarchy, and to weaken the cohesion of the Ethiopian society in general. These developments had both begun during the reign of Tēwodros, but became increasingly serious in the following years. They were linked in several ways. Not only were the Egyptian armies to a large extent trained and led by American and European officers, but Werner Munzinger, a Swiss who had served as both British and French consular representative at Massawa, acted as Egyptian governor on Ethiopia's northern frontier in 1871–1875, and that famous symbol of British imperialism, General Charles Gordon, looked after *Khedive* Ismā'īl's interests as governor in the Sudan and emissary to King Yohannis in the second half of the 1870s. Moreover, many missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, expected to have more freedom of movement under Egyptian rule and therefore used their knowledge and influence in favour of the Egyptian attempt to gain control over Ethiopia.

* * * * *

The volume follows the principles and format of volumes I and II of the series. Thus it contains not only all official letters and documents we have been able to locate, but also whatever semi-official and private letters we have come across. In many cases it is difficult to draw a line between one category and another. Local chiefs and governors participated on both sides in the political and cultural process by which foreigners tried to impose their will on the Ethiopians. Other individuals acted on behalf of religious communities or other groups, while a few simply provided news to friends outside Ethiopia. Borderline cases where missionaries, or businessmen like Pierre Arnoux, may well have inspired or even produced a text more or less on their own, present a different problem. While the principle that *Acta Aethiopica* is to represent 'the voice of the Ethiopians' remains, borderline cases have sometimes been included for what they can reveal about the atmosphere in which relations were shaped.

More than one third of the letters (ninety-one, to be precise) were written by Kasa/Yohannis IV, and another ten by governors or emissaries on his behalf. Minīlik and his court are represented by some forty-five letters and other documents, and Tekle Gīyorgīs by six. This reflects the fact that it

was primarily Yohannis who had to deal with the pressures from abroad. Minīlik, however, was also very actively involved in foreign affairs throughout the decade. Most of the letters are addressed to foreign heads of state or their more or less official representatives, but Yohannis also wrote to the Coptic patriarch, and both he and Minīlik corresponded with the Ethiopian monastic community in Jerusalem.

At the second level of the power structure we find a number of chiefs, governors and other officials with foreign contacts of their own. Some of them defected to the Egyptians. The most prominent of these, *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl, governed Bogos on their behalf during the second half of the decade—and wrote a dozen letters to his new masters (nos 144–145 and *passim*). The influential Orthodox cleric and emissary of Yohannis, *Aleqa* Birru Welde Gīyorgīs, involved himself in intrigues with Minīlik and Munzinger against his former master (nos 62, 78, 128). Among the European-educated élite Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs from Senafē, who had long been a middleman between Europeans and Ethiopian rulers (ACTA I, no. 34; II, *passim*), sought support for political ambitions of his own, *i.a.* from France (nos 34, 77, 106). Other officials remained loyal to their sovereign, notably *Ras* Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq (nos 115 and 201) and *Lij* Mirċha Werqē (no 62, 70).

While the above-mentioned must by all standards be defined as Ethiopians, the case of the *shaykhs* along the coast of the Red Sea (nos 22, 35, 43, 45, 65, 76, 97, 179–180, 199, 225 and 235) is more complicated. They clearly became less and less dependent on the rulers of the inland and more and more on the Egyptians and Europeans. Nevertheless their attitudes and activities are so closely connected with the conditions of the hinterland, and so important for an understanding of the changes in Ethiopia's political environment, that they must be included—as they were in volumes I and II. This applies also to Abū Bakr up to 1876 after which his correspondence with Cairo becomes more and more that of a local Egyptian administrator. Three letters from Harer just before the Egyptian occupation in 1875 (nos 133–135) and a letter from the ruler of the Werre Hīmano (no. 57) must obviously be regarded as coming from the Ethiopian side in the conflicts, even though the rulers of Harer were independent, while the *shaykh* of Werre Hīmano was certainly not, having his faith only in common with the invaders.

Catholic clergymen, scholars and students are represented with a few names in this volume as in the earlier ones. *Debtera* Asseggaheñ continues his narration of on-going political developments, answers Antoine d'Abbadie's linguistic questions, and describes his scientific experiments and discoveries. *Abba* Yosēf, a Catholic priest, most probably with an Orthodox background (nos 100, 122), informs d'Abbadie of his opinion about his European colleagues in two very frank letters. The 1870s also provide the first documents from another foreign-related group of Ethiopians, teachers and students of the Swedish Mission in Hamasēn: *Qēs* Hayle Ab Tesfay is represented by three letters in Amharic (nos 98, 99, 131), and the student Welde Haymanot has left us the first letter written in Swedish by an Ethiopian (no. 130).

The single most important source of documents for this volume are the National Archives of Egypt. More than fifty letters, most of them Amharic and Arabic originals, have been traced there. In addition to the expected crop of more or less known letters at the Public Record Office, a few additional letters to Tēwodros's son Alemayyehu—discovered in, of all places, the Treasury files—deserve to be mentioned. With the Italian involvement in the area, the importance of the Italian archives has increased. We have managed to add a few royal letters from Austrian, German and Russian archives, but have so far failed to locate others, known to have been dispatched by Yohannis to Czar Alexander II and King George of Greece. Important archives providing materials for *Acta Aethiopica* for the first time include the collection of the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem Dayr al-Sulṭān, the Archive of the Eparchy of Adigrat, and the archives of the Swedish Evangelical Mission in Stockholm and Uppsala. Unfortunately the archives of *e.g.* the Coptic Patriarchate and further deposits in Jerusalem, which almost certainly contain important Ethiopian letters, are still inaccessible. The Egyptian scholar Anṭūn Suryāl 'Abd al-Sayyid has, however, placed his own copies

of three letters from Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V at our disposal. An even more serious limitation of *Acta Aethiopica* is that so little material has so far been available from sources within Ethiopia itself.

* * * * *

Although Yohannis IV is credited with a more traditional attitude and a closer relationship with the Ethiopian clergy than Tēwodros, there is no return to the Gi'iz language in his many letters, even in those to the monastic community in Jerusalem. Nor did Minīlik use Gi'iz, even in a letter to the pope. Titles and dates, and quotations from the bible, however, do appear in Gi'iz forms, and Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr, for instance, uses the old language for parts of his letters. Amharic naturally predominated in the correspondence, but this did not prevent Yohannis and *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl from writing many of their letters to Cairo in Arabic. English, French, and Italian were occasionally used even for letters bearing the royal seal of Yohannis. Arabic naturally retained its position as the means of communication among the Afar *shaykhs* and *sulṭāns* on the Red Sea coast. Thus all evidence indicates that the choice of language remained politely pragmatic. The only consideration seems to have been to get the message across. In other words, language was a means of communication pure and simple, not—as in Europe—a banner or symbol of national self-assertion.

Rather, it was by identifying himself with Aksum (and thus with Zion, the city of David) that Yohannis revealed what he must have regarded as the essence of his monarchy. The identification developed gradually. At first he was just "*ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia" (nos 2, 3, 16). Then he (or his advisers) replaced Ethiopia with "the land of Aksum" (nos 23, 27, 38, 40, 41). A little later he focussed attention more precisely on the national sanctuary, the Maryam Ṣiyon Church, "Aksum Ṣiyon" (no. 46 and *passim*). In July 1871 he introduced the title "*niguse Ṣiyon* of Ethiopia" (no. 73 and *passim*). Whether "of Ethiopia" here implies a recognition that there was geographically speaking another Zion, *viz.* Jerusalem in Palestine, is impossible to say with certainty. In Ethiopia, Ṣiyon carried many meanings, concrete as well as esoteric: the sanctuary of Aksum, the city, the land and people, but also the Church, the Kingdom of God in heaven and on earth. In some cases the context demands 'Ṣiyon'; in others it suggests the English 'Zion'. Once Yohannis had been crowned 'Elect of God, king of kings of Ethiopia', the emphasis on Aksum weakened, and it seems more appropriate to use the form 'Zion'.

As for form and style, the letters continue to show great variety. Seals were placed at the top—the rule in Yohannis's letters—or at the bottom. Letters were rarely signed, except by people who had been influenced by Europeans, for instance *Debtera* Asseggaheñ and 'Yosēf, the Catholic priest (*qesīs katolīkawī*)', as well as the friend of the Swedish missionaries, '*Qēs* Hayle Ab, the exile (*sideteññaw*)'. Most official letters in Amharic open with the phrase 'May the letter (or the message) from so-and-so reach so-and-so', followed by the usual inquiries as to the health of the recipient. The letters in Arabic are influenced by the Arabic epistolography of the time, lavish with titles and praise of the recipient.

By the 1870s almost all the correspondents had accepted the custom of dating their letters. As a rule the date appears at the bottom, with rare exceptions where European influence can be supposed to have played a role. Dates usually refer to the Ethiopian or Arabic calendar. The 'year of the creation of the world (*amete alem*)' appears only in three letters from Minīlik in 1869 (nos 5–7). Otherwise, the Amharic letters are mostly dated 'in the year of grace (*amete mihret*)', 'in the year of the birth of Our Lord', or some other similar term. Sometimes the date is given in both the Ethiopian and the European calendar, defined as *lisane gi'iz* and *lisane latīn, i.e.* Gi'iz and Latin language. Some made mistakes in the calculation, and not all warned the addressees, as Asseggaheñ did in the very first letter of this volume: "I am not sure but I suspect that the Latin date is wrong." How right he was, wrong by one day and one year!

Seals

The seals used by Ethiopians during the short period covered by this volume of *Acta Aethiopica* show a number of interesting developments. Yohannis III, the deposed but surviving king of kings from the *Zemene Mesafint*, continued to use a simple lion seal with no crown or legend. Nor does the lion in Tekle Gīyorgīs's seal wear a crown, but the legend, 'Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia (*niguse negest ze-ītyopya*)', leaves no doubt as to the extent of his claim. The other two pretenders to the throne after the death of Tēwodros embellished their seals with crowned lions.

Minīlik's first seal is clearly fashioned after the seal used by Tēwodros during most of his reign. Even the order in the legend with the title before the name is the same. In 1870 Minīlik acquired a seal which was almost certainly manufactured in Europe. It is the first seal in which the lion and the letters of the legend are raised, thus showing up black on white. The lion wears a typically European crown and holds a patriarchal cross in its right front paw. The unusual spelling 'Minyilik' is probably another indication of a European origin, while the omission of the name of the country may simply be due to lack of space. Most important, it is in this seal that the motto 'The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed (*mo'a anbessa zeimmenegede yihuda*)' first appears in Ethiopian heraldry. Although a quote from the book of Revelation in the New Testament, the mention of 'the tribe of Judah' called to mind the claims of the *Kibre Negest* that the Ethiopian kingship originated with Minīlik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The contemporary Shewan ruler was thus the second Minīlik. Though Minīlik was later obliged to acknowledge Yohannis as his suzerain he continued to use the seal.

Kasa/Yohannis used seven different seals on altogether ninety preserved letters from the year 1869 to 1879. The first is even more similar than Minīlik's to the seal used throughout most of Tēwodros's reign. In this case, however, the crown on the lion's head is contradicted by the legend '*Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia'. The implication is that, while Kasa was unwilling to acknowledge either of his two rivals as his overlord, he was not prepared to claim the title 'king of kings' unless or until he could be properly crowned by an Ethiopian *abun*. The first change came as early as 1869, when the image of the lion was improved and the flat crown was exchanged for one displaying three leaves in somewhat the same way as early crowns in Europe did. After Kasa's coronation in January 1872 the legend was changed to 'King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia (*niguse ṣiyon ze-ītyopya*)', followed by 'Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia (*mālik al-mulūk al-ḥabasha*)' in Arabic letters. Less than two years later a new seal appears, with the legend 'Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia' (*niguse negest ze-ṣiyon be-ītyopya* and *mālik al-mulūk ṣahyūn bi-l-ḥabasha*). A symbol resembling a St. Andrew's cross in a rectangle has been introduced between the Arabic and the Ethiopian text, as well as above the crown of the lion.

Foreign influences crossed each other, playing havoc with otherwise simple matters in the seals. For the year engraved in this and the following two seals Arabic numerals have been used. Nevertheless the year '1864' does not reflect the Arabic calendar but the Ethiopian! The next seal, used 1876–79, is almost identical with the earlier one, except that the year has been moved from the legend into the circle. In another seal, preserved on two letters from 1879, there are, however, two new and striking elements. The lion holds a cross in one of his paws, and the legend includes the statement: 'the cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'ēl (*mesqel mo'a negede isma'ēl* and in Arabic *al-ṣalīb ghalaba 'umma ismā'īl*)', a reminder that it was Yohannis, not Minīlik, who had saved Ethiopia from 'the tribe of Isma'ēl'. Other letters from 1879 again are stamped with a seal which closely resembles the one Yohannis began to use immediately after his coronation.

Though the Ethiopians had literally defeated the 'nation of [*Khedive*] Ismā'īl', there can be no doubt that Yohannis was thinking in religious terms: Christianity as opposed to Islam or—in Old Testament terms—Israel as opposed to Ishmael. Both the words and the cross in the paw of the lion

bear witness to this. From the content of many letters we know that Yohannis emphasized his role as the defender of Christianity when addressing European rulers. Thus it may be significant that the two letters preserved were sent to European rulers, not to the ruler of Egypt. The legend of this seal was, however, in all probability inspired by internal political changes as well.

Of the lesser princes *Ras* Welde Sillasē, using the name Wereñña (by which he was known as a warrior), combined his lion with the title which had served Yohannis well for two years: *ri'ise mekwanint*. *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon first had a seal with Ethiopic letters and a small cross, but exchanged this seal for one in Arabic when he defected to the Egyptians in February 1876. Two months later he exchanged *dejjach* for a *ras* title. In the process his name was also affected, changing from 'Walad Nikā'īl' to 'Waldinkīl'. An elaborate cross appeared in the seal of *Ras* Barya'u. Yohannis's foreign emissary *Lij* Mirċha Werqē had supplied himself with a modern seal, giving his name in both Latin and Ethiopic script and bearing as symbol a star of David, also known as the seal of Solomon. Other seals bore the names and in some cases the titles of the owners, but no symbols. This was obviously the case with the seals of all Muslims.



[Lion seal of Yohannis III]



Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia



King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia



Minyilik, king of kings.
The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.



Dejjazmach Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia



Dejjazmach Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia



King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia



Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864



Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864



King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion in Ethiopia.
The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'ēl.
Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia.
The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864



King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia;
Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia



Dejjazmach Welde Mīka'ēl, son of Selomon, of the land of Hamasēn



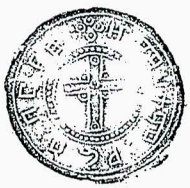
Dejjach Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl)



Ras Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293



Ri'ise Mekwanint Ras Wereñña



This is the seal of *Ras* Barya'u



Aleqa Birru, *līqe kahinat*; (*Rayīs* Jirjis the Abyssinian)



Lij Mirṣha Werqē; *Lag*i(?) M.M. Warkee



Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr



Ṣebahit Gebre Tekle, the Ethiopian



Muḥammad al-Amīr bin 'Alī al-Amīr bin 'Abd al-Shakūr



Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm



Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm



Burhān Muḥammad



Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs the Abyssinian



Shūm Ḥumad Dīn



Shūm Mūsā



Shūm 'Umar



Qāḍī 'Umar

Note on Orthography

There is no widely accepted simple system of transliteration from Ethiopian to Latin script, and many conventional spellings of the names of persons and places are by no means well-established. The system used for Amharic in *Acta Aethiopica* is fairly simple containing only three diacritical marks: a dash for two of the vowels, a dot for glottalized consonants, and an apostrophe to indicate a glottal stop, where it is pronounced by at least some Amharic speakers; thus Ya'iqob and Gi'iz, but Araya (not Ar'aya) and Alī (not 'Alī or 'Alī). On the other hand, the system is applied as consistently as possible for all names, as well as titles and other Ethiopian words written in Latin script, except for those geographical names where the English spelling is now practically uniform and in most cases has resulted in a distinctly different pronunciation (Abyssinia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Massawa).

The consonants or combinations of consonants have their normal English pronunciation, *g* (as in *g*et) standing for ገ, *j* (as in *j*am) for ጀ, *zh* (as *s* in plea*s*ure) for ዠ, and *q* (glottalized *k*) for ቀ. The seven vowels are transliterated *e, u, ī, a, ē, i,* and *o,* and pronounced approximately as in b*e*t, r*u*le, mach*i*ne, f*a*ther, touch*é* , f*i*t, and l*o*rd. When the vowel is not pronounced in the sixth order, the *i* is omitted in the transliteration.

In view of the ambivalent use of the labialized consonants, we have decided in favour of the simpler forms Gojjam and Gonder, also for instance Goshu, and Mekonnin. In cases where some authors have consistently used the labilized consonant we have allowed both forms, *e.g.* Gwela and Gola.

For Arabic and Turkish names, the spelling used by the *Cambridge History of Islam* has been adopted, except for Ethiopians bearing such names. Unfortunately this leads to what some may regard as annoying inconsistencies: Egyptians are called Aḥmad and 'Alī, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, but Ethiopians Ahmed and Alī, Mehammed and Ībrahīm. In fact, this concession to Ethiopian orthography is no different from the practice of writing Muhammad for an Arab but Mehmed for a Turk, or Butrus for an Egyptian but Petros (Ṗēṭros) for an Ethiopian, not to mention Peter for an Englishman. This principle does not solve all cases, but it does help establish some consistency as far as recognized Ethiopians are concerned.

Glossary

Abba	Father, monk (also used in *noms de guerre* or horsenames)
Abbatē	Father, priest, monk
Abun, abune	Our father, bishop, metropolitan of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Afe nigus	"Mouth of the king", supreme court judge
Aleqa	Chief, head, vicar of a church
Amba	Flat-topped mountain, mountain fortress
Amīr	Commander, prince
Anbā	Father, bishop
Aṣē, aṭē	Emperor
Ato	Master, Mr.
Azzazh	Chief, commander, supervisor
Bahr negash	"Ruler of the sea", governor of province or district in Eritrea
Baldereba	Intermediary appointed for relations with persons of high rank
Basha	Customs official, artillery officer (Ethiopian version of *pasha*)
Bey, bīk	Sir, civilian or military official
Bītwedded	Honorific title for senior court official
Blatta	Honorific title for achievement in learning and literature
Blattēngēta	More prominent honorific title for achievement in learning and literature
Debtera	Chorister, scribe (unordained member of the clergy)
Dejjazmach, dejjach	"Commander of the entrance", general, governor
Effendi	Sir, Mr.
Ferenj, ferenjoch	Foreigner(s), European(s) (by implication Roman Catholic)
Fītawrarī	Commander of the vanguard
Fitha Negest	"The Legislation of the Kings", old Ethiopian code
Gēta, gētaw	Lord, Master, Mr.
Ḥājj	Honorific title for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina
Iċhegē	Head of the monastic order of Tekle Haymanot, highest administrative officer of the Ethiopian Church
Igzī'i	Lord, Master
Imām	Muslim religious leader
Itēgē	Queen, consort of the ruler of Ethiopia
Kentība	District governor, mayor
Khawāja (Amharic *hawaja*)	Mr. (used in particular for Europeans; in Amharic letters *hawaja*)
Kibre Negest	"The Glory of the Kings", Ethiopian literary work embodying *i.a.* the legend of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

Lij	"Child, son", honorific title, mostly used for young members of the higher aristocracy and the royalty
Līq, līqē (plur. *līqawint*)	Scholar, prominent churchman
Līqe mekwas, līqemekwas	Equerry, high-ranking official close to the king
Līqe pappasat	Archbishop, patriarch
Līqe kahinat	Archpriest, high-ranking ecclesiastic
Mekonnin (plur. *mekwanint*)	Nobleman, dignitary, officer, governor
Memhir, memmirē	Master, teacher, abbot
Mislenē	Deputy, representative
Mu'allim	Master, teacher
Mudīr	Chief, administrator
Nā'ib	Deputy, agent; title given by the Turks to the Ethiopian chief on the mainland opposite Massawa
Nibure'id, nebure id	Head of the church of St. Mary of Aksum and administrator of the territory belonging to the church
Nigus	King
Niguse negest	King of kings
Ṗappas	Bishop
Pasha (Amharic *basha*)	Sir, honorific title for high civil or military official
Qāḍī	Magistrate, judge
Qēs	Priest
Ras, ri'ise	"Head", governor, commander, lord
Ri'ise līqane pappasat	Patriarch, pope
Ri'ise mekwanint	Head of the nobility, governors or commanders
Ri'ise memakirt	Chief advisor, chief counselor
Sayyid	Mr., master
Shaleqa	Officer, major
Shaykh (Amharic *shēh*)	Chief of an Arab clan or village; religious official
Shifta	Rebel, outlaw
Shum	District or village chief
Sulṭān (Amharic *silṭan*)	Ruler, prince
Ṭejj	Mead, honey wine
Wagshum	Governor of Wag
Wakīl (Amharic *wekīl*)	Agent, representative, steward
Wazīr	High government official, minister of state in Muslim countries
Weyzero	Mrs., madame, lady
Zemene Mesafint	The Era of the Princes (or Regents)

Abbreviations

AAPA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Bonn
ACOP	Archives of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Cairo
ACTA	*Acta Æthiopica*
AE (Brussels)	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Commerce Extérieur, Brussels
AEA	Archives of the Eparchy of Adigrat, Adigrat
AECC	Correspondance commerciale, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AECP	Correspondance politique, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AECPC	Correspondance politique des consuls, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AED	Archives diplomatiques (*reserved*) du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AEMD	Mémoires et Documents, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AMṢC	Archives of the Maryam Ṣiyon Church, Aksum
AP.DD	*Atti Parlamentari, Documenti Diplomatici*
ASCPF.SRC	Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli "de Propaganda Fide", Rome
ASMAI	Archivio Storico dell'ex Ministero dell'Africa Italiana, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome
ASSGI	Archivio Storico, Società Geografica Italiana, Rome
AVPRI	Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossii, Moscow
BL	British Library, London
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
BSGI	*Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*
CADN	Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes
CM/O	Original incoming letters, journals and papers, Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham
CMS	Church Missionary Society; Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham
CSA	Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala
DS	Dayr al-Sulṭān, Jerusalem
ENA	National Archives, Cairo
FO	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London
HHS	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
IIAO	Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Rome

IOR	India Office Library and Records, London
JES	*Journal of Ethiopian Studies*
Missions-Tidning	*Missions-Tidning,* published by Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen, Stockholm
RRAL	*Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*
RSE	*Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*
SS.EFS	Stockholms Stadsarkiv, Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens arkiv
T	Treasury Records, Public Record Office, London
Trattati	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, *Trattati, Convenzioni e Accordi Relativi all'Africa, III, 1841–73*, Rome, 1943,

List of documents

1.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	8 Jan. 1869
2.	Kasa Mirṣha to Birhane Mesqel *et al.*	16 Jan. 1869
3.	Kasa Mirṣha to C. Delmonte	[1869]
4.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	12 Feb. 1869
5.	Minīlik to Napoleon III	28 Feb. 1869
6.	Minīlik to Victoria	4 March 1869
7.	Minīlik to William Merewether	4 March 1869
8.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Victoria	[March 1869]
9.	Tekle Haymanot, Gebre Maryam and Fisseha Ṣiyon to Napoleon III	[March–April 1869]
10.	Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Antoine d'Abbadie	14 April 1869
11.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Isaac and Dimoteos	[April 1869]
12.	Yohannis III to Napoleon III	11 June 1869
13.	Yohannis III to Antoine d'Abbadie	11 June 1869
14.	Kasa Mirṣha to Isaac and Dimoteos	18 June 1869
15.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Victoria and Robert Napier	[June 1869]
16.	Kasa Mirṣha to W. Munzinger	26 July [1869?]
17.	Kasa Mirṣha to Robert Napier	10 Aug. 1869
18.	Afewerq and Welde Mesqel to Alemayyehu Tēwodros	21 Aug. 1869
19.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Napoleon III	22 Aug. 1869
20.	Dinqē and Desta to Alemayyehu Tēwodros	24 Sept. 1869
21.	Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	7 Nov. 1869
22.	Contract between Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm Aḥmad, and Giuseppe Sapeto	15 Nov. 1869
23.	Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger	17 Nov. [1869]
24.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	27 Nov. 1869
25.	Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	28 Nov. 1869
26.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	3 Dec. 1869
27.	Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger	2 Jan. 1870
28.	Laqīyayē to Alemayyehu Tēwodros	12 Jan. 1870
29.	Laqīyayē to Victoria	[Jan. 1870]
30.	Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	19 Jan. 1870
31.	Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger	19 Jan. 1870
32.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Hormuzd Rassam	24 Jan. [1870]
33.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Robert Napier	[24 Jan.?] 1870
34.	Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Hormuzd Rassam	[Jan. 1870]
35.	Burhān Muḥammad to Ja'far Maẓhar	24 Jan. 1870

36.	Kasa Mirċha to Werner Munzinger	4 Feb. 1870
37.	Kasa Mirċha to Werner Munzinger	10 Feb. 1870
38.	Kasa Mirċha to Werner Munzinger	28 Feb. 1870
39.	Kasa Mirċha to Werner Munzinger	8 March 1870
40.	Kasa Mirċha to Napoleon III	10 March 1870
41.	Kasa Mirċha to Victoria	10 March 1870
42.	Kasa Mirċha to Robert Napier	10 March 1870
43.	Contract between ʻAbdallāh Shaḥīm, Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm Aḥmad, and Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino	11 March 1870
44.	Minīlik to Hormuzd Rassam	25 March 1870
45.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Jaʻfar Maẓhar	3 May 1870
46.	Kasa Mirċha to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem	23 May 1870
47.	Kasa Mirċha to Franz Hassen	16 June 1870
48.	Minīlik to G.R. Goodfellow	3 July 1870
49.	Tekle Gīyorgīs to Napoleon III	7 July 1870
50.	Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	29 July 1870
51.	Kasa Mirċha to G.W.F.V. Clarendon	16 Aug. 1870
52.	Kasa Mirċha to E.L. Russell	16 Aug. 1870
53.	Kasa Mirċha to G.L.-G. Granville	24 Aug. 1870
54.	Kasa Mirċha to Victoria	25 Aug. 1870
55.	Kasa Mirċha to E.L. Russell	25 Aug. 1870
56.	Kasa Mirċha to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem	26 Aug. 1870
57.	Ahmed Alī Mariyyē to ʻAla' ad-Dīn	22 Oct. 1870
58.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	24 Dec. 1870
59.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	24 Dec. 1870
60.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	27 Dec. [1870]
61.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	27 Dec. 1870
62.	Birru Welde Gīyorgīs and Mirċha Werqē to G.L.-G. Granville	14 Jan. 1871
63.	Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	9 Feb. 1871
64.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	11 Feb. 1871
65.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Minīlik	[March 1871]
66.	Kasa Mirċha to Victoria	21 April 1871
67.	Kasa Mirċha to E.L. Russell	22 April 1871
68.	Kasa Mirċha to Robert Napier	22 April 1871
69.	Minīlik to C.W. Tremenheere	6 May 1871
70.	Mirċha Werqē to Edward Stanton	11 May 1871
71.	Minīlik to Theodore Waldmeier	15 May 1871

72.	Mirṣha Werqē to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	12 June 1871
73.	Kasa Mirṣha to Robert Napier	26 July 1871
74.	Kasa Mirṣha to E.L. Russell	26 July 1871
75.	Kasa Mirṣha to Victoria	28 July 1871
76.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to C.W. Tremenheere	28 Aug. 1871
77.	Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Pierre Arnoux	[11 Sept. 1871]
78.	Birru Welde Gīyorgīs to Franz Hassen	20 Oct. 1871
79.	Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Alemayyehu Tēwodros	30 Jan. 1872
80.	Haylu to K.W. Almqvist	2 Feb. 1872
81.	Yohannis IV to Welde Maryam	2 April 1872
82.	Wereñña (Welde Sillasē) Welde Kīdan to J.M. Touvier	6 May [1872]
83.	Minīlik to Victoria	31 May 1872
84.	Minīlik to W.F. Prideaux	31 May 1872
85.	Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II	[20 June 1872
86.	Minīlik to Victoria	21 June 1872
87.	Yohannis IV to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	[31 July 1872]
88.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	13 Aug. 1872
89.	Yohannis IV to G.L.-G. Granville	13 Aug. 1872
90.	Yohannis IV to Ferdinand I (in fact Franz Joseph)	13 Aug. 1872
91.	Yohannis IV to Alexander II	13 Aug. 1872
92.	Yohannis IV to Wilhelm I	13 Aug. 1872
93.	Yohannis IV to Adolphe Thiers	13 Aug. 1872
94.	Welde Maryam to K.W. Almqvist	[Sept. 1872]
95.	Yohannis IV to Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux	17 Sept. 1872
96.	Yohannis IV to J.W. Schneider	29 Oct. 1872
97.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	27 Nov. 1872
98.	Hayle Ab Tesfay to K.W. Almqvist	[Dec. 1872]
99.	Hayle Ab Tesfay to P.E. Lager	[Dec. 1872?]
100.	Yosēf to Antoine d'Abbadie	29 Jan. 1873
101.	Yohannis IV to J.W. Schneider	29 Jan. 1873
102.	Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	18 Feb. 1873
103.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	2 March 1873
104.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	[March 1873]
105.	Minīlik to Pierre Arnoux	3 March 1873
106.	Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs *et al.* to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	13 March 1873
107.	Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	20 March 1873
108.	Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	24 March 1873

109.	Minīlik to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem	8 May 1873
110.	Yohannis IV/J.C. Kirkham to G.L.-G. Granville	13 May 1873
111.	Yohannis IV to G.L.-G. Granville	15 May 1873
112.	Yohannis IV to Birhane Mesqel	3 June 1873
113.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	4 June 1873
114.	Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II	5 June 1873
115.	Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	[July 1873]
116.	Yohannis IV to W. Schimper	20 Sept. 1873
117.	Minīlik to Jean-Marcel Touvier	31 Jan. 1874
118.	Minīlik to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	31 Jan. 1874
119.	Haylu to anonymous	10 March 1874(?)
120.	Yohannis IV to whom it may concern	6 April 1874
121.	Yohannis IV to Edward Stanton	6 April 1874
122.	Yosēf to Antoine d'Abbadie	3 Sept. 1874
123.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	9 Nov. 1874
124.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	9 Nov. 1874
125.	Minutes from inquest regarding the death of E. Dissard	29 Jan. 1875
126.	Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	1 April 1875
127.	Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	22 May 1875
128.	Birru Welde Gīyorgīs to Eugène Boré	13 June 1875
129.	Welde Sillasē Kinfu to the Committee of the Bible Society	[June? 1875]
130.	Welde Haymanot to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission	20 July 1875
131.	Hayle Ab Tesfay to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission	8 Sept. 1875
132.	Tesemma Zerubabēl to Antoine d'Abbadie	25 Sept. 1875
133.	Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-Shakūr to Muḥammad Ra'uf	6 Oct. 1875
134.	Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-Shakūr to Muḥammad Ra'uf	6 Oct. 1875
135.	Adam Asihabiyyē to Muḥammad Ra'uf	17 Oct. 1875
136.	Yohannis IV to Arakīl Nubar	18 Nov. 1875
137.	Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec	18 Nov. 1875
138.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	7 Dec. 1875
139.	Yohannis IV to Patrice MacMahon	9 Dec. 1875
140.	Minīlik to Pius IX	10 Dec. 1875
141.	Yohannis IV to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm	13 Dec. 1875
142.	Mirṣha Werqē and Gebre Maryam to Kīrillus V	24 Jan. [1876?]
143.	Yohannis IV to Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon	4 Feb. 1876
144.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib *et al.*	[Feb. 1876]
145.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib and Ḥasan Ismā'īl	[Feb. 1876]

146. Onesimus Nesib to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission [March? 1876]
147. Yohannis IV to Ḥasan Ismā'īl 11 March 1876
148. Yohannis IV to Ḥasan Ismā'īl and Muḥammad Rātib 12 March 1876
149. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib [22 March 1876]
150. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib *et al.* [March 1876]
151. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib 24 March 1876
152. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib and Ḥasan Ismā'īl [April 1876]
153. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 15 April 1876
154. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 16 April 1876
155. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 23 April 1876
156. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 28 April 1876
157. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [April? 1876]
158. Yohannis IV to Patrice Mac-Mahon 3 May 1876
159. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 5 May 1876
160. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 12 May 1876
161. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 20 May 1876
162. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 21 May 1876
163. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 30 May 1876
164. Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm 7 June 1876
165. Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II 15 June 1876
166. Minīlik to Patrice Mac-Mahon 15 June 1876
167. Treaty draft France–Shewa 15 June 1876
168. Minīlik: concession of coal mine to Pierre Arnoux 15 June 1876
169. Minīlik: *mandat politique* for Pierre Arnoux 16 June 1876
170. Minīlik: power of attorney for Pierre Arnoux 16 June 1876
171. Minīlik: land grant to Pierre Arnoux 16 June 1876
172. Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm 16 June 1876
173. Minīlik to Charles Wodehouse 16 June 1876
174. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 26 June 1876
175. Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib 18 July 1876
176. Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V 19 July 1876
177. Yohannis IV to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem 19 July 1876
178. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [July 1876]
179. Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Khairi [27 Aug. 1876]
180. Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to G.R. Goodfellow 20 Sept. 1876
181. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [Sept.? 1876]
182. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [Sept.? 1876]

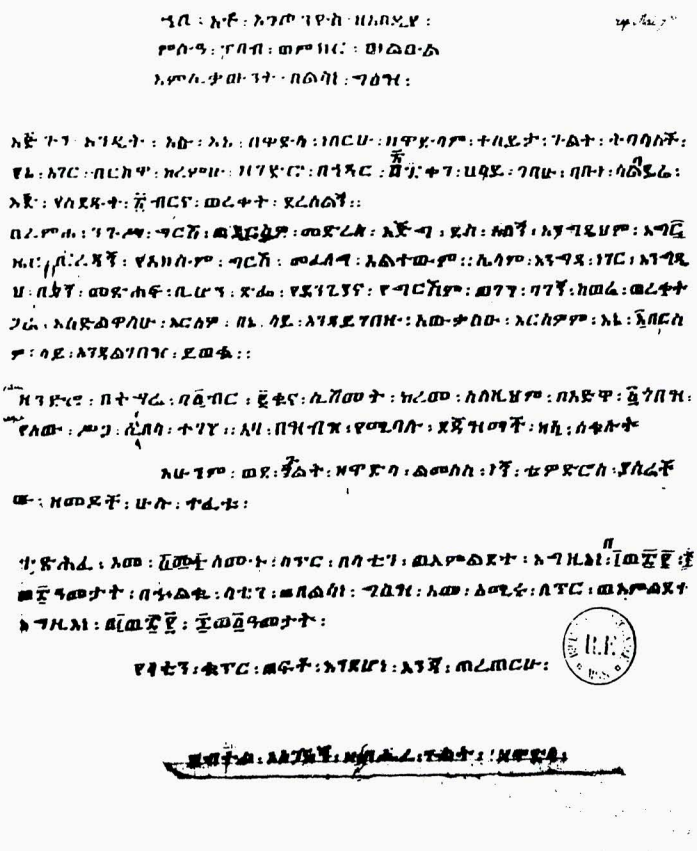
183.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib	[Sept.? 1876]
184.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to anonymous	[Sept.? 1876]
185.	Yohannis IV to Welde Maryam	7 Oct. 1876
186.	Minīlik to Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm	14 Oct. 1876
187.	Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II	14 Oct. 1876
188.	Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib	23 Oct. 1876
189.	Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib	30 Oct. 1876
190.	Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Jules-Alexis des Michels	7 Nov. 1876
191.	Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Antoine d'Abbadie	23 Nov. 1876
192.	Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Muḥammad Rātib and Muḥammad Rif'at	25 Dec. 1876
193.	Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie	21 Jan. 1877
194.	Minīlik to Orazio Antinori	[Jan.? 1877]
195.	The population of Ṣe'azega to Charles Gordon	[March 1877]
196.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Charles Gordon	[March 1877]
197.	Yohannis IV to Charles Gordon	18 June 1877
198.	Minīlik to Pierre Arnoux	25 Oct. 1877
199.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to A. Depretis	9 Jan. 1878
200.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Jules-Alexis des Michels	27 Jan. 1878
201.	Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq to Charles Gordon	11 May 1878
202.	Gebre Tekle to Patrice MacMahon	17 June 1878
203.	Minīlik to Roblī Farrag	7 Nov. 1878
204.	Minīlik to Victoria	9 Nov. 1878
205.	Minīlik to Alexander II	9 Nov. 1878
206.	Minīlik to Wilhelm II	10 Nov. 1878
207.	Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V	28 Nov. 1878
208.	Minīlik to Umberto I	6 Dec. 1878
209.	Minīlik to Victoria	6 Dec. 1878
210.	Minīlik to Leopold II	6 Dec. 1878
211.	Minīlik to Umberto I	7 Dec. 1878
212.	Minīlik to Cesare Correnti	8 Dec. 1878
213.	Minīlik to Charles Gordon	[Dec.?] 1878
214.	Minīlik to S. Martini	15 Dec. 1878
215.	Minīlik to Loch	21 Dec. 1878
216.	Minīlik to Leopold II	Feb.–March 1879
217.	Mahdere Qal Tewelde Medhin to Achille Raffray(?)	6 April 1879
218.	Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V	28 April 1879
219.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	2 May 1879

220.	Yohannis IV to Alexander II	19 June 1879
221.	Yohannis IV to Umberto I	20 June 1879
222.	ʻAbd al-Salām ʻAbd al-Awwal to Franz Hassen	18 Aug. 1879
223.	Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to ʻAlāʾ ad-Dīn	25 Aug. [1879]
224.	Yohannis IV to Īyasu Dagmawī	20 Sept. 1879
225.	Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to G. Rohlf	8 Oct. 1879
226.	Yohannis IV to Alula Ingida Qubī	15 Oct. [1879]
227.	Yohannis IV to Īyasu Dagmawī	17 Oct. 1879
228.	Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Tawfīq	7 Nov. 1879
229.	Mahdere Qal Tewelde Medhin to the consul general of France in Egypt	18 Nov. 1879
230.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	20 Nov. 1879
231.	Yohannis IV to Wilhelm I	20 Nov. 1879
232.	Yohannis IV to Jules Grévy	20 Nov. 1879
233.	Yohannis IV to Welde Sema'it	21 Nov. 1879
234.	Yohannis IV to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem	21 Nov. 1879
235.	Declaration of Burhān Dīnī of Rahīta	30 Dec. 1879

THE TEXTS

Document no. 1

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 8 Jan. 1869



To Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye), who is full of wisdom and counsel, eminent among scholars of the Gi'iz language.

How are you, really? I was in Wadla. My country in Wadla is specifically known as Gult. I spent the rainy season there. This year I reached Halay on the 28th day of Hidar. I received the 20 thalers and the letter you sent by the hand of Father Salvayre (*Abune* Salbayirē). I am very glad that the coin of King Remha has reached you. Now, if God helps me, I shall not stop looking for Aksumite coins. If I get something unusual in the future, be it a book, I shall copy it, or if I come upon species of stone and coins, I shall send [them] to you, together with a report of the news. I know that you will not be negligent about me, and you should know that I will not be negligent about you.

This year has passed in Tigray with two measures of grain sold for one thaler. Because of this, at Adwa a young man was found eating human flesh. *Dejjazmach* Kasa, who is called Abba Bezbiz, hanged him. And now I shall go back to Gult in Wadla. All my relatives whom Tēwodros had imprisoned have been released.

Written on the seventh of Ṭirr in the year of the birth of Our Lord 1868 according to the European calendar (*hwilqu latīn*), and on the first day of Ṭirr 1861 in the year of the birth of Our Lord according to the Ethiopian calendar (*lisane gi'iz*). I am not sure but I suspect that the Latin date is wrong.

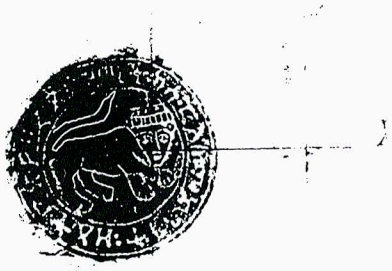
Debtera Asseggaheñ of the land of Gult in Wadla.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 226, Amharic original. For Asseggaheñ's background, see ACTA I, no. 146, and II, no. 96. A number of his letters were published in Amharic by Carlo Conti Rossini, "Epistolario del Debterà Asseggachègn di Uadlà", *RRAL*, **6**, I (1925), and in Italian by Luigi Fusella, "Le lettere del dabtarā Assaggākhañ", *RSE*, XII (1953), pp. 80–95; XIII (1954), pp. 20–30. The above letter is no. IX in Conti Rossini's publication. *Dejjazmach* Kasa Mirċha, later Yohannis IV, was also known as Abba Bezbiz. Father Salvayre conducted a visitation of the Lazarist mission work in 1868 (Kevin O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix,* Asmera, 1982–92, II, pp. 68, 94–97).

Asseggaheñ's feeling that he might have missed something with regard to the dating was correct; by Ṭirr 1861 the European year has become 1869.

Document no. 2

Kasa Mirṣha to Birhane Mesqel *et al.*, 16 Jan. 1869



በሰሙ፡አብ፡ወወ ልድ፡ወመ ን ፈ ሰ፡ ቅ ዱ ስ ፡ ፫ አምላክ።።
መልእክ ት፡ዘ ላ ፈ ነወ ት፡እም ላ ፡ ደጅ ፊ ዝማች፡ ካሳ ፡ ር እሰ ፡
መ ኳ ንንቱ።።ዘ ሊ ት ዮ ጵያ ።።ቅ ድ ሮ ሰ ። ኢ የሩ ሳ ሌም ፡ ከ አ ባ ፡
ክ ፍ ሃ ን፡መ ስ ቀ ል ።።ወ ሀ ቡ ፡ ኩ ሎ መ ሙ ፡ወ ሳ ቦ ■ ሮ ፡ መ ነ ኮ ሳ ት ።።
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ወ ቂ ፡ ሰ ድ ጅ አ ለ ሁ ። ። የ መ ጢ ቀ ድ ሱ ቦ ት ፡ ቢ ጉ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቲ ያ ን ፡ የ መ ጢ
ቀ መ ጡ በ ት ፡ ዮ ጵ ፡ ብ የ ፡ ሽ ማ ፡ ብ ር ፡ ሰ ድ ጅ ሳ ኝ ሁ ፡ አ ለ ሁ ። ። አ ባ ፡ ሥ ላ ሴ ። ።
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ሱ ጽ ሳ ፈ ት ፡ በ ፲ የ ወ ር ፡ የ ፲ ሠ ፭ አ ም ል እ ሊ ፡ ነ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ።።
አ መ ዘ ለ ዓ ለ ም ።።

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

Letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia. May it reach *Abba* Birhane Mesqel and the whole community of monks in Jerusalem. How are you really, [my] fathers?

I have received (lit. heard) [the message] you sent me regarding *Aleqa* Gebre Igzī'abihēr. Hoping to succeed, I have sent someone to bring about reconciliation. I have sent you one thousand thalers, saying to myself, [let it be] for the church in which they say Mass and the place in which they live. Do not forget me, my fathers. My baptismal name is Welde Mīka'ēl. My wife, Ṭibebe Sillasē, has died; do not forget her in your prayers. If God establishes me on the throne of my fathers I, too, shall not forget this yearly pay of yours. You, too, do not forget me.

Written on 9 Ṭirr in the year 1861 after the birth of Christ.

DS, no. 1, Amharic original. This is the first of a number of letters from Kasa Mirṣha/Yohannis IV to the monks in the Ethiopian monastery of Dayr al-Sulṭān in Jerusalem. We are grateful to the community for their kind permission to photograph this valuable collection of original Amharic documents.

The purpose of the letter was apparently to introduce an emissary entrusted with the task of reconciling Gebre Igzī'abihēr with some other members of the community. A later letter (no. 56) indicates that the conflict was doctrinal and centered on the superior, *Abba* Birhane Mesqel (Kirsten Pedersen, *The History of the Ethiopian Community in the Holy Land from the Time of Emperor Tewodros II till 1974*, Jerusalem, 1983, p. 40). Some of the letters preserved at Dayr al-Sulṭān were at one time copied into an Ethiopian manuscript, published by Bairu Tafla as *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV (1872–89),* Wiesbaden, 1977. The above letter is found on pp. 162–63. The copier has made some minor, probably unintentional, changes, such as *memhir* for *abba* as Birhane Mesqel's title and *amete mihret* for the *lidete Kristos* of the original. The letter was in all probability dispatched with the delegation under *Aleqa* Birru which left Massawa for Cairo in early February to obtain a new bishop for Ethiopia.

Document no. 3

Kasa Mirçha to C. Delmonte [1869]

በሰመ፡አብ፡ወወልድ፡ወመንፈሰ፡ቅዱስ፡፩
አምላክ፡፡መልእክት፡ዘተፈነወት፡እምኀበ፡
ደጅ፡አዝማች፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኳንንት፡ዘኢትዮ
ጵያ፡፡ትድረሰ፡ከጌታ፡ዴሞንቲ፡ወኪል፡የፈረን
ሳዊ፡፡እንዴት፡አለህ፡በዜና፡፡እኔ፡በክርሰቶስ፡
ቸርነት፡ደህና፡ነኝ፡ምሰለ፡ፍቁር፡ወልዳ፡የማ
ርያም፡ሰሰል፡ከረን፡አለች፡ሰምቸ፡አለሁ፡፡ሰለ፡
ፍቅር፡ምልክት፡ብትሰድልኝ፡እወድ፡አለሁ፡፡
እኔም፡በተቻለኝ፡ሁሉ፡ያልኸኝን፡አደርግ፡አለሁ፡፡



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May this message sent by *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia, reach Mr. Delmonte (*Gēta* Dīmontī), the French representative. How are you, [though known to me only] by hearsay? By the goodness of Christ I am well. I have heard that there is a picture of Mary with her beloved son at Keren. I would like you to send [it] to me as a sign of friendship. I will also, as far as I can, do all that you ask me to do.

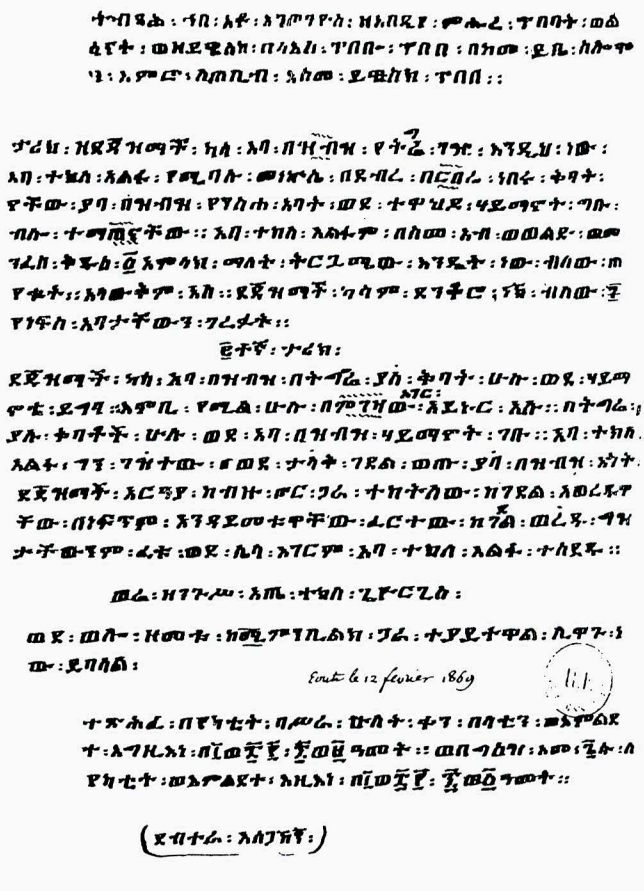
Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

AEA, Amharic original. This letter was published in O'Mahoney, II, p. 89. We are indebted to the rector of the Major Seminary at Adigrat, *Abba* Tewelde Hagos, for sending us photocopies of the originals of this letter and the other letters from the seminary included in this volume (nos 82, 95 and 117 below).

While the letter is carefully written in beautiful handwriting, Kasa Mirçha and his scribe were apparently somewhat uncertain about the name and position of the addressee. Firstly, his name is badly misspelled, and secondly, he is not addressed as *abba* or *abune*, as might have been expected, but as *gēta* and *wekīl yefrensawī*. There can be no doubt, however, that the addressee was Father Delmonte of the Catholic misson at Keren, who died in May 1869. This places the letter in the first half of that year, perhaps as early as February, when the letter to Jerusalem (no. 2) was penned in the same handwriting.

Document no. 4

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 12 Feb. 1869



May it reach Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye), learned in the sciences and languages, who adds knowledge to his knowledge as Solomon says, "Teach a wise man and he will add to his wisdom."

The history of *Dejjazmach* Kasa Abba Bezbiz, the ruler of Tigray, is like this. There was a monk called *Abba* Tekle Alfa at Debre Berberrē. He is a *Qibat*. Abba Bezbiz's father confessor entreated him to embrace the *Tewahido* faith. *Abba* Tekle Alfa asked him what is the meaning of "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God?" He said, "I do not know." *Dejjazmach* Kasa called his father confessor stupid and flogged him.

Second story.

Dejjazmach Kasa Abba Bezbiz said, "All the *Qibat* who live in Tigray must accept my faith. Let no one who refuses live in the land which I rule." All the *Qibat* who lived in Tigray embraced the faith of Abba Bezbiz. *Abba* Tekle Alfa, however, excommunicated [them] and ascended a cliff.

Dejjazmach Araya, the uncle of Abba Bezbiz, pursued [him] with a large army and brought him down from the cliff. He came down from the mountain because he was afraid that they would kill him with a rifle[-shot]. He withdrew his excommunication. And *Abba* Tekle Alfa sought refuge in another region.

News about the king, *Aṣē* Tekle Gīyorgīs.

He marched to Wello. He and Minīlik have sighted each other. It is said that they are going to fight.

Written in Yekatīt, on the twelfth day, in the year of the birth of our Lord 1869, in Latin, and in Gi'iz on the 6th of Yekatīt in the year of the birth of our Lord 1861.

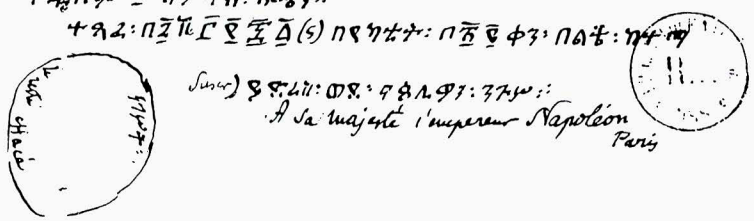
Debtera Asseggaheñ.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 227, Amharic original. This letter is Conti Rossini's no. X.

Abba Tekle Alfa belonged to the early group of Orthodox clergy who accepted Catholic ordination from Mgr. Massaja in 1849. The *Dejjazmach* Araya referred to was Kasa's maternal uncle Araya Sillasē Dimṣu, who had long played a role in Tigrean politics. See ACTA I, no. 50, and II, nos 16 and 38.

Document no. 5

Minīlik to Napoleon III, 28 Feb. 1869



May the message sent by King Minīlik [of] the land of Shewa reach King of Kings Napoleon (Napolīwon) of the land of the French.

How are you, really? Are you well? I am well, thank God. My people and my country are also well. Since I often hear news of your kindness, I very much desire your friendship. The friendship between France and Shewa started with my grandfather, Sahle Sillasē. Bishop Massaja (*Abune* Misiyas) sent a letter [to you] on my behalf last year, when the English army came to Abyssinia. I was very delighted when your representative told me that he had sent the reply to the letter to Bishop Massaja (*Abba* Misiyas). Also, introduce me to your friends, the other Christian kings, so that they may be my allies in times of need. If it is God's will, I plan to send you an envoy after a few days. Until then acknowledge and befriend me.

I, King Minīlik, write [this] letter of greetings to the Christian assembly, [and] to you, Napoleon, the French king. Grace be with you and peace from God the Father, from Our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

Written in 7361, on the 22nd day of Yekkatīt, in the town of Lichē.

Seal: [King] of Kings [Minīlik of Ethiopia].

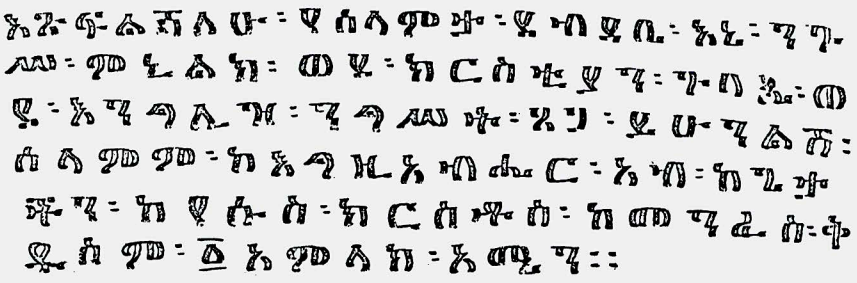
BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 270, Amharic copy and French translation by Antoine d'Abbadie. It has been impossible to locate the original. The seal was apparently illegible with the exception of the word *negest*. This word, however, proves that the seal used was the one, in which Minīlik styled himself *niguse negest*. But note that he uses *nigus* only in the text. The last line "*yidres* . . ." is most probably the address on the envelope.

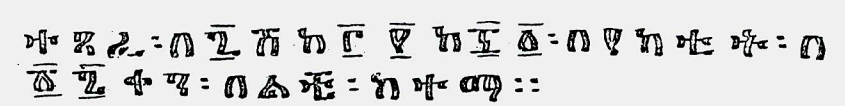
For Minīlik's earlier contact with Napoleon, see ACTA II, no. 218. He was at this time using Bishop (later Cardinal) Guglielmo Massaja, as well as Werner Munzinger (referred to as "your representative"), as his contacts with the French government. Munzinger was appointed French consul in October 1868.

Document no. 6

Minīlik to Victoria, 4 March 1869

መልእክት፡ የኮለከ፡ ከጣጣ፡ሥ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ሀገረ፡ሸዋ፡ ደጁረሰ፡ ወጁ፡ጣላ ሠ ት፡ቢክ ት ር ጁ።፡ እጣጢት፡ሄ ሽ፡እጅጉ፡ጣ።፡ ጁፋና፡ነሽ።እኒ፡እጣሪአ ሀ ሬ ር፡ጁፀመ ሠ ግጣ፡ ጁፋና፡ነ ች፡ሰ ዊ ም፡አ ግ ሬ ም፡ ጁፋና፡ነ ወ።። ቀድሞ፡የ ሰ ጀ ድ ሽ ል ች ፡ጀ ብ ሃ ቢ፡ የ ኤ ሰ ል ች፡አ ጅ ል ፡ሃ ሰ፡አ አ ች ፡መ ል ክ ት፡ ጭ ር ፡ ም፡ አ ጣ፡መ ክ ሀ ም፡ ሃ ፋ ና፡ግ ለ ል ች ፡ሃ ጣ ች ጣ ፡ ወ ጀ ቹ ፡ ነ ት ፡ ጭ ር ፡ ም ክ ር፡እ ጅ ላ፡ወ ሃ ቹ ሁ።። እ ኔ ም፡ ሃ ጣ ች ጣ ፡ ቅ ቆ ር ፣ ግ ሮ ሄ ድ ና፡ ት ፈ ለ ጋ ሁ።፡ ሀ ሥ ፡ ቀ ጣ ፡ ነ ው።። መ ል ክ ት ፡ ች ሄ ሰ ደ መ ሰ ሰ፡ መ ጀ፡ አ ች ች ፡ የ ሰ ክ ት ።እ ኔ፡ እ ሬ ሴ፡ መ ሃ ሰ ቀ ጀ ለ ፡ዝ ም ች ።። የ ሚ ሰ ሬ ት ጣ ፡ ሰ ሞ ች ች ጣ ፡ ሰ ጣ ሰ ፈ ት ት ።። ነ ግ ሬ፡ ሰ ጀ ሃ ት ፡ መ ጀ መ ች ች ፡ ት መ ል ሺ ፡ እ ግ ሬ ፡ ከ ዘ መ ች ፡ ጀ መ ሞ ል ፡ እ ሰ መ ሃ ም ና ፡ት መ ል ሰ ፡ግ ሰ ሞ ፡ በ ግ ሰ ፡ ጠ ፲ ቀ ጣ ፡እ ጣ ላ ሊ ሂ ች ፡ ጁ ል ፡ ላ ሃ ደ ጣ ፡ ች ፡ ሃ ም ሠ ሬ ፡ ሰ ፡ መ ሞ ች ፡ የ ሚ ል ፡ የ ም ሠ ሬ ች ፡ መ ጠ ል ች ።። ጀ ክ ጣ ፡ ሰ ሞ ሰ ጣ ፡ እ ጅ ላ ፡ ሃ ሰ ።እ ኔ ፡ ሰ ለ ፍ ቀ ር ፡ ሃ ጀ ፡ ሰ ነ ሰ ፡ ች ኩ ለ ሙ ፡ ት መ ለ ሰ ፡ ቢ ለ ች ፡ ቀ ሬ ሁ ።። እ ሰ ዚ ጅ ም ፡ እ ፍ ች ፡ ጀ ር ጊ ም ፡ ሃ ፋ ና ፡ ሃ ሬ ሱ ል ች ።። እ ጣ ዚ አ ሰ ሐ ሬ ር ፡ ሃ ሰ ች ል ች ።። እ ኔ ፡ ሰ ለ ፍ ቀ ር ፡ ሃ ጀ ፡ ል ጣ ፡ ሃ ሁ ፡ ች ፡ ሉ ፡ ነ ግ ር ፡ ሬ ሰ ም ፡ ሃ ው ቃ ል ።። መ ሰ ክ ረ ሰ ች ጣ ች ፡ሁ ሉ ፡ች ኩ ም ፡ የ መ ቀ ል ሊ ጣ ፡ ነ ፍ ች ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ አ ሰ በ ኛ ክ ፡ ክ ር ሰ ች ጣ ች ፡ሁ ሉ ፡ች መ ጀ ለ ች ።። ፩ ሠ ር ፡ ከ ሬ ፡ ፭ ቢ ክ ች ፡ ሰ ጁ ጁ ፡ አ ለ ሁ ፡ ለ ጣ ላ ለ ሠ ች ፡ ሃ መ ቀ መ ል ፡ ሠ ች ፡ ሃ ሬ ሱ ፡ ሰ ጣ ፡ ሃ ጀ ሃ ፡ ነ ው።። ለ ሃ ሃ ፡ ም ፡ ለ መ ል ክ ት ች ፡ ም ል ክ ት ፡ ነ ው።። ሽ ፍ ክ ፡ አ ም ጠ ፡ አ ሃ ሃ ዘ ፡ አ ሰ ች ፡ ላ ሮ ች ፡ አ ል ኖ ፡ ለ ዘ ሃ ፡ መ ሰ ጠ ሬ ሃ ፡ ሃ ሬ ለ ላ ል ች ።።





May the message sent by King Minīlik of the land of Shewa reach Queen Victoria (Bīktoriya).

How are you, really? Are you well? I am well, thank God; and my people and country are also well. The letter which you sent to me some time ago has reached me. I am very pleased. Moreover, my messenger *Ato* Mekbib has arrived safely. I appreciate your friendship and your advice very much. It is a long time that I have sought your love and friendship.

Before my messenger whom I sent to you returned, I marched towards Meqdela myself to free your imprisoned people. When I found the situation difficult for me, I turned back and entered my country. Then, I mobilized a second time. When they could get no news of your [men] they returned, as my countrymen are not accustomed to engaging in a campaign at Easter. On the eighth day after my men had arrived, my messenger brought me the good news which said that the Engish had been victorious and that Tēwodros had died. When I heard this I became very happy. And when I started off to pay your people a friendly visit (lit. meet your people in friendship), I was told that they had returned in haste and [so] I remained. The prisoners and *Ato* Dargē and his companions have reached me in safety. Thank you. Rassam (Rasem) knows all that I have done out of friendship (lit. for love's sake). Mestawat has had all the firearms of Meqdela repaired and is attacking all Christians.

I am sending a silver knife and a armlet. It is not because I believe that they will be of any use to the queen. They are a sign [that he is] my messenger. Rebels are troubling me by occupying mountain strongholds (*amba)* again and again. Therefore acquire means of breaking into them for me.

Seal: King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia.

I, King Minīlik, write [this] letter of greetings to the Christian assembly, [and] to you, the English queen. Grace be with you and peace from God the Father, from Our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

Written in 7361, on the 26th day of Yekkatīt, in the town of Lichē.

FO 95/728, no. 191, Amharic original and English translation. In this document and the following "Mekib" obviously stands for "Mekbib". Mekbib was apparently a trusted emissary of Minīlik's (see ACTA II, no. 217).

Minīlik's uncle *Ras* Dargē had spent a decade or more as Tēwodros's prisoner on Meqdela. Mestawat is known as the queen of Wello. When the British left after having pillaged and burnt Meqdela, Mestawat occupied the *amba.* According to Asseggaheñ (ACTA II, no. 248) the British actually made a gift of rifles to Mestawat; if that was the case, Minīlik apparently preferred to leave unsaid what might be regarded as a criticism of the British.

Respectful forms were often ignored in the case of Europeans in the nineteenth century, not from disrespect but rather from a feeling that it did not matter as foreigners were not part of Ethiopian society anyway.

This letter seems to have reached London only in September (FO 1/28, fol. 3).

Document no. 7

Minīlik to William Merewether, 4 March 1869

መልእክት፡ የነገሥት፡ ክዣጉ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ሀገረ፡ ሰዋ፡ ደብረ፡ ስ. ወደ፡ ኮሎኔል፡ ሚሌ ዊዶ ረ ካመ²ደ ር፡ አዳኒ፡ አኒ ሂሥ፡ ሰነበት፡ ህ፡ አይ ጉ፡ ኒ፡ ። ደ ሳና፡ ሰኒ ነበ ት፡ ኤ ል በ አሳ ዘ፡ አ ነበ ሐ፡ ሮ ት ረ፡ ነት፡ አኔ፡ ደ ሳና፡ ነ ሻ፡ ሰ ዊ ም፡ አ ግ ሬ ም፡ ደ ሳ ና፡ ሳ ው፡ ። አኒ ዛ፡ ት፡ ኤ በ ሽ፡ ዘ መ ቻ፡ በ ደ ሳ ና፡ ነ ባ ህ፡ የ ኔ ም ሰ ው፡ መ ነ ነ ፡ በ ደ ሳ ና፡ ደ ረ ሰ ል ኝ ። አ ሳ ዘ፡ አ ነ ሐ፡ ሮ፡ ደ ስ ጥ ህ ። አ ሁ ኒ ም በ ሽ፡ መ ሮ ዝ ፡ ዮ ሐ ኒ ስ ኒ ፡ ሰ ዱ ል ኤ ለ ሁ ና ፡ አ ደ ራ፡ ት ቀ ል ል ሻ ። የ ሼ ቅ ሮ ፡ ም ል ክ ት፡ ለ ነ ነ በ ሮ ና ፡ ፅ ሌ ት ቁ ። ሰ ዱ ል ኤ ለ ሁ ና ፡ ት በ ሽ መ ሮ ዝ ፡ ዮ ሐ ኒ ስ ፡ ት ቁ በ ል ።

እሹ ፍ ል ኤ ለ ሁ ፡ የ ሰ ላ ም ቱ ፡ ደ ነ በ ሃ ቢ ፡ አ ኒ ፡ ኒ ጉ ሥ ፡ ም ኒ ል ክ ነ ፡ ወ ደ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቲ ደ ኒ ፡ ን ባ ሉ ፡ ወ ደ ፡ እ ኒ ሳ ሉ ፡ ዝ ሽ ፡ ም ፡ ከ መ ኒ ደ ር ፡ አ ደ ኒ ፡ ጂ ን ፡ ደ ሁ ኒ ል ህ ። ሰ ላ ም ም ከ እ ሳ ዘ፡ አ ነ ሐ ሮ ፡ አ ነ ፡ ከ ጌ ታ ች ኒ ፡ ከ የ ሱ ስ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ፡ ከ መ ኒ ፈ ስ ፡ ቅ ዱ ስ ም፡ ፅ አ ም ላ ክ ፡ አ ሜ ኒ ። ።

ዙ ጻ ፈ ፡ በ ጊ ሽ ከ ሮ ደ ካ ፯ ፩ ፡ በ የ ካ ቲ ት ፡ በ ሸ ጌ ቱ ኒ ፡ በ ል ቼ ፡ ከ ተ ማ



May the message sent by King Minīlik of the land of Shewa reach Colonel Merewether, the commander [of] Aden (Kolonēl Mēlēwēder, kemender Aden).

How have you been, really? Have you been well? By the grace of God, I am well; and my people and my country are also well. You have returned safely from the expedition to Abyssinia. Also my servant Mekbib has reached me safely. May God reward you. Now I have sent *Basha* Merzē Yohannis to you, so please receive him. As a token of friendship I have sent you a leopard and an armlet (*bītawa*). Accept them from *Basha* Merzē Yohannis.

I, King Minīlik, write [this] letter of greetings to the Christian assembly, [and] to you, the English governor, [the] commander [of] Aden. Grace be with you and peace from God the Father, from Our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

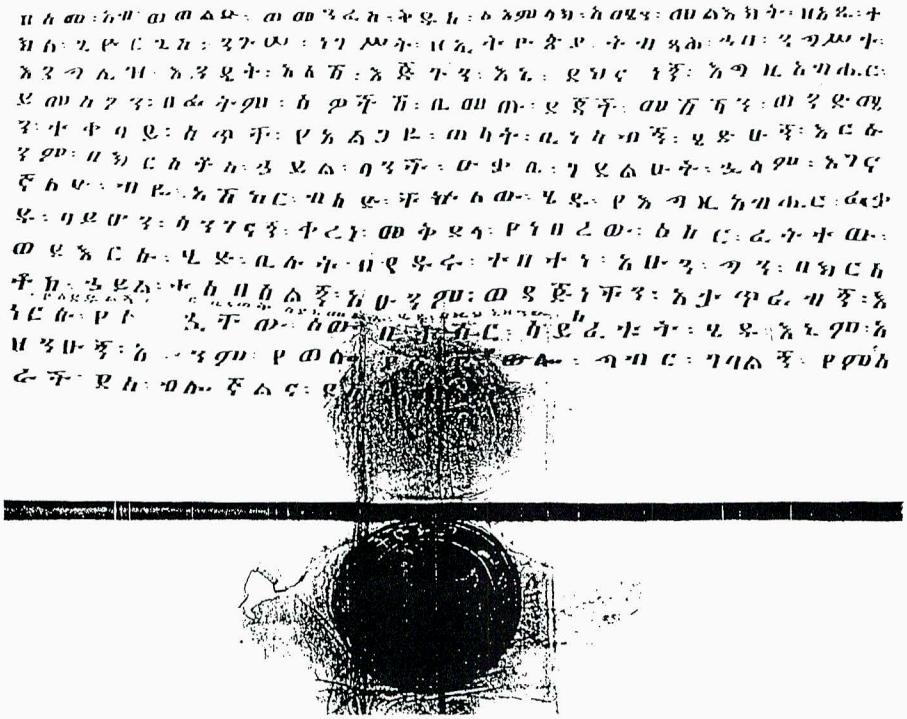
Written in 7361, on the 26th day of Yekkatīt, in the town of Lichē.

Seal: King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia.

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation, vol. 540, fol. 70, Amharic original; fol. 69, Arabic translation; fol. 68, English translation. This is obviously a covering letter for no. 6 to Queen Victoria. Again the earlier messenger is called Mekib, but in the Arabic translation he is Mekbib. This seems to be the first time *Basha* Merzē Yohannis appears in the correspondence. A letter from India Office to Foreign Office (FO 1/28, fol. 3) mentions a letter from Minīlik to Rassam at about this time, but it has not been possible to locate it.

Document no. 8

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Victoria [March 1869]



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the letter from *Aṣē* Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the queen of England. How are you, really? I am well, thank God. Before, when your people came, I gave [them] my brother *Dejjach* Meshesha to receive them, and left since an enemy to my throne had arisen against me. By the power of Christ and your guardian spirit, I killed him.

Later, when I sent a servant with the intention of meeting [your people myself], they had left in a hurry. Since it was not the will of God, we did not meet. The prisoners who were at Meqdela had been released and told to go to me, but they dispersed here and there in the forests (lit. in every forest). But now by the power of Christ they have assembled with me (lit. to my advantage). Now do not let your friendship with me come to naught. When the man I gave them was captured, they went away without getting him released. When the telescope you sent me was taken away by force, they left without seeing to it that it was returned. I was sorry. Now the taxes of Wello and Shewa have been delivered to me. Good news! Since I rejoice, rejoice [with me].

Seal: Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia.

IOR, L/P&S/9/205, Political and Secret Department Records: Abyssinia Original Correspondence, vol. 3, pp. 280–281, Amharic original; pp. 277–278, English translation by Munzinger dated Massawa 1 April 1869 and forwarded from Aden to India Office on 20 May. The enemy referred to was Ṭiso Gobezē (see Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 21–22). The content reveals that the letter is in fact intended for Sir Robert Napier of the British expedition.

Document no. 9

Tekle Haymanot, Gebre Maryam and Fissiha Ṣiyon to Napoleon III [March–April 1869]

May this letter reach our lord, Napoleon, the king of kings, the protector of all the Catholics, the priests, the monks, and the nuns, the old and the young; the terror of the wicked and the joy of the righteous, as St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans, chapter 13: "Kings are not terrifying to those who do good; they are so only to those who do evil. If you do not want to dread them, do good. It is not in vain that the power of the sword is given to them, because they are authorized to make use of it against the evildoers". Greetings to the exalted crown, to the throne and the cushion.

Our father, Bishop De Jacobis, told us in his days: Your protector in matters of the flesh is the emperor of the French, Napoleon; your protector in matters of the spirit is the pope, Pius IX. Today we do not have a protector. Your Majesty does not care about us any longer. We have become the despised of all the world. People believe they are making a sacrifice agreeable to God by killing us. They say to us, "You say that Napoleon is your protector; you say that he is very powerful! If he has the power, why does he not save you who are so weak?"

All the world knows that Tēwodros said to Lejean, "May Napoleon save you if he can!" The people who say all this are the chiefs, but those who teach them this are the Copts and the Protestants.

In the days of *Abba* Selama there were those among us who were put in chains, who suffered, who were pillaged, and others whom they refused burial-ground. Today the princes of Tigray have sent money to Cairo to bring a bishop. If he comes, we are absolutely lost.

For God's grace, help us quickly. Send a consul who should reside at Adwa. We beg Your Majesty to send him quickly so that the old people and the women do not lose hope. Once the Coptic bishop has come there will no longer be a single Catholic in Abyssinia.

Before, when we did not want [anything] from you, you came to seek us out; today we seek you, and you turn away from us. Where has your love and your patience gone? Before, when Your Majesty was unable to care about us, there were at least your people and your chiefs who cared about us. Today all the world has forgotten us. Send us a protector!

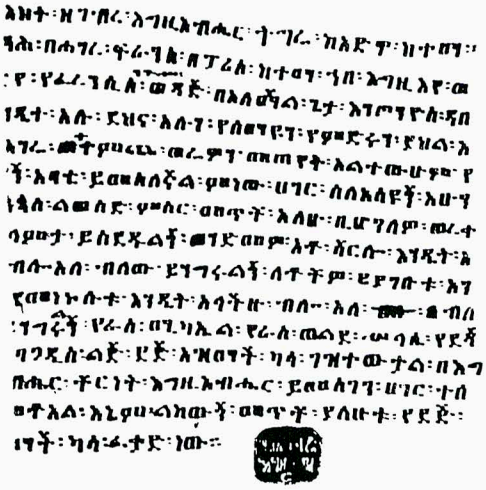
The Catholic priests of Agamē: Tekle Haymanot
Gebre Maryam
Fissiha Ṣiyon.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 3, fols 259–260, French translation dated 4 April 1869 and verified by Consul Munzinger. It has not been possible to locate the original, but there is no reason to doubt that the above is a fairly literal translation of an Amharic original. The quote from Romans, chapter 13, verse 3–4, has been rendered as in the French translation. It is difficult to know to what the word "coussin" (cushion, pillow) in the French text really refers. One possibility is influence from Isaiah 66, 1, where the "throne" is followed by the "footstool".

Abba Tekle Haymanot Gelawdēwos (the Elder) and his brother *Abba* Gebre Maryam from Gwela belonged to the first group ordained or reordained by Massaja in February 1847 (O'Mahoney, I, pp. 59, 230). *Abba* Fisseha Ṣiyon Gebre Igzī'abihēr, son of a priest from May Berazī'o, was ordained by De Jacobis (*ibid.*, III., pp. 200–201). They were the leaders of the Catholic community in Agamē, and often acted together in relations with their European counterparts (ACTA II, nos 87, 134, 135). Apparently they felt abandoned, not to say betrayed, by their European mentors. The last paragraph almost gives the impression that they would have preferred that the Europeans had never come to look for converts among them.

Document no. 10

Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Antoine d'Abbadie [14 April 1869]



May the message from Gebre Igzī'abihēr, the Tigrean from the town of Adwa, reach Paris in the country of France. To my master and beloved, the friend and courtier of the French king, Master Antoine d'Abbadie (*Gēta* Inṭoniyos Dabedī).

How are you? Are you well to the extent of heaven and earth? I have settled in my country, and have not stopped asking for news about you. I feel that you are like my father who has begotten me. Why? Because you have shown me the country. And now I have come to Egypt to take [with me] a bishop. If you can, send me a letter of greetings. Tell your brother Mr. Charles (*Ato* Sharlo) that I send greetings. Tell also your two sisters who have married and the one who has become a nun that I send greetings.

Dejjazmach Kasa, the son of *Ras* Mīka'ēl, *Ras* Welde Sillasē [and] *Dejjach* Subagadis, governs. Praise be to God, the people have by the grace of God accepted [him]. I have been sent and arrived here by the decision of *Dejjazmach* Kasa.

Seal: Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 227, Amharic original. The writer was a member of Kasa's delegation to Cairo. His seal shows that his own name was Sahlu (see no. 191). The letter is annotated "écrite au Caire Avril 14".

Document no. 11

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Isaac and Dimoteos [April 1869]

Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of Ethiopia, sends this letter to Bishop Isaac and to Bishop Dimoteos. How are you? Are you very well?

Since the routes are not safe up to here, we have been obliged to make you wait. I have just received a letter [written] on behalf of your sovereign, who asks me to let you leave. So return to your country. You will receive two mules for yourselves from *Dejjach* Yenēneh(?). Take with you everything you have. Your departure distresses us, and we burst into tears.

Seal: Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia.

R. P. Dimothéos, *Deux ans de séjour en Abyssinie*, Jerusalem, 1871, p. 129, French translation. Though possibly abbreviated, the letter bears all the marks of being authentic. The drawing of the seal has the correct legend, but the lion is turned to the left instead of the right as in preserved originals of Tekle Gīyorgīs's letters. The British had most probably taken steps to help the two Armenian ecclesiastics, who had gone to Ethiopia to assist in the release of Tēwodros's European detainees. These measures had led to the belief that they were British subjects (FO 1/29, fol. 59). The French text calls the *dejjach* referred to "Eniné". He was the governor of Belesa.

Document no. 12

Yohannis III to Napoleon III, 11 June 1869

መልእክት፡ዘሐጼ፡ዮሐንስ፡
ት፡ብዳሕ፡ኀበ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዐቢይ፡
ናፅልዮን።

ልዑል፡ሆይ፡እኒ፡ከተድሞ፡ጋርምረ፡እርሰ
ን፡ከመንግሥትዎ፡ጋራ፡በፍጹም፡እንድ
ወድዎ፡ወደገራችን፡የመጡ፡ያገርዎ፡ሰዎ
ች፡ያውቃሉ። መከራና፡ጭንቅ፡በዝቶ፡ብ
ኛል።ቤቲን፡በግድ፡ለቆቲ፡ከንጉሥ፡ቲዎድ
ሮስ፡ጋራ፡ዓሥሬ፡ሶስት፡ዓመት፡ዞርሁ።እ
ርሳቼ፡ውሙ፡ሲሞቱ፡እኒን፡እግዜር፡ከ
ሞት፡አድኖኝ፡በአክሱም፡አለሁ።
ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡አባቲ፡ነው።እግዝእት
ነ፡ማርያመሙ፡እናቲ፡ናት።የሁለችነን
ም፡እርሱ፡ነውና፡በተቻለዎ፡ዘመድ፡
እንዲሆንይ፡ብዬ፡ይህችነን፡የመከራ
ዬ፡ወረቀት፡ወደርሰዎ፡እንዲያደርሱ
ልኝ፡በምጽዋ፡ያሉን፡የርሰዎን፡ኰንሱ

ል፡መንኑ። ሰምቻለኑና፡ሰምዎ፡እጅ
ግ፡ክርስቲያናዊ፡የፍራንሳ፡ንጉሥ፡እን
ዴ፡ሆነች።በበጉነትዎና፡በኃይልዎም፡
ብዞችን፡ሰዎች፡ከመከራ፡ማዳንዎ።
ከመንግሥትዎ፡ጋራ፡በሰላም፡ይኑሩ።
በሰኔ፡፭ኛ፡ተን፡ከሥጋዊ፡በኋላ፡በ፲ወ፷፻
፷፩ድ፡ዘመን፡በአክሱም፡ተጻፈች።



May the message from *Aṣē* Yohannis reach the great king of kings, Napoleon (Napoliyon).

Your Highness!

The people of your country who have come to our country know since a long time that I love you and (lit. together with) your kingdom very much. I am facing a lot of hardship and distress. I was forced to abandon my home, and moved about for thirteen years together with King Tēwodros. And when he died, God saved me from death, and I [now] live at Aksum.

Jesus Christ is my father and Our Lady Mary is my mother. Because He belongs to us all, I begged your consul at Massawa to take this letter about my hardship to you, so that you will be my helper as much as you can. For I have heard that your reputation is [that of] a very Christian king of France, and that you have saved many people from hardship with your kindness and your might.

May you and your kingdom, remain in peace.

Written at Aksum on the 5th day of Senē in the year 1861 after the Incarnation.

Lion seal.

AED, Protocole, C 41, Ethiopie 1869–1898, no no., Amharic original. Yohannis was the last puppet monarch of the *Zemene Mesafint*. See ACTA I, p. XIV, nos 80, 96, 145, and 185. He was a prisoner or semi-prisoner of Tēwodros throughout the thirteen years of the latter's reign.

Document no. 13

Yohannis III to Antoine d'Abbadie, 11 June 1869

ዛቲ፡መልእክት፡ዘሐጼ፡ዮሐንስ፡
ት ብጻሕ፡ኀበ፡ዐቢይ፡እንጦንዮስ፡
እጅጉን፡እኔንዲት፡ነህ፡በደኅና፡መኖርኸን፡
ሰምቼ፡እጅግ፡ደስ፡አለኝ።
አለፈታዲ፡ከንጉሥ፡ቲዎድሮስ፡ጋራ፡ነበር
ኁ።እርሳቸው፡ሲሞቱ፡እግዚር፡በቸርነ
ቱ፡ከሞት፡አዳነኝ።
ሰንና፡ጕራዲን፡እንድትሰድልኝ፡አለምን
ሀለኁ።
በሰላም፡ኑር።
ተጽሕፈት፡በአክሱም፡አመ፡፭ለሰኒ፡ዎእ
ምነ፡ሥጋዊ፡በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፩ዓመት።



May this message from *Aṣē* Yohannis reach the great Antoine (Inṭoniyos).

How are you, really? I am very happy [because] I have heard that you are well. I was [staying] with King Tēwodros against my will. When he died, God in his mercy saved me from death. I beg you to send me a small basin (*senn*) and a sword.

May you live in peace.

Written at Aksum on the 5th day of Senē in the year 1861 after the Incarnation.

Lion seal.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 258, Amharic original.

Document no. 14

Kasa Mirçha to Isaac and Dimoteos, 18 June 1869

Dejjazmach Kasa, by the grace of God prince of the city of Aksum, sends this letter to Bishop Isaac, patriarch of the Armenians, as well as to Bishop Dimoteos, bishop of Jerusalem. May the grace of the Lord be with you to protect you. My seal is in the pattern which you see depicted here.

Do not receive those who say they are the subjects of Kasa, and who are with you in Jerusalem, if they do not present you with this very seal. [This letter] has been written in the year of the Evangelist St. Mathew on the 12th of the month of Senē 1861 of the Christian era.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

Dimothéos, pp. 158-159, French translation.

Document no. 15

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Victoria and Robert Napier [June 1869]



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message from *Aṣē* Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the queen of England [and] Napier (Napēr).

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. Last year when you came here, I received you before any one else (lit. before a person). I showed you the road. I issued a proclamation saying, "Go to their camp with grain, honey, sheep, and goats". You captured (lit. entered) Meqdela. But then they told me not to wage war. Behind my back (lit. me) a rebel rose against me. I went against him. I was in Simēn; [the British] were at Meqdela. Then you marched off in haste, and we failed to meet each other. More than everyone [else], however, I am [your] friend.

As for the case of *Dejjach* Kasa, when I earlier occupied Tigray, he entered my service before anyone else. I placed him there, appointing him governor and decorating him, but he subverted all my servants in Tigray, and betrayed me. Later when you arrived, you advised the two of us to remain on friendly terms. I said, "Yes, let him live under me as his father [did]; let him deliver the tribute due to me." While I remained quiet, respecting the counsel of the queen and my fathers, he caused my servant Hayle Maryam, whom I had appointed over Simēn and Wegera to rebel (lit. to desert), and going even further, he appointed, decorated, and sent him as governor as far as Gonder, Debre Tabor, Belesa and Dembiya. That all this happened was because I remained quiet, respecting your words, and not because I lacked the strength to face him.

However, might belongs to Christ, and not to men. Perhaps Christ, seeing that I have been wronged and abused, gives me power, and if I appoint [someone else] in his land, I hope you will not support him at my expense. Let the people of Abyssinia be my witness if all this is false.

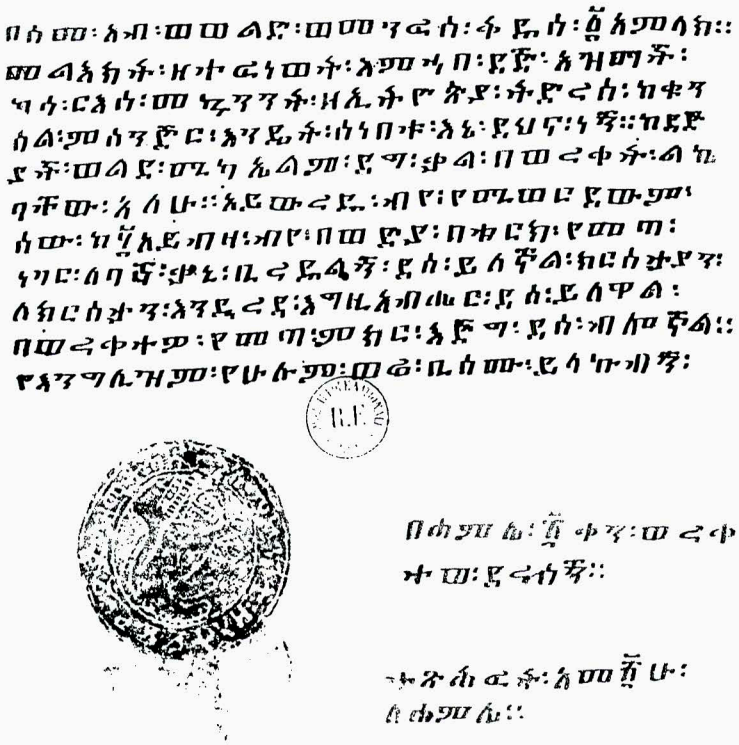
Seal: Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia.

FO 95/728, no. 192, Amharic original and English translation by Martin Flad. A copy of the translation is found in IOR, L/P&S/9/205, pp. 397–398. The letter has been tentatively dated "June" as we know that it was forwarded from Aden on 2 July. A letter from Aden dated 29 September (L/P&S/9/205, p. 498) mentions three letters, from Tekle Gīyorgīs and Minīlik to Victoria, and a letter to Rassam(?). In fact the 29 September letter may well refer to nos 5–7 above, thus Merewether and not Rassam. Also this letter seems to be directed to Napier rather than the queen (see no. 8).

The Foreign Office was rather unhappy about the incoming correspondence from Ethiopia and decided that the above letter seemed to be intended only for Napier. The princes in Ethiopia should be advised to address themselves to the Political Resident at Aden so that the queen and the British government would not be bothered with their internal conflicts (FO 1/28, fols 19–21). By December letters and presents were prepared for Tekle Gīyorgīs, Minīlik and Kasa. The presents were identical, consisting of a telescope and a pair of binoculars for each of the princes.

Document no. 16

Kasa Mirçha to Werner Munzinger, 26 July [1869?]



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May the message sent by *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia, reach Consul Munzinger (Qunsel Misinjir).

How have you been? I am well.

I have sent a friendly letter (lit. friendly words in a letter) to *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl, telling him that he should not to go down [to Massawa?], and that the people who do go down should not exceed fifty.

If there is anything that has come from abroad, from the Turks, I would be pleased if you would help *Basha* Qanī for my sake.

God is pleased if a Christian helps a Christian. I am very happy with the advice that came in your letter. [Please] write to me if you hear news of the English, and about all [other] things.

Your letter reached me on 20 Hamlē.

Written on 20 Hamlē.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 3, Amharic original. The information that the eight letters in this small collection, once catalogued as Mondon-Vidailhet no. 113, have folio numbers in chronological order is erroneous. The correct order is 3, 2, 4–8, 1. Although the year is not always indicated, all letters except the above were written after the attempt on Consul Munzinger's life in September 1869. It has not been possible to identify the situation in which the letter above was written, nor the identity of the person called *Basha* Qanī. The annotation "Juillet 68, Cassa, Bogos et M. René" is not very helpful, as neither Bogos nor René are mentioned in the letter. It may have been written in 1868, but more likely in 1869. See also no. 23 below.

Document no. 17

Kasa Mirẓha to Robert Napier, 10 Aug. 1869

Adwa 10 August 1869

Prince Kasa of Tigray to Lord Napier of Magdala.

How have you been since we parted to the present time? Thank God, I am well. Your letter of the 31st of May I received on the 25th of July. I, with all my noblemen and my people, greatly rejoiced in your advising me [to keep] peace until now. However, *Dejjach* Chalew(?), with other great men of mine, swore to betray me to *Wagshum* Gobezē. They wish to kill me, but I brought witnesses, and [he was] judged by the people and by the laws of Abyssinia to have deserved the death penalty. Nevertheless, I pardoned him for God's sake, and placed him in shackles. All my sufferings I bring to you as to a father.

When you asked at Senafē what you should do for me, when you said this to me, I said that the father knows best what he can do for his son. But now, if you will do me the favour in a short time, I will be very glad. About the 5th of October I am going to fight with Gobezē or he will fight with me. If you will send me a rocket tube and some rockets, and if you can, a man to fire them, for if I die, you will be sorry afterwards, for the father will be sorry when he loses his son.

You sent me the queen's proclamation, in which it was stated that those who assisted Her Majesty's forces in saving the prisoners' lives would receive great rewards and assistance. When I received this proclamation I did everything within my power. And now, look at [this] my letter [and] fulfill my wishes according to our agreement.

I was going to revenge the blood of the English who were killed by the Shanqilla, but since the brother of the English wrote me a letter saying that he was coming to me, I am waiting until he comes. Then I will revenge the blood, for English blood is the same as my blood.

FO 1/28, fol. 29 (also IOR, L/P&S/9/205, Political and Secret Department Records: Abyssinia Original Correspondence, vol. 3, pp. 527–530), English translation. A note on this document reads: "Note by Lord Napier. The original of this letter was sent to India Office. Arrived there after my departure." This probably refers to Napier's departure for India. It has been impossible to locate the original. In a letter to E.L. Russell at Aden dated the same day as the above (IOR, R/20/A/356, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinian Compilation Accounts, fol. 122B), Kasa's military adviser Kirkham mentions that a member of the British staff named Kennedy had taken charge of Kasa's letter to mail it to the India Office in London. It may well have been sent on to Napier and lost.

This letter and the one from Kasa's rival Tekle Gīyorgīs to Queen Victoria and Napier (no. 15) show that the two pretenders maintained that they had both served the British expedition well and therefore regarded themselves entitled to British support, which they hoped in vain that Napier would secure for them.

The Englishman referred to was Thomas Powell, who had been killed together with his family and entourage—including two of the first Swedish missionaries in Kunama—while hunting elephants for ivory south of the Mereb. The event is described from the missionary point of view in Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia*, Stockholm, 1978, pp. 144–45. *Debtera* Asseggaheñ briefly describes the event in document no. 24 below. Kasa's reaction shows how eager he was to strengthen his position with the British. See also no. 26.

The translator has evidently had such great problems with the Amharic grammar that the English text in some places is almost incomprehensible. Part of one sentence seems to have been omitted. In this case we have therefore disregarded the structure and orthography of the preserved text in favour of a more comprehensible version. Rather than as a translation of the original it should be accepted as an indication of what we believe the original contained. We have not been able to identify the person called "Adjatch Shallow" in the French text. "Chalew" seems a reasonable guess, but the title may well be *azzaj* rather than *dejjach*.

Document no. 18

Afe Werq and Welde Mesqel to Alemayyehu Tēwodros, 21 Aug. 1869

በስመ፡አብ፡ወወልዱ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡፩አምላክ።ደጅረስ፡
ከጊታችን፡ከሄኞ፡አዝማች፡ዓለም፡አየሁ።። ።።
ወረዪ፡ኀጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ቴዎድሮስ።። ።።
ኤየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡ጌታችን፤እድሜና፡ጤና፡ይስጥልኝ፡ብለኝ
እጅ፡እኛነሣለን።። ባሮችዎ፡አለቃ፡አፈ፡ወርቅ።። አለቃ፡
ወልዩ፡መስቀል።። እኛም፡አግዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡ደህና
ነን።። ።። የኤየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡አባት፡ይክበር፡
ይመስገን።። የጌታችን፡ነኝ፡የኛጌ፡ሠ፡ነገሥቱ፡የቴዎድሮስን
ዘር፡ያጥፋ፡ብሉ።። እስዎ፡ለእኛ፡ብዙ፡ነው፡ስለቸገኝ፡ነዎና።።
እኛም፡በመዓልትም፡በሌሊትም፡ዘወትር፡በጸሎትዎ
በኀዘኝ፡እና፡ስበዎ፡አለን።። ልናየዎ፡እንወዳለንና።። በተ
ያየኝም፡ጊዜ፡የፈሰሰውን፡እንባዎን፡አይተናልና።።
ሁሉቸር፡ኖ፡ጤሞቴዎስ፡ምዕራፍ፡፩።። ቁጥር፡፫ ፬።። ።
እኛም፡በእርሶዎ፡ስም፡ብዙ፡መከራ፡ተቀበልነ።።ከመቸ
ሄሳ፡እርሶዎን፡ትክትለን፡ከወጣነ፡እስከ፡አሁን፡ድረስ፡
፩ቆሮንቶስ፡ም፡፬፡፰፡ ፲፩ ፲፫ ።። ነገር፡ግን፡በመከራ
ችን፡ሁሉ፡እናዝንም።። በጌታችን፡ሞት።። በእርሶ፡መ
ለየት፡ነው።እኛጂ።። ለቅሶአችን፡አዘናችን።። ኤየሩሳሌ
ምን፡እኛኳ፡ለመሳም፡እግሄዳለን፡ብለንም።። ከምጥዋ፡አመ
ገብ፡ስንሄርስ።። ከጌታችን፡ውሉ፡ልጁ፡ሉሄዱ፡ነው።ብለው።
መልሰው፡ሰዱት።። ጳጳስ፡ሊወስዱ፡የመጡ፡ሰዎች።።
አሁንም፡ለእኛ፡የሄዝንነው፡ዋን፡ነገር፡ብሳሰማ፡እጁላ፡ደስ፡

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May this letter reach our lord, *Dejjazmach* Alemayyehu, the son of King of Kings Tēwodros.

We, your servants *Aleqa* Afe Werq and *Aleqa* Welde Mesqel, bow to you, saying, "May our Lord Jesus Christ grant you long life and health." We are also well, thank God.

The Father of Jesus Christ be honoured and praised for having prevented the seed of our lord Tēwodros, the king of kings, from perishing completely. Since you are to us our great hope, we always remember you day and night in prayer and in sorrow, and we desire to see you, having seen the tears you were shedding when we parted from each other. II Timothy, chapter 1, verse 3–4.

We have met with much hardship because of our relationship with you (lit. in your name) ever since we left Meqdela and followed you until now. I Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 11–13. Nevertheless we do not grieve because of all our [own] affliction. It is the death of our lord and our separation from you that are the cause of our lamentation and grief.

Even when we intended to go to Jerusalem to worship

ደለናልኽ።። ከቆኘስል፡ም ስኟኹር፡ድረስ፡ወረቀት፡ደስደ
ዱልኟ።። አዲዋ፡ሳሹ፡ማየር።። ሳሹ፡ቤኟደር፡እኟዲ ሠጡ ልኟ ፡
አድርገወ።። አለቃ፡ዘነብም፡እኛም፡የእርስዎኟ፡ወረ፡
እየጠየቅኑ።። አዲዋ፡ት ቀምጠናል።። እርሶም፡ዐመል
ካም፡ስራ፡ጸኟት ው፤ነው ር፡የሌለበት፡ሰው፡ሁነው፡ደ
ኑሩ።። ቲሹ፡ ፱ ም ዕ፡ቀኑጥ፡፲ ፲።። ሮ ማ፡ ም ዕ፡፲ ፱።። ቀኑኖ፡
፲ ፬ እስከ፡፳ ፩።። ሁለላዚ፡ጸልት፡ደድርጉ።። እላዚ አብሐ
ርኟ፡ደፍሩ።። የወዲ፱ኛዎኟ፡ም ክርሩ፡ይስመ።። ለመዝ ሙ
ር፡ ፱ ፲ ፩፡ ቀኑጥ፡፲ ።። ም ሳሌ፡ ፱ ም ዕ፡ ቀኑ፡ ፱ ፡፲ ፲ ፩ ።። አ ም ሳከ፡
ደሩፍ፡ደወጠ ቅልኟ፡ም ክሩኟ፡ጥበብኟ፡ገልጦ።። ለመዝሪ
ለመ፡ር፡ ፱ ፳ ፩ ፡እስከ፡ ፍ ሃ ማ ው፡ ይረስ።። ።። ።። ።።
ዚህ ም ሰኒሳ፡ስለ፡ወረ፡ሁሉ፡ጽፈናል።። የእናተ ዎ፡የኔ
ቴ ዮ፡ጥሩ፡ወርቅ፡እናትን፤ወደዘር፡ሳቂያዮ፡ደህና፡ናቸው፤
ደሉበት ም፡ደረስጌ፡ነው።። ደጂኟ፡ካሳም፡አገሩ ተ ዎ፡ስ
ጪኟ፡ወልቃደት፡ጠገዲኟ፡ደግዛሉ።። ደህና፡ናቸ ው ።።
ደባተ ዎኟ፡የደጅ፡አጣኟ፡ው ሪኟ፡አጅ ም።። ከደዛሪ፡ን
ቦር፡አፍልሰ ሰ ው፡ደረስጌ፡አገ ቡት።። ደጂኟ፡ጊኟጉ ልኟ
ም።።ደጂኟ፡ጉ በ ዚ፡ስ ጪኟ፡ተ ዋ ላ ተ ው ።።ደዘ ው፡አስረ
ቀቸ ው፡ነበረ።። ን ም ለመ ው፡ሞት፡በ ለመ ጋ ቢት፡በ ጋ ቀኟ ።።
ደጂኟ፡ተ አም ራ ት፡አጉ ተ ዎ ም፤ጠገዲ፡ሳደ፡ተ ዋ ላ ተ ው፡
በ ጦ ር፡ሞቱ።። ።። ።። ።።
እራ ስ፡ለመ ሺ ኻ፡ወኟዱ ም ዎ፤ቂራ፡ሳደ፡ተ ዋ ላ ተ ው፡ከደስ
ን፡ዛ ሩ፡ጋ ር ።። ዱ ል፡አ ዱ ርጎ፡ደ ዞ፡አ ሠራ ቸ ው ።። ቲሳ፡ላኟ፡
ን ርቀ ው፡ተ ፈት ተ ው፡ሳ ሉ።። እነ ቢት ወ ደ ዱ፡ዋ ሴኟ፡ደ ዘ
ው፡ከ ገ ዛራ፡ለመ ድኃኔ፡ዓ ለ ም፡ጋራ፡ጫ ል ጋ፡ሳ ደ፡ተ ዋ ጉ፡
ቢት ወ ደ ዱ፡ዋ ሴ፡ሞ ቱ።። እራ ስ፡ለመ ሺ ኻ ኟ፡ደ ዞ፡አ ሠ ር አ ቸ
ው፡ሳ ለ።። የተ ዱ ሳ፡ጊ ሉ፡ል ጅ፡ደ ጂ ት፡ደ ስ ት፡ገ ሠ ላ ሰ፡ለመ ኖ

there (lit. kiss her), and arrived in the neighbourhood of Massawa, the people who came to bring a metropolitan (*pappas*) said that we were going to the son of our lord, and sent us back.

And now we would be very happy to hear [news] about your well-being. Send us a letter through Consul Munzinger (Misinjir), and arrange so that he hands it over at Adwa to Mr. Mayer (*Ato* Mayer) [and] Mr. Bender (*Ato* Bēnder) for us. *Aleqa* Zeneb and we are staying at Adwa all the time, asking for news about you.

As for you, be firm in good deeds and remain a man in whom there is no disgrace. Titus, chapter 2, verse 7–8; Romans, chapter 12, verses 14–21. Pray at all times, and fear God. Listen to the advice of your friends. Psalm 111, verse 10; Proverbs, chapter 9, verses 9, 10, 11. May the God of Joseph protect you, revealing his counsel and wisdom [to you]. Psalm 121 up to the end.

And after this, we are going to write all the news to you. *Weyzero* Laqīyayē, the mother of your mother, *Itēgē* Ṭiru Werq, is well and lives at Deresgē. Your uncle *Dejjach* Kasa rules Simēn, Welqayit and Ṭegedē. He is well.

The remains of your [grand]father Wibē have been removed from Debre Tabor and brought to Deresgē.

As for *Dejjach* Gwangwil, *Dejjach* Gobezē attacked him in Simēn, captured and im-

ሞ፡ ሄ ም ቢ ደ፡ ከ ታ ሠ ራ በ ት፡ ስ ቆ ሬ ። ደ ሉ ዉ ኝ፡ ሞ ር፡ ጣ ር ኪ፡ አ ግ ሩ ኝ ም፡ ዘ ፎ ሮ ። እ ር ሳ ቸ ው ኝ፡ ደ ዘ፡ ሣ መ ለ ሰ ። አ ጁ ላ ም፡ አ ቆ ር ፡ በ ጫ ግ ባ፡ አ ጁ ር ሳ ፡ አ ኑ ሮ፡ አ ቸ ው ፡ ሳ ሌ ፡ በ ሰ ኝ ሰ ለ ት። ታ ከ ረ ው ። ሄ ጂ ኾ ፡ ግ ሙ በ ዚ ፡ ኮ ሩ ፡ ጉ ሹ ኝ ፡ ደ ላ ጩ በ ው ፡ የ ም ስ ራ ቹ ፡ ደ ል ጋ ኽ ኝ ፡ ፈ ሳ ጊ ፡ ቂ ጣ ሁ ል ህ ። የ ም ስ ራ ቹ ኝ ፡ የ ዣ ኮ ሠ ፣ ፡ ጠ በ ዣ ጂ ፡ ሽ ወ ቂ ት ኝ ። እ ራ ስ ፡ ጠ መ ሺ ሻ ኝ ፡ አ ጁ ር ገ ህ ፡ ስ ሄ ጁ ፊ ጂ ፡ ኮ ለ ፡ ቢ ሌ ክ በ ት ፡ እ ም ቢ ፡ እ ለ ። በ ዚ ህ ፡ ኑ ግ ር ፡ የ ሉ ኒ ሳ ፡ ሁ ለ ቱ ፡ ሉ ጣ ለ ሉ ዋ ል ። እ ራ ስ ፡ ጠ መ ሽ ሻ ኝ ም ፡ ፈ ት ኾ ፡ አ ክ ኮ ሮ ፡ አ ኑ ሮ ፡ አ ቹ ዋ ል ። እ ር ሱ ም ፡ ደ ኝ ገ ል ፡ በ ር ፡ በ መ ለ ስ ፡ ጁ ቆ ኝ ፡ ሞ ጂ ም ኝ ፡ ደ ገ ዚ ል ። ። ። ወ ደ ዘ ሮ ፡ አ ል ጣ ሽ ፡ እ ሳ ሉ ዎ ፡ ከ ራ ስ ፡ ባ ር ያ ው ፡ ከ ባ ላ ቹ ው ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ አ ደ ቀ ፡ ና ቹ ወ ። ። በ እ ር ሱ ዎ ፡ መ ለ የ ት ፡ ዘ ወ ት ር ፡ ሱ ደ ለ ቅ ሱ ፡ ደ ና ራ ሉ ። ። ወ ደ ዘ ሮ ፡ ዳ ኅ ሽ ። ። ል ጁ ፡ ኃ ደ ለ ፡ ጣ ር ፡ ደ ም ፡ ወ ኜ ጁ ም ዎ ፡ ደ ህ ና ፡ ና ቹ ው ። ። ደ ሉ በ ት ም ፡ ከ አ ጭ ፡ ሰ መ ኤ ል ፡ ሰ ና ፈ ፡ ኑ ው ። ። ። ጀ ጂ ኾ ፡ ም ኜ ደ ፎ ክ ም ፡ ሽ ዋ ኜ ፡ እ ስ ከ ፡ ወ ሉ ፡ ጨ ገ ዛ ሉ ። ። አ ሁ ኜ ፡ ኅ ኜ ፡ ፊ ደ ጂ ኾ ፡ ጨ በ ዚ ፡ ፈ ሩ ። ከ በ ሽ ሉ ፡ ወ ደ ደ ፡ ሳ ኜ ኑ ። ከ በ ሽ ሉ ፡ ወ ዲ ህ ፡ ለ እ ኔ ፡ ኑ ባ ፡ ለ ው ፤ ታ ር ቀ ው ፡ ት ሂ ዱ ፡ በ ኋ ላ ፡ ወ ር ቂ ት ኜ ፡ ሹ ለ ው ። ። አ ሁ ኜ ፡ መ ስ ታ ዎ ት ፡ ለ ሁ ሉ ም ፡ አ ልገ ዘ ም ፡ ለ ፡ ወ ረ ኒ መ ና ኜ ና ፡ ወ ሉ ኜ ፡ ደ ዛ አ ለ ች ፡ ሽ ፍ ታ ።

ደ ጀ ች ፡ ጫ በ ዚ ፡ አ ጤ ፡ ቲ ክ ለ ፍ ኛ ር ጎ ስ ፡ ቱ ለ ለ ዋ ል ። በ ሰ ኔ ፡ ከ ፋ ሪ ስ ፡ አ ሌ ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ ሙ ዋ ላ ኩ ው ። የ ጂ ፡ ሳ ጂ ፡ ሩ ፈ ስ ፡ አ ሌ ፡ ሞ ኩ ። ኮ በ ሽ ሉ ፡ እ ስ ከ ፡ ኑ ላ ፈ ። ኒ ዓ ላ ጂ ፡ እ ስ ከ ፡ ኑ ከ ዚ ፡ ጭ ሬ ስ ፡ ጂ ገ ዛ ሉ ። ቢ ሦ ኜ ም ፡ አ ገ ር ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ጠ ል ፍ ፡ አ ቹ ዋ ል ። ኜ ኹ ሠ ፡ ነ ኜ ፡ እ ደ ሉ ፡ አ ገ ር ፡ እ የ ዘ ፈ ፡ ፉ ፡ እ ኜ ጂ ፡ ሽ ጭ ታ ፡ ጂ በ ሳ ሉ ። ። ። ። ። ። ደ ጀ ፡ እ ዝ ጣ ኹ ፡ ካ ሳ ፡ ኑ ኑ ከ ዚ ፡ እ ስ ከ ፡ ም ጽ ዋ ፡ ጭ ሬ ስ ፡ ጂ ገ ዛ ሉ ። እ ጁ ላ ም ፡ ጠ ል ኻ ም ፡ ሚ ታ ፡ ሁ ነ ዋ ል ። ሶ ክ ር ስ ቁ ስ ም ፡ ለ ሰ ው ም ፡ ሄ ስ ፡ የ ጫ ደ ሰ ኹ ፡ ሁ ነ ዋ ል ። በ ጉ ል በ ታ ቹ ው ም ፡ አ ጂ ጠ ኩ ፤ በ እ ላ ዚ አ ላ ሒ ር ፡ ኃ ጂ ል ፡ እ ኜ ጂ ። ጳ ጳ ሱ ና ፡ ደ ጂ ኾ ፡ ካ ሳ ፡ በ ላ ዙ ፡ ፍ ቅ ር ፡ አ ኜ ጭ ፡ ሁ ነ ዋ ል ። አ ግ ሩ ም ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ኑ ካ ክ ሉ ፡ ጠ ላ ቦ ት ል ። የ እ ላ ዚ አ ላ ሒ ር ፡ ጠ ኜ ፈ ስ ፡ እ ል ኑ ለ የ ው ም ።

prisoned him. He fell sick and died on the 5th of Meggabīt.

Your uncle *Dejjach* Tamrat died fighting in Ṭegedē. Your brother *Ras* Meshesha fought in Qwara with Desta Birru, who defeated, captured and imprisoned him. But later, when he was reconciled and released, he took *Bītwedded* Wasē and his companions and fought at Ṣhilga with Gebru Medhanē Alem. *Bītwedded* Wasē died.

When *Ras* Meshesha was captured and imprisoned, *Dejjach* Desta, the son of Tedla Gwalu, came by forced marches to Dembiya, to the place where Meshesha was imprisoned. Having captured the army [and] pillaged the country, he took [Meshesha] and returned. While showing him great respect and treating him properly, he [nevertheless] kept him in chains.

Having beaten Birru Goshu, *Dejjach* Gobezē [sent a message to *Dejjach* Desta]: "Good news, I have on your behalf punished the one who wanted your throne." When, as his reward, he asked him to send the king's gun, one thousand ounces (*wekēt*) [of gold] and *Ras* Meshesha, he refused. Because of this matter the two of them became enemies. Having released *Ras* Meshesha and honoured him, he has let him live with due honour. And starting from Dengel Ber he rules all Gojjam.

Your sister, *Weyzero* Altash, is at Adwa with her husband *Ras* Baryaw. She is con-

እራስ ቢሰው ር፡ ደምቢያ፡ ናቸው፡

ገዝረ፡ ጠው ሄሳኝ። ዋፊ። ው ቤ። የበሳቸው፡ እናት፡ ጂስጌ፡ ወጂዘሮ፡ ሁሳገርኽ ። ጠጁ፡ አባ፡ ድንቄ። ፋጠሣ፡ ኢየሱስ። ላም ጂ። መሙኑት። ሣህ ሲዛ። ወሰላ፡ ማሪካ አሌ። ትኩ። እስፋው ። ጠሮኻ፡ ሲህ በእላዚአክ ሐሮ፡ ኃጂሌ። በእሰዎ፡ ሀሣት፡ ደህና፡ ናቸው።እኽ ካሮ ቸ ዎ፡ ሁሰ።

ጊቃችኝ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ክር ስቶ ክ፡በተወለደ፡ በሺ፡ክ ስ ምንት፡ጠሳ፡ ስ ሌሳ ፡ኦንጅ፡ዘ ጠንጉ፡ በ ነ ሐ ሲ፡ ሰ ፲ ፭ ቀ ኝ፡ቱ ዳ ፈ ። አዴዋ፡ሳጂ። ስሳ ሐ ት፡ለእላ ዚ አሳ ሐሩ ር፡ው ት ረ፡ለ ዓ ለጠ ፡ ዓ ለ ም፡ አ ማ ኒ ን፡

stantly weeping because of her separation from you. *Weyzero* Dagish and your brother *Lij* Hayle Maryam are well. They are with *Ato* Samu'ēl at Senafē.

Dejjach Minīlik rules Shewa as far as Wello. But now, after being reconciled with *Dejjach* Gobezē who said, "Beyond Beshilo is for you, from Beshilo in this direction is for me", he appointed Werqīt and left. Now Mestawat said, "I shall not submit to anyone." And so she rebelled and seized Werre Hīmeno and Wello.

Dejjach Gobezē has now been named *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs. In June he fought with Farīs Alī in Yejju, and Farīs Alī died. [Gobezē] rules from Beshilo to Tigray, from the river Abbay to the Tekkezē. Even so, all people hate him. He says, "I am the king", and pillages the land as a *shifta*.

Dejjazmach Kasa rules from Tekkezē to Massawa. He has become a very good master, one who pleases [both] Christ and men. He does not glory in his strength, but in the power of God. The metropolitan and *Dejjach* Kasa have become one in their great love for each other. All the land is pacified and well provided for. The spirit of God is with him. *Ras* Bīsewwir is in Dembiya.

Gebre Medhin, Warī, Wibē, Desta, the mother of Belachew, *Weyzero* Hulagerish, Ṭejj Abezza Dinqē, Amete Īyyesus, Gimja, Munīt, Sahlītu, Welette Mīka'ēl, Tikku, Asfaw, Mersha, by the power of God and by your bounty all these, all your servants, are well.

Written at Adwa on the 16th day of Nehasē in the year of the birth of Christ 1861.

Praise be to God always and for ever. Amen.

T 1/7217, file no. 15005 (papers regarding Alemayyehu), Amharic original and English translation by J.L. Krapf. This letter, and no. 20 below, had been forwarded to Krapf by the German missionaries Mayer and Bender at Adwa. When he finally passed them on to Rassam 5 April 1872, having received an additional letter for Alemayyehu from Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs (no. 79), he excused himself by stating that he had not known where to send them. Rassam forwarded them to the Treasury which was handling the affairs of the young prince.

The writers were apparently Alemayyehu's former teachers or guardians. Their concern about the spiritual welfare and growth of the young prince is unmistakable as shown by the selection of texts cited from the Holy Scriptures. It is also interesting to note that the writers wanted to remind Alemayyehu of so many of the members of the household at Meqdela of which he had himself been one. It is difficult to say whether or not the person here called Ṭejj Abezza Dinqē (perhaps for Dinqē Ṭejj Abezza) is the lady who one month later co-authored a letter to Alemayyehu with Weyzero Desta (no. 20). Alemayyehu's brother-in-law *Ras* Baryaw Ṗawlos was Tēwodros's last governor of Tigray and should not be confused with Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq who held the same position under Yohannis (see no. 115).

As this letter was written so soon after the events at Meqdela and the departure of the British expedition and as the writers seem to have been following the political events very closely, it is an important source. Naturally Alemayyehu's closest relations on his mother's side receive special attention, but it is interesting to note the writers' very high opinion of *Dejjazmach* Kasa, still a ruler only beyond the Tekkezē.

Document no. 19

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Napoleon III, 22 Aug. 1869

መልእክት፡ዘደጅዝማች፡ወልዴ፡ሚካኤል።

ይድረስ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ወንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ናፖሊዮን፡ንጉሥ።

ወሉ ሁለ፡ለ ሁ ለ ጎ ።

ክቡርነት፡አንድ ጉ ን፡እን ዴ ት፡አለ ።

ከነዚያ፡ሚደ፡ከሉት፡ሁሉ፡ነገሥታት፡አርሰው፡አጅ ግ፡ኃ

ይለኛ፡አድ ት፡ጠቦ ቱ፡የአርሰቲያ ን፡ወጣቂ፡ነው፡ሉሉ፡በለ

ጠ።አኔም፡ፍቅ ረ ው ን፡ፈራጊ፡ወደርሰው፡አልክለሁ።

አኔ፡ምንም፡ከደጅ ዝማች፡ክፋ፡ጠታ ች፡ጠሁን፡ከዛ ቲ፡ጣያ

ቲ፡ከቅማ ቲ፡ሳገሬ፡ለሐማሴን፡የ ጉ ን ት፡ባለባት፡ነኝ።

ኗ ገለ ጮ ም፡ወሙ ጥ ው፡በለ ገሰ፡ሉሉ፡ሉለወ ቶ ም፡ሂሙለረ ጭ፡አ

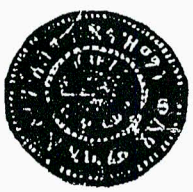
ኔ፡ነኝ።

ለአ ተ ም፡የለም ን፡ሰም ችን ከመውደ ጉ ን፡መጠ ቴ ን፡ቅን አሉ

ት ም፡በሬ ት ም፡የነበሩ ት፡አሁ ን ም፡ያሉ ት ፡ት ን ሰል፡ም

ስ ጭ ር፡ያ ው ታሉ፡አሁ ን ም፡ገጽ፡በረ ከ ት፡አለ ይ ጋ ር፡ሰ

ው፡ለመለ ደድ፡እ ፈ ል ጋ ለ ሁ ና፡ይ ፍ ቅ ዲ ል ኝ ።



ተጽ ሕ ፈ ፡በለ ገረ፡ሐ ማ ሴ ን፡
አ መ ፡ኅ ው ኃ ለ ኪ ሐ ቪ ፡በ ፍ ል ሰ ት ፡
መ ስ ፐ ፐ ፍ ፡ኀ ው ፬ ፡አ ም ለ መ ተ ፡
ም ሀ ረ ት ።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl reach Napoleon (Nepolēwon), king of kings of the French and Highness of Highnesses.

How are you, really [though known to me only] by hearsay? Since I heard people say that you are the most powerful, the strongest, of all the kings over there, the defender of Christians, I am writing (lit. sending) to you, desiring your friendship.

Although I am under [the authority of] *Dejjazmach* Kasa, I am of old the legitimate ruler of my country Hamasēn from my father and my grandfather and my great-grandfather. Secondly, I am the neighbour of your people at Massawa and in Bogos. Thirdly, your former consuls and your present consul, Munzinger (Misinjir), are aware of my friendship and protection of your people. And now, as I want to send a person with gifts, permit me [this].

Written in the land of Hamasēn on 21 Nehasē, during the Feast of the Assumption in the year of grace 1861.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl ibn Selomon of the land of Hamasēn.

AECP, Égypte, Massouah 3, fol. 280, Amharic original. Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon of the house of Hazega was appointed governor of Hamasēn and Serayē by Kasa in 1868, replacing Tēwodros's governor Haylu Tewelde Medhin (see ACTA II, no. 249, where Welde Mīka'ēl is defined as the son of *Weyzero* Illēnī). Haylu and Welde Mīka'ēl were both notables from Hamasēn, from Ṣe'azega and Hazega respectively. When Kasa found out that Welde Mīka'ēl, encouraged by Munzinger, was seeking French support in this manner, he removed him from his governorship. Welde Mīka'ēl spent some years in prison (Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 40–41). Later he sided with the Egyptians against Yohannis (see nos 144–146, 183).

Document no. 20

Dinqē and Desta to Alemayyehu Tēwodros, 24 Sept. 1869

የተሳከ፡ ከወይዘሮ፡ ድንቂ፡፡ ከወይዘሮ፡ ደስ
ታ፡፡ ይድረስ፡ ከደጃች፡ ዓለም፡ አየሁ፡፡ መድኃ
ኔ፡ ዓለም፡ ጤና፡ ይስጥልን፡ እጅ፡ እንነሣለን፡፡ ያለ
ንበት ም፡ ትግሬ፡ አድዋ፡ ላይ፡ ነው፡፡ ዘመድ፡ የ
ሚሆነን ም፡ አላገኘን ም፡፡ እስከ፡ ዛሬ፡ የርሰዎን፡
ይህንነት፡ የሚነግሬን፡ እያጣን፡ እንጨነቃለን፡፡
እርሰዎም፡ ደብዳቤ፡ የማይልኩብን፡ ሆኑ፡፡ አደራ፡
ጥብቅ፡ ሰማይ፡ እራቅ፡ ሁኖብን፡ በአጊጉል፡ ተቀ
ምጠናል፡፡

May [this letter] sent by *Weyzero* Dinqē [and] by *Weyzero* Desta reach *Dejjach* Alemayyehu. We greet you, "May the Redeemer of the world grant you health."

We are at Adwa in Tigray. We have found no one to befriend us. We are worried because up to now we have found no one to tell us of your well-being. You have sent us no letter.

Please, [we] entreat [you], the sanctuary of heaven has become remote from us. We are in a state of uncertainty.

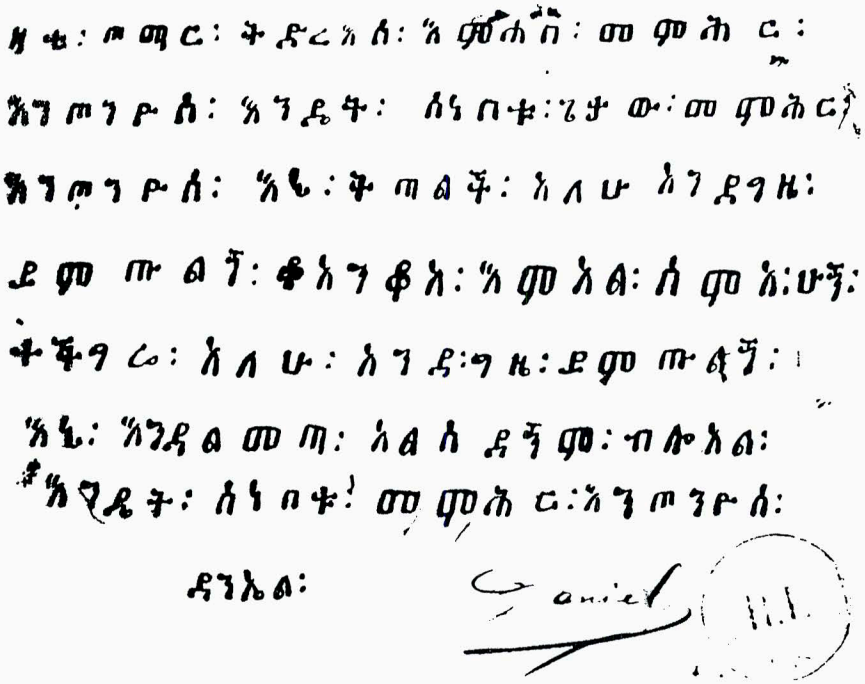
Written at Adwa on the 15th day of Meskerem in the year of the birth of Christ 1862 .

በመሥከረም፡ በ፲፭ቀን፡ አድዋ፡ ላይ፡ ተጻፈ፡
በ፲፰፻፡ ፷፪ ዓመት፡ እምልደተ፡ ክርስቶስ፡

T 1/7217, file no. 15005, (papers regarding Alemayyehu), Amharic original and English translation by J.L. Krapf. For context, see no. 18.

Document no. 21

Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 7 Nov. 1869



May this letter reach *Memhir* Antoine (Inṭoniyos). How have you been, *Gētaw Memhir* Antoine? I have quarrelled. [Please] come for a short while for my sake. I am in trouble because I do not understand the language. [Please] come for a short while for my sake. I cannot come, because they have said that they will not send me. How have you been, *Memhir* Antoine?

Danēl Daniel

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 129, Amharic original.

In a following letter (no. 25) Danēl signs himself "Danēl the Felasha" and gives his address as Rue des Marais 46, Paris. He was apparently studying in Paris and somehow a protégé of d'Abbadie's.

The grammar and orthography of this letter are very poor.

Document no. 22

Contract between Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm Aḥmad, and Giuseppe Sapeto, 15 Nov. 1869

Praise be to God.

It being Monday the eleventh day of the month of Sha'bān of the year 1286 according to the reckoning of the Muslims, and the fifteenth day of November of the year 1869 according to the European calendar, the brothers Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad and Signor Giuseppe Sapeto, acting on board the *Nāṣir Majīd*, the boat of Sa'īd 'Awad, have met and stipulated what follows in the presence of witnesses:

1. The above-mentioned brothers Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad, *sulṭāns* of Aseb, have sold and sell to the aforesaid Signor Giuseppe Sapeto the territory contained between Mount Ganga and Cape Lumah and both sides of it; therefore the ownership of this land shall belong to Signor Giuseppe Sapeto as soon as the latter has paid the price for it, because they have sold it to him spontaneously, of their own free will and with honest intentions.

2. The above-mentioned brothers swear by the Holy Quran that neither they nor their people will behave treacherously towards the Europeans who will come and live on the land owned by Signor Sapeto.

3. Signor Giuseppe Sapeto buys the said area for the price of six thousand thalers. For it he hands over two hundred and fifty thalers to the sellers as a pledge and commits himself to pay the remaining five thousand seven hundred and fifty thalers within one hundred days, running from the first of Ramaḍān until the tenth day of the month of Ḥijjah. But if Signor Giuseppe should not return again, nor any others come instead of him within the time fixed, the amount pledged shall be lost. The brothers named below cannot sell the said area to others, having already sold it to Signor Giuseppe Sapeto and granted him one hundred days to pay its price.

This is the contract agreed upon between Signor Giuseppe Sapeto and the brothers Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad in the presence of the witnesses Muḥammad 'Abdī, Aḥmad 'Alī, Sa'īd 'Awad, and the clerk 'Abdallāh bin Burhān.

Accepted and signed by the contracting:

Ḥasan bin Aḥmad Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad
Giuseppe Sapeto.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, *Trattati, Convenzioni e Accordi Relativi all'Africa, III, 1841–73*, Rome, 1943, pp. 416–17. The printed document is introduced with the following heading: "Convention signed by Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad, *sulṭāns* of Aseb, and by Professor Giuseppe Sapeto for the sale of the territory situated between Mount Ganga [and] Cape Lumah and their two limits. Aseb, 15 November 1869." The signatures are followed by the following note: "The rights deriving from this convention were transferred by the Rubattino society [company] to the Royal Government by the convention of 10 May 1882." All attempts to locate the original or an archival copy have failed.

This private purchase of a piece of land by the former Catholic missionary Giuseppe Sapeto (see ACTA I, no. 30) with no mention of the Rubattino Company, for which he was acting, much less the Italian government, nevertheless became the foundation for the first Italian claims to the colony of Eritrea.

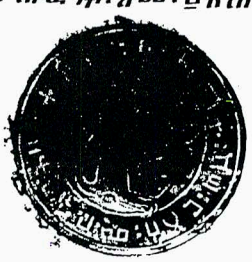
"Abd-Allah ben *Duran*" in the Italian text (here as in no. 235) most probably stands for 'Abdallāh bin *Burhān*.

Document no. 23

Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger, 17 Nov. [1869]

መልእክት፡ዘደጅ፡ሰጣማች፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መንጣንት፡ሰይመ
አፄ፡ዘብሔር፡ዘብሔር፡ሰክሉ፡ዓም።ይድረሰ፡ከቁንሰል፡
ዓመታሰጅር፡እንዴት፡ሰነበቱ፡እኔ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመሰ
ጣንት፡ይህን፡ነኝ፡እንኳንስ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ሰመጣው፡ሰጣ፡እም
ነቱ፡ሊመሰክር፡ከፉ፡ያጭ፡ሰው፡ሰደጅ፡ሰ ለሁ፡እኔም፡መድምሬ፡
ሰፅሁ።።በምጣዛሙ፡ሰገር፡ወጣበዬ፡ሰጣበ፡ሰ፡ሁሉ፡በኑከሰነበ
ት፡ጊዜ፡የኔ፡መጅ፡እርሰው፡እንዲህ፡መሆነም፡እኔን፡ያሳዝነ
ኝ፡ልጅ፡እርሰ፡ምሰ፡እንኳንስ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ሰመጣው፡ሰልጋ
ደዝኑ።።ይጅያችሁ፡ወልደ፡ሚካሌ፡ልጓም፡እኔን፡ሽጠሙ፡ሰልጋ
ዩን፡ሲገሰብሙ፡ከሰባ፡ከይሲ፡ከጣ፡በእሩ፡ኑሳልካሙ፡ጠመሩ፡ነ
ም፡ሳሽ፡ሲገኑ፡እንዲህ፡ቢያይርጉ፡ግን፡በሚገባ፡ጌታመሰክር፡
አሰመሰክሩ፡አሰርሷቸው፡ለሁጓም፡ልጅ፡ቻቸው፡በሩሐ፡ገ
ብተው፡ከጥቱ፡እንደያ፡ጣ ሉኝ፡አገሩ፡ግን፡ነገእዜ፡ነሙ፡ነገር፡
ግን፡እርሰው፡ወደጅ፡ነወጥ፡ነገሩን፡ልነግሩ፡ይቅር፡ብዮ፡ነሙ።።
ከሙሌየ፡ጋራ፡ወደጅ፡ጠመሆን፡ከኔ፡ጋራ፡ወደጅ፡መሆን፡ይ
ሻሳል።።

ሙጽሐፍ፡ሰመ፡ይሰሐይር፡በአድዋ፡ካ ተመ።።



May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. I am glad that God has spared you.

I have sent *Abba* Imnetu with a judge, so [that you may] produce evidence against one another. I have also investigated. It makes me sad that [anything] like this happened to you, my friend, at the time when all brigands [and] predators (lit. lions) have been subdued in the country I rule. As for yourself, do not grieve, since God has spared you.

Dejjach Welde Mīka'ēl corresponded with Abba Keysī [and] with Gobezē in order to overthrow me (lit. my throne) by betraying [lit. selling] me, so that he might rule beyond the Mereb. When he did so, however, I imprisoned him after duly having seven witnesses give evidence. Let not his sons take to the wilderness and alienate me from you. Nevertheless, the country is mine (lit. my property). But since you are my friend I want to tell you about the matter. It is better to be friends with me than be friends with my vassal (*lolē*).

Written on the 9th of Hidar in the city of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 2, Amharic original. This is the second of Kasa's early letters to Werner Munzinger. It is annotated "Nov. 1868 A. Emnetu", but as the attempt to assassinate Munzinger, then French vice-consul at Massawa, took place in September 1869 (AECP, Massawa 3, fol. 285), the year indicated is obviously a mistake (see dating of no. 16 above). Note that *Dejjazmach* Kasa here adds "*siyume Igzī'abihēr*" ("God's designated" or as normally translated "the elect of God") to his title. On the other hand "of Ethiopia" is replaced by "of the land of Aksum". This designation remains until March 1870, when Aksum is defined "the Ethiopian" (no. 40).

Wagshum Gobezē (ACTA II, no. 247, and nos 8 and 15 above) had declared himself king of kings the year before this letter was written. For Munzinger's opinion and contacts with Kasa Mirṣha and Welde Mīka'ēl and the circumstances of the assassination attempt, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 276–279. The advice given in the last sentence is no doubt a warning to Munzinger not to have too close relations with Welde Mīka'ēl.

Document no. 24

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 27 Nov. 1869

ኅብ፡ጌታ፡አባ፡ፕሮ፡ኢ፡ዘአበዲየ፡ስመ፡ዓ፡ዜና፡ምኵ፡ፕበ፡ወልዙ፡ክ
ተለየነ፡ይምሮ፡እነዲት፡አኩ፡በምሽተ፡ምና፡ለዘመዶት፡ወም፡ሰላምኞ፡ዙሱ፡
ሰላምኞ፡ደንገሱልኝ፡ጸኩት፡እነዲያደርጉልኝ።

ወሬ፡ዘሸዋ፡

ምንቢልክ፡የሸዋ፡ንጉሥ፡እንግሊዞች፡ቴዎድሮስን፡በገደለበት፡ዘመነ፡ይመ
ለክተኞ፡ወደ፡አደን፡ሰደ፡ር፡የሮ፡ም፡ካህናት፡ወደ፡ሸዋ፡ወስደ፡ከሰሳቱ፡
አንዱ፡ጴጳስ፡ነው።አቡነ፡ማቴዎስ፡አቡነ፡ተውሪን፡ይመስሱኖል።የሸዋ፡ንጉ
ሥ፡እድጓ፡ወደዓትው፡አኩ፡እስከ፡ዛሬ፡ግን፡ክህነት፡አልሰሙም።ጳጳመኛ
ም፡የሸዋ፡ንጉሥ፡አምና፡መሸያት፡የምትባል፡የወሎን፡ንጋር፡ድል፡አደረጋት፡
ወሎንም፡አጠፉው።ሃያ፡ሚሶት፡ክርክር፡እንዳይነሣ፡ኤዋድ፡ነገረ፡እድጓ፡ዘር
ቱዎዋል።

ወሬ፡ዘንጉሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ጎጠሬ፡

ንጉሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡አምና፡ወደ፡የጁ፡ዘመተ፡የጁንም፡አጠፉው።በሰኔ፡
ወደ፡ዋድላ፡ሄደ።የብሩ፡አሊጋዝን፡ልጅ፡በየጁ፡ሾመ።የደጃዝማች፡ፋሪ
ስ፡ልጆች፡ሸፍተው፡ነበሩ።ያሊጋዝ፡ብሩን፡ልጅ፡ሰለመውጋት፡ወጀደ፡የጁ፡ሄዱ፡
ያሊጋዝ፡ብሩ፡ልጅም፡ወደ፡ንጉሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊስም፡ሳከ።ንጉሥም፡ከ
ዋድላ፡በተነሣ፡በ፲ሠላተኛ፡ቀን፡ከብሩ፡አሊጋዝ፡ልጅ፡ጋራ፡ሲዋጉ፡ደረስባቸው፡
ድል፡አደረጋቸው።ፋሪስ፡አሊኖ፡ፋሪስ፡ወረኛ፡ሞቱ፡ፋሪስ፡ንጉሤ፡ተወግቶ፡
ተያዘ፡ፋሪስ፡ጋንጉልና፡ፋሪስ፡ጉበና፡አመለጡ።ብዙ፡መኳንንት፡ሞቱ።

የጎሹ፡ብሩ፡ወሬ፡

ጎሹ፡ካሁን፡ንገሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡አሥሮት፡ነበረ።ጎሹ፡ብሩ፡ግን፡ቁራኛ
ቸን፡የሚጠብቁቱን፡ወታደሮቸ፡በመጡኅኒት፡አሳብጾ፡አመለጠ።ጳጳመ
ኛ፡ተደዘ፡ታዘረ።ጳጳመኛ፡በመርዣ፡ጠጣቅቹን፡ገድሉ፡አመለጠ፡ደግሞ፡
ተያዘ፡ንጉሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊሰደ፡መኳንንትን፡ሁሉ፡ሲቃውንትንም፡ዙሉ፡
ስብሰቦ፡ፍረጁ፡አለ፡ለጎሹ፡ብሩ፡ሞት፡ይገባዋል፡ብለው፡ፈረጁ፡ጎሹ፡ብሩ፡
እድጎ፡እግሬቸውንና፡ተቁርጠው፡ሞቱ፡ይት፡የጎሻም፡ደብተሮችም፡ተቁ
ርጠው፡ሞቱ።ንጉሥ፡ተክለ፡ጊዮርጊስም፡ወደ፡ወገሬ፡በሰኔ፡ዘመቱ።የደም
ሽያ፡

ደጀዝማች ፡ ገብሩ ፡ መድኅኔ ፡ ዓለም ፡ ይባል ፡ ነበረ ፡፡ ወደ ፡ ጎዳም ፡ ተለደ ፡ ሄደ ፡፡ የ
ተድላ ፡ ጊሉ ፡ ልጅ ፡ ደጃዝማች ፡ ደከታ ፡ ገጠመው ፡ ገብሩ ፡ መድኅኔ ፡ ዓለም ፡ ድል ፡ ሆነ ፡
በነፍጥም ፡ ሞተ ፡፡ ፯ንጉሥ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ጊዮርጊስ ፡ በመስከረም ፡ ወደ ፡ ጎጃም ፡ የተድላ ፡
ጊሉን ፡ ልጅ ፡ በመውጋት ፡ ዘመተ ፡ ዛሬም ፡ በጎጃም ፡ አለ ፡፡ ጎገደርም ፡ ዘንድሮ ፡ ፕ
ቂት ፡ ይሻላል ፡፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን ፡ ግን ፡ ከበዓታ ፡ በቀር ፡ የተሠራ ፡ የለም ፡፡ በዓታ
ን ፡ ከንቲባ ፡ ኀይሉ ፡ ሠሩዋት

ወሬ ፡ ዘደጃዝማች ፡ ከሳ ፡ አባ ፡ በዝብዝ ፡ ዘትግሬ ፡

አባ ፡ በዝብዝ ፡ ካሳ ፡ በአድዋ ፡ አለ ፡ ሥላሴ ፡ የሚባል ፡ ቤተ ፡ ክርስቲያን ፡ በአድዋ ፡ ሠራ ፡
ወልደ ፡ ቅብስ ፡ የማይል ፡ ስው ፡ ቤቱ ፡ ይበርበር ፡ አጁም ፡ ይታሠር ፡ ብሎ ፡ አዋጅ ፡
ነገረ ፡፡ የትግሬን ፡ ሁሉ ፡ መኳንንት ፡ ፩ ሳይቀር ፡ አሠራቸው ፡ ከንጉሥ ፡ ጋራም ፡ እዋጋ
ለሁ ፡ ይባል ፡፡ ወደ ፡ አስማኤል ፡ ባሻ ፡ የምስር ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ እርዳኝ ፡ ብሎ ፡ ልከዋል ፡ ጸ
ር ፡ ጻሩን ፡ ሁሉ ፡ አገር ፡ ሰኖቸሀለሁ ፡ ብሎታል ፡፡ የኤውሮፓን ፡ ስው ፡ ሁሉ ፡ አይወድም ፡
ግብጥ ፡ ብቻ ፡ ይወዳል ፡ አባ ፡ ተክለ ፡ አልቶ ፡ ወልድ ፡ ቅብሰ ፡ አልልም ፡ ብለው ፡ ታሥረዋል

የበጎስ ፡ ወሬ ፡

፪ አንግሊዘች ፡ ከበጎስ ፡ ወደ ፡ ባርያ ፡ ሄዱ ፡ አውሬ ፡ ሲያድኑ ፡ ሄዱ ፡፡ በመንገድ ፡ ባርያ ፡ ገደላ
ቸው ፡፡ ዘመዶቻቸው ፡ ብዙ ፡ ብር ፡ ሰላ ፡ በዝብዝ ፡ ካሳ ፡ ሰጡ ፡፡ ከባሕር ፡ ቱርክ ፡ አወጡ ፡
ከአባ ፡ በዝብዝም ፡ ጦር ፡ ተቀብለው ፡ ባርያን ፡ ፈጅ ፡ ብዙ ፡ ስው ፡ ገደሉ ፡፡

የኩንሉል ፡ ሙስንጅር ፡ ወሬ ፡

አቶ ፡ ሙስንጅር ፡ ከበጎስ ፡ ወደ ፡ ምጥዋ ፡ ሲሄዱ ፡ ፩ ነፍጠኛ ፡ ስው ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ የሚ
ባል ፡ በ ፪ አፍ ፡ ነፍጥ ፡ መታቸው ፡፡ ፩ ከርካርቸው ፡ ፪ ዓረር ፡ ገባ ፡ ከበቅሎዋቸ
ው ፡ ፪ ዓ ፪ ረር ፡ ገባ ፡ ነገር ፡ ግን ፡ በአግዚአብሔር ፡ ቸርነት ፡ አልሞቱሞ ፡ ጻኑ ፡
ዓረርም ፡ ወጣ ፡፡ ዮሐንስም ፡ ሲመታቸው ፡ በጹር ፡ ውስጥ ፡ ሀኖ ፡ ነው ፡ ኋላም
አመለጠ ፡፡ የአባ ፡ እምነቱ ፡ ወሬ ፡

አባ ፡ እምነቱ ፡ በጎስ ፡ ነበሩ ፡ ስዮሐንስ ፡ ዋጋ ፡ ሰኖተው ፡ በነፍጥ ፡ አስመቱኝ ፡ ስዚህ ፡
ምክር ፡ አስኝ ፡ ብለው ፡ ወደ ፡ ሐማሴን ፡ ወደ ፡ ደጃዝማች ፡ ወልደ ፡ ሚካኤል ፡፡ ጌታ ፡ ሙ
ስንጅር ፡ ሳኩ ፡፡ ወደ ፡ አባ ፡ በዝብዝም ፡ ሳኩ ፡፡ ደጃዝማች ፡ ወልደ ፡ ሚካኤል ፡ አባ ፡ እ
ምነቱን ፡ አሥረው ፡ ከበጎስ ፡ ወደ ፡ አድዋ ፡ ወሰዱ ፡፡ አባ ፡ በዝብዝ ፡ ካሳ ፡ ግን ፡ አባ ፡ እም
ነቱን ፡ ፈታ ፡፡ ደጃዝማች ፡ ወልደ ፡ ሚካኤልን ፡ አሠረ ፡፡ በፈረንሲስና ፡ በአባ ፡ በዝብ
ዝ ፡ መካከል ፡ ብዙ ፡ [illegible] ፡ ገባ ፡፡

ተጽሕፈ ፡ በሰገነይቲ ፡ አመ ፡ ፲ወ፪ለ ፡ ዓዳር ፡ አምልደተ ፡ አግዚአነ ፡ በ፲ወ፰ ፻ ፡
፰ወ፪ አመት ፡ በኀሳበ ፡ ኢትዮጵያ ፡፡

ወበኀሳበ ፡ ሳቲን ፡ በ፲ወ፰ ፻ ወ፸ ዓመት ፡

ይቤ ፡ ደብተራ ፡ አስጋስኝ ፡

፡ [illegible]

፬ዓይና ፡ ጎሹ ፡ ዘጎጃም ፡ ሞተ ፡

አቡነ ፡ ደልሞንቲና ፡ አቡነ ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ ኢስቴሳ ፡ በሕማም ፡ ሞቱ ፡ በበጎስ ፡፡

To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (*Gēta* Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye) of illustrious fame, full of wisdom and intelligence.

How have you been since we parted from each other? Convey my greetings to your wife, relatives, and all your children, so that they pray for me.

News about Shewa

At the time when the English killed Tēwodros, Minīlik, the king of Shewa, sent two emissaries to Aden and brought three Roman [Catholic] priests to Shewa. Of the three one is a bishop. I believe they are *Abune* Massaja (Masiyas) and *Abune* Taurin (Tewrīn). They say that that the king of Shewa likes them very much. Until now, however, they did not ordain [any priests]. Moreover, last year the king of Shewa defeated the ruler of Wello called Mestawat and destroyed Wello. He decreed that no debate about religion should take place. He has become very strong.

News about King Tekle Gīyorgīs Gobezē

Last year King Tekle Gīyorgīs marched into Yejju and destroyed it. In the month of Senē he went to Wadla. He appointed the son of Birru Alīgaz over Yejju. The sons of *Dejjazmach* Farīs had rebelled. They went to Yejju to fight the son of Birru Alīgaz. The son of Birru Alīgaz sent a message to King Tekle Gīyorgīs. And the second day after he had left Wadla, the king found them fighting with the son of Birru Alīgaz. He defeated them. Farīs Alī and Farīs Wereñña died, and Farīs Nigusē was captured after being pierced [by a lance]. Farīs Gwangul and Farīs Gubena escaped. Many notables died.

News about Goshu Birru

King Tekle Gīyorgīs had imprisoned Goshu Birru. But Goshu Birru escaped, having drugged and driven mad those shackled with him, and the soldiers guarding him. He was captured again and imprisoned, and once more he killed his guards with poison and escaped. Once more he was captured.

King Tekle Gīyorgīs gathered the noblemen and the learned people, and asked them to pass judgement. They pronounced that Goshu Birru deserved death. Goshu Birru died after his hands and feet had been cut off. Two *debtera* from Gojjam were also mutilated and died.

In Senē King Tekle Gīyorgīs marched to Wegera. The *dejjazmach* of Dembiya was called Gebru Medhanē Alem. He went into exile in Gojjam. The son of Tedla Gwalu, *Dejjazmach* Desta fought with him, and Gebru Medhanē Alem was defeated. He died from a rifle [shot]. In Meskerem, King Tekle Gīyorgīs went to Gojjam to fight the son of Tedla Gwalu. He is in Gojjam now. Gonder is a little better off this year.

As for churches, however, except Be'ata none were built. It was *Kentība* Haylu who built Be'ata.

News about *Dejjazmach* Kasa Abba Bezbiz of Tigray

Abba Bezbiz Kasa is in Adwa. He has built a church at Adwa called Sillasē. He issued a proclamation saying, "He who does not profess that the Son is anointed should have his house ransacked and his hands shackled." He has imprisoned all the nobles of Tigray, sparing not a single one. He says, "I am going to fight with the king." He has sent [a message] to Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), the king of Egypt, saying, "Help me." He told him that he has given him all the borderlands. He dislikes all Europeans. He likes only Egyptians.

Abba Tekle Alfa is imprisoned, because he refused to profess "the Son [is] Anointed (*weld qib*)".

News about Bogos

Two Englishmen went from Bogos to Barya. They went to hunt wild animals. On the way, the Barya killed them. Their relatives gave a lot of money to Abba Bezbiz Kasa. They brought Turks from the sea[coast] and received soldiers from Abba Bezbiz. They destroyed the Barya. They killed a lot of people.

News about Consul Munzinger (Musinjir)

When Mr. Munzinger was travelling from Bogos to Massawa a rifleman by the name of Yohannis shot him with a double-barrelled rifle. Four bullets hit him. Two bullets hit his mule. But by the mercy of God, he did not die. He has recovered. The bullets were taken out. Yohannis fired at him, [hiding] in a bush; then he escaped.

News about *Abba* Imnetu

Abba Imnetu was in Bogos. Master Munzinger sent [a message] to Hamasēn to *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl, saying, "He has given money to Yohannis to have me shot. I have witnesses for this." He also sent [a message] to Abba Bezbiz. *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl put *Abba* Imnetu in chains and took him from Bogos to Adwa. But Abba Bezbiz Kasa released *Abba* Imnetu. He imprisoned *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl. A serious quarrel arose between the French and Abba Bezbiz.

Written at Segeneytī on the 19th of Hidar in the year 1862 after the birth of Our Lord according to the Ethiopian calendar, and according to the Latin calendar in the year 1870.

So says *Debtera* Asseggaheñ.

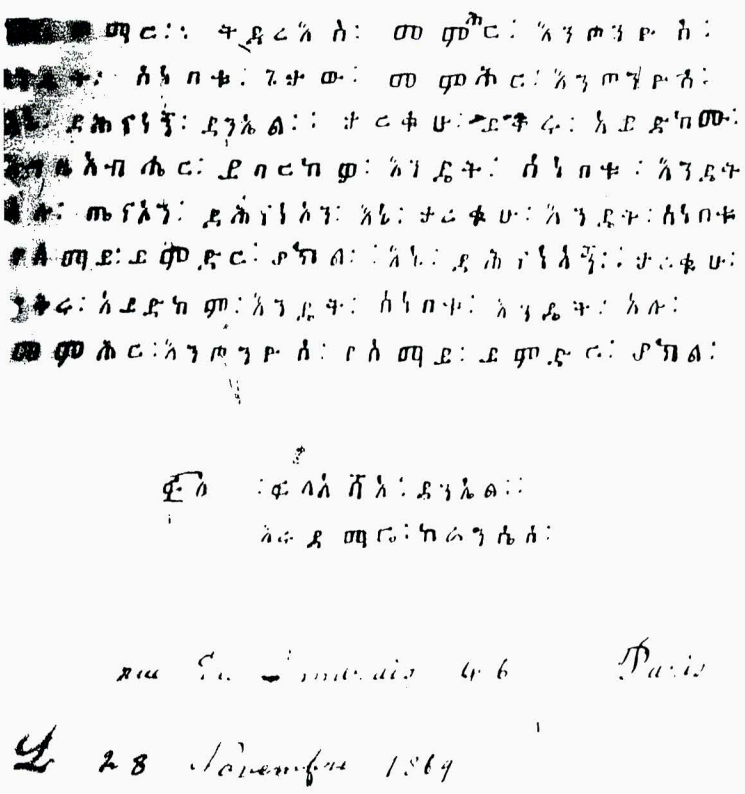
The distinguished scholar (*Arat Ayna*) Goshu of Gojjam has died. Father Delmonte (*Abune* Delmontē) and Father Giovanni Stella (*Abune* Yohannis Istēla) died of disease in Bogos.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 233–234, Amharic original. This letter is Conti Rossini's no. XI. Note that Asseggaheñ often refers to people by placing their father's name in front of their own, thus Goshu Birru for Birru Goshu and Farīs Alī, Farīs Wereñña etc. for the sons of Farīs. He also uses the unusual spellings Minbīlik and Mestayat.

The news about Bogos refers to the punitive expedition against the Kunama who had killed the elephant hunter Thomas Powell and his companions (see no. 17). As for the assassination attempt against Munzinger, Asseggaheñ was apparently more certain about the guilt of *Abba* Imnetu than *Dejjazmach* Kasa was.

Document no. 25

Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 28 Nov. 1869



May this letter reach *Memhir* Antoine (Inṭoniyos).

How have you been, *Gētaw Memhir* Antoine? I, Danēl, am well. I am reconciled. Do not come, do not trouble yourself. God bless you. How have you been? How are you, your health and your well-being?

I am reconciled. How have you been to the extent of heaven and earth? I am well. I am reconciled. Do not come, do not trouble yourself. How have you been? How are you, *Memhir* Antoine, to the extent of heaven and earth?

Danēl the Felasha.

Rue des Marais (Iru Demarē) in France.

Rue des Marais 46, Paris.

28 November 1869.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 181, Amharic original. The address is repeated in French and the date is given in the same language.

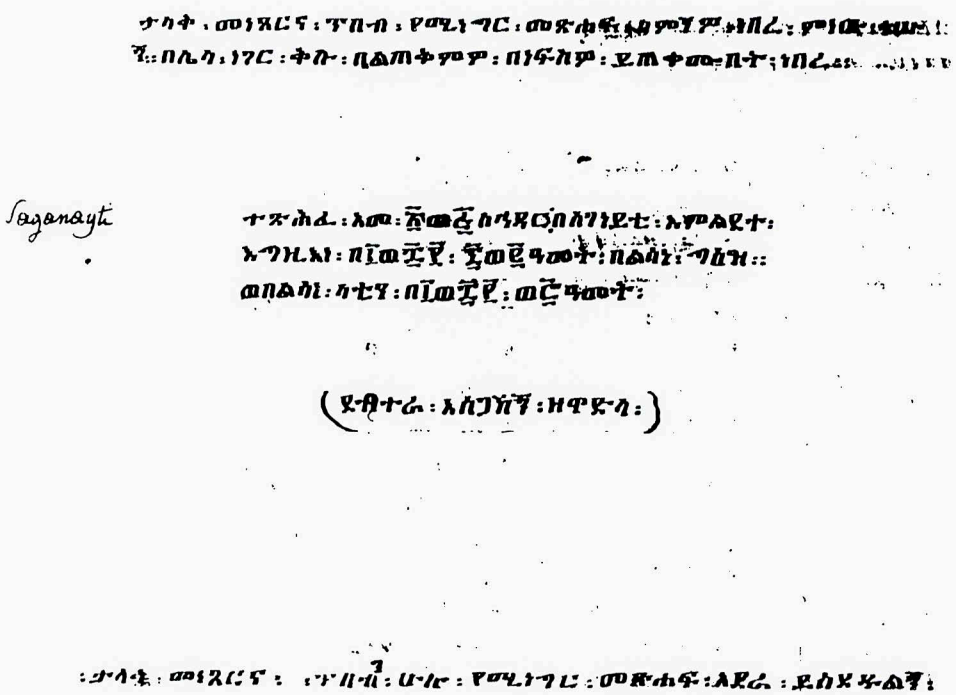
Document no. 26

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 3 Dec. 1869

ሳበ፡ ጌታ፡ አፃሶንዮስ፡ ዘጀ፲ አበዲየ፡ ዘደሙበመሙ፡ አውስአር[illegible]በብ፡ ስሲቃሙን
ት፡

አጅጉን፡ አንዲት፡ አሙ፡ ከተስየነ፡ ጀምሮ። አምነ፡ ወደኔ፡ የስደዱት፡ ወረቀት፡ ም
ሳሹ፡ አንዲዘ፡ ነው።፡ የቺነኛ፡ ደባሳል፡ አንጅ፡ የነጣር፡ አደባልጧ።፡ እንደ፡ አንቂሳል፡ያ
ለ፡ ደፃሪያ፡ በወስጡም፡ ብዙ፡ እነደ፡ ብርጭቆ፡ የጠራ፡ መልኩም፡ ፲ማዘን፡ የሆነ፡
መጽ፲ቱም፡ አንደ፡ ብረት፡ የሆነ፡ ታናናሽ፡ ደፃሪያ፡ ተገኘ።፡ በፊት፡ እንደ፡ ስጎን፡ አንቂሳ
ል፡ ነበረ።፡ በጣድ፡ ብስብረው፡ ግን፡ ፲በውስጡ፡ ያሉቱ፡ ከዋዝብት፡ ደመስሳሉ፡
እጅግ፡ አደነቅሁ።፡ ኋሳም፡ ስአቡነ፡ ፊልክስዮስ፡ ዘካጡቺኒ፡ አሳየኋቸው፡ ወፍ
ራም፡ መነሄር፡ ቀደዱብት።፡ ዲየማዝት፡ ወደም፡ ፈርመደ፡ ነው፡ አሉኝ።፡ እነደ፡
ሽምብራ፡ ያሉ፡ ፲ደንጊያ፡ ሰጠኋቸው።፡ ባገራችን፡ በአ፲ሮፓ፡ ደወደዳል፡ ዋጋ
ውም፡ ብዙ፡ አሉኝ።፡ ስለዚህ፡ እርስዎን፡ እምንዋስሁኮ፡ እውነተኛ፡ ስሙን፡ ደ
ነገራኛል፡ ብየ፡ ዋጋም፡ ቢገኝበት፡ ይስጡኛል፡ ብየ፡ ወደርሶ፡ ፲በኩንስል፡ መ
ስጊር፡ አጅ፡ ሰደድሁት።፡ እኛደዘህ፡ያስ፡ ደኋጊያ፡ ብዙ፡ አስኝ።፡ ወደርስዎ፡ የሰደ
ድሀቱ፡ ታናሽ፡ ነው።፡ ዱብ ፻ም፡ የማጊያህ፡ ደንጊያ፡ ደገኛል።፡ ከኩንስል፡ ሙስጊ
ጊር፡ ደቀበሉ፡ እምኮ፡ የስደድሁትኝ፡ ደንጊያ።፡ የ፻ጊያ፡ ነስልም፡ ወደ፡ እስት፡
ባገሀው፡ ነዩ ሂ።፡ ባሄፍንበት፡ ም፡ እሳት፡ ፲ሳ፲ት፡ አሳደረ።፡ አመጻም፡ ነፍሮ፡ ሆነ።፡
ደሸዋ፡ ነንሥ፡ ስሠው፡ ምንዚልክ፡ ነው፡ ምንደልክ፡ አደ፲ሰም።፡ ፡ቴዎድሮስ፡
በጅ፡ ነፍጠኛ፡ ተኩሶ፡ ስውነቱን፡ ገደስ፡ ወደቀ።፡ እንግሊዞች፡ ስስል፡ መሳል፡ የ
ማደውቅ፡ ሰው፡ አመጡ።፡ ቴዎድሮስ፡ ወድቆ፡ ሳለ፡ አስመስሎ፡ ሳለው።፡ የስስ
ሉ፡ መልክና፡ የሬሳው፡ መልክ፡ ፲ሆነ።፡ ደንዛ፡ ማለት፡ እጅግ፡ ረጅም፡ ሾተል፡
ነው፡ ድንኳኑ፡ ፲ው፡ ውሳጋው፡ በብር፡ የተሸለመ፡ ነው።፡ ቸፍፍ፡ ማለት፡ ወርቅ
ና፡ ብር፡ የመኳንንት፡ ሽልማት፡ ነው፡ ከጃቸው።፡ ያገኙታል።፡ [illegible]ፍፍፋ።፡
ደብረ፡ ዘረበሬ፡ አምባሽነጀቲ፡ በሚባለ፡ አገር፡ ነው፡ ገደሉም፡ [illegible]ጠርሱ፡ አሰ።፡
ስአዘ፡ ተክለ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ፫ብር፡ ከኩንስል፡ እንዲቀበሉ፡ እጽፋለሁ፡ ብለው፡ ነበረ፡
ለስነ፡ ዛሬ፡ አልተቀበሉም።፡ የእነሱም፡ መጻልያና፡ ፪ብለእክሉም፡ የተቀረጸ፡
ታቦት፡ አገዚር፡ ቢረዳኝ፡ አፈልጋስሁ።፡ ትራ፡ ነው።፡ጠራ፡ አደ፲ለም።፡ ፈል
ግልኛ፡ ነው።፡ ፍልግልኝ፡ ማለት፡ አማርኛ፡ እደ፲ለም።፡ ስደ ድልኛ፡ ነው።፡ እንጅ፡ስ
ደ ደልኝ፡ አደ፲ሰም።፡ መጻልያ፡ ስስል፡ ያለበት፡ ፐጽሐፍ፡ ደረስልኝ።፡
ሃሰስድና፡ ባርቶስ፡ ልሳነ፡ ሰብእ፡ የማጪው፡ መጻሕፍት፡ ስድ ደለሁ፡ ከኩንስል፡ ደ
ቀበሉ።፡

Dabra bärbäre ena Imba sänaṭē.



To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye) who gives wise replies to scholars.

How have you been, really, from the time we parted? The answer to the letter you sent me last year is as follows: It is called *yeneja* and not *yenezha*. People have found a stone like and egg with many small square-shaped stones inside, resembling very clear glass and as hard as iron. Before it was like the egg of an ostrich. When I broke it open by force, however, the stones inside looked liked stars. I was very surprised. Later I showed it to Father Felicissimo (*Abune* Fīliksiyus) of the Capuchins. He slit a thick eye-glass with it. He told me that it is either a diamond or a *fwērmey*(?). I gave him four stones that look like chickpeas. He told me that they are precious in his country in Europe and that their value is high.

Because I trust you, I am sending them by the hands of Consul Munzinger (Musingīr) so that you will tell me their real name and give me the payment if they are valuable. I have many stones like these. What I have sent you is [just] a little. There is another stone which is as big as a pumpkin. Get the stone I sent you last year from Consul Munzinger. When I put the pit coal into the fire, it burned. I choked it. The next morning it was still glowing, and its ashes became white.

The name of the king of Shewa is "Minbīlik" and not "Minyilik". Firing his gun with his [own] hand, Tēwodros killed himself and fell. The English brought a man who can draw pictures. While Tēwodros was still lying [there], he sketched him faithfully. The image in the drawing and that of the dead body became identical. *Fenzo* means a very long, curved sword (*shotel*). The sheath (*digwis*), handle (*wilaga*) and metal cap (*lomīta*) are decorated with silver. *Ċhufa* means [armlet of] gold and silver. It is a decoration for noblemen, and they wear it around their arms. Debre Berberrē is in the district called Amba Sineytī. The hagiography [of the founder] is there.

You said that you would write to the consul that *Abba* Tekle Mīka'ēl should receive five thalers. So far he has not received [them]. If God helps me, I shall search for Aksumite medals and for altars (*tabot*) carved at Aksum.

ሲሉሞን፡ [illegible]
ምሂይልሕክ፡
ተማይ፡
ዘግዱር፡
አክሉማይ፡
እውሲባስዮ፡
ተሐዋስያ፡
አብሌልዩስ፡
ወረደ፡ፀሐይ፡
ሐንዶር፡
ወረደ፡ነጋሽ፡
አውሲያ፡
ኤሳልዮን፡
ቶማጽዮን፡
ባስዮ፡
አውኖፕ፡
ዘዋፈ፡ንብረት፡
ሰይተይ፡
ረምሐይ፡ ባዕ፡ ግርሽ
ሐንዴ፡
ሰፌልያ፡
አልግቡል፡
በዋውል፡
በወሪስ፡
መሐሌ፡
ናልኩ፡
ባዜን፡
ጽንፈ፡ዓርዓድ፡
ባሕር፡አስገድ፡
ግርማሶር፡

ግርማ፡ስፈር፡
ሰርጋይ፡
ዘርአይ፡
ሰብአ፡አስገድ፡
ጽዮን፡ግዛ፡
አግዱር፡
ሲይፈ፡አርዓድ
አብርሃ፡ወአጽብሐ፡
አስፍ[illegible]፡
አርፍድ፡
አርምሲ፡
አልዓዶባ፡
አልዓሚዳ፡
ታዜና፡
ካሌብ፡
ገብረ፡መስቀል፡
ቁስጠንጢኖስ፡
ወሲን፡ስገድ፡
ፍፈሬ፡ሠናይ፡
አድርዓዝ፡
አክሰ፡ውድም፡
ግርማ፡ሲፈር፡
ድርጋዝ፡
ድንግልና፡ሚካኤል፡
ባሕር፡ይክሳ፡
ጉም፡
አስጉምጉም፡
ትልም፡
ተሳተም፡
ፖደ፡ጎሽ፡

አደዙር፡
ድድም፡
ውድድም፡
ውድም፡አስፈሬ፡
አርማሳ፡
ድግንዝን፡
ግድዓዝን፡
አንበሳ፡ውድም
ድልነዓድ፡
ማኅበረ፡ውድም፡
አግብአ፡ጽዮን፡
ጽንፈ፡አርስድ፡
ነጋሽ፡ዛሬ፡
አስፍሕ፡
ያስቆብ፡
ባሕር፡አስገድ፡
አድም፡አስገድ፡
ይኩኖ፡አምሳክ፡
ውድም፡ረዓድ፡
ቀድመ፡አስገድ፡
ሕዝበ፡አስገድ
ጽንፈ፡አርዓድ፡
ባሕር፡አስገድ፡
ያግብአ፡ጽዮን፡
አምደ፡ጽዮን፡፡

ይህ፡ሃኒገሥታት፡ስምና፡ተራ፡በገድ
ሰ፡ተክለ፡ሃይማኖት፡ይገኛል፡እውነተ
ኛ፡ስምና፡ተራ፡ይህ፡ነው፡

It is *tera* and not *ṭera*. It is *felligilliñ*; *filligilleñ* is not Amharic. It is *sidedilliñ,* and not *sididelliñ.* I received the book with the pictures of medals. I have sent the books called *Mi'ilad, Bartos* and *Lisane Seb*. Get them from the consul. I have asked for binoculars and a book which teaches (lit. tells) wisdom. Why have you refused [to give them to] me? Even if I am not of any use to you in any other way, it could benefit your soul.

Written on the 25th of Hidar, at Segeneytī, in the year 1862 after the birth of Our Lord according to the Ethiopian calendar (*lisane Gi'iz*) and in 1870 according to the European calendar (*lisane Latīn*).

Debtera Asseggaheñ of Wadla.

Please send me the binoculars and the book which teaches (lit. tells) all wisdom.

Selomon
Minyilhik
Temay
Zegdur
Aksumay
Awsibasiyo
Tehawasiya
Abfeliyus
Werede Ṣehay
Handor
Werede Negash
Awsiya
Elaliyon
Tomaṣiyon
Basiyo
Awṭiṭ
Hewarī Nibret
Seyfay
Remhay (with a coin)
Handē
Sofeliya
Algibul
Bewawil
Bewerīs
Mehasē
Nalku
Bazēn
Ṣinfe Arad
Bahr Asged
Girmasor
Girma Sefer
Sergway
Zeray
Seba Asged
Ṣiyon Giza
Agdur
Seyfe Arad
Abriha we-Aṣibiha
Asfih
Arfid
Amsī
Aladoba
Alamīda
Tazēna
Kaleb
Gebre Mesqel
Qosṭenṭīnos
Wesen Segged
Ferē Sennay
Adiraz
Akle Widim
Girma Sefer
Dirgaz
Dingilinna Mīka'ēl
Bahr Yikla
Gum
Asgwemgum
Tilm
Telatem
Ode Gosh
Ayzur
Didim
Wididim
Widim Asferē
Armah
Dignizhen
Gidazhen
Anbesa Widim
Dilne'ad
Mahbere Widim
Agba Ṣiyon
Ṣinfe Arid
Negash Zarē
Asfiha
Ya'iqob
Bahr Asged
Idim Asged
Yikunno Amlak
Widim Re'ad
Qidme Asged
Hizbe Asged
Ṣinfe Arad
Bahr Asged
Yagba Ṣiyon
Amde Ṣiyon

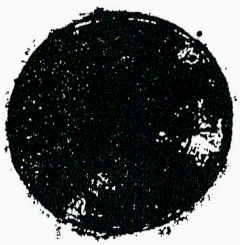
This list of names of kings is found in *Gedle Tekle Haymanot*. These are the true names and order.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 231–32, Amharic original. This letter with its notes on the Amharic language and its list of Ethiopian rulers shows that Antoine d'Abbadie continued to rely on Asseggaheñ for information. It is not included in Conti Rossini's publication.

The word *gedel* (cliff) is in all probability an error. We have read it as *gedil* (hagiography), which makes more sense. The names in the list of kings have all been transliterated with the spellings of Asseggaheñ's text.

Document no. 27

Kasa Mirẓa to Werner Munzinger, 2 Jan. 1870



May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. I have sent those people whom you had sent to me, according to the instructions (lit. words) of the letter, so that they may give evidence against each other. I have also imprisoned *Abba* Imnetu, for the harm to you is also harm to me. I am glad that God saved you.

The English, Mr. Powell (Mester Pawil) and Mr. Jackson (Mester Jegsen), came to me [as you wrote] in your letter. I received them, complied with their wishes, and after making them happy I sent them off.

When they left, they told me that they would send me a gift that would make me happy. And now I have heard that it has reached Massawa. Since my property is also your property, take charge of it and send me a letter at once, and I shall send a man who will bring it to me. Since you are my friend and confidant, may I not be deprived of letters from abroad. May God enable us to see each other eye to eye (lit. with the eyes of the flesh). Amen.

Written in Tahsas, on the 24th day.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 4, Amharic original. The Mr. Powell mentioned in this letter was the brother of Thomas Powell, who had been killed in Kunama with his wife and companions in April 1869. He had come to avenge the death of his brother, and promised Kasa presents for his assistance in doing so (see no. 17).

Document no. 28

Laqīyayē to Alemayyehu Tēwodros, 12 Jan. 1870

ይህ፡ቃል፡ይድረስ፡ከዲጃዝማች፡ዓለማየሁ፡፡

የተሳከ፡ከወይዘሮ፡ሳቃየ፡ከቴየ፡ጥሩነሽ፡እናት፡
እኔም፡ያለሁ፡ከናትህ፡አገር፡ከዲጃዝማቹ፡ውቤ፡ደብር፡ነው፡፡
ልጂ፡ወዳጂ፡እጅጉን፡እንዴት፡አለህ፡
ከተለያየነ፡ጀምሮ፡እስከ፡ዛሬ፡ድረስ፡
ምነው፡ወረቀት፡አትሰድልኝ፡በኋዘን፡በልቅሶ፡ስሞት፡
አሳንት፡በቀር፡ሌላ፡ልጅ፡ሌላ፡ተስፋ፡የለኝም፡፡
አሁንም፡ተሎ፡ወረቀት፡ስዲድልኝ፡
መልክህን፡በሥዕል፡አድርጊህ፡ዘወትር፡እንዳየው፡፡
ክርስቶስ፡ለመገናኘት፡ያብቃን፡አሜን፡፡

ከንግሊዚቱ፡ንግሥት፡ከመስኮብ፡ንጉሥ፡ከፈረንሳዊ፡ንጉሥ፡
ከነገሥታቱ፡ሁሉ፡ወዳጅ፡ሁን፡ወረቀት፡ሳክ፡
የሀበሻ፡ሰው፡ሁሉ፡አንተን፡ይጠብቃል፡ይመኛል፡ብልህ፡ሁን፡
ለሀበሻ፡ሰው፡ዓይን፡አውጣለት፡ሰውር፡ሁኗል፡
ጥበብ፡አውጣለት፡እንዲህ፡ሰውር፡አንደሆነ፡አይቅር፡፡

በዘመነ፡ዮሐንስ፡በጥር፡በ[illegible]ቀን፡ተጻፈ፡

አዛዥ፡ወልደ፡ሚካኤል፡፡አለቃ፡ወልደ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡፡አለቃ፡አፈ፡ወ
ርቅ፡እጅጉን፡እጅጉን፡የሰማይ፡የምድሩን፡ያህል፡እንዴት፡ነ
ዎ፡እንኳ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ማረልነ፡ፊ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ለመገናኘት፡
ያብቃነ፡ይላሉ፡፡ ፡፡ ፡፡

May this message (lit. word) sent by *Weyzero* Laqīyayē, by the mother of *Itēyye* Ṭirunesh, reach *Dejjazmach* Alemayyehu.

It is in the land of your mother, in the church (*debr*) of *Dejjazmach* Wibē, that I am [staying].

My son, my beloved, how have you been, really, from [the time] when we parted from each other up to now? Why do you not send me a letter, when I am dying from grief and mourning? I have no other son, no other hope but you. And now, send me a letter at once, enclosing your picture (lit. putting your face on a picture), so that I may look at it all the time. May Christ enable us to meet. Amen.

Make friends with the English queen, with the Russian king (*Meskob nigus*), with the French king, with all the kings. Send letters [to them]. All the people of Abyssinia wait [and] long for you. Be clever. Open the eyes (lit. produce eyes) for the people of Abyssinia. They have become blind. Produce wisdom for them so that they do not remain blind like this.

Written in the year of John, on the 4th day of Ṭirr.

Azzazh Welde Mīka'ēl, *Aleqa* Welde Gīyorgīs [and] *Aleqa* Afe Werq say, "How are you, really, really, to the extent of heaven and earth? We are happy that God saved you for us. May God enable us to meet."

T 1/7217, file no. 15005 (papers regarding Alemayyehu), Amharic original; published in *Letters from Ethiopian Rulers (Early and Mid-nineteenth Century)* by Appleyard, Irvine and Pankhurst, Oxford, 1985, pp. 154–156, no. XXIX.

The writer of this letter and the following was *Dejjazmach* Wibē's widow, mother of Ṭirunesh or, as she was more often called, Ṭiruwerq, and grandmother of Tēwodros's son Alemayyehu, whom the British had taken to England to be educated there. In a letter to Queen Victoria (no. 29) the writer is called Laqīyayē. The form Laqaye is probably used as a dialectal variant as is *itēyye* for *itēgē*.

The letter was sent to the school at Cheltenham, where Alemayyehu studied, but was returned, because there was no one there who could read it (FO 1/29, fol. 300). Eventually it ended up in the files of the Treasury, with other papers dealing with Alemayyehu.

Document no. 29

Laqīyayē to Victoria [Jan. 1870]



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May [the letter] sent by *Weyzero* Laqīyayē, the mother of *Itēgē* Ṭiru Werq, the grandmother of *Dejjazmach* Alemayyehu, reach the English queen. [You] reader, bow on my behalf.

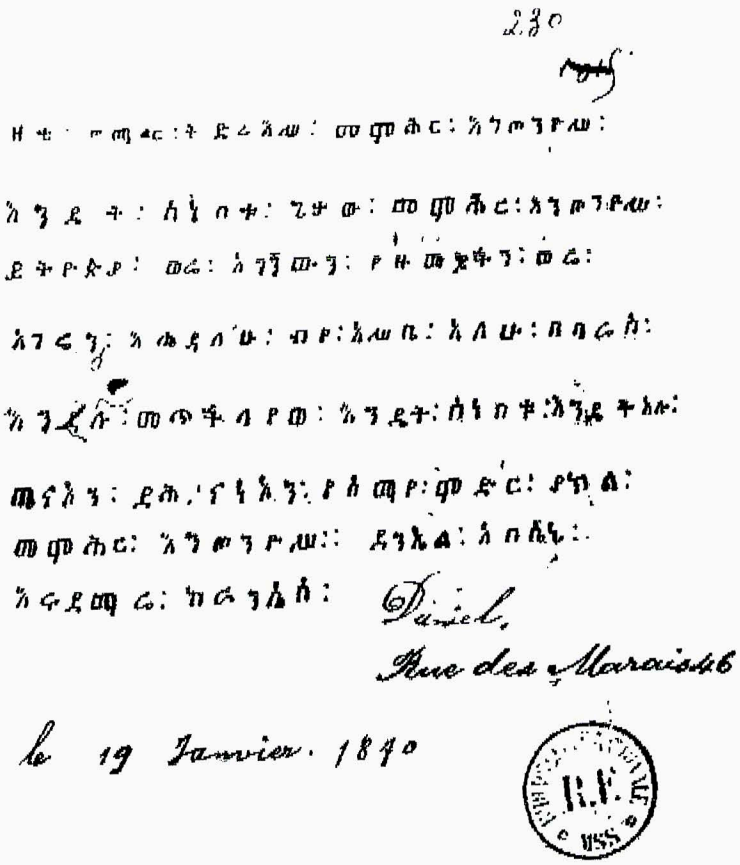
May the Saviour of the world give [you] health. May He extend your kingdom. May He destroy your enemies. I have lost by death three *dejjazmaches,* the fourth [loss being] the *itēgē.*

Only *Dejjazmach* Alemayyehu is left to me. Please look after him for me. Although God deprived him of his father [and] his mother, He gave him you [instead]. As long as I do not see him, I count myself, too, among the dead. He calls you his mother, but he does not call me his mother, since I did not raise him. Please bring him up for the sake of God.

IOR, L/P&S/9/205, Political and Secret Department Records: Abyssinia Original Correspondence, vol. 3, p. 739, Amharic original; pp. 737–738, English translation by Munzinger, dated Aden 13 June. Laqīyayē was most probably referring to three sons who had died before she ultimately lost her daughter.

Document no. 30

Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 19 Jan. 1870



May this letter reach *Memhir* Antoine (Inṭoniyos). How have you been, *Gētaw Memhir* Antoine?

Have you received news about Ethiopia, news about my relatives? I am thinking of going to my country. May I come and see you, if you are in Paris?

How have you been? How are you? Is your health good, *Memhir* Antoine, to the extent of heaven and earth?

Danēl the Abyssinian.
Rue des Marais (Irudemarē) in France.

Daniel, Rue des Marais 46.

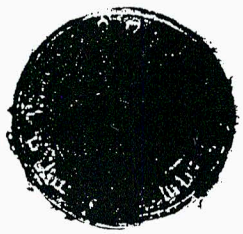
19 January 1870.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 230, Amharic original. This is the third letter from Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie. Note that Danēl now signs himself "the Abyssinian" instead of "the Felasha" (see no. 25). Whether he made it back to Ethiopia or not is unknown.

Document no. 31

Kasa Mirẓa to Werner Munzinger, 19 Jan. 1870

ጠመልእክት፡ዘይ ጅኡ ጣዛማች ፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መ
ኳንጓት፡ጰሠያመ፡እብዚአዝሐር፡ዘብሐረ፡አ
ክሱም፡ይዩ ረስ፡ብሉጓስ፡ጸመጓስ ጀር ። እን
ዴት፡ሰንበቱ፡እጅጉን፡እብዙአዝለረ፡ይሰላ
ምክክሮቹጓ፡ጠላጭቹ፡ናቸው፡በሀሰት፡እን
ደመስክሩብኝ፡ልጥራ፡አሉ፡በጠላት፡ምስክ
ራቸው፡ጨት፡እይሰኝ፡አሉ፡በዚህ፡ሒወጠ
በ ት፡ብለው፡መኳንንቱ ፡ራ ረ ይ ፡በዚህ፡ቀ
ስ ፡እ ዉ ሰ ው፡ትራቅትቀል፡እኔ ም፡ጌ ጣሪ ን
ል መ ጠ፡ትንስ ቹ፡እለ ሁ ፡ የ ዝ ያ ን ፡ ጊ ዜ ፡ እ ግ ዥ
መ ቀ ስ ሁ ። ጠ ላ ት ም ጣ ም፡ ሸ ራ ፍ ፡እ ለ ፡ ሰ ም ቹ ፡ ል
ሁ ፡ እ ስ ራ ል ጣ ቀ ስ ሁ ፡



ተሀድሓፈ፡በጓ፡ቢ፲፫ቀን

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been, really? May God give you [a speedy] recovery. He said, "The witnesses are my enemies. Let me call [other witnesses to prove] that they have testified falsely against me. The judge will not sentence me to death on the evidence of enemies."

On the basis of this, the notables passed judgement, saying, "Enough, he is to be released." On the basis of this he named a guarantor, and was released.

I am about to come to Hamasēn. Then I will confront your enemy, who I have heard is in Serayē. I shall search for him (lit. have him searched for).

Written on the 12th day of Ṭirr.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 5, Amharic original. See no. 23 above. Munzinger reported the attempt on his life to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 January 1870. The accused, *Abba* Imnetu, is not mentioned by name. Apparently he succeeded in defending himself in this first trial against the accusation that he was involved in the assassination attempt on Munzinger. The person referred to as "your enemy" is most probably the man who fired the shots against Munzinger, a certain Yohannis.

Document no. 32

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Hormuzd Rassam, 24 Jan. [1870]

In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost – one God –.

From Takla Georgis King of Kings of Ethiopia –

May this reach my friend Commander Rassam. How are you, very much how are you? Thank God I am well.

When you were at Magdala I assisted you to the best of my power; and when [Sir Robert] Napier came [to Abyssinia] I gave him my uncle as a guide. I rendered them [the British troops] every needful help. I even offered to join you [the British] in fighting, but I was refused. After this I had to go to fight against a rebel at Baigamader, and after I had accomplished my desire I resolved to meet Napier, but I heard on the way that he had already left Indarta on his way back to England. When I found that it was quite impossible to overtake him I remained where I was to settle the affairs of my country.

I have now to give you good tidings –, and that is, I have gained a great victory over Godjam and made its people pay me tribute. I have killed Faris Ali in Yadjo as the Wolloo Gallas were paying tribute to Shoa.

Now hear and behold all you my friends this my complaint against Dajaj Kasa! His father was a domestic of my father, and he himself was my servant, and now he refuses to obey me and pay me tribute. I have now, by the power of God, turned my face towards Tigree. When I am there I shall write to you a friendly letter.

The rest you will hear from Aito Samuel.

Written in Godjam January 24th [1870] Thursday

IOR, L/P&S/9/205, Political and Secret Department Records: Abyssinia Original Correspondence, vol. 3, pp. 767–768, English translation by J.M. Flad. The letter was forwarded to Rassam, who sent a translation to the Secretary of State for India (pp. 765–766) but most probably kept the original himself. It is not found in the Rassam Papers

This letter is reproduced with the orthography, including misspellings, and punctuation of Flad's translation.

Document no. 33

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Robert Napier, [24 Jan.?] 1870

In the name of the Trinity

In the name of the Son of God: the Life, not the life of the Holy One; but the witness of the Holy One!

From Teckla Georgis King of Kings of Ethiopia

May this reach Sir Robert Napier Commander in Chief

Salutations to you, oh! friend! May calamity never reach you! Right glad was I on hearing of your safe arrival in your own land When you were in my Country, I sent my uncle Dejatch Máshásha to you, to assist in every way – even in battle; but you would not accept his services, and thus my heart's desire was not accomplished

Two years have passed since then, and I have done much

On your return I wished greatly to see you and your Army (as you were passing Enderta), but unfortunately news reached me that my uncle had been made prisoner by Faris Ali whom he had gone to reduce in the Yedjow country. So I attacked without delay, and laid siege to his stronghold I killed my Enemy and freed my uncle

I brought Yedjow into subjection: also Wallo and Shoa. I went to Gojam and subdued that Province also

Oh! friend judge between me and Dejatch Kassa: his father was tributary to my father, and he himself has sworn allegiance to me; but he has estranged himself.

My face is turned towards Tigre, and, God willing, I will soon settle it

Now, with regard to my not writing to you until now, that Kassa has blocked up the road; but as soon as I arrange matters there, you shall hear from me

Written in Gojam (about 10th February 1870)

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation, fols 93–94. English translation or paraphrase of a letter reportedly written in Arabic. The letter was sent to Captain Charles Speedy for translation (fol. 90). It can be assumed that it was written or at least dispatched together with no. 32 to Hormuzd Rassam.

This letter is reproduced with the orthography, including misspellings, and punctuation (or rather lack of punctuation) of the preserved English text.

Document no. 34

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Hormuzd Rassam [Jan. 1870]

This letter is from Aito Samuel. May it reach my friend and master Commander Rassam. How are you? Are you well? Since we parted I have been well – thank God.

Dajaj Kasa has treated me badly and has annoyed me very much. I am now in the desert. He never fulfilled the request of the English but behaved badly. All the chiefs who were liberated at Magdala by the English excepting Dajaj Araya, he has put in chains. When I saw this I left him.

I had sent Dabaj (a private messenger) with a letter to the Emperor Takla Georgis to which he sent me an answer by his own servant. He wants me to come to you and ask you to bring his case before the Queen and the Government of India and I should take back the answer. He says that "the English had always shown a great friendship and christian feeling to Abyssinian Kings and chiefs, but the late King Theodore did not like them. He went against their will and did that which is not right whereby he disgraced the name of a King. The great Queen consequently was wroth and punished him. I now seek for your friendship. If one behaves badly you ought not to be vexed with all. For the ill you had to suffer from Theodore I am willing to repay by guaranteeing to you a sincere friendship. I am willing to do what you require in my dominions, and let commerce be opened between our respective countries."– Your merchants can come to my country, and my merchants may go to yours". This is what the King says. He asked me to come myself to you and take him back an answer. Although I am longing to see the light of your countenance again I do not think it advisable for me to come without having first obtained your kind permission. I am therefore sending my brother Ibraheem and I shall await your instructions.

The King is truly anxious to cultivate your friendship. You know as much as I how much he assisted us while we were at Magdala. He is a most true and sincere man. If you can manage to obtain for him the friendship of your Government I trust that you will do it. If not, send me word too.

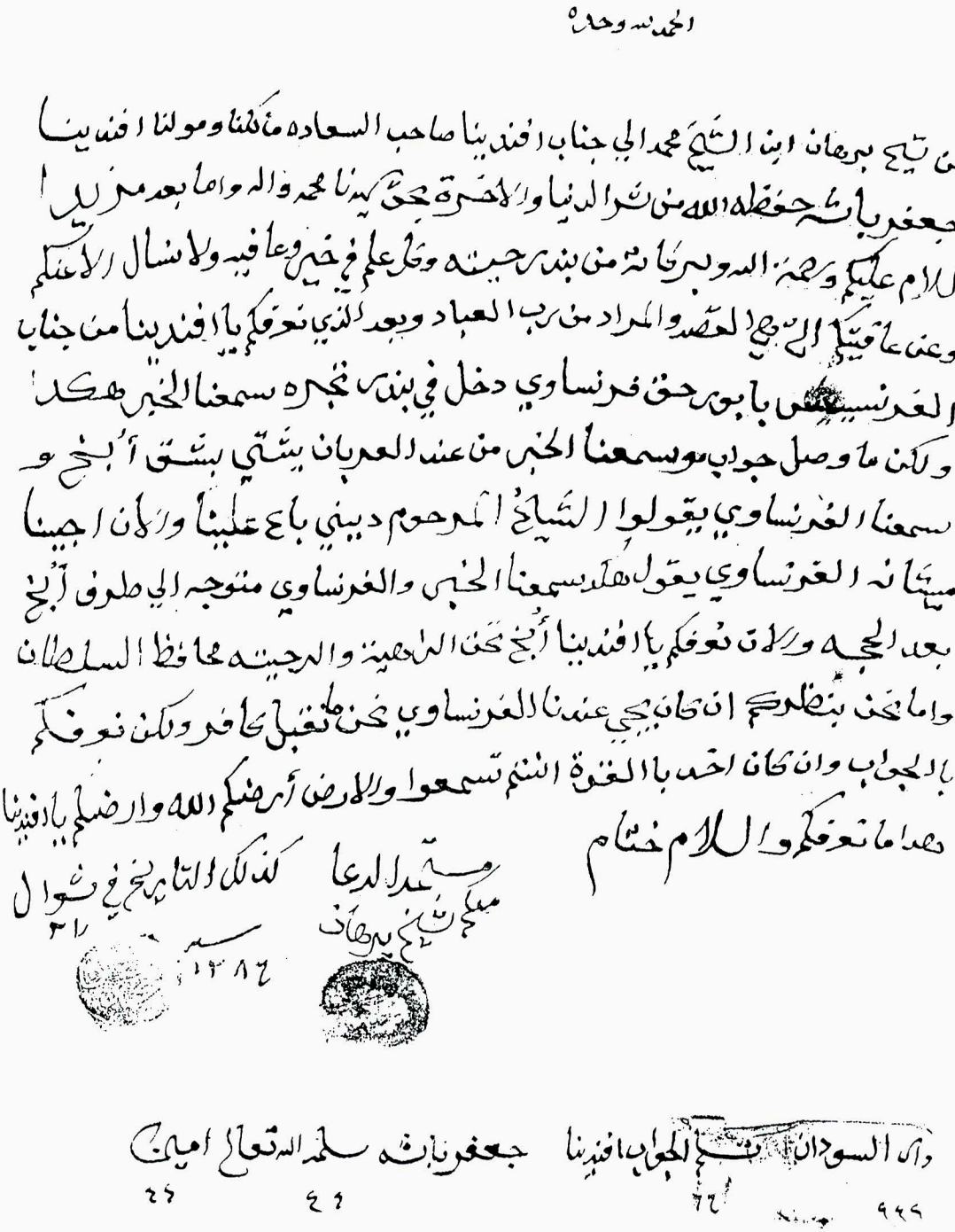
IOR, L/P&S/9/205, Political and Secret Department Records: Abyssinia Original Correspondence, vol. 3, pp. 768–770, English translation by J.M. Flad. The Amharic original has not been found.

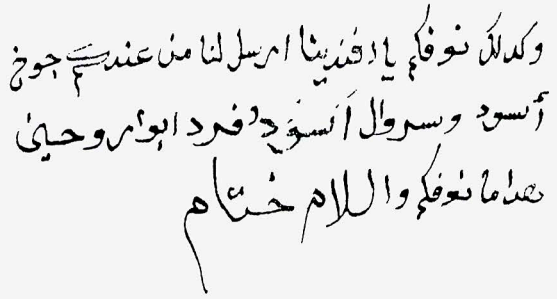
Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs, a son of Alī Umar (ACTA I, nos. 25–26) and also known as Husayn Alī, had been baptized by Samuel Gobat some forty years before this letter was written. For his earlier contacts with Europeans, see ACTA I, nos. 34, 41, and II, nos. 3, 16, 38n, 154, 156, 162, 171, 248. In the last of these documents Asseggaheñ reports that Samu'ēl was recommended to *Dejjazmach* Kasa by the British and that he received a governorship, probably the whole of Akkele Guzay. When Kasa Golja contested Kasa Mirċha's claims to Hamasēn, Samu'ēl reportedly sided with the former (AECP, Égypte 49, fols 427–438) and ultimately shared in his defeat. Then he apparently decided to support Tekle Gīyorgīs in his struggle with *Dejjazmach* Kasa for the supreme position. See ACTA II, no. 248, for Asseggaheñ's opinion about Samu'ēl's position at the time of the British departure.

This letter is reproduced with the orthography, including misspellings, and punctuation of Flad's translation.

Document no. 35

Burhān Muḥammad to Ja'far Maẓhar, 24 Jan. 1870





Praise be to God alone.

From *Shaykh* Burhān, son of *Shaykh* Muḥammad, to His Excellency, our *effendi,* the possessor of happiness, our ruler and our lord, our *effendi* Ja'far *Pasha.* May God preserve him from the evil of this world and the hereafter by the truth of our master Muḥammad and his God.

After abundant greetings and blessings from the port of Rahīta as well as everything about [our] situation and health—we do not ask about anything except you and your well-being, which is the aim and will of the Lord of the faithful—after this, what we want to tell you, our *effendi,* about the French is that the steamer of the French entered the port of Tajura. We heard this news, but no letter arrived. We heard the news from the bedouins who winter outside Obok. We heard that the French say, "The late *Shaykh* Dīnī sold to us". Now we reply, "What business of the French is it to say this?"

We heard the news, and after the pilgrimage the French turned towards Obok. But we tell you, our *effendi*, that Obok is under al-Rāhīya(?), and Rahīta belongs to the *sulṭān.* As for us in regard to you, if the French come to us we will not receive an unbeliever but inform you by letter. And if he takes [it] by force you will hear it. The land is your land; God and your land, O our *effendi.* This is what we want to tell you. Concluding greetings.

The sender of the letter is *Mu'allim Shaykh* Burhān. Its date is 27 Shawāl, the year 1286.

Seal: Burhān Muḥammad.

To be handed over to the Governor of the Sudan, our *effendi* Ja'far *Pasha,* may God Almighty keep him. Amen.

And likewise we inform you, O our *effendi,* [that] a black cloth and black trousers and a double-barreled pistol were sent to us from you. And after this we have nothing to tell you. Concluding greetings.

ENA, Maia Sanieh Carton 99 (47), fol. 44 (36), Arabic original. The figures in brackets refer to the older numbers in the Egyptian archives. The text on the verso consists of an instruction to the bearer of the letter and an acknowledgement of gifts received, the latter across the verso.

The *Shaykh* Dīnī referred to was Dīnī Aḥmad Abū Bakr, who had negotiated the treaty of March 1862 with France (ACTA II, no. 98; also 104–107). It was essentially a sale of the Obok area to France on behalf of a number of Afar chiefs. Disagreements arose as to whether Dīnī and those who ratified the treaty did in fact have the right to cede the territory. Burhān Muḥammad apparently challenged the agreement, on the grounds that Obok was part of his domain of Rahīta. Sapeto's purchase of Aseb only two months earlier was soon to complicate matters further.

We have not been able to establish what "al-Rāhīya" stands for. The issue being the status of Obok it would make sense to read "Obok is under Rahīta, and Rahīta belongs to the *sulṭān*", but the spelling is too divergent.

Document no. 36

Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger, 4 Feb. 1870

መልእክት፡ዘይጅ፡ሰዝማች፡ካሳ፡ር.ኣ ሳ፡መ ኀ.ኀ ነ ት፡
ሰይመ፡ኣ ግዚ ኣ ብ ሒ ር፡ዘ ብ ሒ ሩ፡ ሪ ነ ኡ ም። ደ ህ ሮ ስ፡
ክ ቱ ን ሰ ላ፡ምን ሳ ስ ጅ ር፡ኣ ን ዬ ት፡ ሳ ነ በ ቱ፡ ኣ ኔ፡ ደ ህ ነ ፡
ነ ኝ፡ኣ ግዚ ኣ ብ ሒ ር፡ ይመ ሳ ግ ን ።ም ስ ክ ሮ ቹ፡ኣ ሰ ነ ፡መ ሩ መ
ሩ፡ ድ ሮ ስ፡ ብ የ፡ ሰ ባ፡ኣ ም ነ ቱ ን ። የ ፍ ታ ሒ ች ሙ፡ በ ደ ል ደ ሳ.
ዋ ስ፡ነ ው። በ ፊ ት ም፡ ሮ ት ኮ ሰ በ ዎ ን፡ ሳ ው፡ኣ ር ሱ ም፡ኣ ሰ ነ፡
ፈ ሰ ግ፡ ድ ሮ ስ፡ብ የ፡ ነ ው፡ ሪ ሁ ን ም ፡ኣ ሰ ፈ ል ግ፡ ኣ ሰ ሁ። ኣ ነ ነ.
ን፡ኣ ር ሰ ም፡ወ ደ ጅ፡ ደ ኑ ል ኝ፡ ኣ ን ጅ፡ የ ሰ ባ፡ኣ ም ነ ቱ፡ ነ ገ ር፡ግ ን
ኣ ደ ግ ል ም፡ወ ይ ት፡ የ ሚ ገ ባ፡ሁ ም። ኣ ኑ ም፡ መ ጥ ቹ፡ ሰ ድ፡መ ጣ ሁ
ን ቱ፡ ሳ ጥ ፊ፡ ኣ ሰ ሁ።ኣ ሁ ን ም፡ ደ ል ደ ሳ፡ ሳ ው፡ይ ሰ ደ ይ።
ም ስ ክ ሮ ቹ ን፡ኣ ን ድ፡ ን መ ሮ ም ሮ ቹ ው። ሰ ብ ኦ፡ ጥ ዘ ብ፡ ሰ ዘ
ዙ፡ም ክ ር፡ የ ሆ ኑ ኛ ል፡ የ ም ሰ ሙ፡ ኣ ባ ቴ፡ መ ደ ጅ፡ኣ ር ሰ ም፡ ነ ም።
ካ ብ ዙ፡ሳ ው፡ ኀ ር፡ ከ ፈ ሪ ን ሲ ስ፡ ን ጉ ሥ፡ ኀ ር፡ ያ ፉ ት ሩ ኛ ል፡ ያ
ል ሆ ም፡ኣ ር ሰ መ ን፡ነ ው። ኣ ሁ ን ም፡ ያ ደ ሩ ግ ሁ፡ ሰ ድ ር ጊ፡ ጠ ሳ
ሑ ም ን፡ሳ ሳ መ ጭ ሙ፡ ኣ ል ቀ ር ም።
የ ፈ ረ ን ሲ ስ፡ን ጉ ሥ፡ ደ ብ ዳ ቤ።በ ሐ ዋ ጂ፡ ኮ ስ ታ ን፡ኣ ጅ፡ ደ ር ሰ ኝ፡
ኣ ጅ ግ፡ ደ ስ፡ ኣ ሰ ኝ።ም ሳ ኑ ን፡ግ ን፡ኣ ኔ ን፡ኣ ር ሰ ም፡ሰ ን ግ ሳ ኝ፡
ኣ ነ ግ ሮ ም፡ ሳ ሰ ሁ፡ኣ ኀ ጅ፡በ መ ሮ ቀ ት፡ኣ ል ሰ ድ ም።
መ ሮ ቀ ት፡ የ ያ ዙ፡ ሰ መ ቹ፡ ኣ ሰ ድ፡ኣ ሰ ሁ። ሳ ጥ ኑ ን፡ሰ ነ ዚ ያ፡ ይ ሰ ደ
ይ ል ኝ።



ተ ጽ ሕ ፈ ት፡ በ ሽ ህ ላ ነ፡ ዘ ነ ን ር፡
በ ሺ ሰ፡ ተ ኛ ይ ኛ ይ ዘመ ን፡ኣ ም
ል ዬ ት፡ክ ር ሰ ቱ ስ። በ ሳ ድ፡ መ ጣ ን
ቴ፡ ካ ተ መ ን።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God.

I had *Abba* Imnetu released on reliable bail (lit. guarantor), intending [to wait] until the witnesses had been investigated. And earlier my idea was [to postpone] while (lit. until) people were looking for the man who shot [at you].

Now too, I am searching for [him]. But above all I am happy that you, my friend, were spared. As for *Abba* Imnetu, the matter is not important. He has no way to escape. I have come and camped at Adi Megwentī.

And now, send a reliable person so that we can examine the witnesses. You are my father and friend, from whom I expect much wisdom and advice. You are the one who I hope will establish friendship between me and many others [and] the French king. And now I shall not fail to do everything possible to destroy your enemy.

I received the letter of the French king by the hand of *Khawāja* (*hawaja*) Kostan. I was very pleased. However, I shall tell you my answer when I and you meet, but I will not put [it] in a letter. I shall send people who will be carrying a letter. Send me the box through these [people].

Written in the camp of Adi Megwentī on the 28th day of Ṭirr, in the year 1862 after the birth of Christ.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 6, Amharic original. The box referred to was no doubt the goods sent by Mr. Powell as a reward to Kasa for his allowing him to avenge the death of his brother (no. 27), and the letter Napoleon's of 4 August 1869, which had reached Munzinger only in January 1870 (AECC, Massouah 2, fols 80–81).

Document no. 37

Kasa Mirċha to Werner Munzinger, 10 Feb. 1870

መልእክት፡ ዘደጅ፡ ኣዛማች፡ ካሳ፡ ርእሰ፡ መኳንንት፡ ሰፎመ፡
ኣግዚኣብሔር፡ ዘብረሔር፡ ኣክሱም።። ይድረሰ፡ ክቡን፡ ሰልም
ኣስጅር፡ለንደን፡ ሰነበቱ፡እኔ፡ደህና፡ነኝ፡እግዚኣብሔር፡
ይመስግን።። ኣባ፡እምነቱም፡ሬሳ፡ቅኣቹ፡የነበረ፡የኩና
ሰበም፡ሞሐንስ፡ለሰቲካኛ፡ሰርኩ፡ማታ ለደ፡ብየ፡ነው።።
እኔም፡ኣፈ ሬሮ ድሁም፡ጥሩ ሐሪ፡ነገረሠ ትም፡ኣሳሳየሁም፡ሰ
ማታ ለደ፡ብየ፡ቅ ልኣ፡ኣልሁኣ ቹ ው፡እን ጅ ።።ኣርሷ ን፡ጨንም፡
ኣሁን፡ኣሰርሷ ቹ ው፡የተኮሰበም ንም፡ድሐንስንም፡ኣሰር
ሁ ት።። ቢሆ ን፡እርሰም፡ቢመጡ፡እወ ድ፡ኣለሁ፡ባይሆ ን፡ግን፡
እነዚኣያ ን፡በቀ ይም፡መጥ ተ ው፡የነበሩ ት፡ን፡ሰ መኾ፡ይሰደዱ
ኣቹ ው፡ጠ ፋ ት ም፡ግ ን፡እንዳ ይጠ ፉ፡ዋ ቢ፡እኔ፡ኣለሁ።።
በፊ ትም፡የርሰ ም፡ይም፡የኔ፡ይም፡ነ ው፡ብ የ፡ለ ኢ፡በ ም፡ነበር
ኣሁ ን፡ስ፡እኔ፡እን ይም ን፡እዋ ሽ፡ኣለሁ።።



ዛጽ ሐ ፈ ት፡በ ፬ ቀ ን፡
በ የ ካ ቲ ት፡በ ፲ የ መ ጅ የ
ጉ መ ፍ ለ ደ ሥ፡ክ ር ስ ቶ
በ ኣ ድ፡መ ፋ ን ቲ፡ካ ዝ
ማ።።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. The reason why I had *Abba* Imnetu released was [that I wanted to wait] until Yohannis, the man who shot at you, was found, thinking it would be a way of tricking him. I did not give judgement, and I did not invoke the *Fitha Negest*. I was indifferent towards him only to mislead. But now I have arrested him, and I have also arrested Yohannis, who shot at you. If it is possible, I would like you to come. But if this is not possible, send those men that came some time ago. I shall be the guarantor so that your enemy will not disappear. And earlier, I sent to you saying, "Your feud (lit. blood) is my feud!" And now, how can I be lying?

Written on the 4th day of Yekkatīt, 1862 after the birth of Christ, in the camp of Adi Megwentī.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 7, Amharic original. Munzinger seems to have been displeased with the way Kasa was handling the case of the assassination attempt, while Kasa wanted to follow procedures and make sure that there would be sufficient evidence to punish the guilty. See nos 31 and 36 above.

Document no. 38

Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger, 28 Feb. 1870

ሀመልእክት፡ዘደጅ፡ፈዝሀገጭ፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኳንንት፡ሰዮመ፡አግረኅብ
ሔር፡ዘብሔር፡ለክሡም።ይድረሳ፡ከቁንስል፡ምጣሳጅር፡አሳይሰት
ሰንበት፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመስግን፡ይህ፡ጉ፡ነኝ።የሳጣ፡እምነቱን፡ነግር፡
እርሰም፡ሳይመጡ፡የማይቀጣ፡ነገር፡ደሰኝም።ነገሁ፡ጌ፡ሳይጽፍም፡በአ
ሽከቀኝ፡መላእክት፡ቢሆን፡እኔ፡ታመጣሁ።የሰይርግሁት፡ሳይኖረኝ፡የ
ፈገርም፡ሳ ሬት፡የአሙቁሙል።የሰገ ቀኝ፡ጌ ምት፡ሳሬን፡የአሙቁሙል፡
አዜነም፡እርሰ ም፡ይምጡ፡ነፌ ተም፡አጓይጠገ ባ፡አይርቧሰሁ።



ሑሱ ሕፈት፡በኽ ይሳ ፣በየካቲት፡
በ፲ወ፷ኛ፲ኛ፹ወ፬ዓመተ፡ምሕረት።
አደመ ነሥቲ፡ሳይ።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum, reach Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. Regarding the case of *Abba* Imnetu there is nothing that I am going to do before you come. Though I had done nothing [wrong], I was earlier criticised for sending messages through servants.

You know the formalities of your country and you know the formalities of our country. And now come here, and I will do what should be done in front of you.

Written on the 22nd day of Yekkatīt, in the year of grace 1862, at Adi Megwentī.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. 300, no. 8, Amharic original. See no. 37 above. Munzinger complied, and went to Kasa. He reported on his visit on 27 March (AECP, Massouah 3, fols 291–98).

Document no. 39

Kasa Mirṣha to Werner Munzinger, 8 March 1870

Dejjazmach Kasa, head of the princes, elect of God, of the land of Aksum.

After a thorough investigation it has been proved in a clear and definitive manner that *Abba* Imnetu has committed a crime against ourselves, and it has been discovered that he has committed a crime against the good relations between our kingdom and foreign kingdoms. And therefore we should have sentenced and punished him here, but we have delivered him into the hands of Consul Munzinger and left him to his fate.

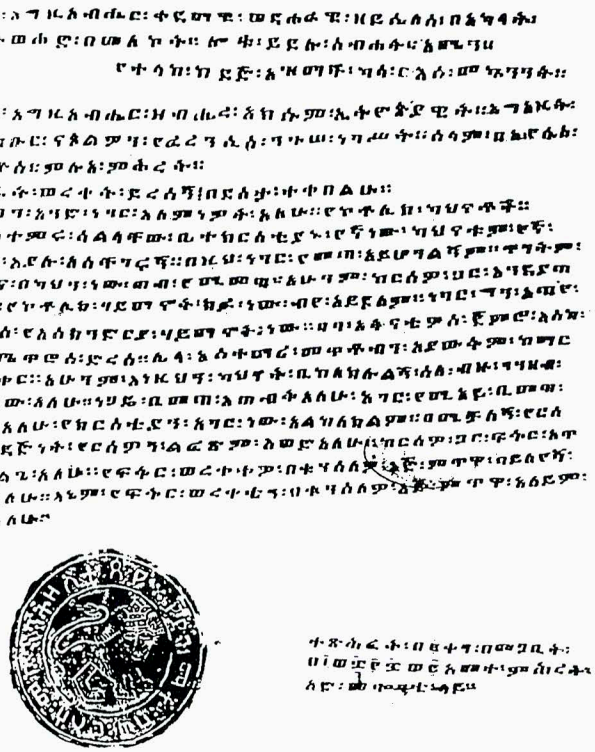
Seal.

30 Yekkatīt 1862 (8 March) 1870 at Adi Megwentī.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 3, fol. 299, French translation. This letter was translated by Munzinger at Massawa on the 27 of March according to a note signed by himself. Unfortunately the French government archives contain neither the original nor a copy of the Amharic; nor has the original ended up in BN, Ethiop. 300, where we find the other letters that Kasa wrote to Munzinger about the assassination attempt. It is thus impossible to ascertain whether Munzinger has worded this letter to suit his own case.

Document no. 40

Kasa Mirċha to Napoleon III, 10 March 1870



In the name of God, the beginning and the end, who is three in appearance and one in divinity, glory to him. Amen.

[Letter] sent by *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint,* elect of God, of the land of Aksum, the Ethiopian, the free, to the honoured Napoleon (Napoliyon), king of kings of the French. Peace [be to you] through Jesus Christ [who is] full of mercy.

The letter you sent has reached me. I received it with joy. But I plead with you for one thing. The Catholic priests, without my telling them to teach, are making trouble for me, saying, "Matters regarding the church and priests are our business (lit. the church is ours and the priests are ours)." It is impossible for me to tolerate what follows from this.

As of old, quarrels come because of women and priests. And now, let them not create enmity between me and you. I am not saying that the Catholic religion is bad. But my lot is the faith of Mark (Marqos) [and] of Alexandria, beginning from Father Athanasius (*Abba* Atinatēwos) and until Father Demetrius (*Abba* Dīmēṭros). Never did any other teachers except [those from] Mark come to us. And now, I shall count it as a great favour (lit. like much wealth) if you stop these priests for me. If merchants come, I shall protect them. If people who want to see the country come, I shall welcome them. This is a land of Christians, I shall not prevent [anyone]. As far as it is possible for me, I would like to be your friend (lit. like your friendship) and to fulfill your [wishes]. I strongly want friendship with you. I would love not to miss your letters of friendship through your consul at Massawa. I, too, shall not fail to send my letters of friendship through your consul at Massawa.

Written at Adi Megwentī on the 2nd day of Meggabīt, in the year of grace 1862.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 105, Amharic original; fol. 55, French translation by Antoine d'Abbadie, whose copy of the Amharic original is found in BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 268–269. Munzinger comments that this letter is not worded the way he would have liked (AECP, Massawa 3, fols 291–296, 27 March 1870). The letter referred to is most probably the letter from Napoleon acknowledged to Munzinger a month earlier (see no. 36 above).

Document no. 41

Kasa Mirṭha to Victoria, 10 March 1870

በ ሰመ ፡ አግዚ አብሔር ፡ ዘ ቀ ዳ ሚ ፡ ወ ደ ሐ ራ ዊ ፡ ዘ ይ ሴ ለ ሰ ፡ በ አ ሃ ዳ ፡ ወ ይ ቅ ው ሐ ይ ፡ በ መ ለ ኮ ት ፡ ስ ሙ ት ፡ ይ ሁ ን ፡ ሰ ብ ሐ ት ። አ ሜ ን ።

የ ኩ ላ ት ፡ ክ ብ ር ፡ አ ዛ ማ ች ፡ ን ሰ ፡ ር እ ሰ ፡ መ ኳ ኑ ን ት ።

ሰ ዪ መ ፡ አ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ዘ ብ ሔ ረ ፡ አ ክ ሱ ም ። ኢ ትዮ ጵ ያ ዊ ፡ ዓ ፃ አ ዜ ቅ ። ሃ ፀ ፡ ክ ብ ር ፡ ቤ ክ ሥ ር ያ ፡ የ አ ፃ ግ ሊ ዝ ፡ ን ፃ ፈ ፡ ዕ ቅ ብ ት ፡ ሃ ይ መ ኖ ት ። የ ክ ብ ረ ት ፡ መ ረ ቀ ቱ ም ፡ ደ ረ ሰ ኝ ፡ በ ደ ስ ታ ፡ ተ ቀ በ ል ሁ ። የ መ ን ፍ ቅ ፡ ም ክ ር ፡ እ ጅ ግ ፡ ደ ስ ይ ሉ ኝ ። ሁ ለ ት ፡ መ ነ ፀ ር ፡ መ ነ ፀ ር ፡ የ ሰ ደ ዱ ል ኝ ፣ እ ጅ ፡ ነ ሰ ቱ ፡ ተ ቀ በ ል ሁ ። ነ ኅ ር ፡ ግ ፡ መ ልኧ ክ ፡ ሥ ሴ ፡ ከ ኒ ሮ ዲ ስ ፡ ፃ ፊ ፡ ሰ ብ ፣ ፃ ጂ ፡ ሰ ፡ ከ ኒ ሮ ር ኒ ሰ ፡ ፃ ፊ ። ፍ ሳ ር ፡ ይ ኵ ፡ ጥ ና ት ፡ ኅ በ ሬ ቱ ሙ ። ኤ ትዛ ያ ፡ በ ጠ ቃ ፡ ሳ ዒ ፡ አ መ ት ፡ እ ኔ ፡ በ ሬ ሳ ይ ፡ እ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ተ ኸ ም ሁ ። ኅ ወ ር ድ ፡ ና ሮ ዩ ር ፡ ር እ ሰ ፡ መ ቅ ደ ኅ ፡ የ አ ፃ ግ ሊ ዝ ፡ ሰ ራ ዊ ት ፡ ይ ዘ ፡ የ መ ጣ ፡ ኒ ዘ ፡ በ ት ቻ ለ ኝ ፡ እ ኅ ዴ ት ፡ መ ፡ ይ ኅ ሳ ፡ አ ድ ር ጌ ፡ ተ ቀ በ ል ሁ ። መ ሸ ን ቴ ና ፡ መ ቀ በ ሌ ፡ ግ ፣ ። የ ር ሰ ም ፣ ው ፡ ዩ ጅ ነ ት ፡ የ ር ሰ ም ፣ ጥ ቅ ር ፡ ል ጓ ኜ ፡ ብ የ ፡ ነ ው ። ኦ ሁ ፣ ም ፡ መ ፣ ግ ሥ ቴ ፡ እ ኅ ጂ ወ ና ል ኝ ፡ በ መ ፡ ቻ ለ ው ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ቤ ሪ ዲ ኝ ፡ እ መ ጅ ፅ ሩ ። ግ ፣ ዘ ብ ፡ ግ ፣ ፡ የ ም ፈ ል ፣ ው ። ዝ መ ፣ ን ኝ ፡ ሰ ኖ ዴ ር ፡ ሽ ጉ ፡ ኅ ሳ ፡ ኔ ሽ ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ ደ መ ወ ኑ ፡ እ ኔ ፡ የ ም ሰ ጠ ው ፡ የ መ ጊ ያ ስ ቀ ም ር ል ኝ ። መ ድ ፍ ፡ ሳ ለ ፣ ያ ፡ ሰ ፡ በ ሙ ር ጡ ፡ የ መ ጊ ስ ፣ ም ም ። ቢ ሰ ዲ ል ኝ ፡ እ መ ጅ ፡ እ ሰ ሁ ።



ሳ ጽ ሐ ፈ ፡ በ ፪ ሳ ፡ ዘ መ ፃ ኤ ፡ በ ፲ ወ ፫ ኛ ፡ ዓ መ ተ ፡ ምሕረቱ ፡ ለ ዐ መ ፃ ጅ ነ ት ፡ ሳ ድ ስ ተ ኛ ፡ ዓ መ ት ።

In the name of God, the beginning and the end, who is three in appearance and one in divinity, glory to him. Amen.

[Letter] sent by *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint,* elect of God, of the land of Aksum, the Ethiopian, the free, to the honoured Victoria (Bīktorya), queen of England, guardian of the faith (lit. guarded by faith).

The letter with which you honoured me has reached me. I received it with joy. I am very happy with the advice you gave me. I have received with respect (lit. bowing) the two excellent binoculars you sent me.

Now, there was friendship and requests for favours between Welde Sillasē and George (Gīyorgīs), Subagadis and George. Forty years after they had died, by the will of God I was appointed.

When Lord Napier (Lawerd Napīyur), Lord of Magdala (*ri'ise* Meqdela), came with the English army, I received him well to the extent of my ability. It was, however, with the intention of getting your friendship and love that I received him and saw him off. And now I would like you to help me with everything possible for you, so that my kingdom will be consolidated.

As for goods (lit. money), of rifles I would like to have sniders (*senadēr*), [and] rockets together with a gunner, whose salary I will pay, [and] who will instruct my men (lit. me). I would like you also to send me light artillery which can be loaded through the butt.

Written at Adi Megwentī on the 2nd day of Meggabīt, in the year of grace 1862.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

FO 1/28, fol. 55, Amharic original; fol. 57, English translation. Note that the Tigrean ruler Subagadis (ACTA I, nos 21–23) is now called Seba Gadīs.

Document no. 42

Kasa Mirċha to Robert Napier, [10] March 1870

From Dejach Kassa – through God, Chief Governor and Lord of Ethiopia

To Sir Robert Napier, Lord of Magdāla.

Earnest salutations – Since I saw you last I have enjoyed good health – I heard of your kindness in forwarding my letter to the Queen. I received an answer thro' the Governor of Aden –

It gave me much pleasure. I sent a reply to the Queen. You have been in London (?) I hear; and are now going to India – I am glad.

From the very commencement I have had enemies willing enough to kill me if unarmed, but I would descend with my weapons and match-lock men and be able (to hold my own). I would wish you to come to Massawa

To the English Queen and to her Army I am a perfect stranger – You alone I know – Should you come I will receive you; should you go I will escort you in the best way I can. – Should you come Via Zulla pray command me.

You should be informed that I have not as yet received 350 muskets. Do not think me avaricious.

Written March 1870.

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation,, fol. 92, English translation of original, which we have not been able to locate.

The letter is reproduced with the orthography, including misspellings, and punctuation of the preserved English text.

Document no. 43

Contract between 'Abdallāh Shaḥīm, Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm Aḥmad, and Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino, 11 March 1870

Glory be to God.

On the ninth day of the month of Dhū-l-Ḥijjah of the year 1286 of the Muslim era, on the eleventh of the month of March 1870 of the common era, *Sulṭān* 'Abdallāh Shaḥīm and *Sulṭāns* Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad on one side, and Messrs. Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino, captain of the steamship *Afrika,* on the other, meeting on board the said steamship, have reached [agreement on] the terms of the following contract:

The above-mentioned *sulṭāns* sell, as they have sold, to Messrs. Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino the tract of land and of sea enclosed between Ras Lumah and the straits called Alala and Mount Ganga, without any obligation or subordination on the part of the buyers, who shall pay to the same above-mentioned sellers the agreed price of eight thousand and one hundred in scudi or Maria Theresa thalers.

But since the above mentioned *Sulṭāns* Shaḥīm, Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm do not wish to be paid in pounds sterling but in good Maria Theresa thalers, they are thus for the time being satisfied to receive

six hundred Maria Theresa thalers and three hundred and eighty-eight rupees, declaring that they will wait for the total payment of eight thousand and one hundred thalers until the return of the steamer from Aden.

Meanwhile the above-mentioned Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm, sons of Aḥmad, declare and reconfirm that Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto came to pay the price of Lumah within the fixed time according to the agreement of 15 November 1869, and they confirm that they will wait for the full payment for the new territory, within the limits described above, which they together with *Sulṭān* 'Abdallāh Shaḥīm sell, as they have [indeed] sold [it], to Messrs. Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino, and this for the time until the steamer returns which will be sent to Aden to change the pounds sterling into Maria Theresa thalers; and they acknowledge having received the above-mentioned instalment, in Maria Theresa thalers three hundred and in rupees three hundred and eighty-eight, bequeathing to the new owners of the purchased lands the full and complete right to establish themselves there as they think best, and to raise their national flag as a sign of absolute sovereignty over the place.

This much was agreed upon by the *Sulṭāns* 'Abdallāh Shaḥīm, Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm and by Messrs. Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino as representatives of Messrs. R. Rubattino & Co.

This agreement having been translated literally into Arabic for the above-mentioned *sulṭāns*, they have approved the contents and the stipulated sale of it [and] have affixed their signature and seal, together with the buyers Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino, in the presence of the undersigned witnesses, declaring that they have drawn up the present contract in perfect good faith, and that they therefore give it full legal value, even though it is not drawn up in the form used in similar documents.

In closing, Giuseppe Sapeto and Andrea Buzzolino, as representatives of Messrs. R. Rubattino & Co., declare that by this contract they do not intend in any way to invalidate the agreements which, before the present contract, were agreed upon between Giuseppe Sapeto and Mr. Rafaele Rubattino and other rightful parties or jointly interested..

In approval they sign what is [written] above, as they have no seals.

Giuseppe Sapeto	Ḥasan bin Aḥmad
A. Buzzolino	'Abdallāh Shaḥīm
	Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad

Witnesses: 'Abdallāh Eben(?) – 'Alī Chesi(?)

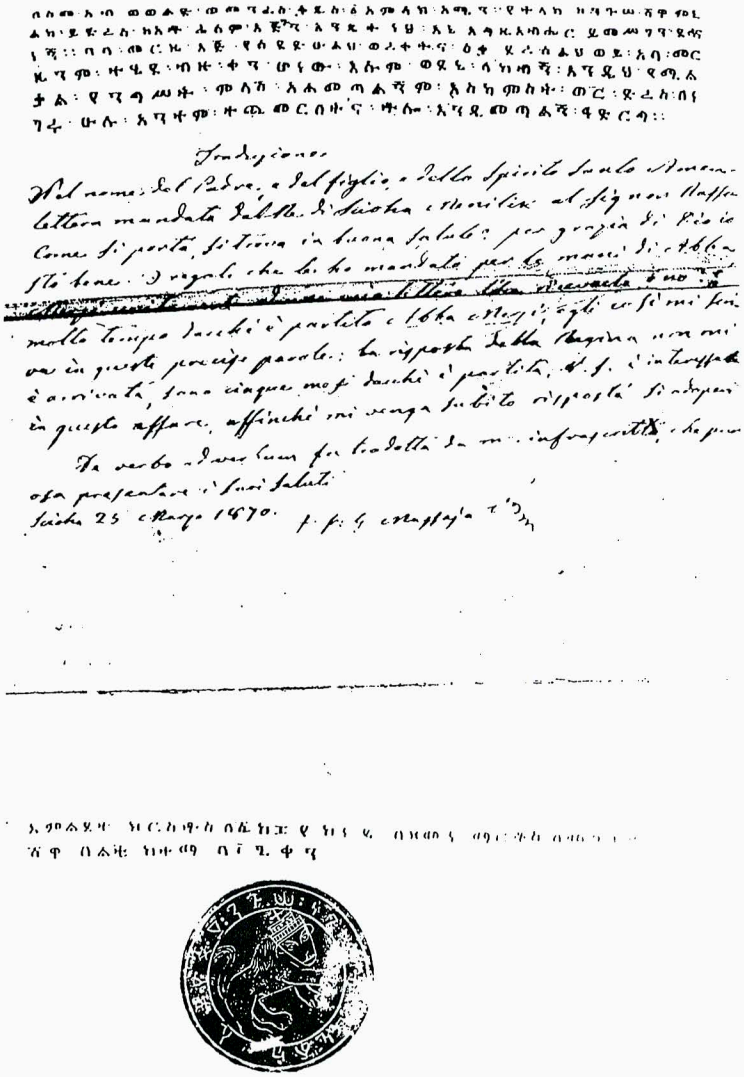
Trattati, III, 1943, The printed document is introduced with the following heading: "Convention signed by Sultans 'Abdallāh Shaḥīm, Ḥasan bin Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad and by Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto and Captain Andrea Buzzolino for the sale of a tract of country and of sea enclosed between Ras Lumah and the strait of Alala and Mount Ganga. Aseb, 11 March 1870." The signatures are followed by the following note: "The rights deriving from this convention were transferred by the Società Rubattino to the royal government by the convention of 10 May 1882." As in the case of the first contract (document no. 22 above), it has not been possible to locate the original of this agreement.

It is highly unlikely that any Arabic versions of the two contracts ever existed in writing. The dating in particular raises questions. Instead of *hijra* the first contract has *il computo degli islamiti* and *l'era degli europei*, and the second *l'era musulmana* and *l'era volgare*.

The names of the fathers of the two witnesses seem to be incomplete or misunderstood. "Eben" is most probably "ibn", and the missing father's name Burhān as in no. 22 above . What "Chesi" stands for is impossible to say.

Document no. 44

Minīlik to Hormuzd Rassam, 25 March 1870



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May [this letter] sent by the king of Shewa, Minīlik, reach Mr. Rassam [*Ato* Rēsem].

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. Have the letter and the things I sent you with *Abba* Merzē reached you? Many days have passed since *Abba* Merzē left. He sent me a message which runs like this, "The queen's reply has not reached me even in five months." Concern yourself, too, with the whole matter and see to it that it reaches me quickly.

In the year of the birth of Christ 1862, in the year of Mark, on the 17th day of the month of Meggabīt, at the town of Lichē in Shewa.

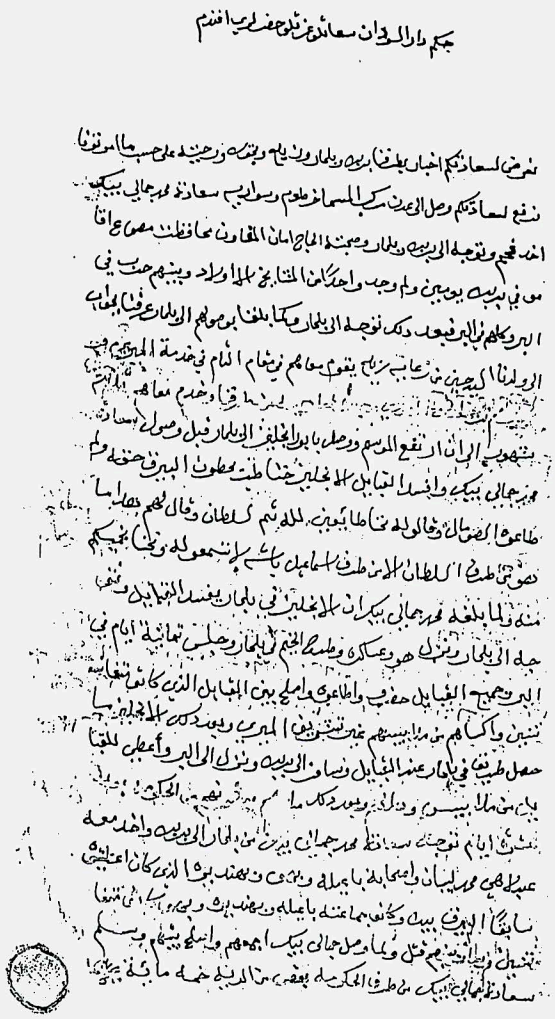
Seal: *Niguse Negest* Minīlik of Ethiopia.

IOR, MSS, Eur. F. 103, Rassam Donation, fol. 16, Amharic original and French translation by Cardinal Massaja dated the same day as the original. Munzinger reported on 14 April that he had received a letter from Minīlik asking him to assist his people who were coming to Massawa. Minīlik reportedly asked if it would be possible for France to act as a mediator between the kings of Abyssinia (AECP, Égypte 47, fols 176–178).

A report in FO 1/29, fol. 306, states that two letters to Rassam had arrived, one from Minīlik, most probably the above, and one from Meshesha [Tēwodros?]. It has not been possible to locate the latter.

Document no. 45

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Ja'far Maẓhar, 3 May 1870



The governor of the Sudan, His Highness, His Eminence, His Excellency, *effendi*.

We present to Your Highness news from our lands, Berbera, Bulhar, Zeyla, Tajura and Rahīta that we have been ordered to forward to Your Highness. A vessel with the name *Khartoum* arrived at Aden, with His Highness Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey* and his guard. It loaded coal and turned towards Berbera and Bulhar. *Ḥājj* Amān, the administrator of the government of Massawa went with it. They stayed two days in Berbera but found none of the *shaykhs*, only the youngsters, since there was a quarrel between [the people in] the interior, and [so] all of them were in the interior. Then they turned towards Bulhar. When [news] reached us that they had arrived at Bulhar we wrote to our son, *Sayyid* Ḥusayn, a subject of Zeyla, to stand by them completely in the service of the government *and be interpreter with the Egyptians; we arranged for his payment from us. He served them for three months until the end of the season.*

But an English steamer had come to Bulhar before His Highness Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey* arrived. The English [tried to] corrupt the tribes to the extent of demanding that their flag be hoisted. The Somali, however, did not obey and said to them, "We obey God and then the *sulṭān*". And they said to them, "This comes from the *sulṭān*. But as for Ismā'īl *Pasha,* Do not listen to him. We will protect you from him."

When [the news] reached Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey* that the English were corrupting the tribes at Bulhar he turned towards Bulhar and embarked, himself and his soldiers. He pitched his tent at Bulhar and stayed for eight days on land. All the tribes came to him and submitted to him, and he reconciled the tribes which had been fighting, dressing them in [Egyptian] clothes [but] not in government uniforms. After this the English did not make inroads among the tribes at Bulhar. So they sailed to Berbera, disembarked and distributed some clothes and money to the tribes. After this *they incited them to disobey the government* After ten days His Highness Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey* turned from Bulhar to Berbera. He took with him 'Abdullāhi Muḥammad Lībān and his followers Bā'īla, Bahū and Bahandabara, to whom I personally had given the flag before. They, Bā'īla, Bahandabara and Bahū, had previously all been fighting, and between them there had been bloodshed. But when Jamālī *Bey* arrived he gathered them together and reconciled them.



On behalf of the government His Highness Jamālī *Bey* gave them as a sort of blood money five hundred riyals, and treated them as brothers and made a covenant between them and dressed them in [Egyptian] clothes. And he stayed at Berbera until the end of the season. Then all the subjects and the merchants left, and both he and the steamer of the English went to Aden, and from Aden to Zeyla, our land. He received all the news from me.

All the tribes, the goat-keepers, [up to] to Ras Hafun, ask for the flag of His Highness the *Bey*, since they fear harm from the English. They submit to the government and [pray that] God make the *sulṭān* and the glorious *khedive* victorious and (one word illegible) to Your Highness.

As for the Somali, if there is no resident governor of the government in Berbera, the Somali will not settle there. There is no way except by a governor and soldiers, because of the allurement of the English, trying to corrupt them with money to be under their protection. Truly a governor from the government has to come within this year. They will not be reconciled except by a governor, and by being dressed in government uniforms. There has to be a governor in order to know the *shaykhs* and who among them can be useful. As for the navy, it is of no use, for the people take the gifts and disappear into the interior. We had better tell you this. As for news from Zeyla, sound and quiet trust and security prevails. Also in Tajura sound and quiet trust and security prevails. As for Rahīta, [news] has reached us that the people of Aseb, [living] in the lands of the government, have sold Aseb to Italian Christians, who have unloaded coal there and built houses.

When this [information] reached us we informed the true ruler of Rahīta, *Shaykh* Burhān. He went to the Christian and talked to him and said to him, "Aseb belongs to the *sulṭān*." But he did not obey what he was told. Thus we sent information to His Highness Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey*, to Berbera, and wrote a letter to the governor of Massawa. And Muḥammad Jamālī *Bey* came to our land, to Zeyla, on his way to Rahīta and Aseb, to the Christian in order to prevent him, even though he did not have an order from the government. But a vessel arrived from Aden, bringing mail to him from Aden calling him back to Aden. And he turned towards Aden. God knows (lit. the one who decides, decides) where he will go next.

The first of Ṣafar 1287.

The message comes from *Ḥājj* Abū Bakr ibn Shaḥīm Salīm. Praise be to God Almighty. Amen.

Seal: Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm Shaḥim.

ENA, Maia Sanieh Carton 99 (47), fol.. 471 (407), Arabic original. The barely legible passages (lines 7 and 17) have been supplied from an Arabic copy in the archive. In the translation these passages are indicated by asterisks. Jamālī Bey's visit to Berbera and Bulhar (Douin, III, 3A, 558) was prompted by European activities. *Ḥājj* Amān was the Egyptian administrator or governor of Massawa until replaced by Munzinger (Douin, III, 3B, p. 994).

Document no. 46

Kasa Mirçha to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem, 23 May 1870

በሰመ፡አብ፡ወወልድ፡ወመንፈሰ፡ቅዱስ፡፩አምላኮ፡ሐሌሉ፡፡
መልእክቱ፡ዘይጅ፡አዝማቹ፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኑሃነ፡ሰዩመ፡አግዚ
አብሔር፡ዘብሔረ፡አክሱም፡ጽዮን፡አግዓዚት፡፡ይድረሰ፡ክመሐ
በረ፡መነኮሳቱ፡ዘኢየሩሳሌም፡ይር፡ሠልጣን፡፡መናንያነ፡ዓለም፡
እርቲአነ፡ሃይማኖት፡፡አግብርቲሁ፡ለአግዚእነ፡ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡፡
እጅጉን፡እንይት፡አሳቹሁ፡አባቶቹ፡ወደጆቹ፡፡እኔም፡ይህኖ፡ነኝ፡አግዚ
አብሔር፡ይመሰገን፡፡ሺሕ፡ብር፡ሰደጀሳቹሁ፡አለሁ፡ባባቴ፡ወልደ፡አሰ
ማዕ፡ትኖ፡ባባቴ፡ነብረ፡ሚካኤል፡እጅ፡፡አትርሱኝ፡እዘኑልኝ፡በጸሎት፡
ጊዜ፡ይህ፡የሰደድሁሳቹሁ፡ብዙ፡አይዩለም፡ጥቂት፡ነው፡አገር፡ቢጠ
ፋብኝ፡ነው፡፡

ተጽሕፈ፡በ፲፯ቀን፡ግንቦት፡፡በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፪አመተ፡ምሕረት፡



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message of *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the free, reach the community of monks of Dayr al-Sulṭān in Jerusalem; those who have forsaken the world, the orthodox in faith, the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. My fathers and friends, how are you, really? I am well, thank God.

I have sent you one thousand thalers by the hands of *Abbatē* Welde Sema'it and *Abbatē* Gebre Mīka'ēl. Do not forget me; intercede for me in your prayers (lit. at prayertime). What I am sending you is not much, it is negligible; it is because the country is devastated.

Written on the 16th day of Ginbot, in the year of grace 1862.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

DS, no. 3, Amharic original. See document no. 2 above for an earlier reference to the gift of 1,000 thalers. Apparently *Abba* Welde Sema'it and *Abba* Gebre Mīka'ēl were the persons sent to bring about harmony in the community. While we lack further information on *Abba* Gebre Mīka'ēl, *Abba* Welde Sema'it Welde Yohannis, better known as *Memhir* Welde Sema'it, was the superior of the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem for more than two decades. See Pedersen, pp. 39–41, and *passim*.

A new minor change in Kasa's title is introduced in this document by the replacement of "the Ethiopian" by "Ṣiyon".

Document no. 47

Kasa Mirṣha to Franz Hassen, 16 June 1870

መልእክት፡ዘደጅ፡ሰዝጠ ፉ፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ ሰ፡መኳንንት፡ሰይመ፡አግዚአብ
ሔር፡ዘኢትጠፍ፡ለክ ሱ ምም፡ጽዮን፡ፅግዛዚት። ይድርሰ፡ከ ሐጣዊ፡ለ ሰን፡
መ ዚል፡ኩነሰላ፡ምንሰ ጅር። አንጌት፡ ሰነበ ቱ፡አኔ፡ደህ ና፡ነኝ፡አግዚአ
ብሔር፡ይ መ ሰገን። ከ ሸ ሶ፡ ግዛይ፡የለሱ፡ ነ ጭ ሊክ። የ ሰሱ ቱን፡
የለ ግሬ፡የአበ ሻ፡ነ ው፡አ ንጅ፡ከአ ባ፡ድ ፍ ሶ ፡በ ሁር፡ሊ ሳ፡የ ማ ሙ ት
ሙ፡ሰ ሙ፡የለ ሻ ምም። አ ሁ ነ ም፡እኔ፡ሙ ጉ፡ዝር ዕ ፡አ ሳ ፊ ሁ ም፡አ ሁ ን፡
ግን፡ነ ገ ር፡ኩ ንሰ ልም ንሰ ጅር፡አ ሰ ቢ፡መ ጡ፡ድ ሶ ስ፡ይ ቀ ይ። ይህ፡ነ ገር፡
ግን፡ለ መ ት ሮ፡ለ ይሆ ንም።



ተጽ ሐ ፈ፡በ፲ ቀ ን፡ሰ ኔ፡አ ም
ተ ሳ ይ ን
በ፲ ወ ፫ ይ ፫ ወ ፪ ለ መ ተ ፡ም
ሐ ሮ ት።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the free, reach *Khawāja* Hassen, the agent [of] Consul Munzinger (Minsijir).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. As for the Catholics who are in Akkele Guzay, it is about those of my country, of Abyssinia, that I speak. [Among the foreigners] there is no other person that I know except Father Duflos (*Abba* Diflo). Now, I did not tell people to attack [and] plunder. But now let the matter rest until Consul Munzinger comes. This, however, will not do for the future.

Written on the 10th day of Senē, at Adwa, in the year of grace 1862.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

BN 300, no. 1, Amharic original. In Munzinger's absence at Aden, his deputy Franz Hassen was acting for him. Apparently convinced that their relations with the French consul and the missionaries would protect them, the Catholics of Akkele Guzay had refused to pay their taxes, and suffered for it. Kasa had become increasingly impatient with the situation, and decided to expel Father Duflos, who was in charge of the mission. See Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 36–40.

Document no. 48

Minīlik to G.R. Goodfellow, 3 July, 1870



60

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May [the letter] sent by the king of Shewa, Minīlik, reach Goodfellow (Gud Fellah), the deputy (*mislenē*) at Aden of Lord Clarendon (Bord Klarendon), the chancellor (*afe nigus*) of the queen. How are you, really? I am well, thank God. By the power of God, my country and my army are all well.

The letter which came to me from the Queen says like this: "If you want to get quick answers to all the business about which you write to us, we have an appointed representative at Aden. Write to him. As he is an official (*ammakarī*) of our government; he knows the things we have in mind (lit. in our heart), and we have given full authority to him. If difficulties arise, he will write to us." I was very pleased when a statement like this reached me. The binoculars which the queen sent to me have reached me safely. I received [them] with pleasure. I bow saying, "May God repay you in my stead."

In the days of my fathers, the queen rendered great [and] kind deeds of friendship towards them, but my fathers erred because of the lack of understanding of the people. They wronged your people, because people who hated the light and loved darkness advised them. This lack of understanding of theirs fell upon me in the third generation. I was captured [and] left [my country]. [God] in His mercy kept me out of prison for some time. When the time came, He aroused me in His mercy and by His spirit. I stood up and escaped. I came to the border of my country. Bezzabih fought against me. By the power of God, I defeated him. As [God] is far from anger and His mercy is great, He put me on the throne of my fathers. I recalled the lack of understanding of my fathers. Especially when, after your people had left [after] having defeated King Tēwodros, I heard of their organisation and their skills, I regretted very much that I missed [the opportunity to observe] all this good training and skill. And now, forgive me all the offence which has been attributed (lit. written) to my country because of the foolishness of my fathers, for they acted out of ignorance. As Christ has erased what was written against us, [please] forgive me.

As of now, I shall welcome with pleasure, with friendship [and] with honour all men who come with your permission. As all that I do from lack of understanding is unintentional, [please] advise me. I shall not depart from your will. And now, make peace between us, the kings of Abyssinia, so that we may live in friendship like you, so that we remain each one within his own country, so that wars stop [and] so that the blood of people is not shed in vain. I shall not cross from this side of the Abbay and the river of Beshilo, for these are [our] ancient boundaries. [The granting of] kingship belongs to Christ, so see to it that we do not fight. May God give you health. As I have made the successor of Mr. Mason (Miṣṭir Masen) [our] representative at Aden, please recognize him.

Written in the town of Lichē, on the 27th day of the month of Senē in 1862 after the birth of Christ, in the year of Mark.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

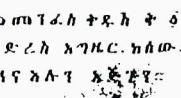
As a sign of friendship I have sent you two horses [and] a mule. Accept [them] from the hands of Bilṭo and Werqē. Do not forget the business of my servants, so that they may return safely to me.

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation, fol. 83, Amharic original; fol. 84, Italian version; fols. 80-81, English translation. The Italian translation in Massaja's handwriting is dated 10 July. For Minīlik's new seal with the spelling "Minyilik", the patriarchal cross and the legend "The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed", see Sven Rubenson, "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Christian Symbol and/or Imperial Title", JES, III, 2 (1965), p. 82. Most probably the seal was supplied by Massaja or the French traveller and businessman Pierre Arnoux. In a covering letter to Goodfellow (fols 81–82) Massaja wrote that he had exhorted Minīlik to dispatch the above letter, "leaving the King to express himself as he wished". In September the Political Resident E.L. Russell wrote to Minīlik, acknowledging the receipt of letters and informing him that they had been forwarded to London. Captain Goodfellow had left Aden in April 1870 but served there again 1872–1880.

We have read *bale-iwqe*t as *kale-iwqet*, assuming that there is a writing error here, and *diber* as *dinber* or *dimber* (demarcation). The definition of Shewa's boundaries to the north as understood at the time is of interest.

Document no. 49

Tekle Gīyorgīs to Napoleon III, 7 July 1870

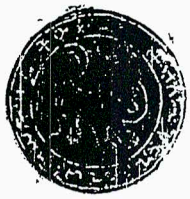


In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May [this letter from] the king of kings of Ethiopia, *Aṣē* Tekle Gīyorgīs reach Emperor Napoleon (*Niguse Negest* Napuliyon), whom God has elected from amongst men and made king. How are you? Are you well, really?

I desire your friendship very much. I wanted to send you a gift, but the road was not convenient for me. I thought that this dispatch of a simple letter of friendship might be the beginning of a correspondence and a sign to you of my desiring your friendship.

By the power of God, with your advice and your friendship, I intend to put right all that *Aṣē* Tēwodros spoiled. I want your consul to come to my country, and merchants of your country to come and trade, and I want with your permission to have my desire fulfilled for me.



Dejjach Kasa's grandfather served and obeyed my grandfather, and his father my father. And when I appointed him and left him saying, "defend the country", he rebelled and refused to obey. Now, however, I am going to settle the account with him, and do not condemn me. The reason why I have sent this message by the hand of another [person] is because I do not trust people.

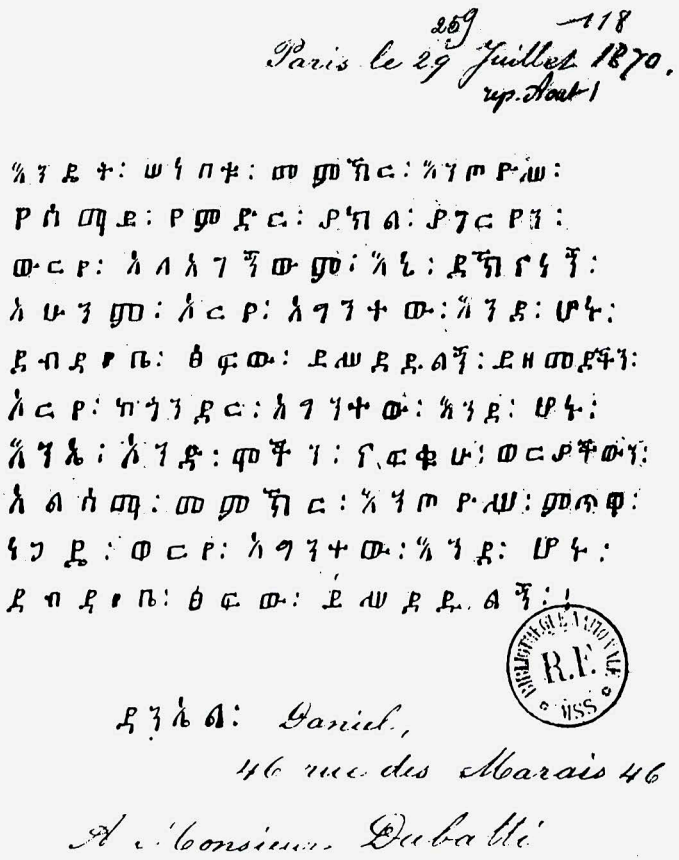
In the year 1862 from the birth of Our Lord, in the year of Mark the Evangelist, on the first day of Hamlē.

Seal: Tekle Gīyorgīs, king of kings of Ethiopia.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 110, Amharic original; fol. 111, French translation. Whether it was Consul Munzinger or someone else that Tekle Gīyorgīs did not trust, the growing tension between Kasa and the Catholics had obviously led to closer contacts between the Catholics and Tekle Gīyorgīs, for this letter was forwarded through the missionaries.

Document no. 50

Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 29 July 1870



Paris, 29 July, 1870.

How have you been, to the extent of heaven and earth, *Memhir* Antoine (Inṭoyos)?

I have not received [any] news about my country. I am well. Now if you happen to get news, write a letter and send it to me, [that is] if you have received news of my relatives at Gonder.

I long for my brothers. I do not hear about them. *Memhir* Antoine, if you get news through merchants at Massawa, write a letter and send it to me.

Danēl . Daniel.
46 rue des Marais 46 (*sic*).

To Mr. d'Abbadie.

BN, Orient. Abb. 254, fol. 259, Amharic original. Both spelling and grammar in the letter are very poor, probably because the writer had been staying in France too long, isolated from other Amharic speakers.

Document no. 51

Kasa Mirçha to G.W.F.V. Clarendon, 16 Aug. 1870

መልእክት፡ዘደጅ፡አዝማች፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኳንንት፡ስዩመ፡አግዚአብሔር፡
ዘብሔር፡አክሱም፡ጽዮን፡አግዓዚት፡እርሰ፡አይባሬት፡፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡
ይድረሰ፡ከሳወርድ፡ክሳልድርን፡፡እጅጉን፡እንዴት፡አሉ፡በዜና፡፡
እኔም፡በክርስቶስ፡ቸርነት፡ደህና፡ነኝ፡አግዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡፡
እኔ፡ደስ፡ብሎኛል፡አዋ፡ቤን፡ከጥኔ፡በሎንደን፡ወኪል፡አድርጊ፡አለሁ፡
ቤአግዙአቸው፡እጅግ፡ደስ፡ይለኛል፡፡እኔ፡አስቤ፡አለሁ፡በረከት፡ለመስደድ፡
ከሰዎቸ፡ጋራ፡ለከበረች፡ለታፈረች፡ለታላቂቱ፡ንግሥት፡ቢክዮርያ፡
ስለ፡እንግሊዝ፡መንግሥት፡፡የፍቅር፡ምልክት፡፡አሜን፡፡

ተጽሕፈ፡በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፪
አመተ፡ምሕረት፡፡በ፲፩ቀን፡
ነሐሴ፡በአድዋ፡ከተማ፡፡



May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the free, the head of the churches (*ri'ise adbarat*) of Ethiopia, reach Lord Clarendon (Lawerd Kilalidirin).

How are you, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay? By the mercy of Christ, I am well, thank God. I am happy to have appointed Mr. King and Company (*Ato* Kīn Kepenī) my representative in London. I would be very glad if you could help him. I am thinking of sending with my people a present to the respected and feared great Queen Victoria as an expression of my friendship towards the English government. Amen.

Written in the year of grace 1862, on the 11th day of Nehasē, in the town of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

FO 1/28, fol. 65, Amharic original; fol. 67, English translation omitting opening phrases and date. In a letter dated 15 September (IOR, L/P&S/9/205, p. 749) with which Russell forwarded the above he enclosed a letter from Kasa to Henry S. King & Co., of which there seems to be no copy in the archives. The appointment is confirmed in a letter the company wrote to the Foreign Office in December 1870 (FO 1/28, fols 103–104).

Document no. 52

Kasa Mirċha to E.L. Russell, 16 Aug. 1870



May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the free, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach General Russell (Resel).

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. As I have sent letters intended for London (Lenden), forward them for me at once. If letters come for me, I would like you to send them to me at once.

Written in the year of grace 1862, on the 11th day of Nehasē, in the town of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation, fol. 97, Amharic original; fol. 96, English translation. This is the covering letter for no. 51 and for a letter to Henry King & Co. of the same date. Russell reported to Kasa (fol. 98) that he had received and forwarded the letters to London.

The omission of 'elect of God' from Kasa's title in this document is almost certainly unintentional, as the appellation is found in all other letters from November 1869 onwards.

Document no. 53

Kasa Mirṣha to G.L.-G. Granville, 24 Aug. 1870



May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach the Right Honourable Earl Granville (Rayt Anorebil Erl Gran Wīl).

How are you, really, [although known to me only] by hearsay? I [am well], thank God. I am very pleased to have made [someone] of your standing my deputy in London. I have sent you letters even before. And now, I have sent trustworthy men, Chief Advisor (*ri'ise memakirt*) Gīyorgīs and Werqē Mirṣha to hand over presents to the honoured queen of England. I would be very happy if you could have them reach there safely. It would be a sign of friendship.

Moreover, I would like someone to be sent to me who will teach manual skills in Abyssinia. I also want all kinds of iron tools bought through your care (lit. agency). You will be informed about everything by these people.

Written in the year of grace 1862, on 19th day of Nehasē, in the town of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*(?).

FO 1/28, fol.60, Amharic original; fol. 56, English translation by G. Sauerwein. The seal stamped in red wax on this letter, and on the letters to Queen Victoria and the Political Resident at Aden the following day (nos. 54 and 55), is smaller than and slightly different from the seal Kasa used on his other letters at this time. The lion faces left, the crown has a different form, and "of Ethiopia" seems to be missing in the legend, which is, however, damaged and therefore partly illegible.

The person here called *Ri'ise Memakirt* Gīyorgīs is better known as *Aleqa* Birru Welde Gīyorgīs. In connection with a mission for Minīlik he appears as '*Ras* Birru'. For Mirṣha Werqē, see ACTA I, no. 89, and II, nos 57 and 235.

The two envoys failed in their attempt to proceed to England, mainly because of opposition from London (FO 1/28, fols 69–122) On this matter, see also no. 62 below. The above letter and the following to Queen Victoria were answered only in March 1872 (FO 95/731, nos 135 and 136).

Document no. 54

Kasa Mirṣha to Victoria, 25 Aug. 1870

በስመ፡ አብ፡ወወልዱ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡፩ አምላክ። አሜን።

መልእክት፡ዘ ይቺ፡አዝማች፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኳንንት፡ሰዊመ፡አግዚአብሔር።

ዘነብሔ ረ፡አክሱም፡ጽዮን፡ርእሰ፡ሊቃ ውንት። ይድረስ፡ንግሥት፡

ቪክቶርያ።ሰላመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይጠብቀ ም።አሜን።

ስለ፡መንግሥት ም ፡ክብረት፡ነጽ፡በረከት፡ሰ ይቺ፡አለሁ።የፍቅር፡ምልክት።

በርኖስ።ልባልባ።ጨማ። ይ ረ። ። መጣምር፡ነው።

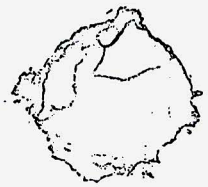
በታመነ፡ወይቺ፡ርእሰ፡መማክርት፡ጌ ሮርጌ ስ። የታመነ፡ወይቺ፡ምርጨ፡ወርቂ።

በሬት ም፡ከሳወር ድ፡ፕ ኖ ቪር፡ርእሰ፡መቅ ደሳ።ከቺነሬል፡መሪ ወ ይር፡ን ሬ ፡

ሰላኔ፡መንግሥት፡ስለ፡አርሰ ም፡መንግሥት።ያ ሩቀ ረ፡አር ኩ፡ነው።

ከነዚህ፡ከወ ይቺ፡የ ሰ ይድ ሁት፡ነጽ፡በ ሮከት፡ቤተ በ ሉልኝ፡አጅ ግ፡ይ ስ፡ይ ሰ

ኛለ። አኔም፡ይህ፡ነኝ፡አግዚአ ብሔር፡ይመስገን።



በወርኃ፡ነሐሴ። በ፳ኛው።

በ፲ወ፮ኛ፲ወ፪ አመ ት፡ምህ ረት

ት። ተጽ ሐ ሬ፡

በ አ ድ ዋ፡ከ ተማ።

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach the honoured Queen Victoria. May the peace of God keep you. Amen.

I have sent a gift to honour your kingdom. [It is] a sign of friendship: a burnous, a pair of ladies' pantaloons (*libbalba*), a pair of shoes, a necklace, and an ornamented saddle [sent] with my trustworthy friend Chief Advisor (*ri'ise memakirt*) Gīyorgīs [and] my trusted friend Mirṣha Werqē. He is the one who established friendship earlier, together with Lord Napier (Lawerd Napiyur) and with General Merewether (Merīweder), in the name of my government and in the name of your government. I would be very happy if you would accept the gift I have sent through these friends of mine. I am well, thank God.

Written on the 20th day of Nehasē, in the year of grace 1862, in the town of Adwa.

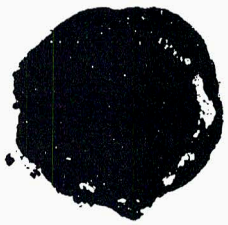
Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*(?).

FO 95/729, no. 170, Amharic original and English translation. The translator has read the year as 1863, but nevertheless arrived at 1870 European calendar. For the seal and the identity of the bearers of the letter and the gifts, see no. 53.

Document no. 55

Kasa Mirçha to E.L. Russell, 25 Aug. 1870

መልእክት፡ዘደጅ፡አዝማች፡ካሳ፡ርእሰ፡መኳንንት፡ሰዩመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ዘብሔር፡
አክሱም፡ጽዮን፡ርእሰ፡ሊት ዮጵያ። ይድረሰ፡ጀነራል፡ረሰል፡ሰላመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡
ይጠብቀዎ።አሜን።እጅግ፡ደሰ፡ብሎኛል፡ለታላቂቱ፡ንግሥት፡ቢክቶርያ፡ሰድጀ፡
አለሁ፡ነጸ፡በርከት።በማምጥቸው፡እጅ።ርእሰ፡መማክርት፡ጊዮርጊሰ።አቶ፡ምርጫ፡
ወርቂ።ይህና፡አድርጉው፡ተቀብለው፡ሸኝተው፡ይሰደዴልኝ።



በ፲ወ፰፻፷ወ፪አመተ፡
ምሕረት፡በወርሃ፡ነሐሴ፡
በ፳ቀን፡
ተጽሕፈ፡በአድዋ፡ከተማ።

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach General Russell (Resel). May the peace of God protect you. Amen.

It gives me great pleasure to send a gift to the great Queen Victoria by the hands of Chief Advisor (*ri'ise memakirt*) Gīyorgīs [and] *Ato* Mirçha Werqē, whom I trust. Receive them well and send them on with an escort for me.

Written in the year of grace 1862, on the 20th day of the month of Nehasē, in the town of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*(?).

IOR, R/20/A/372, Aden Settlement Records: Abyssinia Compilation, fol. 100, Amharic original, red wax seal as on nos 53 and 54. An English translation in good handwriting follows below the Amharic text.

Document no. 56

Kasa Mirṣha to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem, 26 Aug. 1870

በሰመ፡አብ፡ወወልድ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡አሜን።



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

May the message from *Dejjazmach* Kasa Mirṣha, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach the community of monks of the Ethiopian Dayr al-Sulṭān in Jerusalem, the honoured, the upright in Orthodox faith, who have forsaken the world, the servants of Jesus Christ and sons of St. Mark the Evangelist.

My fathers, old and young, how are you, really? Thank God, by the mercy of Christ, I am well. I have received your letter and having heard its words I have placed it in my heart.

Your deeds are my deeds, and your thoughts are my thoughts. Pray ardently for me, so that Christ may carry out his will for me in this matter. Moreover, do love one another for my sake, so that Ethiopia will not be critized and so that you also will not be critized in front of God.

If *Abba* Birhane Mesqel is found in error (lit. dishonourable) in matters of faith, prove it against him with witnesses and expel him, but if there is no error in him, live together in concord as before for my sake. Let him also live in harmony as he did before. As a sign of love I have written these words. If you listen to my words, I shall also listen to yours. I shall remember you very often with what I can.

Written in the year of grace 1862, on the 21st of Nehasē, in the town of Adwa.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

DS, no. 2, Amharic original. See document no. 2 above for an earlier reference to the conflicts which apparently troubled the community. This letter has been published in the volume by His Grace Bishop Matewos, *Debre Silṭan Be-Īyerusalēm* (1996), p. 34.

Document no. 57

Ahmed Alī Mariyyē to 'Alā' ad-Dīn, 22 Oct. 1870



الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام علي من لا نبي بعده

الي سعادة صاحب العز والمجد والاحترام ذو الهمة العاليه والمراتب السنيه حضرة
باشه مصوع وحواليها ادم الله عزه امين ولا زالت بالعز والنصر ايامه مشرقه
امين بجاه سيد المرسلين واله اجمعين اما بعد من مدة قريبه قد بلغنا اخبار
ان دولة حضرتكم قصدكم ملك ارض دنكل ومحل الملح وارض اوسه والي
بربره في السواحل ففرحنا بذالك غاية الفرح كون ان ارضنا بغاز ذالك
ومن سواحل البحر الي ارضنا ثمانيه ايام بالحموله بالجمال من قرية
يقال لها بيلول ولم فيها جبال وارضنا يسمي ورهمنو ونحنوا
ناس مسلمون ورعيتنا كذالك ولنا من الخيل والرجال جمله ونحب ان
يتوسع ملك الدوله العليه فلما طاب الخاطر بهذا الخبر بادرنا
بهذا الي حضرتكم نريد المعرفه بينا وبينكم واي شيئ كذالك تطلبوا من
الدواب او غيره تعرفونا بالجواب مع حامل هذا واما ارض دنكل لم
هم عندنا حجه اي شيئ تريدوه نفعل فيهم وهذا جعلناه لكم للمعارفه
والصحبه بيننا وتعرفونا بذالك الي رالي مصر افندينا والنظر لكم وكان قصدنا
نرسل هديه دواب الي حضرتكم انما ارض تكري ملك غيرينا ولم يفوتوه
وهذا بعجل لا مؤاخذه وخير الكلام ما قل ودل

احمد بن
صديق بن علي
ماريه

٢٥ رجب ١٢٨٧

Praise be to God alone and blessings and peace be upon him after whom there is no prophet.

To His Highness, entrusted with might, glory and respect, possessor of high significance and exalted rank, His Excellency, the *pasha* of Massawa and its surroundings. May God prolong his power. Amen. And may his days remain radiant with might and victory. Amen. By the glory of the Master of the messengers, and the God of all.

Now, not long ago the news reached us about the government of Your Excellency that you intend to take possession of the land of Danakīl and the salt places, as well as the land of Awsa up to Berbera on the coast. We rejoiced greatly at this, since it is the outlet for our land. From the coast to our land the transport by camel takes eight days, from the village called Beylul. There are no mountains on the road, and our land is called Werre Hīmeno.

We are Muslims, and our people likewise. We have a lot of horses and men, and would like the domain of the Sublime Government to expand. And when our mind was delighted at this news we rushed with it to Your Excellency.

We want to reach an understanding between us and yourself, and thus anything that you request concerning animals or something else, let us know [it] by a letter with the bearer of this one. As for the lands of the Danakīl, they are not a problem to us. There we can do anything you want. This we grant you because of the understanding and friendship between us. Make this known for us to the ruler of Egypt, our *effendi,* at your discretion. Our desire was to send a gift of animals to Your Excellency, but then the land of Tigray has another ruler than ourselves, and it will not escape him.

This is urgent and there is no objection. The best speech is short and direct.

The ruler of Werre Hīmeno, Ahmed Ṣadiq Alī Mariyyē (Aḥmad bin Ṣaddīq bin ʻAlī Māriyyah).

25 Rajab 1287.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 126, Arabic original, or copy made at Massawa.

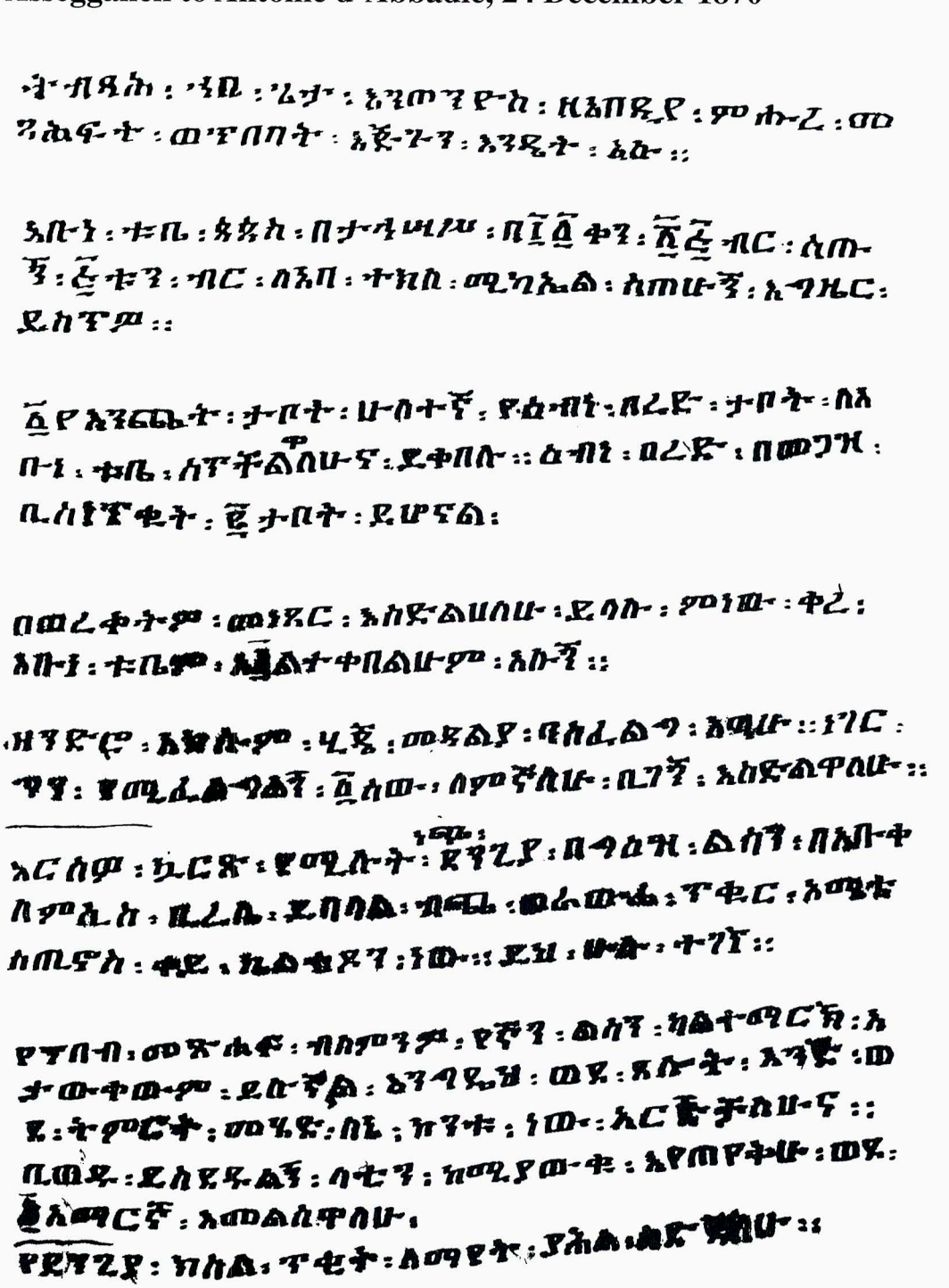
The writer of this letter belonged to the Werre Hīmeno clan of the Oromo population in Wello. He would thus be known as Ahmed Alī, a grandson of *Ras* Mariyyē Gugsa, ruler of Begēmdir 1828–31. Apparently the writer welcomed the establishing of Egyptian rule along the Red Sea coast, as well as the possible conquest of the hinterland, including Awsa. In addition to the prospects of commercial gains, the common faith was obviously important.

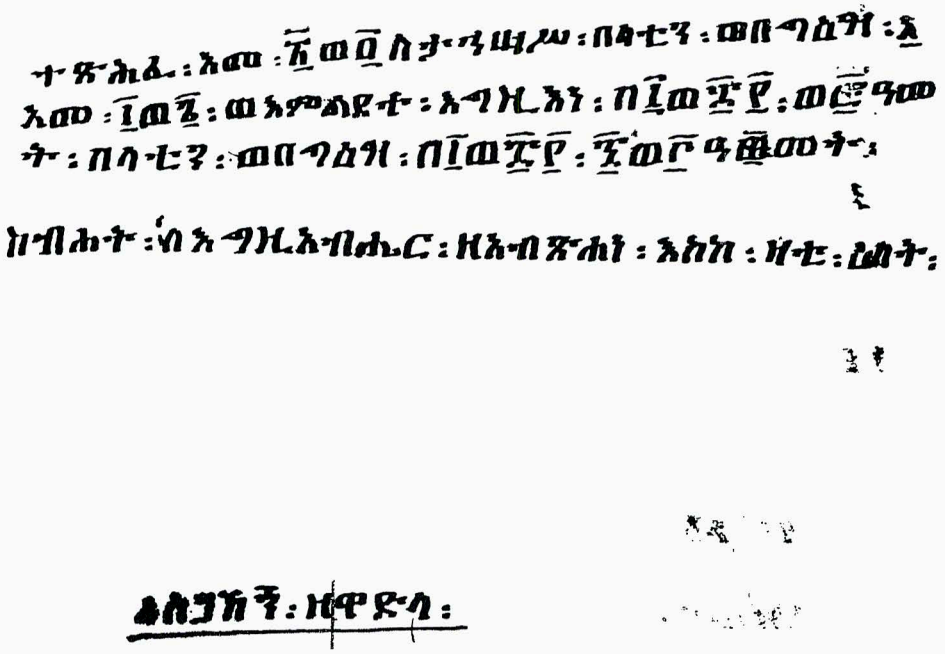
The addressee "the *pasha* of Massawa" was undoubtedly ʻAlā' ad-Din *Bey*, governor at Massawa at this time. He took charge of the letter, which he forwarded to Cairo with an attached note dated 15 Ramaḍān [12]87 (9 December 1870) and a report in which he mentions Ahmed Alī's letter and requests a reply for the "governor of al Raḥmanū" (Werre Hīmeno) in time to be handed over to him on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca. Douin has published an extract (vol. III:2, p. 317) identifying the writer as "Ahmed ben Saddik ben Ali Marish, gouverneur de Rahamto".

The report in addition contains information about some priests who were on their way to Jerusalem in August (document no. 56) as well as about the activities of *Lij* Mekonnin Welde Mīka'ēl who was for a short time governor of Hamasēn and apparently more in sympathy with Tekle Gīyorgīs than Kasa Mirċha.

Document no. 58

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 24 December 1870





May [this letter] reach Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye), versed in literature and wisdom.

How are you, really? Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Tubē, *pappas*) gave me 25 thalers on the 11th of Tahsas. I have given 5 thalers to *Abba* Tekle Mīka'ēl. Thank you. I have given one *tabot* of wood and a second *tabot* of marble to Bishop Touvier. So get them from him. If you cut the marble *tabot* with a saw, you will have (lit. it will be) two *tabots*. You mentioned in your letter that you were sending me a pair of glasses. Why did they not arrive? Bishop Touvier, too, says he did not receive them.

This year I went to Aksum and searched for medals, but could not find any. But I have asked a man to search for me. If [any] are found, I shall send them to you. The white stone you call quartz is in Gi'iz in the Apocalypse called *bīrillē*. Yellow topaz, black amethyst, red chalcedony—all these have been discovered.

When I asked you for a book on wisdom, you told me that I would not understand it unless I learnt your language. But since I am old now, it would be useless for me to go to school, rather than to prayer. [But] if you are willing, send it to me. I shall ask those who know Latin and have it translated into Amharic for me. I am sending some pit coal, enough to examine.

Written on the 24th of Tahsas according to the European (lit. Latin) [calendar] and on the 16th according to the Ethiopian (lit. Gi'iz), and in the year of the birth of Our Lord 1870 according to the European and in the year 1863 according to the Ethiopian [calendar].

Glory be to God who has preserved us to this day.

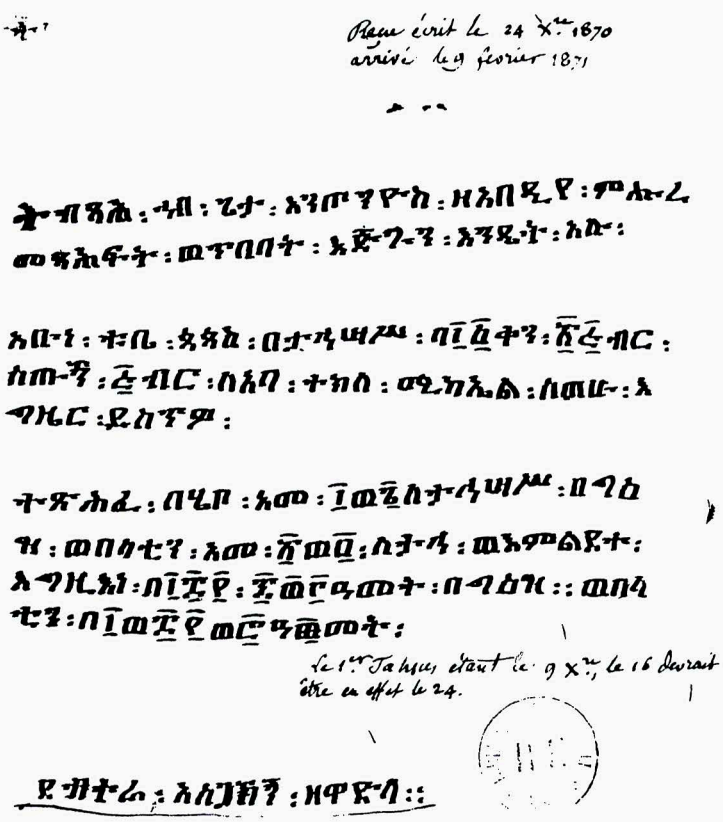
Asseggaheñ of Wadla.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 236, Amharic original. This letter is not included in Conti Rossini's publication.

Father Jean-Marcel Touvier arrived in Ethiopia in February 1869. Appointed vicar apostolic in November, he returned to Rome and was consecrated bishop in April 1870 (O'Mahoney, II, p. 279). Catholic priests were known as *abun* in Ethiopia, and Asseggaheñ apparently first used *abun* in a general sense, then decided to emphasize Touvier's rank by adding *pappas* when he was first mentioned. Touvier was also known as *Abune* Yosēf. See no. 78.

Document no. 59

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 24 Dec. 1870



May [this letter] reach Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye), versed in literature and wisdom.

How are you, really? Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Tubē, *pappas*), gave me 25 thalers on the 11th of Tahsas. I have given 5 thalers to *Abba* Tekle Mīka'ēl. Thank you.

Written at Hēbo, on the 16th of Tahsas according to the Ethiopian (lit. Gi'iz) [calendar], and on the 24th of Tahsas according to the European (lit. Latin), in the year of the birth of Our Lord 1863 according to the Ethiopian and 1870 according to the European [calendar].

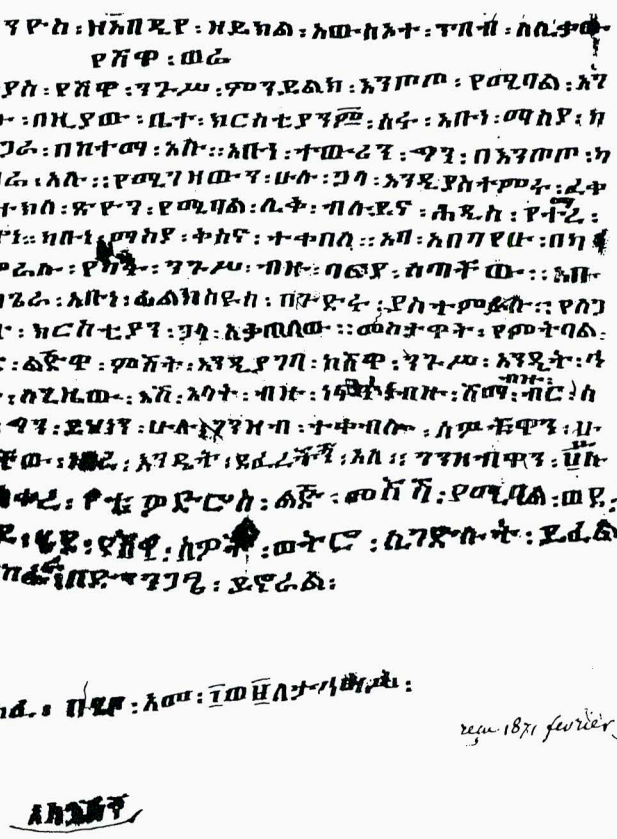
Debtera Asseggaheñ of Wadla.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 235, Amharic original. This letter is not included in Conti Rossini's publication.

As in no. 58, Asseggaheñ here emphasizes Touvier's rank by adding *pappas* to his name. Written the same date as no. 58, the letter is simply a separate acknowledgement that the sum of 25 thalers had reached the writer.

Document no. 60

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 27 Dec. [1870]



To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye) who can give scholars the wise answers.

News about Shewa

The king of Shewa, Minīlik, gave Bishop Massaja (*Abune* Masiyas) a country called Inṭoṭṭo, and he built a church there. Bishop Massaja is in the camp with Minīlik. But Father Taurin (*Abune* Tewrīn) is at Inṭoṭo with one priest. [Minīlik] gave him permission to teach all the Galla under his rule.

A scholar called Tekle Ṣiyon, who is learned in both the Old and the New Testament, has become a Catholic. He has been ordained priest by Bishop Massaja. *Abba* Abebayyehu teaches in Kefa. The king of Kefa has given him many slaves.

Father Leon (*Abune* Liyon) teaches in Gēra, while Father Felicissimo (*Abune* Fīliksiyus) [teaches] in Gudru. The Galla set the church of Legamara on fire.

In order that her son might marry, the ruler of Wello called Mestawat asked the king of Shewa for the hand of a very young girl. To gain time he gave her a positive reply. She sent many rifles, many *shemma* [and] thalers in great quantity. However, having received all this wealth, he was about to imprison all her men, saying "How dare she be disrespectful towards me?" He took all her property and kept [it].

The son of Tēwodros called Meshesha went into exile in Shewa. The Shewans want to kill him all the time. He lives in hardship and fear.

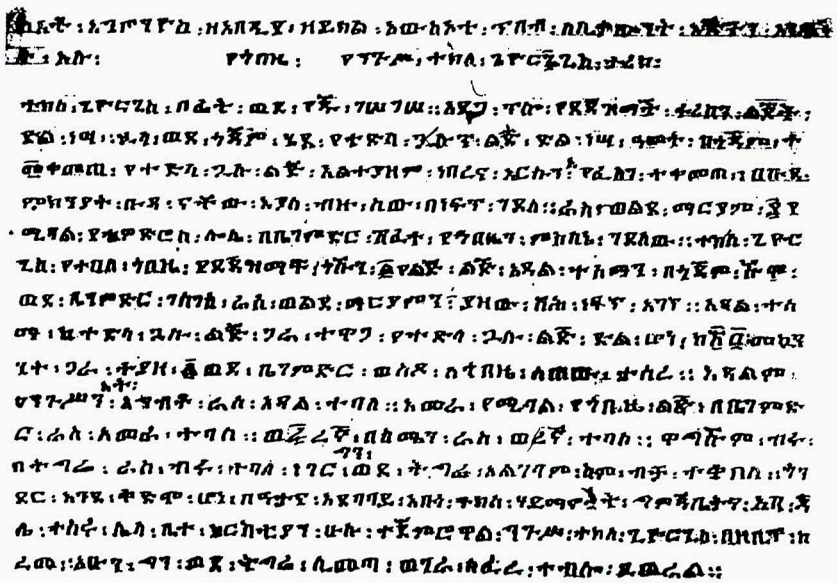
Written at Hēbo on the 19th of Tahsas.

Asseggaheñ.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 237, Amharic original. This letter is no. XII in Conti Rossini's publication. While Tekle Ṣiyon had apparently joined the Catholic mission in southern Ethiopia without having first worked in the north, *Abba* Abebayyehu was one of the early Catholic converts. See ACTA I, nos. 105–107, 116.

Document no. 61

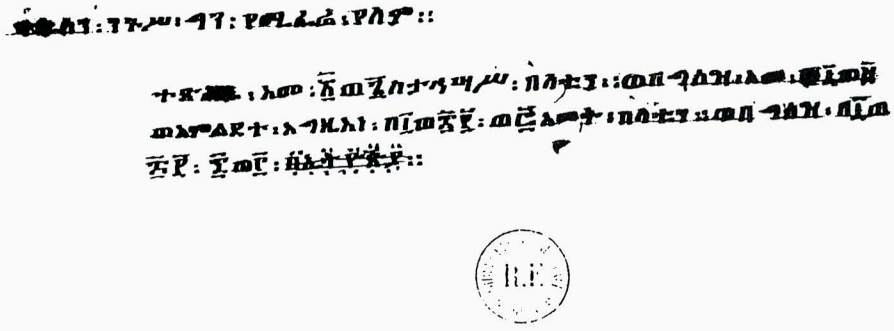
Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 27 Dec. 1870



To Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye) who can give scholars the wise answers. How are you, really?

News about Gobezē, King Tekle Gīyorgīs

Earlier Tekle Gīyorgīs made a forced march to Yejju. He made a surprise attack and defeated the sons of *Dejjazmach* Farīs. Then he went to Gojjam. He defeated the son of Tedla Gwalu. Since the son of Tedla Gwalu had not been captured, he remained in Gojjam for one year. He stayed [there] searching for him. Using spirit possession (*buda*) as a pretext, he called people *buda,* and shot and killed many. A retainer of Tēwodros, called *Ras* Welde Maryam, rebelled in Begēmdir and killed the deputy (*mislenē*) of Gobezē. Gobezē, who is called Tekle Gīyorgīs, appointed Adal Tesemma, the grandson of *Dejjazmach* Goshu, over Gojjam and hurried to Begēmdir. He captured *Ras* Welde Maryam. He found one thousand rifles.



Adal Tesemma fought with the son of Tedla Gwalu. The son of Tedla Gwalu was defeated. He was captured together with 24 noblemen. He took [him] to Begēmdir and handed him over to Gobezē. He was put in prison. Adal, having married the sister of the king, was named *Ras* Adal. The son of Gobezē, Amerra by name, was appointed *Ras* Amerra in Begēmdir. Wereñña was appointed *Ras* Wereñña in Simēn. *Wagshum* Birru was appointed *Ras* Birru in Tigray. However, he only received the appointment, but did not enter Tigray. Gonder has become as [it was] before. Be'ata and Adebabay, Abune Tekle Haymanot, Gimjabet and Abba Jalē have been [re]built. [Rebuilding] all the other churches has been started. King Tekle Gīyorgīs has spent the rainy season in Zebīṭ. But now there are rumours that he has camped at Wegera on his way to Tigray.

News about Abba Bezbiz Kasa, the *Dejjazmach* of Tigray

Abba Bezbiz has received a bishop called *Abba* Atinatēwos from Egypt. The bishop's faith is 'The Son anointed' (*weld qib*). [Abba Bezbiz] imprisoned a lot of people because they did not profess 'The Son anointed'. And the bishop strikes all the people with [his] cross. So his cross was broken. He gives two [types of] deaconhoods: the first is called 'for the slaughtering of chickens', the second 'for saying Mass'. Abba Bezbiz handed over *Abba* Imnetu to the consul. He lived imprisoned at Massawa. Later on he was found dead in the prison. Abba Bezbiz has built a church at Adwa. The monk who was appointed there shot his servant dead and disappeared. Abba Bezbiz has ordered the Catholic churches to be demolished. He has appointed [a man] called *Abba* Gebre Gīyorgīs head of the clergy (*līqe kahinat*) in Akkele Guzay. Three men from Halay were imprisoned because of the Catholic faith. But they were released right away. A missionary called Father Duflos (*Abune* Dīplo), a French priest, suffered a lot of hardship. [*Abba* Gebre Gīyorgīs] said to him, "Leave Akkele Guzay and return to your country; do not teach the Catholic faith [here]". Because she killed Tēwodros, the queen of England is greatly feared in Ethiopia. There is, however, no one who fears the French king.

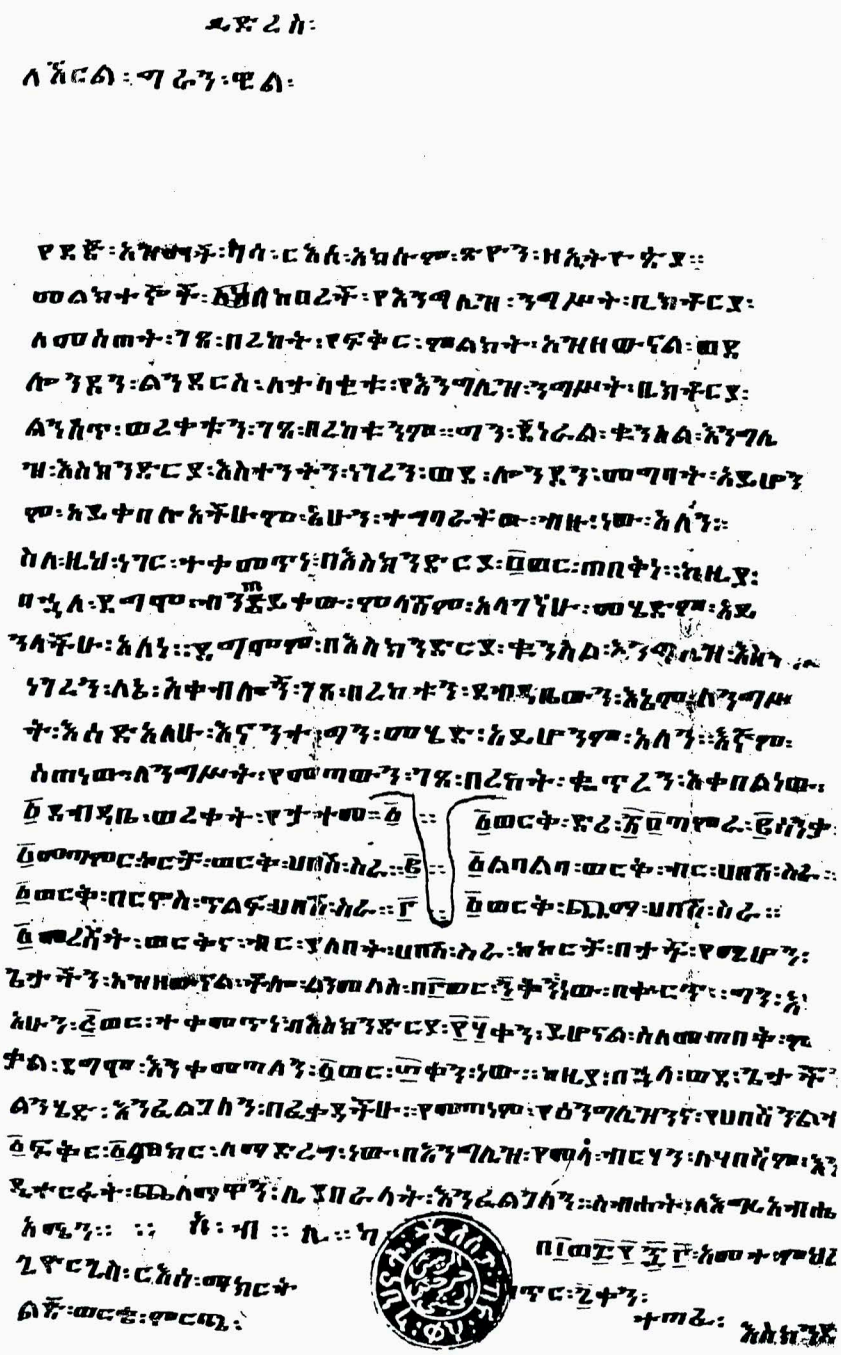
Written on 26 Tahsas according to the European (lit. Latin) [calendar] and on the 19th according to the Ethiopian (lit. Gi'iz), in the year of the birth of the Lord 1870 according to the European, and 1863 according to the Ethiopian [calendar].

Debtera Asseggaheñ.

BN., Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 251, Amharic original. This letter is no. XIII in Conti Rossini's publication. Asseggaheñ apparently tried to keep himself well informed about political events throughout the country (cf. no. 24 above), but he was naturally best informed about what was happening to the Catholic mission.

Document no. 62

Birru Welde Gīyorgīs and Mirċha Werqē to G.L.-G. Granville, 14 Jan. 1871



May [it] reach Earl Granville (Irl Gran Wīl).

We, the messengers of *Dejjazmach* Kasa, ruler (*ri'ise*) of Aksum Ṣiyon of Ethiopia, have been instructed to present gifts, tokens of friendship, to the honoured queen of England, Victoria (Bīktorya); that we should go to London [and] present the letter and the gifts to the great queen of England, Victoria. But the English consul general [at] Alexandria, Stanton (Istentin), told us, "It is not possible to go to London. They will not receive you." He said to us, "They have many duties now." Because of this, we stayed at Alexandria. We waited four months. And when we then asked him again, he told us, "I have not received a reply, and it is not possible for you to go." Moreover, the English consul at Alexandria, Stanley (Istenlī), told us, "Hand over the gifts [and] the letter to me, and I shall send [them] to the queen. But your going is impossible." And we gave him the gifts intended for the queen. We counted and handed over to him:

1. a sealed document, a gold necklace, 24 doubled-edged [spears] (*ṭamra*), two buckles (*sanka*), a gold-ornamented saddle of Abyssinian make,
2. a [pair of] ladies' pantaloons (*libbalba*), [embroidered] with gold and silver, of Abyssinian make, [and] a gold-embroidered burnous of Abyssinian make,
3. a gold[-ornamented] pair of shoes of Abyssinian make, a saddle cloth [embroidered] with gold and silver, which goes under the riding saddle, of Abyssinian make.

Our master ordered us to return quickly, within three months. It is exactly 90 days. But now we have stayed five months in Alexandria. It amounts to 150 days. We shall stay one [more] month waiting for the reply. That is 30 days. Then, with your permission, we want to return to our master. [The reason for] our coming was to make the hearts of the English and the Abyssinians united in friendship and counsel. We want the light which is abundant in England to spill over to Abyssinia and light up her darkness.

Praise be to God. Amen. *A[leqa]* B[irru] *L[īqe] K[ahinat].*

Written [at] Alexandria, in the year of grace 1863, on the 7th day of Ṭirr.

Gīyorgīs, chief adviser (*ri'ise memakirt*). *Lij* Werqē Mirṣha.

Seal: *Aleqa* Birru, *līqe kahinat. Rayīs* Jirjis the Abyssinian.

FO 1/28, fol. 186, Amharic original. A first rough translation was made 7 March 1871 (fols 138–140). In July there was some discussion at the FO about spending as much as £5 for a proper translation (fol. 188).

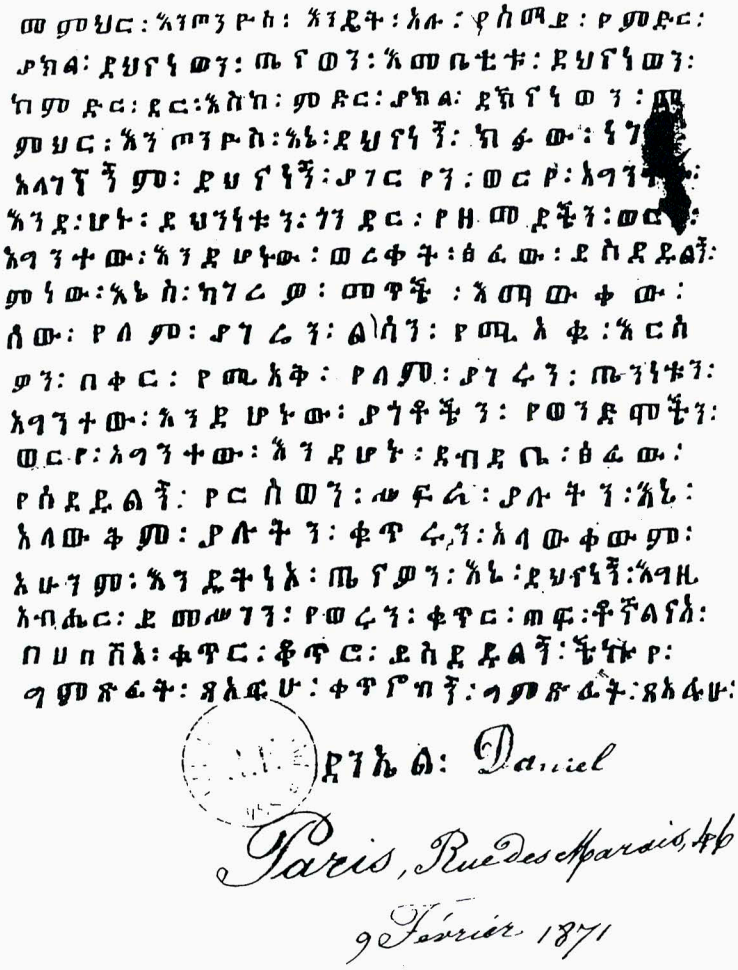
In spite of the expressed determination of the envoys to return to Ethiopia after one month unless they were invited to proceed to England, *Lij* Mirṣha was still in Alexandria four months later. See his letter to Stanton of 11 May (no. 70 below).

For Mirṣha Werqē, see ACTA II, nos 57, 226, 235. Note that in this letter to a British official Mirṣha signs *Lij* Werqē Mirṣha, in order to be known by his own name Mirṣha. The second envoy, *Aleqa* Birru Welde Gīyorgīs, who had led the delegation which brought *Abune* Atinatēwos to Ethiopia, was regarded as one of Kasa's most trusted councillors. Though he signs himself simply as Gīyorgīs, and calls himself *ri'ise memakirt,* the seal and the four letters *A, B, L, K* prove his identity beyond doubt. His seal shows that he did not bother too much about how he was known to the foreign, largely Arabic-speaking community.

The French consul at Massawa, E.C. de Sarzec, confused him with Birru Ṗēṭros which is evident from the statement that he had been educated in Malta (AECP, Égypte 52, 77-81). After his return from Egypt, Birru Welde Gīyorgīs quarrelled with Kasa and went to Shewa to offer Minīlik his services. There he seems to have dropped his ecclesiastical title and was known as *Ras* Birru, occasionally even *Amīr* Birru. He has been accused of being an Egyptian agent. In fact, there are parallels between his career and Munzinger's, and he actually died together with Munzinger, when the latter, in September 1875, tried to reach Shewa and incite Minīlik to attack Yohannis See Douin, III, 3B, pp. 717, 720–726, 735, 809–810, where *Aleqa* Birru is confused with *Ras* Birru Alī of Yejju; also Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 274–275.

Document no. 63

Danēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 9 Feb. 1871



Memhir Antoine (Inṭoniyos), how are you to the extent of heaven and earth? Is your health good? Is the lady of the house well? Is she well from one edge of the earth to the other (lit. to the extent of the earth)? *Memhir* Antoine, I am well. Nothing bad has happened to me. I am well.

Write a letter and send me if you have come across news of my country, of its well-being, in case you have come across news of my relatives [at] Gonder. You know well, that since I came to your country, there is no one that I know.

There is no one except you who knows the language of my country. Write a letter and send [it] to me if you have come across (news) of the well-being of the country, if you come across news of my uncles [and] brothers.

I do not know the place where you are. I do not know the number [of the house] where you are.

Again, how are you in your health? I am well, thank God. I have forgotten the date (lit. number of the month). Write me after calculating the date according to the Abyssinian calendar. Because I am in a hurry I have written in a poor hand. Since [the ink] is thin, I have written in a poor hand.

Danēl Daniel.

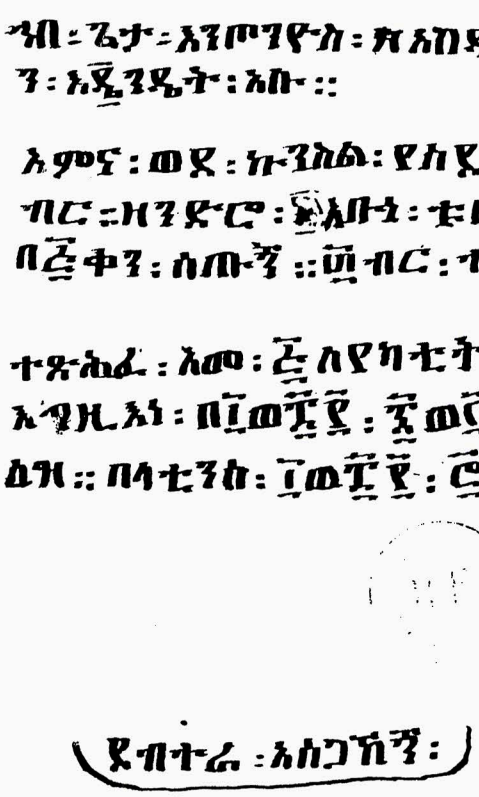
Paris, Rue des Marais, 46.

9 February 1871.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 240, Amharic original. See nos. 21,and 30 above. Apparently Danēl had overcome some of his initial problems in Paris, but was instead worried because he was losing contact with his family and cultural background.

Document no. 64

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 11 Feb. 1871



To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye).

How are you, really? The thirty thalers you sent to the consul for me last year, Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Tubē) gave me on the fifth day of Yekkatīt this year. I have received thirty thalers.

Written on the fifth of Yekkatīt in the year 1863 after the birth of our Lord in the Ethiopian (lit. Gi'iz) [calendar] and in the year 1871 in the European (lit. Latin).

Debtera Asseggaheñ.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 238, Amharic original. This letter does not appear in Conti Rossini's publication. *Debtera* Asseggaheñ is consistent in calling Touvier '*Abune* Tubē'; see no. 58.

Document no. 65

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Minīlik [March 1871]

Praise be to God!

To our true friend, to King Minīlik, I send this letter. Your two envoys Bilṭo and Werqē arrived with a mule and two horses. I sent them on to Sirk al-Hakim(?), the governor of Aden. Later they returned to me, having been thrown out by the English governor. As was expected he did not give them any letter; he did not even send a kind word; he did not give them an honourable reception. Bilṭo said to the governor, "We are leaving, give us a reply to the letter which we brought." He replied, "Your name is not even in the letter, but Werqē's name." – "Because it is so that Werqē has written instead of me," said Bilṭo.

The governor added, "Has your king lost his head? How could he have written and put the name of a simple servant in the letter? Have them all get out of my presence." With these words (lit. saying this) he arranged to give them ten thalers each for the journey and turned them out. The letter which Mūsā and Bilṭo are bringing you was sent to me prior to the return of your envoys to Zeyla.

My son, I had written to you two or three times before not to seek the friendship of the English. Your father and your grandfather would have nothing of this friendship with the English. A box of gold was sent to your father through the agency of my father and myself; he rejected and returned it. Queen Bezzabech was perfectly aware of this rejection. The friendship of the English is definitive and fatal. Don't you have with you Welasma Mehammed, Welasma Abba Gayih? Why don't you question them about what has taken place in the past? Don't you know how Tēwodros acted towards the English? How he treated them? What business have you with the English to keep writing to them all the time?

Listen to what I tell you, my son. With your mouth you call me 'my father', but you do not know who I am, if I am great or small. You do not listen to my advice. Impostors, ill-intentioned people, try to frighten you by telling you that the English are such and such. I believe you are really frightened and say, "The English will fall upon me as they fell upon Tēwodros. By whose orders, by whose will, on whose command did they leave them? You do not know yourself who gave them their marching orders, who commanded them, by whose will they returned home. Those who are close to you do not know more. Do you believe the words of your two envoys? What Mekbib untruthfully tells you, what the Jew tells you, what the priests tell you, that there are not in this world other powers than the English, the French and the Christians? Do you believe all that? *Wellahi! Webillahi!! Wetillahi!!!*

All these princes are subject to the orders of *Sulṭān* 'Abdülaziz, the son of the great *Sulṭān* Mahmud. They are all subject to his orders, like slaves. When they destroyed Tēwodros it was only by the will of the *sulṭān*; otherwise they would have done nothing. When they returned, they were withdrawn by his will. Do not believe that the English or the French, crushing me on their way, will reach you. I am the gate whereby one enters and whereby one departs; you do not know that. Do you place me on a level with Mekbib and these other people? So from now on do not ask me again to send you neither English nor French nor priests. I do not know yet what will happen to me for having sent Werqē under inopportune circumstances. All I am telling you is a piece of advice that I give you. If you accept it, it is fine; if you do not accept it, it is still fine. You do not know who are your friends, who are your enemies. All the rest you will hear from the mouth of my son Mūsā, from Bilṭo and from Werqē.

As I have rejoiced that you have returned to the kingdom of your fathers, rejoice also at the increase in power which has come upon me. I have received the governorship of all the land which stretches from the seacoast as far as Abyssinia. For this I have given forty slaves, men or women, among them

eight eunuchs, not counting the other gifts. I need you to send me a great number of these eunuchs; let them be brought by my son. If I tell you to send me these cattle it is not as a pledge of friendship, but to honour you and to protect your country. You do not seem to know me. All your friendship is for the chief of Harergē. Under the *sulṭān* the greatest chief is myself. All his authority is in my hands. I do not want to expand further. If you are my son, send me five eunuchs. Two are not enough; you can dispense with sending them to me. I know that you have a great number of them. Kinship and friendship cannot subsist on stinginess. By my son Mūsā you sent me a crippled slave, by Ibrāhīm a small and black eunuch. I ought to have sent them back to you, but out of friendship for you I accepted them.

My desire is to make you acquainted with him who dominates all other powers and to have you enter into friendship with him. Listen to my word, do not listen to the words of your servants. They only try to deceive you. Send me the answer at once through *Ḥājj* Muḥammad. Let me know what you want. If we take into consideration, you, the principles of your father, of your grandfather, and of your ancestors, and I the principles of my father, of my grandfather, and of my ancestors, our friendship will be strong. I recommend to you my sons, my lands, all the people who belong to me. Receive from the hands of my son Mūsā two double-barrelled rifles, two pieces of silk, a shirt of red cloth.

I shall tell you about an event which happened on the coast of Arabia. An army called *asiri* landed to fight the Turks near Hodeida. The army consisted of 70,000 men. In the first encounter the army of the invaders had the upper hand. In the second encounter it was defeated. It lost 2,500 men. Surprised, distressed, and defeated they returned to their country. During all this time I was in great anguish. At the news of their departure I rejoiced. For three days I had a volley of ten cannon shots fired as a sign of rejoicing. The war took place in Hidar.

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fols 22–24, French translation reportedly made at the Innewarī royal residence on 15 May 1871, signed "F. Taurin, Vic. prefet apost. de la Mission Galla, vic-general de Monseigneur Massaja" and sealed with the seal first used, as far as we know, by Minīlik on his letter to Goodfellow 3 July 1870 (no. 48). A note at the top of a copy preserved at the Public Record Office (FO 1/29, fols 286–87) states that the French version was made from an Amharic translation by the king's interpreters of the Arabic original, and that it reached its destination around Easter (the 9th of April). It would most likely have been written the month before. It is regrettable but not surprising that we have been unable to trace the Arabic or Amharic version, but it is not only the exclamation *Wellahi! Webillahi!! Wetillahi!!!* that indicates that we have a literal translation of an Arabic document. It has not been possible for us to identify the name or title written "Sirk al-Hakim" in the French text. After his return to Shewa in 1865 Minīlik had approached the residency at Aden to correspond with England, using the Mekbib mentioned here as his envoy (ACTA II, nos. 216–17; nos. 6 and 7, and 48 above). Beyond all reasonable doubt the names of the envoys this time, Bilṭo and Werqē, tie the above letter to the mission of Minīlik to Goodfellow in July the previous year. It has not been possible to identify Bilṭo; Werqē is quite possibly identical with Werqē Karapet from Adwa, or a son of his (ACTA I, no. 89) who had accompanied the German missionaries Mayer and Greiner to Shewa after the fall of Tēwodros.

Apparently he did not return together with Bilṭo to Zeyla since, in connection with the journey back to Shewa which he intended his son Mūsā to take charge of, Abū Bakr speaks only of Bilṭo. A note in the margin of the translation explains that the Jew referred to was a converted Bengal Jew called "Abba Merdje", who had come to Ethiopia nearly thirty years earlier and who, during the reign of Tēwodros, had been governor of Amba Gishen.

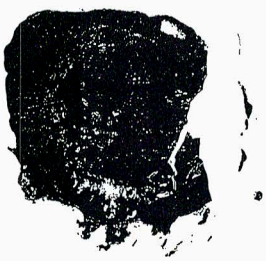
The letter reveals how problematic the relations had become between the Ethiopian ruler in the interior, King Minīlik, and the ruler on the coast, Abū Bakr at Zeyla. Less than a decade earlier the *shaykh* had entered into agreements with the French government (ACTA II, 31, 92, 98, 105, 111–115) but was disappointed with their lack of support when he needed it (II, 128–30). Himself in a weak position, he tries to prevent Minīlik's contacts with the British in Aden and wants to introduce him to his own suzerain, the *sulṭān* in Istanbul. How much easier had things not been in the days of their fathers and grandfathers!

For the reference to the box of gold, see ACTA I, no. 140. Obviously Minīlik was not discouraged by Abū Bakr's tirades but continued his correspondence with Aden (see no. 69 below).

Document no. 66

Kasa Mirṭha to Victoria, 22 April 1871

መ ል እ ክ ት ፡ ዘ ደ ጅ ፡ ለ ዝ ማ ች ፡ ካ ሳ ፡ ር እ ሰ ፡ መ ኮ ንን ት ፡ ሰ ዩ መ ፡ እ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር
ዘ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ለ ክ ሱ ም ፡ ጽ ዮ ን ፡ ር እ ሰ ፡ ሊ ት ዮ ጵ ያ ። ይ ዩ ሪ ስ ፡ ከ ከ በ ሩ ት ፡
የ እ ግ ሊ ዝ ኛ ግ ሥ ት ፡ ቢ ክ ቸ ር ያ ። እ ጅ ኑ ን ፡ እ ን ጌ ት ፡ ነ ም ። እ ኔ ም ፡ ደ ህ
ና ፡ ነ ኝ ፡ እ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ይ መ ስ ግ ን ። ባ ገ ሬ ፡ የ ተ ደ ሪ ነ ው ን ፡ ወ ሬ ፡
ል ነ ግ ሪ ም ፡ ነ ው ፡ እ ኔ ፡ እ ጅ ግ ፡ ይ ሰ ፡ ብ ሶ ኖ ል ፡ ስ ለ ፡ ሰ ደ ደ ል ኝ ፡ የ ም
ክ ር ፡ መ ሪ ኮ ት ። አ ም ና ፡ ከ ሁ ሉ ፡ ዓ ለ ም ፡ ን ሬ ፡ ኮ ሩ ር ፡ ብ ለ ው ፡ አ ሁ ን ፡
ግ ን ፡ እ ጅ ግ ፡ አ ሰ ብ ሩ ኝ ፡ የ ፈ ረ ን ሲ ስ ፡ ቱ ን ሰ ል ፡ ም ጥ ም ፡ ድ ለ ው ፡
ም ን ሰ ጅ ር ። ም ነ ው ፡ በ ኮ ሌ ክ ፡ ሃ ይ ማ ኖ ት ፡ የ ተ ነ ሳ ። ከ ፈ ረ ን ሲ ስ ፡
ሊ ለ ዋ ጋ ች ፡ ነ ው ። የ ሐ በ ሻ ፡ ሰ ዝ ብ ፡ ከ ፈ ረ ን ሲ ስ ፡ ሰ ዝ ብ ፡ ን ሬ ፡ ሊ አ
ሩ ጅ ነ ፡ ሠ ነ ። በ ቱ ር ኮ ፡ የ መ ር ፡ መ ሪ ኮ ት ፡ ሳ ከ ብ ኝ ። የ ኮ ሌ ክ ን ፡ ሃ ይ
ማ ኖ ት ፡ ካ ል ተ ቀ በ ሀ ። እ ን ደ ፡ ሰ ጤ ፡ ቴ ም ይ ሮ ስ ፡ መ ር ፡ መ ር ቂ ፡ ለ
ም ጥ ቂ ፡ ለ ሰ ን ይ ል ህ ፡ ለ ሰ ሁ ፡ ብ ሶ ፡ ሳ ከ ብ ኝ ፡ እ ኔ ፡ ግ ን ፡ በ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ፡
ለ ም ን ፡ ከ ሰ ዝ ቤ ፡ ን ሬ ፡ የ ተ ጠ መ ቀ ሁ ኝ ፡ ነ ኝ ። በ ወ ን ጌ ል ፡ የ ለ መ ን ሁ ፡
ነ ኝ ። እ ር ሰ ም ፡ ግ ን ፡ በ ወ ን ጌ ል ፡ የ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ን ፡ ሃ ይ ማ ኖ ት ፡ ጠ ባ ቂ ፡ ነ ም ፡
ይ ህ ነ ን ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ እ ር ሰ ም ፡ በ ማ ሕ ተ መ ም ፡ ሊ ለ ዋ ሙ ት ፡ ይ ቻ ለ ም ፡ ለ ል ።
እ ኔ ም ፡ በ ቻ ለ ም ፡ ጠ ን ቂ ፡ ለ ለ ሁ ፡ ም ክ ር ም ን ም ፡ ለ ም ቼ ፡ ለ ለ ሁ ፡ ለ ሁ ን ፡
ለ ለ ም ነ ም ፡ ለ ለ ሁ ፡ እ ን ዲ መ ክ ራ ኝ ። ይ ግ ሙ ም ፡ ለ ለ ም ነ ም ፡ ለ ለ ሁ ፡ እ ን ጂ
ሪ ይ ኝ ፡ ም ነ ው ፡ ጥ ቅ ሹ ን ፡ ከ ጥ ን ት ፡ ይ ም ሮ ፡ ነ ው ና ፡ ካ ባ ቱ ን ት ን ፡
ከ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ፡ በ ኋ ላ ፡ ከ መ ሳ ቂ ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ይ ጠ ቁ ኝ ።



ሎ ሽ ለ ሬ ፡ በ ፲ ኃ ሳ ፡ ወ ሊ ያ ዝ ያ ።
በ ፲ ወ ፷ ዩ ፬ ፻ ወ ፫ ፡ አ ሀ ሰ ፡ ም ሕ
በ ለ ይ ዋ ፡ ከ ሳ ማ ።

May the message of *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach the honoured queen of England, Victoria (Bīktoriya).

How are you, really? As for me, I am well, thank God. It is to tell you the news of what happened in my country [that I write]. I am very happy about the letter of advice you sent me. Last year I was told (lit. it was said) to be [on] friendly [terms] with the whole world.

But now the French consul (who is) at Massawa, Munzinger (Minsenjir) has offended me badly. It is because of the Catholic faith. [His plan is] that I should fight with the French, that the people of Abyssinia and the French (people) should destroy each other. He sent me an explicit written declaration of war. He wrote (lit. sent) to me (saying), "If you do not accept the Catholic faith, I shall bring and lead an army [against you], and have you killed as *Aṭē* Tēwodros". However, I believe in Christ, and I am baptized together with my people. I believe in the Gospel. And you are the defender of the Christian faith in the Gospel. You are able to stop this matter by your seal. I have stood firm by your word, and have listened to your advice.

Now I beg you to give me advice. I beg you, moreover, to help me for our friendship is [something] that started long ago, from our fathers. Under Christ, protect me from all my enemies.

Written in the town of Adwa on the 15th day of Mīyaziya, in the year of grace 1863.

Illegible seal in wax.

T1/7217, file no. 15005 (papers regarding Alemayyehu), Amharic original and English translation. Copies of the translation are also found in FO 1/29, fols 271–274.

On copies of the letter the date of receipt is noted as June 1872. A Foreign Office minute suggests that the letter be forwarded to the queen and to India Office, and it must have been from the India Office that the original found its way into Alemayyehu's file at the Treasury! The question directed to the India Office by the Foreign Office was "whether any notice should be taken of Mr. Munzinger's alleged communication to the Prince" and if so what to answer. Granville commented, "Perhaps the fewer communications we have with the Prince the better, but it will hardly do to take no notice of his letter" (FO 1/29, fol. 276).

The delay in forwarding this and Kasa's other letters dated 22 April 1871 (nos 67–68) may well have been caused by Munzinger, who entered Egyptian service as governor of Massawa in April 1871. Somehow they must eventually have fallen into the hands of Minīlik's agent at Aden, César Tian, who forwarded them to Russell's successor C.W. Tremenheere in April the following year (FO 1/29, fol. 306). No reply was immediately prepared to the above letter. It was the arrival in London of General Kirkham with new letters from Yohannis IV (nos. 87–88) that caused the Foreign Office to take the matter more seriously.

The letters from Queen Victoria and Lord Granville to Kasa in March 1872 were replies to his letters of August 1870 (nos. 51 and 52).

Document no. 67

Kasa Mirṣha to E.L. Russell, 22 April 1871

ሠመ ልእነ ሳ፡ ዘ ይጅ፡ አዝዘማ ች፡ ካ ሳ፡ ር አ ሰ፡ ሠመ ኑ፡ኛ ነ ሳ፡ ሰ ዪመ፡
አ ግዚአ ብ ሔ ር፡ዘ ብ ሔ ረ፡ ለ እ ሱ ያ መ፡ ቃ ዮ ን፡ ር አ ሰ፡ ኢ ት ዮ ጵ ያ ፡፡
ይ ድ ረ ሰ ፡ ገ ጀ ነ ው ል፡ አ ር ሰ ል፡ለ ይ ሃ ፡፡ አ ጅ ሁ ን፡ አ ነ ይ ሱ፡ ነ ሣ ፡ አ ኔ ፡
ይ ነ ሃ ፡ ነ ኝ ፡ አ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ይ መ ሰ ነ ን ፡፡ መ ረ ሁ ት ፡ ሰ ዪ ጅ ፡ አ ሰ ሙ ፡
አ ነ ዲ ፡ መ ይ ፡ መ ሰ ሁ ዐ ቢ ኝ ፡ ዝ ባ ኒ ፡ ሰ ው ነ ይ ን ፡፡ ይ ስ ይ ዲ ል ኝ ፡፡
አ ግ ዲ ን ያ መ ፡ መ ይ ፡ ሰ ሙ ር ጅ ፡ ኑ ሁ ፪ ፡ አ ፍ ፡ መ ሳ ት ይ ሳ ፡፡ ቦ ነ ይ ፡ ይ ሰ ይ ዲ ል
ይ ግ ሣ ያ መ ፡ መ ፈ ፡ ል ነ ገ ረ ም ፡፡ ሁ ነ ሰ ል ፡ ም ነ ሰ ጅ ር ፡፡ አ ጅ ግ ፡ በ ይ ሱ ኝ ፡፡
የ ኑ ዋ ሊ ክ ፡ ነ ይ መ ነ ሳ ፡ ነ ል ት ሳ በ ል ህ ፡ ብ ሰ ሙ ፡፡ የ ፈ ረ ነ ሲ ስ ፡ ሠ ር ፡ መ ር ፡
አ ም ጭ ች ፡ እ ነ ይ ፡ አ ጤ ፡ ቴ ም ድ ሮ ሰ ፡ አ ሰ ሳ ጣ ህ ፡ አ ሰ ሙ ፡ አ ሱ ኝ ፡፡
የ ቴ ር ሣ ፡ ሠ ረ ሳ ት ፡ ጽ ፈ ሙ ፡ ሳ ነ ሥ ብ ኝ ፡፡ አ ሁ ነ ም ፡ እ ር ሰ ም ነ ፡ አ ስ ሣ ወ ነ ሣ ፡
አ ሰ ሙ ፡፡ ይ ህ ነ ነ ፡ በ ይ ሊ ነ ፡ ሰ እ ን ግ ሊ ዝ ፡ መ ን ግ ሥ ት ፡ ሁ ሱ ፡ ጽ ፈ ሙ ፡ እ ነ ይ ል
ኩ ልኝ ፡፡ ሰ ሁ ሱ ፡ እ ነ ይ እ ሰ ሙ ል ኝ ፡፡ የ ኔ ፡ መ ዝ ሴ ፡ እ ነ ግ ሊ ዝ ፡ ነ ሙ ፡፡ የ ዚ ህ ነ ፡ መ
ሳ ት ፡ ም ሳ ሽ ም ፡ ጥ ሥ ፡ ቢ ሰ ይ ል ኝ ፡ እ መ ይ ፡ አ ሰ ሙ ፡፡

[illegible] ተ ጽ ሕ ፈ ፡ በ ፲ ሪ ቱ ን ፡ ወ ኒ ያ ዝ ያ
በ ፲ መ ኟ የ ጀ መ ሮ አ መ ቱ ፡ ም ፡
ሩ ት ፡ በ አ ይ ዋ ፡ ካ ቱ ማ ን ፡፡



May the message of *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint*, elect of God, of the land of Aksum Ṣiyon, the capital (*ri'ise*) of Ethiopia, reach General Russell (Iresel), Aden.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. I am sending [some] letters. [Please] forward one for me to Mr. King and Company (Kīñ Kubanī), London, and one to Lord Napier of Meqdela (Lord Napīyur of Meqdela). Send it for me to Bombay (Bobay).

Let me also tell you [the] news. Consul Munzinger (Minsijir) has offended me greatly by saying to me, "If you do not accept the Catholic faith I shall guide [and] bring the French army and shall have you punished as *Aṭē* Tēwodros." He wrote and sent me an ultimatum.

And now I beg you to write [about] all this abuse against me and send to the English government. See to it that all hear about it. The English are my representative. I would like you to send me the reply to this letter at once (lit. quickly).

Written in the town of Adwa on the 15th day of Mīyaziya, in the year of grace 1863.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fol. 59, Amharic original; fols 60 and 62, English translations. A copy of the translation, by Lieutenant Prideaux of the Rassam mission, was forwarded from Aden by Russell's successor as British resident there, C. W. Tremenheere, who reported that he had received the letter from Minīlik's agent César Tian together with a letter from *Dejjazmach* Kasa to Victoria (no. 66).

The resident mentions that on the same occasion he received two letters from Minīlik and *Afe Nigus* Meshesha, respectively. These were dated March 1870. Presumably they were forwarded straight to Rassam; we have not been able to locate them.

It is quite possible that the sentence "*Yenē wekīlē inglīz new*" could refer to Messrs King and Company, rather than Great Britain, thus "My representative is an Englishman."

Document no. 68

Kasa Mirẓha to Robert Napier, 22 April 1871

Letter from Dedj-azmatch Kāsa, Head of the Chiefs, God's Governor of Axum of Zion, Head of Ethiopia:

May it reach Lord Napier of Magdala. How are you? I am well, God be praised. Consul Munzinger of Massowa had greatly wronged me. He wishes to come with the French in order that he may raise the question of the Faith, and he wishes to incite to war against me the whole Abyssinian people. Now the whole of the Abyssinian people believe in, and are baptized in, the Gospel, but in this way he would excite war in order that they might be coerced by violence into being baptized into the Catholic Faith. When I was absent from Adwa with my relatives, he gave muskets and powder to my enemies and to the evil-disposed behind my back. I did not think that such conduct was becoming in a Consul, but I passed over the deeds that Consul Munzinger performed on account of friendship. But he has now sent me a sharp, warlike letter which he has written and sent, to the effect that the French would come and that I would be treated like King Theodore. You are my father and my agent is an Englishman. Do not forget our friendship. Communicate all this intelligence to the English government (lit. House of the Kingdom)

As for me I have not forgotten the advice you gave me, first of all at Ad-Aga and afterwords at Sanāfê.

Written in the capital city of Adwa the 15th day of Miazia in the year of grace 1863 (answering to March–April 1872).

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fol. 62, English translation by Hormuzd Rassam at Aden dated 4 June 1872. The fact that it took more than a year for this letter to reach the British authorities there (see no. 66), explains how the Ethiopian year 1863 could become 1872. A copy of the translation is also found in FO 1/29, but it has been impossible to locate the Amharic original. It is easy to recognize the standard form of Kasa's titles used in the letters to Victoria and Russell the same day (nos 66, 67). Obviously "Axum of Zion" should have been "Zion of Aksum".

In a note on the translation Rassam writes that he had not been able to find any person at Aden who knew Amharic, and that he had therefore been compelled to translate the letter himself. He would not vouch for the translation in all details but believed that it conveyed the content "with sufficient accuracy".

This letter is reproduced with the orthography, including misspellings, and punctuation of Rassam's translation.

Document no. 69

Minīlik to C.W. Tremenheere, 6 May 1871

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, True Light, Inextinguishable Lamp, Immortal King; to Him be praise and glory for ever. Amen.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach the governor of Aden, the representative of the queen.

How are you, really? I am well, glory and praise be to God. By the power of God, my country and my whole army are well. The letter you sent me has reached me. I received [it] with much gratitude [and] joy. [Please], you, too, acknowledge (for my sake) my agent César Tian (Qīsar Tīyan). Inform all others on my behalf that he is my agent. Assist him in all my affairs.

I appreciated very much and am satisfied with the information on commercial matters which you sent me through my agent. Much consultation is necessary over the matter of our route. Put pressure on Abū Bakr and [the people of] Tajura yourselves. I have the strength to deal with the Adal who are on my frontier in order to open the route. Furthermore, exert yourself on my behalf regarding the affairs of Abyssinia in order that hostilities cease [and] the blood of Christians be not shed in vain [and] we remain within our respective countries. Do this for us at once by taking counsel with our friends, the kings. May God give you health in full measure.

Written in the camp of Innewarī, on the 29th of Mīyaziya 1863 after the birth of Christ, [in the year of] Luke.

Seal: King of Kings Minīlik. The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fol. 19, Amharic original; fol. 18, French translation, also FO 1/29, fol. 284. The letter was forwarded by Bishop Massaja, who was present at Innewarī.

In his covering letter dated 21 May Massaja mentions that the courier was *Ato* Werqē, involved in earlier contacts with the British at Aden and with Abū Bakr (no. 65), whose son Muḥammad was actually reported to have brought the letter to Aden. The opening lines are not typically Ethiopian, and it is quite possible that, though Massaja does call it a translation, the letter was composed by him on the instructions of the king. The seal is the one introduced into Minīlik's correspondence in July the previous year. Note that the text of this letter, as of others, both earlier (no. 48) and later (nos.. 82, 83, 85), does not use the spelling 'Minyilik' and the motto of the seal. The impression is that these novelties were both introduced by the foreigners who produced the seal (see no. 48).

This letter was sent to the coast with the son of Abū Bakr but seems not to have reached its destination as expected; Massaja reports that Minīlik instructed him to send a translation via Massawa by the hand of *Ato* Werqē. The letter was forwarded from Aden to London only in October.

Document no. 70

Mirṣha Werqē to Edward Stanton, 11 May 1871

Cairo, Thursday, 11 May 1871

Sir,

As I had the satisfaction of reading in the Times Newspaper in a report of a conversation in the House of Lords on the 31st of March that Lord Granville said that the Government of Her Majesty the Queen had not refused to receive my colleague and myself as Envoys deputed by Prince Kassai of Tigré to convey his sentiments of amity and of respect to Her Majesty but that there was difficulty in providing for our journey from Abyssinia to England. I do myself the honor of asking you if you are in possession of any late information from Her Majesty's Government, which in the sense of the answer given by Lord Granville referred to, might assist us in deciding on the course which it would be expedient for us to take in execution of our mission or in submission of our present position to our Gracious Prince with a view to solicit from His Highness new instructions for our guidance in the difficult circumstances in which the long delay now 8 months since we announced our arrival to yourself as Her Majesty's Agent here, has placed us.

Of course it was our special object on behalf of His Highness, in acquitting ourselves as commanded of our duty to His Highness and to Her Majesty to obtain and take back with us from so great and prosperous a country as England some ideas which might be usefully applied towards improving the industry commerce and prosperity of Abyssinia, and this is an object which we have still at heart and hope, by the favour and good will of Her Majesty's Government to be yet enabled to accomplish, and the more so, that the european summer season which is just approaching would be more agreable to us personally, and more favourable to our movements out of doors, that would have been the winter which we must have encountered in England had we gone on there immediately after our arrival here.

I know that our Prince in sending us on this honourable mission, was influenced solely by a desire to cultivate the friendships and goodwill of England, whose armies, when in Abyssinia under their illustrious chief the Lord Napier, who has done us the honour to associate a place he has rendered historic in our country with his title. His Highness did not cease to assist and befriend out of regard for Her Majesty the Queen of the British Empire and the people under Her Dominion. Lord Napier can testify to the constant interchange of good offices, while he was in Abyssinia between his people and those of our Prince and more than that, our Prince when he subsequently received from Her Majesty's Government, by the agency of yourself, a request to facilitate the return from Abyssinia of the Armenian Bishop Ishak, not only responded with some effort (the Bishop had not been detained in Tigré) to Her Majesty's friendly confidence and succeeded in bringing the Bishop to Tigré, but furnished him with means for prosecuting onwards to Cairo.

Under all these circumstances I venture to feel assured that you will not fail to appreciate the dilemma in which we are placed and represent, on our behalf, with all proper respect for Her Majesty's Government our desire to receive from it an early and definite and allow me to add, for our own purpose satisfactory reply.

In conclusion I must appeal to your consideration to allow me to ask you to return to me a letter I addressed to you on the 3rd instant which I wrote when suffering from some bodily pain and which I fear did not so exactly express what I wished to say as this.

Thanking you, also, by anticipation for the good offices we attend from you in the forwarding to England the purport of this our present communication to you.

I have the honor to be, Sir

Your most obedient & humble servant
for myself and colleague the President of the Concil, Georgios
/Signed/ The Legi M. M. Warkee

FO 1/28, fols 157-161, English copy of what was most probably an English original. Mirṣha Werqē knew English and would hardly have used Amharic to a British official. See ACTA I, no. 89, and ACTA II, no. 57.

The letter is reproduced with the orthography and punctuation, including misspellings and omissions, of the preserved text.

Document no. 71

Minīlik to Theodore Waldmeier, 15 May 1871

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, King of Kings & Lord of Lords, the True Light, which will never be extinguished; the only King, who will live eternally, to Him belongs honour, power, & glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

This letter is sent from the king of kings, Menelek, of Ethiopia to Mr. Waldmeier. – How are you? – God be praised, I am well; my kingdom & people prosper through the mercy of the Lord. – I received your letter which gave me much pleasure. I will hear & accept your counsel, that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to the heathen nations & I will never hinder you, nor prevent you from preaching the Gospel. Two points in your letter specially gladdened my heart. – The first is that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to the heathen Galla nations, & the second is, that when you come, you will bring me some good artisans who will work for me. Now come quickly. – I give you permission to preach the Gospel among the heathen, that they may be enlightend, & bring those men & buy some instruments for me. – I have sent you for your journey, 1,000 dollars; receive it from Messrs Mayer and Bender in Tigrè & send me word when you will come, that I may receive you. – I send two copies of this letter, – one by Tajoora & Aden, & the other by Adowa & Massawah.

Written in Shoa, in the city Benwari, May 15th 1871.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of tribe of Judah has prevailed.

When you come come by the Province of Tajoora. – I have prepared the road; do not be afraid.

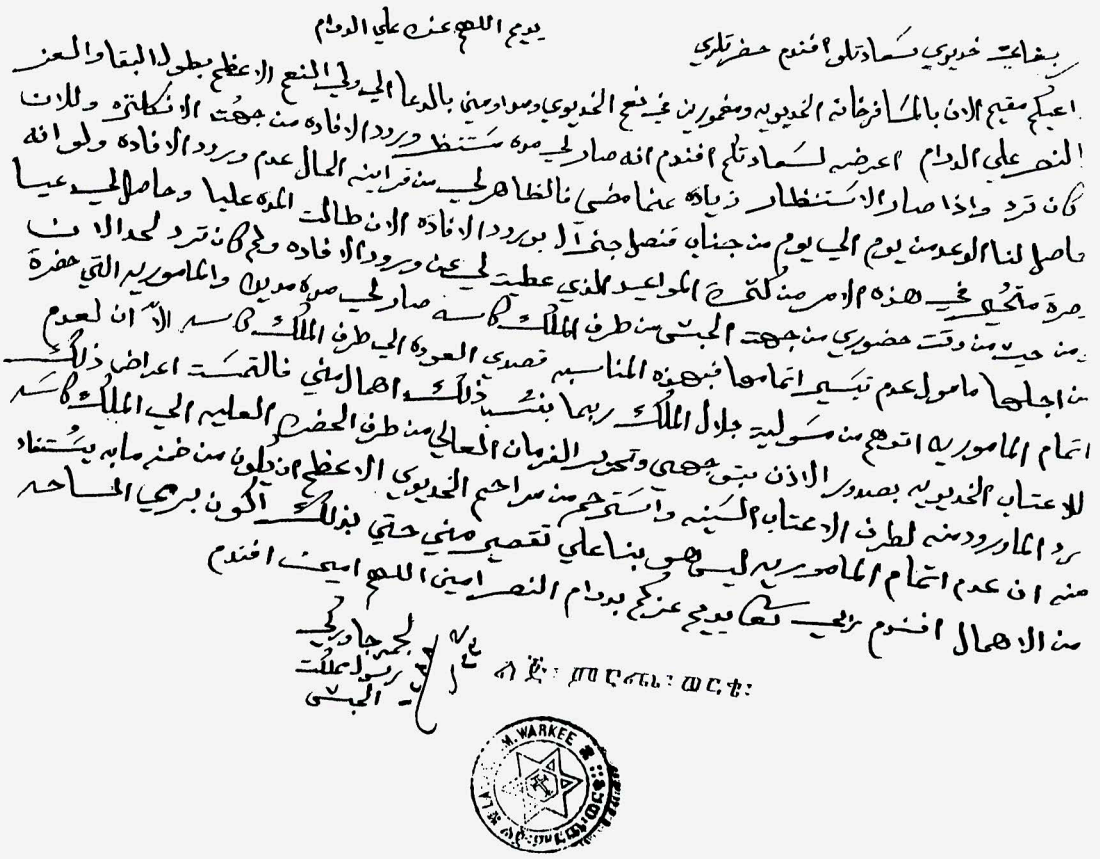
CMS archives, Birmingham, CM/O 8/85B, English translation inserted in a long report from Waldmeier in Syria dated 30 September 1871. The seal at the bottom of the letter is identical with the seal used on documents 48 and 69. If Waldmeier had somehow acquired a copy of Minīlik's seal, or transferred the image to his report in some other way, is difficult to determine.

Waldmeier introduces the letter quoting, "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God" from the book of Psalms. The opening paragraph of the letter itself, invoking Christ instead of the Trinity, does not necessarily indicate a Protestant influence, and there seems to be no reason to doubt the authenticity of the text. Waldmeier's text provides further information about the circumstances. He had apparently received an earlier letter from Minīlik—possibly the one quoted in Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II. Ethiopia 1844–1913* (Oxford, 1875), p. 43—asking him to return to Ethiopia with his missionary colleague Saalmüller "to superintend Industrial Works" for the king. Waldmeier had then replied "more than a year ago" that he would no longer himself accept "manual and secular employment" but only come to preach the Gospel. From the above letter it would seem that he had, however, held out the possibility that he might be able to bring some artisans and equipment.

The letter is reproduced with the orthography, including punctuation, of the preserved English text. The place name read as 'Benwari' is Innewarī, preceded by the preposition '*be-*'.

Document no. 72

Mirċha Werqē to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 12 June 1871



May God sustain his power for ever.

[To] my innermost desire, the *khedive*, His Highness, the *effendi*, His Excellency.

The one who appeals to you is at present staying in the *khedivial* guesthouse (*masāfarkhāna al-khadiwiyya*), submerged in the bounty of the *khedive,* and persists in prayer for the greatest of benefactors that [his] life, power and victories may last for ever.

I present to Your Excellency, *effendi*, [the fact] that for some time I have been waiting for the arrival of a message from England (*al-Inkiltarra*). But until now it has not been brought back, and if the waiting exceeds the time passed it appears to me from the circumstances of the situation that no message will arrive, although we are every day given the promise by His Excellency the consul general that the message is forthcoming.

Now the time [I have waited] has become too long for me and I have become exhausted. I am puzzled about this matter due to the many promises I have been given about the arrival of the reply, but so far it has not been brought back. Since a very long time has passed for me from the moment I arrived from Abyssinia on behalf of King Kasa, the assignment for which I came is not easy to fulfill as expected.

Because of this my intention is to return to King Kasa, except that due to the non-fulfillment of the assignment I fear [being held] responsible [by] the glorious king who will perhaps attribute this to some negligence of mine. I therefore beg to submit this to His Highness the *khedive* to obtain permission for my departure and the issue of a supreme *firmān* from His Sublime Highness to King Kasa as a reply to what came from him to His August Highness. And I plead for the mercy of the supreme *khedive* to be so kind as to chose his words in it implying that the non-fulfillment of the mission is not due to any neglect of mine so that through this I will emerge innocent of any negligence.

Effendi, I pray to the Almighty to sustain your fame by perpetuating your victories. Amen, O God, amen, *effendi*.

Lij Mirṣha Werqē, envoy of the king of Abyssinia. *Lij* Mirṣha Werqē.

23 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 1288.

Seal: *Lagi*(?) M.M. Warkee; *Lij* Mirṣha Werqē.

ENA, Maia Sanieh (Arab) Carton 16 (earlier Turkish, Carton 48), fol. 196, Arabic original. The text is slightly ambiguous with the writer shifting between the second and the third person for the *khedive*. One is left with the impression that the mind of the writer is wandering between the *khedive* and someone who is to approach him on behalf of the writer. Nevertheless the content of the message is obviously in its entirety intended for the *khedive.*

While in Cairo *Lij* Mirṣha Werqē apparently had a seal manufactured for himself, with a cross in a star of David and with his name and title in both Latin and Ethiopic letters. Part of the legend is illegible. From Mirṣha Werqē's letter to Consul Stanton written one month earlier and signed (probably sealed) "Legi M.M. Warkee" (no. 70), it is possible to conclude that 'La' should be followed by 'gi' for 'j'. That the seal has "Lagi" instead of "Legi" is of little significance.

Dejjazmach Kasa's intention had been that Mirṣha Werqē and his companion Birru Welde Gīyorgīs should travel to London with a letter (no. 54) and presents for Queen Victoria. Although they carried several letters to British authorities (nos 51–53, 55) they were been prevented from proceeding from Cairo to London. Birru had returned and Mirṣha was now, after having waited for a reply from London for ten months, also prepared to give upp. See also document no. 70.

The letter is written in the official style of Arabic used by the Egyptian administration.

Document no. 73

Kasa Mirċha to Robert Napier, 26 July 1871





In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message of the Elect of God, Kasa, king of Zion of Ethiopia, reach Lord Robert Napier of Magdala (Lord Rabt Napīyur of Meqdela). How are you really? I am well, thank God.

While I was peacefully settled (lit. sitting quietly), intending to make my country Tigray stable, as you, my father, had advised me, my enemy *Wagshum* Gobezē, who is called *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs, gathered together all the notables of Abyssinia and came against me, as far as my town Adwa. But I waited [trusting] in God, and defeated him together with his army. With the exception of Minīlik of Shewa, I have united [and] brought together the whole kingdom of Ethiopia into my hands. Good news, O my father, my friend, rejoice! Inform all our friends (who are) in the kingdom of England (Ingiltar) of our happiness, as our friendship with the English government is of old. And now, may God strengthen this friendship of ours. Amen.

The 20th day of Hamlē, in the year of grace 1863.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

IOR, MSS, Eur. F. 114, Napier of Magdala Collection, no. 29/1, Amharic original and English translation, both stamped and sealed in red wax. The letter was published in H.D. Napier, *Letters of Field-marshal Lord Napier of Magdala*, London, n.d., opposite p. 21.

After the battle on 11 July 1871 Kasa changed his title from *dejjazmach* and *ri'ise mekwanint* to *nigus*. 'Aksum' was dropped, probably to suggest a connection with the original 'kings of Zion', *i.e.* Jerusalem. At any rate it seems preferable to use 'king of Zion' rather than 'king of Ṣiyon' in the translations, once the explicit reference to Maryam Ṣiyon in Aksum has been dropped. In this letter the distinction between *ingiltar mengist* for the kingdom of England and *inglīz mengist* for the English government is clearly introduced (see also also nos. 74 and 75).

Document no. 74

Kasa Mirṣha to E.L. Russell, 26 July 1871

በስመ፡አብ፡ወወልዱ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡ሰ ላምታ ሳ ፡ለሜጀር።

መልእክት፡ዘሰደወመ፡ንጉሠ ነገሥት፡ካሳ፡ነጉሡ ጽዮን፡ዘኢትዮጵያ ፡ወደ፡ጀነራል፡እርሰል።አጼ፡ኍኑ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ለኩ።አእምሮ፡ያህዝ ፣፡ነኝ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ይመስግን።

ከእንግሊዝ፡ጥሉ፡የቀነሳ፡መደኛ፡የምሳሰደጡ፡ነገር፡መሩቀት፡ሁኩ፡ለርሱ ፡ጓደኝነት፡በሰው፡ልክ ልኝ፡ነበር።ሰ ስ፡ዘህ፡ነገር፡መረቀት፡ጸጉሰ ም፡ለአሁ።ጠላቴ፡ዋ ግ፡ሸዎመ፡ገ፡በዜ፡ሳጠ፡ኮህ ስ፡ጂዮ ር፡ጊሽ፡የቀባሰ ው፡ከከተማ ዬ፡ዩሩስ፡ጀዮዋ፡መዋ ጭ፡ከሰራ ዊ ቱ፡ጋራ፡ሁ ል፡ጀደራ ግሁት።ጀሮሱንም፡ ከጠ ሳ ጭቼ፡ሁ ሉ፡ጋ ሬ፡ያዝሁ ት።ከሸ ዋ ው፡ ምን፡ይልክ፡በቀ ር። የሞሩሻ፡ሀ ሰም። ወደ፡ጂ፡ሆይ፡ጀሰ ይበሰ ም፡ሰ ወደ፡ጀቻችን፡ሁ ሉ፡በእን ግል ጣር፡ካ ሱ፡ይነገሩሰ ዜ ው። ፍቅራችንን፡ጀግዚአብሔር፡ያጥ ፍ ልን። ሰ ፀሜጀ። በ፮ሳ ነ፡ሰ ላም ሴ፡ተጽ ሐፈ። በ፲ወ ፭ ፷ወ ፫ ሳመሀ ት፡ ምሰ ሰ ራ ሳ



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message of the Elect of God, Kasa, king of Zion of Ethiopia. reach General Russell (Jēneral Iresel). How are you, really? I am well, thank God.

They have written to me (lit. It has been sent to me saying), "Write to him all those letters which you [want to] send to us because of your friendship with the English." Therefore I am writing a letter to you.

I have defeated my enemy *Wagshum* Gobezē, who is called *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs, who came with his army to my town Adwa, and I captured him together with all my enemies with the exception of Minīlik (Min Yilik) of Shewa. None remain (for me). Rejoice, my friend! Inform all our friends (who are) in England (Ingilṭar). May God strengthen our friendship. Amen.

Written on the 20th day of Hamlē, in the year of grace 1863.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

IOR, R/20/A/376, Aden Settlement Records: Political Compilation 1871 (Abyssinia), fol. 142, Amharic original; fol. 141, English translation. A copy of the translation (by the assistant resident at Aden) is found in FO 1/28, fol. 206. There the conversion of the date is wrong by one day.

This letter also includes both *inglīz* and *ingilṭar* (see no. 73), translated 'the English' and 'England' respectively. Note the unusual way of writing Minīlik in two words: Min Yilik.

Document no. 75

Kasa Mirċha to Victoria, 28 July 1871

በስመ፡ አብ፡ወወ ልዱ፡ ወመ ነፈ ስ፡ት ሂ ስ፡ ፪ አም ላነ፡፡
አሜ ን ።
ለመ ልእክት፡ዘ ሰ ይ መ፡ እግዚ አብሔ ር፡ ነ ጣ፡ንጉ ሠ፡ነ ገሥ ት፡
ዘ ኢት ዮጵ ያ ።። ይ ድ ረ ስ ።።

ከ ገበ ሩ ት፡ ን ግ ሥ ት፡ በ ክ ቶ ር ያ፡ዘ ሀ ገ ር፡እን ግ ል ጣ ር ፡ አ ይ ጉ ን ን፡እን ዚ
ት፡ሾ ሱ፡እ ኔ ም፡ ይ ህ ኖ ፡ ነ ኝ ፡ እ ግዚ አ ብ ሔ ር፡ ይ መ ሰ ገ ን ። ሰ ፊ ስ፡ክ ብ ረ ት
ም፡ ሰ ላ ም ታ ዊ ን ፡ ከ ጓ ት ፡ በ ፯ ላ ፡ በ ይ ሰ ም ፡ ም ክ ር ። ። በ ር ሰ ም ፡ ጥ ቅ ር ፡ እን
ቺ ፡ አ ሰ ሁ ። እ ጅ ግ ፡ ይ ሰ ፡ ክ ሎ ኖ ል ። ። ሉ ሁ ን ም ፡ ጠ ላ ቴ ፡ ዋ ግ ፡ ሹ ም ፡ ኁ በ
ዚ ፡ እ ጤ ፡ ኮ ክ ስ ፡ ጌ ዮ ር ጌ ስ ፡ የ ተ ባ ለ ው ። ከ ገ ሬ ፡ ሉ ይ ዋ ፡ ከ ገ ኮ ሞ ዬ ፡ መ
ጥ ቶ ፡ ኮ ሞ ጋ ን ፡ ይ ል ፡ ሉ ይ ረ ግ ሁ ት ። ከ ሰ ራ ዊ ቱ ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ እ ር ሱ ን ም ፡ ያ ዝ ሁ
ት ፡ ገ ጠ ላ ቴ ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ እ ጓ ኩ ፡ እ ግ ኙ ፡ ያ መ ሰ ጠ ፡ የ ሰ ም ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ሁ ለ ት መ ው ፡
ከ ጅ ፡ ነ በ ። ከ ሸ ዋ ው ፡ ም ኔ ይ ል ክ ፡ በ ኮ ር ። የ ሌ ት ዮ ጵ ያ ፡ መ ን ግ ሥ ት ፡
ሁ ሉ ፡ በ እ ግዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ሃ ይ ለ ፡ በ ጅ ፡ ሰ ይ ረ ግ ሁ ት ። እ ኝ ይ ፡ ጥ ን ት ፡ ፍ ቱ ራ ሽ
ነ ፡ ሰ ይ ር ሱ ኝ ፡ ይ ዘ ኑ ል ኝ ። እ ኔ ም ፡ የ እ ግ ሌ ዝ ን ፡ መ ን ግ ሥ ት ፡ ፍ ቅ ር ፡ አ ሪ ሳ
ሁ ም ። እ ኛ ይ ፡ ጥ ን ቱ ፡ ነ ኝ ። አ ባ ቶ ቼ ን ፡ አ ባ ቶ ቼ ም ፡ እ ኔ ን ፡ እ ር ሰ ም ፡ እ ኛ ይ ፡ ፍ
ቀ ር ነ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቶ ስ ፡ ነ ግ ሥ ታ ት ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ እ ኛ ይ ያ ፡ ሩ ቅ ሩ ኝ ። እ ስ ም ኑ ም ፡
አ ሰ ሁ ። የ ክ ር ስ ቲ ያ ን ፡ ሃ ይ ማ ኖ ት ፡ እ ኛ ይ ጠ ና ክ ሁ ሉ ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ ፍ ቅ ር ፡ እ ሬ
ል ግ ፡ አ ሰ ሁ ። እ ግዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ እ ይ ሜ ና ፡ ጤ ና ፡ ይ ስ ጥ ል ኝ ። ። አ ሜ ን ። ።

ተ ጽ ሕ ፈ ፡ በ ፲ ፱ ፡ ቀ ን ፡ ሐ ም ሌ ።
በ ፲ ፱ ፻ ፷ ፫ ፡ ዓ መ ተ ፡
ም ሕ ረ ት ።
በ አ ድ ዋ ፡ ከ ተ ማ ።

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message of the Elect of God, Kasa, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured Queen Victoria, of the land of England (Ingiltar).

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. Having conveyed my greetings out of respect for you, [I assure you] that I have consolidated [my position] on the basis of your advice [and] your friendship. I am very happy. And now, my enemy *Wagshum* Gobezē, who is called Aṭē Tekle Gīyorgīs, came to my country, to my city Adwa. We fought. I defeated him. And I captured him together with his army. Of all my enemies not even one escaped. All were picked up and fell into my hands.

By the power of God, with the exception of Minīlik (Minīyilik) of Shewa, I have united [and] brought together into my hands the whole kingdom of Ethiopia.

Do not forget me, pray for me, because of (lit. like) our friendship of the past. On my part, I have not forgotten the friendship of the English government. I am the same as before. I beg you to make me friends with all the kings of Europe in the same way as my fathers and your fathers [were friends and] you and I are friends. I want friendship with all, so that the Christian faith may be consolidated. May God give [you] life and health for my sake. Amen.

Written in the town of Adwa on the 22nd day of Hamlē, in the year of grace 1863.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Kasa, *ri'ise mekwanint* of Ethiopia.

FO 1/28, fol. 197, Amharic original; fol. 198, English translation. The letter is both stamped and sealed with wax. It was handed to the British consul at Suez who was told that it came from Kirkham, "written by him in the name of Prince Kasa" (fol 193). This is not true in the literal sense of the word; the calligraphy is that of a well-trained scribe. But Kirkham may well have been involved in the wording, for instance the title of "king of kings of Ethiopia", used for the first time in Yohannis's correspondence, instead of "king of Zion of Ethiopia" as in the letters to Napier and Russell only two days earlier (nos. 73 and 74). Apparently Kasa's secretary had problems with how to write Minīlik's name; now 'Min Yilik' has become 'Minīyilik'.

Document no. 76

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to C.W. Tremenheere, 28 Aug. 1871



Praise be to God alone.

To His Excellency, the administrator of justice of the port of Aden. May God Almighty guide him. Amen.

[These] words come from the port of Zeyla, the protected, to the port of Aden. The message from our region is welfare and calm, peace and security. If you inquire about us we are well and healthy. May God make you likewise and even more so by the truth of Muḥammad and his family. Amen.

Your kind letter has arrived, and we have understood what you wrote to us. It has been understood by us. What was sent from you, the chest and the letter to King Minīlik, reached us and was delayed with us for a period of two months due to the violent rains on the road. We have sent both [to him] with our sons.

On the same day letters arrived from him to you with our son *Ḥājj* Muḥammad bin *Ḥājj* Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm. He is going to you. Receive the letters from him as soon as he comes to you. And if you have a letter, send it with him. May you remain well.

The message comes from *Amīr Ḥājj* Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm. May God Almighty protect him. Amen.

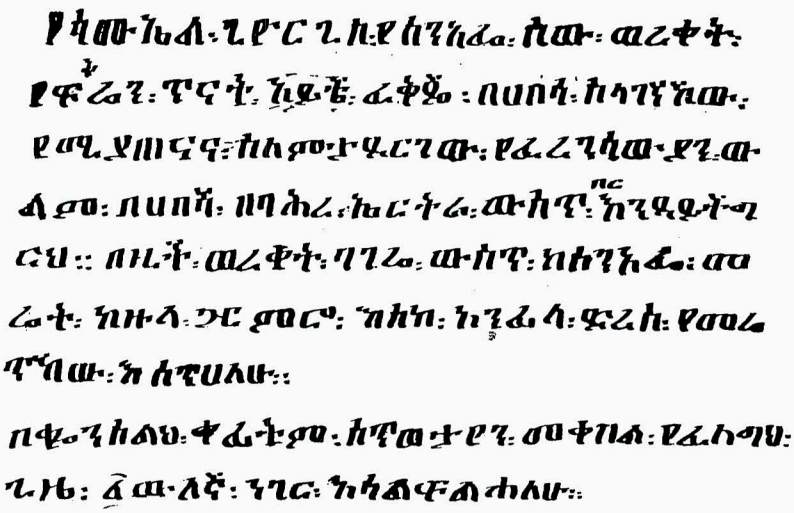
Dated Jumād al-Ākhir 11, 1288.

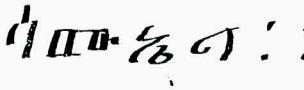
Seal: Abū Bakr bin Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm.

IOR, R/20/A/401, vol. 583, Aden Residency, Abyssinia Compilations 1872, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fol. 13, Arabic original; fol. 12, English translation.

Document no. 77

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Pierre Arnoux [11 Sept. 1871]





Letter from (lit. paper of) Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs, the man of Senafē.

Taking the strength of my friendship into account, I, of my own free will, by this letter give you what[ever] you choose within my country, from the land of Senafē, starting at Zula up to Anfīla, to enhance [the value of] what you have obtained in Abyssinia so that you will have no difficulty concerning a point of access to Abyssinia on the Red Sea in view of the treaty with the French which you are concluding.

When you want to receive my gift, I will sign something legal (lit. pass a legal thing) for you in the presence of your consul.

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs.

ASMAI, Etiopia 36/1–3, no no., Amharic original and French translation. In the French version the letter is dated Massawa 11 September. The Amharic is grammatically so confused that it is difficult to believe that the text was not dictated in a European language by Mr. Arnoux. The translation, however, is far from literal, and Arnoux, who on his return to Europe apparently failed to impress the French government with his diplomatic efforts, has exchanged the reference to "the treaty with the French" into "l'organisation du comptoir Italien sur le litoral de l'Abyssinie dans la mer rouge"! This is only the first of a number of documents which raise grave doubts about the honesty of the French businessman (see documents no. 165–173 from his visit to Minīlik in 1876).

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs, a son of Alī Umar (ACTA I, nos. 25–26) and also known as Husayn Alī, had been baptized by Samuel Gobat some forty years before this letter was written. For his earlier contacts with Europeans, see ACTA I, nos. 34, 41, and II, nos. 3, 16, 38n, 154, 156, 162, 171, 248. In the last of these documents Asseggaheñ reports that Samu'ēl was recommended to *Dejjazmach* Kasa by the British and that he received a governorship, probably the whole of Akkele Guzay. When Kasa Golja contested Kasa Mirċha's claims to Hamasēn, Samu'ēl reportedly sided with the former (AECP, Égypte 49, fols 427–438) and ultimately shared in his defeat. Apparently his attachment to the family of Tēwodros was strong (see no. 79).

Document no. 78

Birru Welde Gīyorgīs to Franz Hassen, 20 Oct. 1871

Letter of *Aleqa* Birru sent to Mr. Hassen, the French consul, asking very much, "How you are?" I am well, by the help of Christ.

My strong desire is that the two of us should meet in that place so that we could confer with each other. Therefore I am trying to obtain the royal permission to come. Until we see each other, do not listen to the words of other people. I have said to him (to the king) to do nothing harmful to the missionaries, who are not criminals, and to wait for the return of the consul from Aden /with reference to the affair of Mr. Duflos/.

But now that *Abune* Yosēf /Monsignor Touvier/ has sent a letter to Tekle Gīyorgīs /Gobezē/, a very bad letter, and has cast blame there—says King Kasa—this is a crime in my country. This letter has his /Monsignor Touvier's/ signature and is to be found in the royal palace, and if he /Kasa/ sees it, he will reflect a lot about it.

I wanted to reform Abyssinia, but matters have become unbearable for me because of these people, drunkards, liars, people who speak insults and argue with arrogance /Godineau and his associates/. My servant Tesfay will explain everything else to you verbally.

20 October. The 10th day of Ṭiqimt at Ṣe'azega.

AECP, Égypte 50, fol. 333., French translation, most probably by the addressee, who has added a number of explanations to the original text, indicated by / . . . /. The issue to be discussed when Munzinger returned from Aden, for instance, is defined as "l'affaire de M. Duflos" and the drunkards, liars, insulting and arrogant people as "Godineau et consorts".

Monsignor Touvier is in this letter and nos. 79, 82 and 196 called "*Abune* Yosēf", although one might have expected "*Abune* Yohannis", as his Christian name was Jean Marcel. He had been consecrated vicar apostolic of Abyssinia in April 1870 (O'Mahoney, 2, pp. 107, 118–119). He is usually referred to simply as Marcel (*e.g.* in the lists and indexes of O'Mahoney). For *Aleqa* Birru, see nos. 53 and 62 and for Franz Hassen no. 47.

Hassen replies 26 October that, since he cannot write what he would like to communicate, he welcomes a meeting, and adds that he has written to *Dejjazmach* Gebru so that the three of them would be able to consult together (fol. 334).

For the conflict with Duflos, see nos. 47 and 61. Touvier's "very bad letter", reportedly containing an offer of "cannons, muskets, and powder" to fight Kasa, was actually discovered when Tekle Gīyorgīs was made a prisoner after his defeat in July 1871 (Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, p. 41).

Document no. 79

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs to Alemayyehu Tēwodros, 30 Jan. 1872

መልእክቱ፡ ላቶ፡ ሳሙኤል፡
ትድረስ፡ወደ፡ደጃዝማች፡ዓለም፡እየሱ ።
የንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ቴዎድሮስ፡ልጅ ።
መድኃኔ፡ዓለም፡ጤና፡ይስጥ
ልኝ፡ብዬ፡እጅ፡እነሳለሱ ። ጌታዬንም፡ከር
ከዎ፡ጋራ፡አገናኘኝ፡እያልሱ፡እለምናለሱ፤
ሢር፡ናፔር፡እኔን፡ከደጃዝ
ማች፡ካሳ፡ጋራ፡በፍቅር፡አገናኝተዉኝ፡ሒዶ።
ደጃዝማች፡ካሳ፡ግን፡በደሉኝ ።በጌታዬም፡
ልጅ ፡በወንድምም፡ላይ፡ክፋትን፡አሰቡ፡ፈለ
ጉ።ስለዚህ፡እርሱን፡እጄ፡ወደ፡ዱር፡ተገባ
ሱ፡ሰስት፡ዓመት፡ከ፷ት ፡ወር፡ነው ።
በረኃውንም፡ነሠተዉኝ፡አሁን፡በምጽ
ዋ፡ነው፡ያለሱ ።የጌታዬን፡ልጅ፡እጄ፡ግን፡
ገንዘቤን፡ፈጅ ቻለሱ ።በምጽዋ፡ያሉቱ፡
ግን፡የካቶሊክ፡ጳጳስ፡አቡነ፡ዮሲፍ ፡ዘመደ፣

May the message of *Ato* Samu'ēl reach *Dejjazmach* Alemayyehu, the son of King of Kings Tēwodros.

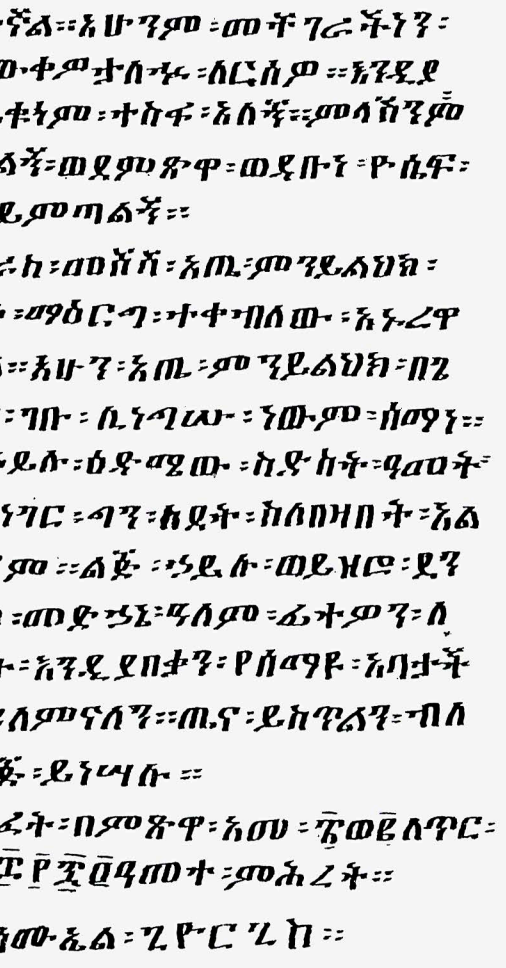
I greet [you], saying, "May the Saviour of the world grant [you] health." I pray to the (lit. my) Lord, asking Him again and again to make [it possible for] us to see each other.

Sir Napier (Sīr Napēr) left after having made me the friend of *Dejjazmach* Kasa. Nevertheless *Dejjazmach* Kasa wronged me. He planned and sought [to do] evil against the son of my lord, your brother. Therefore I took him with me to the woods; it is 3 years and 8 months since then. [Kasa] did not allow me [to live even in] the wilderess, and now I am staying at Massawa.

But as the son of my lord is with me, I have finished my money. The Catholic bishop Monsignor Touvier (*ye-katolīk pappas Abune* Yosēf), who lives at Massawa, has, however, become my friend. And now I have informed you of our difficulties. I hope you will inquire about us. If you send me an answer, let it come to Massawa, to Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf) for me.

As to my lord *Ras* Meshesha, *Aṭē* Minīlik has received him with great honour and made him stay with him. Now *Aṭē* Minīlīk has entered Begēmdir, and we have heard that he is to be crowned.

Lij Haylu is six years old, but is not strong because there has been so much moving about.



Lij Haylu and *Weyzero* Dengish bow, saying, "May [God] give you health. We pray to our Heavenly Father that the Saviour of the World may let us live to see your face."

Written at Massawa on the 22nd of Ṭirr, in the year of grace 1864.

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs.

T 1/7217, file no. 15005, (papers regarding Alemayyehu), Amharic original and English translation by J.L. Krapf. This letter was written more than two years later than the first two letters to Alemayyehu (nos. 18 and 20). It may well have been the immediate reason why Dr. Krapf made an attempt to reach the prince.

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs (see no. 34.) was at the time of this letter looking for new opportunities for himself in alliance with French interests (no. 76). *Lij* Haylu, mentioned at the end of the letter, was the brother of Alemayyehu. Samu'ēl reports that he had taken care of him and protected him against Kasa. For *Abune* Yosēf, see no. 78.

Document no. 80

Haylu to K.W. Almqvist, 2 Feb. [1872]

Letter from *Aleqa* Haylu, may it reach our father Almquist. Much, how are you? I with the messengers, your brothers, live together, teaching the children your faith in the Amharic language. The children read the Holy Book, know Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Pray and care for them.

The children are six. Jesus Christ, the Saviour, they know: two Galla, Nesib, Welde Maryam; two Gojjamē, Marqos, the sister Mihiret; two Hamasēn Tigreans, Welde Maryam, Adhanum. May Jesus Christ give you peace. Amen.

Written the 25th of the month of Ṭirr.

Missions-Tidning, 1872, p. 20, Swedish translation by the missionary B.P. Lundahl.

Aleqa Haylu (no second name used), a Gojjamē who had earlier served as a secretary for King Tēwodros, was one of the first co-workers of the Swedish missionaries at Massawa and the father of the two pupils Marqos and Mihiret (Arén, pp. 250–251). The translation provided here is kept very close to the Swedish which, in turn, reflects the original Amharic.

Document no. 81

Yohannis IV to Welde Maryam, 2 April 1872



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May the message of King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia reach *Memhir* Welde Maryam and the whole community of those who have forsaken the world, the upright in the Orthodox faith, the servants of Jesus Christ, the sons of St. Mark the Evangelist.

How are you, my fathers? I am well, thank God. I have sent you twenty-three thousand thalers (correction in the margin: it is twenty-three hundred) by the hand of *Abbatē* Gebre Mīka'ēl and *Abbatē* Welde Sema'it. The reason why it has been delayed is that I was to send [it] levying one thaler for [every] six pairs of oxen. I raised it, saying "Bring [it]." And after I raised it they mocked me, saying "He has thrown over us the oxhide as Dejjach Wibē [did]." So I gave it back, saying, "How can I be generous with the money of others?" The way of the Abyssinians! He who pays an extra levy, much gold, thinking that if he pays this, it is a big thing! And now, my fathers, it is because this matter worried me that [the messengers] were delayed up to now. In the future, to the extent that is possible for me, I shall not neglect you. Do not lose hope, do not forget me, pray for me.

Written on the 25th day of Meggabīt, in the year of grace 1864.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

DS 4, Amharic original. This is the earliest preserved letter with the seal of Yohannis as king of kings. When Yohannis took this title, he apparently felt the need to assert his position in Arabic script as well as Ethiopian.

Numbers often created problems for the scribes of the 19th century (see no. 209 below). ፪ ፻፻ above is "two hundred-hundreds", *i.e.* 20,000, followed by 3,000. Obviously this turned out to be ten times the actual amount.

Document no. 82

Wereñña (Welde Sillasē) Welde Kīdan to J.M. Touvier, 6 May [1872]

መልእክት፡ የራስ፡ ወረኛ፡ ዬድረስ፡ ከአቡነ፡ የሴፍ፡ እጅጉን፡ እንዴት፡ አሉ፡
እስተገገኛ፡ ድረስ፡ ጭልጋ፡ ከገቢያው፡ አጠገብ፡ ወጥተው፡ ይቀመጡ፡
ወዳጅ፡ ነዎና፡ እኔም፡ እወደዎ፡ አለሁ፡ ጉዳያችን፡ እሰዎና፡ እኔ፡ ስገገናኝ፡ ይ
ሆናል፡ በወዲያ፡ የሚሆነውን፡ እሰዎ፡ ያውታሉ፡



ተጽሕፈት፡ አመ ፳ወ፱ለሚያዝያ፡ በዕለተ፡ ሰኑይ፡

May the message of *Ras* Wereñña reach Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf). How are you, really? Until we meet, go up to Ḉhilga and stay in the neighbourhood of the marketplace.

Since you are my friend, I also like you. Our business will be taken care of when you and I meet. You know what is happening over there.

Seal: *Ri'ise Mekwanint Ras* Wereñña.

Written on Monday, 29 Mīyaziya.

AEA, Amharic original. This letter is published in O'Mahoney, II, p. 140.

Wereñña must have been a kind of nickname with a connotation of being restless, moving about, spreading rumours (see Kane, p. 1508), but it is obvious from this letter that Wereñña himself used the name officially, even in his seal. He is also known as *Ras* Welde Sillasē (Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, p. 37).

Together with Minīlik and Yohannis, Wereñña was a serious pretender to the throne after the fall of Tekle Gīyorgīs, who had made him a *ras* (see no. 104). His claim is very clearly expressed in the seal by the title *ri'ise mekwanint*, the very title Kasa had used until his coronation in January 1872. Although Yohannis recognized Wereñña's position, and granted him the governorship of all the Amhara regions from Simēn to Begēmdir, Wereñña vacillated, to say the least, in his loyalty towards Yohannis during the war against Egypt. (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 770, 898–899, 1020) The confrontation between the Catholic mission and Yohannis led to contacts between Bishop Touvier and Wereñña, attested *i.a.* by this letter.

The fact that Bishop Touvier is here called *Abune* Yosēf strengthens the conclusion (no. 78 above) that he was known under this name rather than as Yohannis (French Jean). For the context on the Catholic side, which is decisive for the dating 1872, see O'Mahoney, II, pp. 136–139.

Document no. 83

Minīlik to Victoria, 31 May 1872

ከስመ፡አብ፡ወወልድ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡አ
ምላክ፡አሜን።
የተላከ፡ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ምኒልክ፡ዘኢትዮጵያ።
ያድሪስ፡ከንግሥት፡ዚነቅርያ፡ዘአነግለዝ።መድኅኔ፡
ዓለምን፡ሕፃን፡ይስናልኝ፡ብዬ፡በማኅጸን፡እጅ፡አነሣለሁ
የሰዳዱልኝን፡ታላቅ፡መነጽር፡ተቀብለሁ፡እጅግ፡ደስ፡አለኝ፡
አማዚአብሔር፡ይስነሳልኝ።ይልቁንምየ፡ዮፍቅር፡ና፡ይሰላም
ት፡ወረቀትውን፡በተቀበልሁ፡ጊዜ።አነ፡በ፡መጠን፡ደስ፡አለኝ።
ለኔ፡አንዳስቡልኝ፡አማዚአብሔር፡ያስብልዎ።ከአጣቸቹ፡ጀም
ር፡አስነበዘሬ፡ድረስ፡በኋ፡ነገር፡አልሎደለጠዎምዮ።ነገርዎ፡ሁ
ሉ፡አነዳ፡ወዮነ፡ደስ፡ያስኝል።ቀነና፡ሌሊትም፡በልቤ፡አዩቋት
ም።በጊዜውም፡ሁለ፡ትዝ፡ይለኛል።ዘማሂለ፡ሠላሴ፡መንግሠ
ት፡ጊዜ፡ያደረሥት፡ቅርሳት፡በ፡ጊዜ፡ሠነ፡ጊዜ፡ሠነ፡ቢሠን፡አነዱት፡ደስ፡
ባለኝ፡ነበር፡አነ፡ደ፡ያቀቀብዎ፡ልነ፡በታዳስ፡ነበር፡ድሬፍ፡ልጅ
ህ፡የለሓው፡ቀኃኝ፡ባለት፡ጊዜ፡አነ፡ደ፡ታዳስ።ነገር፡ማነ፡አጣቸቹ፡
ሰለአበለቹት፡ነገር፡አሁነ፡በ፡አናሪት፡ሠነብኝ፡አይ፡ሰመልቹ፡
አነዱልነ፡ነገር።አርስዎ፡የመነግሥት፡ናብብና፡ሠራት፡ሁለ፡ቤተ
ጹላቹው፡አጣቸቹ፡አበላሽቱው፡መልሰው፡ሰደዋልና።አስነበሁኝ፡
አነግለዞች፡ቢነሯ፡ዩሃች፡ሰመነግሥት፡እጅግ፡ትለማ፡ነበረች።ዓዘቡ
ዎ፡በጥበብና፡በውቀት፡ደጅግ፡ነበር።አሁነም፡በታላቁ፡ሀገናሽ
ም፡ነገር፡ፃታችነ፡አየሱስ፡ክርስቶስነ፡አለምነባሁ፡የነገሠታት፡
ንጉሠ፡ነውና፡የነግሠትን፡አድማ፡ቤሄደዝዎልኝ።ዎሮናለሁት፡የል
ቤነ፡ፍቅር፡ሳዩት፡ልብዎነ፡አስፍቶ፡ቢደራራልኝ።በብልሀትና፡በም
ክር፡ሁለ፡ዘመድ፡ዮሠኑኖል፡ለአገሬ፡ብርሃነ፡ደወጠለታል።ብ
ዮ፡ተስፋ፡አድርጌዎ፡አለሁና፡ይልቁንም፡ዴግሞ፡በምድር፡ካ
ለው፡ሕዝብ፡ሁለ፡አማዚአብሔር፡አነግሊዝ፡በጥበብና፡በፍቅ
ር፡በዐዐነግሠትም፡አነ፡ደ፡በለጠው።ሳዩኑም፡ከርሱ፡ጋራ፡አነ
ደሆነ፡አወቃለሁና።ቀድሞ፡አማዚአብሔር፡ከአስራኤል፡ጋራ፡
አነደ፡ነበረ፡አሁንም፡አነግሊዝ፡አድስ፡አስራኤል፡ነው።ባ
ጼራሪው፡ያሥወቃል።ግለጸን፡ዘማድረጉ፡ልዩ፡ልዩ፡ሕዝብ፡በ
ማነገዛቱ፡የሕዝብ፡ሁለ፡ሳዩነ፡ወዴ፡አነግሊዝ፡በመሆኑ።

ሰለዚኽምየ፡ ጸግሞ፡ እነ፡ ወደ፡ ነግሠት፡ የፍቅር፡ ምጽንታ፡ ሳድሬን፡ አ
ለሁ፡ አግዚአብሔር፡ ፍቅር፡ ነውና፡ የፍቅርዎን፡ ጠርሳን፡ በጣዎም፡ አንዲ ደ
ራልኝ፡ ኅዘዎ። አሠነዎ፡ አንኳ፡ ከርስዎ፡ ጥሩት፡ የፍቅር፡ ዎለንነት፡ ሰለ፡
አገናሠ፡ ልቡነ፡ ደስ፡ ጠለሞት፡ አግዚአብሔርን፡ ሁለጊዜ፡ አመሰግናለሠ
አሠንዎ፡ እኔ፡ ከአንግሊዝ፡ ንፉ፡ በመሉ፡ ፍቅር፡ አለሠኝ፡ አለ ዋቀት፡ ቦ
ሰነቱት፡ በማዳርጎዎ፡ ነገር፡ በቀር። ጸግዎዎ፡ ዩኖ፡ ክፉት፡ አዩ ቸዋሠ፡
ቸል፡ አተበለን። ከአግዚር፡ ትአዛዝ፡ የሠንና፡ የነፍስን፡ ጥቡጠ፡ ሁለ፡ አስ
ተምራን፡ አንጅ። አግዚአብሔር፡ የጎግሰንዝን፡ መነግሠት፡ ዓፄ ስሉቱ፡ ለ
ሰው፡ ኅቀም፡ በለ፡ ነውና። ከርሳቸን፡ ልጠ፡ ዩመልከቱን።
አሠን፡ እኔ፡ ያለሠበት፡ አገር፡ ወለ፡ ላ ዩ፡ ነው፡ በተዎዓ፡ መሠዬት፡ ጀምሬ፡
አለሠ። ወለ፡ ከ፡ በያንኑ፡ አየላንዮ፡ ጠሳት፡ ሃዙልኝ። አንድ፡ በጸለ፡
አንኩ፡ ሰለ ዘድላቸው። ቅ ጊዜ፡ ጦለው፡ በጹኝ፡ አኔም፡ ጦ ነጹሕ፡ ልጠ፡
ጠዙ፡ ሂዜ፡ ጠበቅኋቸው። ሰለዚኽምየ፡ አግዚአብሔር፡ ፈረዱልኝ። ሳ ዩ
ነቱ ኛቹን፡ ሁሉ፡ ደ ዝኋቸው፡ ነገራቸውን፡ አስበለየው፡ ድዲ ስ፡ ጠዬ።
ለጠቻቸው፡ ስፍራ፡ ለ ዩቹ፡ አኑ ዬደቸዋለሠ። ወለ ዎ፡ ሁሉ፡ አሠ
ን፡ ከአግዚአብሔር፡ ፅቃን፡ ዘጁ፡ ነው። ዩ ሠነነዎ፡ ጠወጣ ፈ ፡ ወዬ፡
ሰ ዎ ተው፡ ዘደለኛ፡ መሰ ዮ ው፡ አንዳ ዩ ጠ ሎኝ፡ ጠዩ፡ ነው፡ የፍቅር፡
አደ ሠነበ፡ ጤ ን፡ ዩ ስጠ ው ።
ቢ፲ ወ፲ ፪ ፲ ፬ ፬ ፡ ዘዘጠወነ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ዘወርኃ፡ ጣ ዎ ቦት፡ በሸ ፬ ፡ ቀን፡ ተጸፅ፡
በሠሃረ፡ ወለ ።
ደ ፖሬን፡ ጠ ለ ሳት፡ አ ሳ ዩ ው፡ አለሠ ፡ ጠ ዮ ፡ አንዱን ፡ ዘ ፫ ጥ ፡ ቦ ድ ኧ ፡
ለ ለ ሠ ፡ ዩ ቀ ዘ ለ ለ ኝ ፡ የ ፍ ት ዮ ፡ ዎ ለ ነ ት ፡ ነ ው ፡ ።

Traduction littérale de la précédente.

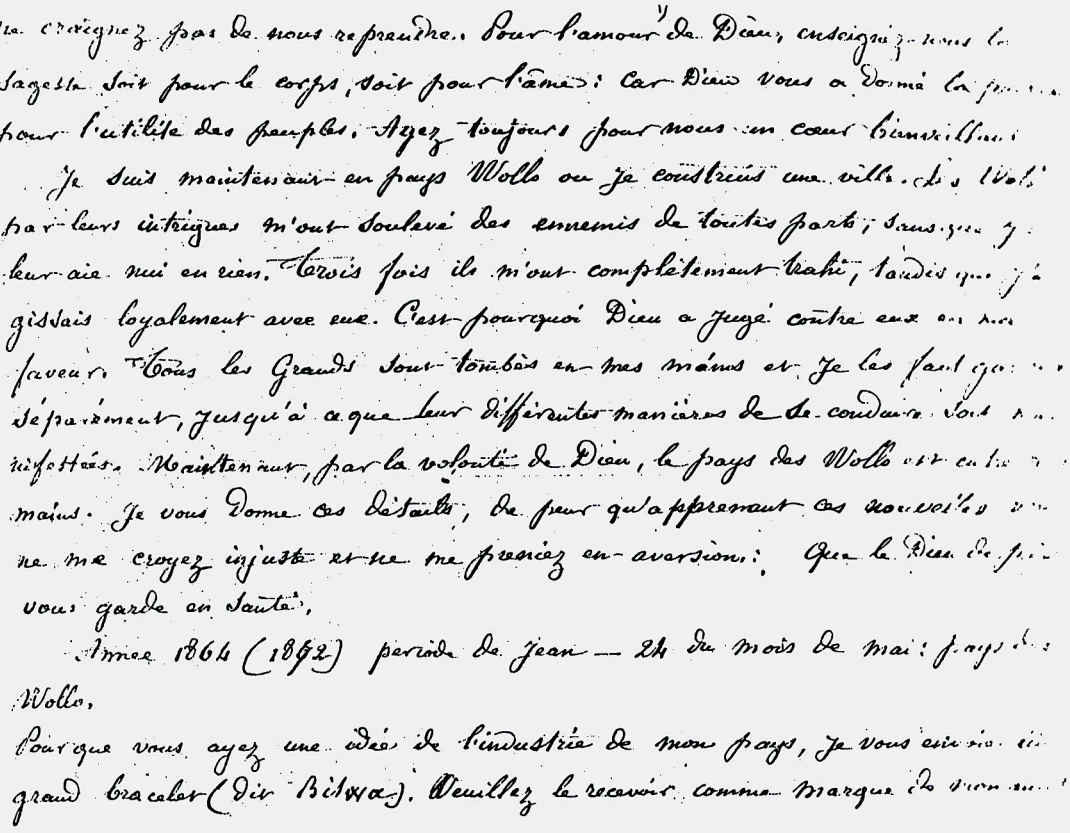
J. Tourin. miss. apost.

Au nom du Père, et du fils et du St Esprit, un seul Dieu. Amen.
Lettre envoyée par Mocnolik roi des rois d'Ethiopie à la Reine d'Inglaterre, Victoria. Que notre sauveur vous donne santé: avec respect je vous salue. J'ai reçu la longue vue que vous m'avez envoyée; ce dont j'ais eu une grande joie; je vous en remercie et encore plus de la lettre d'amitié et de salut qui l'accompagnait. Comme vous avez pensé à moi, que Dieu pense à vous. Depuis le temps de nos ancêtres jusqu'à présent, votre bienveillance ne s'est point démentie: elle réjouit l'âme comme l'aspect de vignes en fleurs: jour et nuit le souvenir [illegible] est présent et me comble d'allegresse. Que d'affection ne nous avez-vous

pas témoigné sous le regne de Sela-Sclassie! Si c'eut été de mon temps, quelle joie pour moi! mon coeur eut été ivre de joie comme celui de Jacob, lorsqu'on lui dit: Joseph, le fils que vous aviez perdu, est vivant. Mais parceque mes années n'ont point répondu à cette bienveillance, j'en conçois une certaine crainte qui m'empêche de parler à coeur ouvert. Car alors que vous leur communiquez les vrais principes et la sagesse du gouvernement, mes Pairs ont tout gâté, éloigné, renvoyé. Si les Anglais étaient restés jusqu'à ce jour, ce royaume eut été florissant et le peuple eût grandi en industrie et en savoir. Maintenant je prie Notre Seigneur le roi des Rois qu'en toute chose, il prolonge les jours de votre royauté, comme m'étant un bienfait personnel. Peut-être qu'en vous ouvrant mon coeur, le Votre prendra pour moi une tendresse de mère. J'espère en outre que dans toutes les questions de prudence et de conseil vous me viendrez en aide et que la lumière brillera sur mon pays: d'autant plus que Dieu a élevé les Anglais au dessus de tous les peuples de la terre en industrie, en magnanimité et en puissance et que son regard le plus favorable est sur vous, je le sais. Autrefois Dieu était avec Israel; aujourd'hui le nouvel Israel c'est le peuple Anglais: c'est que témoignent du reste les faits: la richesse accumulée, les peuples conquis, les regards des nations tournés vers l'Angleterre. C'est pourquoi moi-même j'ai redoublé d'amitié pour vous: et parceque Dieu est amour, veuillez vous-même redoubler de bienveillance à mon égard. Le témoignage que j'en ai reçu m'a fait tant de plaisir que



je me crois de remercier Dieu. Actuellement je suis donc tout affectionné aux Anglais: si je manquais en quelque chose, ce serait par inattention et inadvertance. Du reste s'il vous arrive de connaître quelque faute



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, Amen.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach Queen Victoria of England. I greet you (lit. bow) with respect saying, "May the Saviour of the World give you health (for my sake)."

I have received the large telescope you sent me. I am very pleased, thank you. Above all I was pleased beyond measure when I received your letter of friendship and greetings. May God care for you as you have cared for me. For you have not been lacking in good deeds from the time of my fathers until now. All your deeds please like wine. Day and night they are not far from my heart. I recall them every now and then. How happy I would have been if the generosity you showed during the reign of Sahle Sillasē had been exercised (lit. taken place) in my time. My heart would have been renewed as Jacob's was renewed when they told him, "Your son Joseph who was lost has been found."

However, the fact that (lit. because) my fathers mismanaged matters has become an embarassment for me, so that I do not speak with confidence. For when you sent them all the techniques and statutes of government, my fathers responded [in such a manner that] they spoiled [the relations]. Had the English stayed until now, this government would have prospered greatly. The people would have developed in crafts and knowledge. Now I beg, in things great and small, our Lord Jesus Christ—for He is king of kings—that he may for my sake prolong the life of the queen. Perhaps He, seeing the love in my heart, will widen and soften your heart towards me. For I have made you my hope, believing that you would befriend me with all wisdom and advice, and would enlighten my country,

especially, moreover, as I know that of all the peoples on earth God has made the English superior in science, friendship, and government, and that His eyes watch over it.

As God was before with Israel, now the English are the new Israel. It is known by His acts: by enriching [them], by subjecting various peoples [to them], because the eyes of all nations are [turned] towards the English.

Therefore I again make a friendly appeal to the queen. As God is love, hoping that you will make the light of your friendship shine bright over me, even now my heart rejoices and I praise God always, because I have obtained a token of friendship from you. So now, except for what I do by mistake out of ignorance, I am in full friendship with the English. And you also, being aware of our ignorance (lit. wickedness), do not show indifference towards us, but teach us all the knowledge of body and soul in accordance with God's commandment. Since God has extended the government of the English for the benefit of mankind, look upon us with a kind heart.

The district where I am now is in Wello. I have started to build a town. By sending [messages] to every district the Wello have created many enemies against me, although I have not done them any harm whatsoever. They have deserted me after having sworn [obedience] three times. I waited for them a long time with a pure heart. Therefore, God has judged for me. I have caught all the leaders. I am keeping them by themselves in a special place until I have investigated their affairs. By the will of God, the whole of Wello is now in my hand. The reason why I am writing this is in order that I should not, when you hear news about it, appear [to be] the culprit and that you should [not] dislike me. May the God of love give you health.

Written in the land of Wello, in the year of John, on the 24th day of the month of Ginbot 1864.

Wishing to show you the craft of my country, I have sent an armlet. Receive it from me as it is a token of my friendship.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

FO 95/731, no. 140, Amharic original followed by a "literal" French translation by the Catholic missionary C. Taurin. For the seal, see nos. 48 and 69 above. The translator has indicated the European year 1872 but has not bothered to convert the date, leaving 24 Ginbot as 24 May.

The calligraphy of the Amharic version of this letter indicates that it was hardly written by a royal secretary. It is both unusual and rather poor. Instead the conclusion is almost inevitable that the Catholic missionary Taurin, whose translation immediately follows the Amharic, produced the document in its entirety—and placed the king's seal in the middle of the French text! The letter was, however, copied with minor changes in a different and more ordinary hand three weeks later (no. 86). A letter to Prideaux (no. 84) of the same date as the above, but in the handwriting of an ordinary Ethiopian scribe, does not mention the letter to Victoria, as might have been expected if it was intended as a covering letter.

Moreover, the calligraphy of the Amharic text above appears also in a letter from Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II (no. 85), produced at this time and translated by Massaja on 20 June. The purpose of this letter was to introduce a the Catholic emissary *Abba* Welde Mīka'ēl to the Italian king. Since this letter was not even sealed it may well have been dispatched without Minīlik's approval or knowledge.

It is slightly puzzling to find the Catholic missionaries involved in facilitating contact with Britain. The reason must have been Minīlik's own desire to promote his relations with the country in Europe whose emissaries had visited his grandfather thirty years earlier.

Document no. 84

Minīlik to W.F. Prideaux, 31 May 1872

በስመ አብ ወወልዱ ወመንፈስ ቅዱስ አሐዱ አምላክ።

የሑላክ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ዓፄ ምኒልክ ዘኢትዮጵያ ።።።

ጄኔራል ሰር ዊሪ ፍሬ ወሪዶ። እዬ ንጉሥ እግዚኦ አለህ እኔ በእ
ጓ ዘአብሐር ቸር ነው ሂህ ና ነኝ የሰሂዱኝ ውም የሰላም
ታ ወረቱ ሂረ ሰልኝ ። እዬ ጓ ሂ ስ አሰ ኝ ። በመልነ ም ስለ
አሰብኽ ኝ ። እጓ ዘአብሐር ደ ስብልህ ። እኒ ግም ወረታህ ኝ
አጓዱነ ፍል ደ ዱር ገኝ ። አጓተም ኢጓጓደ ህ ሁሉ ግም ነ
ግር ለነ ብኝ ። እኛ የ ሐበሻ ሰ ም ት የባሕር ዣ ጠባይ አና
ውቅ ም ና ። ደ ህ ደ ከፉል ሂ ዘ ። ደ በጀ ል ደ ኽ ደ ለማል ይኽ ደ
ከ ፉል ነበ ለህ ነበ ተ ልነ ን ። እና ው ቸ ለን ና ስለ ዘ ህ እንጠበ
ቃ ለን ። ከ ዘ ደ ም በ ኋ ላ በ ፍ ቅር ገ ሂ ና ። አጓዱ ሆነ ኝ ።
አጓ ዊ ደ ለ ኝ ። አጓተ ሐ ዝብ ና ሐ ዝብ ን ። በ ጽ ፈ ት ። አስ ተ
ጊ ማ ። ው ነህ የ ም ታ ነ ጋ ር ሰ ው ። ነህ ና ። የ ፍ ቅ ር መ
ከ ብ ት ነህ ። ስለ ዚ ፣ ም ። ነ ግ ር ። ወደ ፔ ነ ተ ህ ን ። እፈ ል ጋ ለ ው ።
ኑ ነ ን ፡ ው ሉ ። እ ጓ ዱ ተ ጠ ብ ቂ ኝ ። የ ሰ ላ ም ። አ ም ላ ክ ። ጤ ና
ሪ ስ ጥ ህ ።።



ባ የ ወ ፫ የ ፰ ፬
በ ዘ ጠ ነ ፡ ሁ ሓ ኒ ስ በ ወ ር ፣ ፣
ጓ ኝ ፩ ፡ ኑ ፡ በ ለ ፬ ፡ ቀ ጓ ፡ ዙ ሂ ፈ ፡ ፡ ገ ፈ ፡ ወ ለ ፡፡

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach General Prideaux (Brīdo). How are you, really. By the grace of God, I am well.

I have received the letter of greetings you sent me. I was very pleased because you kindly remembered me. May God remember you, and may He enable me to repay your favours [to me]. And so, write to me about everything, because we, the people of Abyssinia, do not know the customs abroad. Since we will understand, if you write to us, saying, "This is harmful, this is beneficial; this prospers, this destroys," we expect [your letters]. Then we shall travel together in harmony along the road of friendship.

Since you are a person who translates (lit. acts as an interpreter in writing) and makes people communicate with people, you make friendship endure; because of this I want your friendship, so that you may protect me in all matters.

May the the God of peace give you health.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Written in the land of Wello, in the year of John, on the 24th day of the month of Ginbot 1864.

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fol. 40, Amharic original. There is no translation into English of this letter. Prideaux replied on 31 December (fol. 44).

Document no. 85

Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II [20 June 1872]

ቢስመ፡ አብ፡ ወወልድ፡ ወመንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ ፩ አምላክ፡ አሜን፡፡
የተላከ፡ ከንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ምኒልክ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡ ዮ ደረሰ፡
ከንጉሥ፡ ቢክጦር፡ ዕማንኤል፡ ዘኢጣልያ፡፡ መድኅኒ፡ ዓለም፡
ጤና፡ ዮስጥልኝ፡ ብዬ፡ በማክበር፡ አጅ፡ አነሣለሁ፡፡
የአባቶቼን፡ ዓልጋ፡ ከገኘሁ፡ አሁን፡ ሰባተኛው፡ አመት፡ ሁሉ፡ ጊዜ፡
ከርስዎ፡ ጋራ፡ አታወቃለሁ፡ ብዬ፡ በልቤ፡ አያሰብሁ፡ አልሆነ
ልኝም፡፡ ዛሬ፡ በመንግሥቴ፡ ጥቂት፡ ያረፍሁ፡ አርስዎንም፡ የ
ሚያውቅ፡ ሰው፡ አገኝቼ፡ አንሆ፡ ሰው፡ አባ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ዮ
ሚባል፡ ዮኔ፡ መለክተኛ፡ ወደ፡ አርስዎን፡ ዮ ምጣልና፡ ያገ
ሬን፡ ነገር፡ የሚያጨወጠዎት፡ የልቤንም፡ ነገር፡ ሁሉ፡
የሚናገር፡ ከዚኽ፡ ወዲያ፡ አንዲያውቁኝና፡ ዘመድ፡ አንዲ
ሆኑልኝ፡፡፡ ያገሬን፡ ብልሃት፡ ምልክት፡ ለርስዎ፡ አሳዬ
ለሁ፡ ብዬ፡ አንዱን፡ ጋሻና፡ አንዱን፡ ቢታዋ፡ ሰድጄ፡ አለሁ፡
አንደ፡ ፍቅሬ፡ ምልክት፡ ዮ ቀብሎልኝ፡፡

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God. Amen.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach King Victor Emmanuel (Bīkṭor Immanēl) of Italy. I bow with respect saying, "May the Saviour of the world give you health."

It [is] now seven years since I took possession of the throne of my fathers. All the time I have intended to become acquainted with you, but it was not possible for me. Now that I have a bit of rest in my kingdom and have found someone who knows you, behold, a man called *Abba* Welde Mīka'ēl will come to you and discuss the situation of my country with you and tell you what I have in mind (lit. in my heart), so that from now on you may know me and be my friend.

In order to show you a sample of the crafts of my country, I send you a shield and an armlet. [Please] accept them from me as a sign of my friendship.

IIA, Misc., fasc. 4, Amharic and Italian text. The letter, which belongs to ASMAI 36/1–3, was exhibited together with Victor Emmanuel's reply of 10 November at the Istituto Italo Africano, and the Italian version was published in *AA.DD*, XV, pp. 26–27. According to a memorandum by Antinori, dated 9 November, the letter was dictated by Minīlik himself. As his seal is missing, it is difficult to say whether it is an authentic letter at all. The Amharic handwriting is, however, the same as in the sealed letter to Queen Victoria dated 31 May (no. 83 above). The translation, dated 20 June, is in Mgr. Massaja's hand and signed by him.

Carlo Giglio (*L'Italia in Africa, Etiopia/Mar Rosso*, I, Rome, 1958, pp. 61–62), maintains that the initiator of the mission is much more likely to have been *Abba* Mīka'ēl, as he is called in European accounts, than Massaja. Welde Mīka'ēl arrived in Rome on 30 October and was received in audience by the king (ASMAI 36/1–3). Harold Marcus (*The Life and Times of Menelik II. Ethiopia 1844–1913*, Oxford, 1975, p. 43) mentions a letter by Minīlik to the Società Geografica Italiana as well. It has, however, not been possible to trace that letter there.

Document no. 86

Minīlik to Victoria, 21 June 1872

በስመ፡አብ፡ወወልድ፡ወመንፈስ፡ቅዱስ፡ዕአምሳክ፡፡አሜን፡
የተሳከ፡፡
ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ምኒልክ፡፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡
ይድረስ፡
ከንግሥት፡ቢክቶርያ፡፡ዘእንግሊዝ፡፡
መድኃኔ፡ዓለም፡ጤና፡ይስጥልኝ፡ብዬ፡እጅ፡እነሣለ
የሰደዱልኝን፡ታላቅ፡መነጽር፡ተቀበልሁ፡፡እጅግ፡ደስ፡አለኝ፡
እግዚአብሔር፡ይስጥልኝ፡፡ይልቁንም፡የፍቅርና፡የሰላምታ፡
ወረቀትዎን፡በተቀበልሁ፡ጊዜ፡፡እንበለ፡መጠን፡ደስ፡አለኝ፡፡ስለ
ታዎ፡ከፍቅር፡ጋራ፡ነውና፡፡ለኔ፡እንዳሰቡልኝ፡እግዚአብሔር፡
ያስብልዎ፡፡ከአባቶቼ፡ጀምሮ፡እስከ፡ዛሬ፡ድረስ፡፡በጎ፡ማ
ድረግ፡አልጉደለብዎ ምና፡፡ነገርዎ፡ሁሉ፡እንደ፡ወይን፡ደስ፡
ያሠኛል፡፡ቀንና፡ሌሊት ም፡ከልቤ፡አይርቅም፡፡በጊዜውም፡
ሁሉ፡ትዝ፡ይለኛል፡፡በማህለ፡ሥላሴ፡ጊዜ፡ያደረጉት፡ቸርነ
ት፡፡በኔ፡ጊዜ፡ሁኖ፡ቢሆን፡፡እንዴት፡ደስ፡ባለኝ፡ነበር፡፡እንደ፡
ያዕቆብም፡ልቤ፡በታደሰ፡ነበር፡፡ዮሴፍ፡ልጅህ፡የጠፋው፡
ተገኘ፡ባሉት፡ጊዜ፡እንደ፡ታደሰ፡፡ነገር፡ግን፡አባቶቼ፡ስለ፡አበ
ላሹት፡ነገር፡፡አሁን፡በኔ፡ዕፍረት፡ሆነብኝ፡፡አፈን፡መልቼ፡
እንዳልናገር፡፡እርሰዎ፡የመንግሥትን፡ጥበብና፡ሥራት፡
ሁሉ፡ቢሰዱላቸው፡፡አባቶቼ፡አበላሽተው፡መልሰው፡ሰደ
ዋልና፡፡እስካሁን፡እንግሊዞች፡ቢኖሩ፡ይች፡መንግሥት፡
እጅግ፡ትለማ፡ነበረች፡፡ሕዝቡም፡በጥበብና፡በእውቀት፡
ያድግ፡ነበረ፡፡አሁንም፡በታላቁ፡በታናሹም፡ነገር፡ሄታች
ነን፡ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስን፡አለምናለሁ፡፡የነገሥታት፡ንጉ

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, Amen.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach Queen Victoria of England.

I greet you (lit. bow) saying, "May the Saviour of the World give you health (for my sake)."

I have received the large telescope you sent me. I am very pleased, thank you. Above all I was pleased beyond measure when I received your letter of friendship and greetings. For your gift is in friendship.

May God care for you as you have cared for me. For you have not been lacking in good deeds from the the time of my fathers up to now. All your deeds please like wine. Day and night they are not far from my heart. I recall them every now and then.

How happy I would have been if the generosity you showed during the days (lit. time) of Sahle Sillasē had been exercised (lit. taken place) in my days. My heart would have been renewed as Jacob's was (renewed) when they told him, "Your son Joseph who was lost has been found."

However, the fact that (lit. because) my fathers mismanaged matters has become an embarassment for me, so that I do not speak with confidence. For when you sent them all the techniques and statutes of government, my fathers responded [in such a manner that] they spoiled [the relations]. Had the English stayed until now, this government would have prospered greatly. The people would have developed in crafts and knowledge.

Now I beg, in things great and small, our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is king of kings, that he may for my sake prolong the life of the queen. Perhaps He, seeing the love in my heart, will widen and soften your heart towards me. For I have made you my hope, believing that you would befriend me with all wisdom and advice, and would enlighten my country, especially, moreover, as I know that of all the peoples on earth God has made the English superior in science, friendship, and government, and that His eyes watch over it.

ሥ ፡ነው ፡ና ። ። የ፯ዓ ሥ ት ፯ ፡ዕ ድ ማ ፡ኦ ፯ ደ ያ ረ ዝ ም ል ኝ ። ። ም ና
ል ባ ት ፡የ ል ቤ ፯ ፡ፍ ት ር ፡ኦ ይ ት ። ። ሉ ብ ዎ ፯ ፡ኦ ክ ፍ ት ፡በ ደ ራ ራ ል ኝ ።
በ ብ ሉ ሐ ት ፡ና ፡በ ም ክ ር ፡ሁ ሉ ፡ዘ መ ድ ፡ደ ሆ ኑ ፣ ል ። ለ ሀ ገ ሬ ፡ብ ር
ሃ ፯ ፡ደ ወ ጡ ስ ታ ል ፡ብ ዬ ፡ት ክ ፋ ፡ኦ ድ ር ጊ ዎ ኦ ለ ሁ ና ። ። ደ ል ቱ ፯
ም ፡ደ ሳ ሞ ፡በ ም ድ ር ፡ካ ሰ ው ፡ሕ ዝ ብ ፡ሁ ሉ ። ። ኦ ሳ ዚ ኦ ብ ሔ ር ፡ኦ
፯ ዓ ሌ ዝ ፯ ፡በ ጥ በ ብ ና ፡በ ፅ ት ር ፡በ መ ፯ ዓ ሥ ት ም ፡ኦ ፯ ዳ በ ለ ጠ
ው ። ። ሳ ይ ኑ ም ፡ከ ር ሱ ፡ጋ ራ ፡ኦ ፯ ደ ሆ ነ ፡አ ው ታ ለ ሁ ና ። ። ቱ ድ ሞ ፡ኦ
ሳ ዚ ኦ ብ ሔ ር ፡ከ ኤ ስ ራ ኤ ል ፡ጋ ራ ፡ኦ ፯ ደ ፡ነ በ ረ ። ። ኦ ሁ ፯ ም ፡ኦ ፯ ዓ
ሌ ዝ ፡ሐ ዲ ስ ፡ኤ ስ ራ ኤ ል ፡ነ ው ። ። ባ ደ ራ ሪ ጭ ፡ደ ታ ወ ቃ ል ። ። ባ ለ ጸ ጋ ፡
በ ማ ድ ረ ጉ ። ። ል ዩ ፡ል ዩ ፡ሕ ዝ ብ ፡በ ማ ስ ገ ዛ ቱ ። ። የ ሕ ዝ ብ ፡ሁ ሉ ፡ሳ ደ
ዓ ፡መ ደ ፡ኦ ፯ ዓ ሌ ዝ ፡በ መ ሆ ኑ ። ። ከ ሰ ዘ ሃ ም ፡ደ ሳ ሞ ፡ኦ ኔ ፡መ ደ ፡ኦ
ር ሱ ም ፡የ ፍ ት ር ፡ም ጽ ፯ ታ ፡ኦ ድ ር ጊ ኤ ለ ሁ ። ። ኦ ሳ ዚ ኦ ብ ሔ ር ፡ፍ ·
ት ር ፡ነ ውና ። ። የ ፍ ት ር ም ፯ ፡ብ ር ሃ ፯ ፡በ ጣ ም ፡ኦ ፯ ዲ ደ በ ራ ል ኝ ፣
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ገ ኘ ሁ ፡ል ቤ ፯ ፡ይ ከ ፡ብ ሎ ት ፡ኦ ሳ ዚ ኦ ብ ሔ ር ፯ ፡ሁ ለ ጊ ዜ ፡ኦ መ ሰ ሳ
ነ ሞ ለ ሁ ። ። ኤ ሁ ፯ ም ፡ኔ ኔ ፡ከ ኦ ፯ ዓ ሌ ዝ ፡ጋ ራ ፡በ ሙ ሉ ፡ፍ ት ር ፡ኤ ለ ሁ
ኝ ። ። ኦ ሰ ው ቀ ት ፡በ ከ ሔ ዱ ት ፡ከ ጣ ፤ ር ግ ው ፡ነ ገ ር ፡በ ት ር ። ። ደ ሳ ሞ
ም ፡የ ኛ ፯ ፡ክ ፋ ት ፡ኦ ይ ታ ኸ ሁ ፡ቸ ል ፡ኦ ት በ ሉ ኝ ። ። በ ኦ ሳ ዚ ኦ ብ ሔ
ር ። ። ት ኦ ዛ ዝ ፡የ ሥ ጋ ና ፡የ ነ ፍ ስ ና ፡ጥ በ ብ ሁ ሉ ፡ኦ ስ ቱ ም ራ ፯ ፡ኦ ፯
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ፃ ር ፡ነ ው ። ። መ ፯ ፯ ጁ ፡ስ ለ ፡ኦ ስ ቸ ፯ ረ ኝ ፡ነ ው ና ። ። በ ቤ ተ መ

As God was before with Israel, now the English are the new Israel. It is known by His acts: by enriching [them], by subjecting various peoples [to them], because the eyes of all nations are [turned] towards the English.

Therefore I again make a friendly appeal to you. As God is love, hoping that you will make the light of your friendship shine bright over me, even now my heart rejoices and I praise God always, because I have obtained a token of friendship from you. So now, except for what I do by mistake out of ignorance, I am in full friendship with the English. And you also, being aware of our ignorance (lit. wickedness), do not show indifference towards us, but teach us all the knowledge of body and soul in accordance with God's commandment. Since God has extended the government of the English for the benefit of mankind, look upon us with a kind heart.

And now, behold, I have sent a gilded armlet. It is not, however, a gift worthy of a queen. It is not a gift sufficient for the queen. It is a very small thing because it is difficult for me to send anything (lit. the road is difficult for me). [Please] accept it from me, regarding it as [the offer of] the woman who threw two copper coins (*dirīm*) into God's chest in the temple.

The district where I am now is in Wello. I have started to build a town. The reason for this is that by sending [messages] to every district the Wello have created many enemies against me, although I have not done them any harm whatsoever. They have deserted me after having sworn [obedience] three times. I waited for them a long time with a pure heart. Therefore, God has judged for me. I have caught all the leaders. I am keeping them by law until I have investigated their affairs. By the will of God, the whole of Wello is now in my hand. The reason why I am writing this is in order that I should not, when you hear news about it, appear [to be] the culprit and that you should [not] dislike me. May the God of love give you health.

Written in the land of Wello, in the town of Werre'īlu in the year 1864 after the birth of Christ, on the 15h day of the month of Senē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ቅደ ከ፡ በ ኤማ ዚኤ ኅሐር፡ ሣጥ ኝ፡ ሁ ለት ፡ ድሪ ም፡ ነ ሐ ስ፡ ኤነ ደ፡ ጣ ለ ቸ፡ ቱ፡ ሴ ት፡ ኤ ድ ር ገ ው፡ ይ ቀ በ ሉ ልኝ ።

ኤ ሁ ኝ፡ ያ ለ ሁ በ ት፡ ኤገ ር፡ ወ ሉ ፡ ሳ ይ፡ ነ ው።ከ ተ ጣ፡ መ ሥ ራ ት፡ ጀ ም ረ፡ኤ ለ ሁ ኝ ። የ ዚህ ም፡ ም ክ ኛ ያ ቱ። ወ ሉ ኞ፡ በ ያ ገ ራ፡ ኤ የ ሳ ኩ፡ ኅ ዙ፡ ጠ ሳ ት፡ ቢ ገ ዙ ል ኝ ፡ ነ ው ። ኤ ኔ ድ፡ በ ደ ል፡ ኤ ዩ ኒ፡ ሳ ል በ ድ ሳ ቸ ው። ስ ከ ት፡ ጊ ዜ ፡ ም ስ ው፡ ከ ዱ ኛ ። ኤ ኔ ም ፡ በ ኛ ዱ ሕ፡ ል ጣ ፡ ኅ ዙ፡ ጊ ዜ ፡ ጠ በ ቅ ኋ ቸ ው። ከ ለ ዚህ ም፡ ኤ ማ ዚ ኤ ኅ ሐ ር፡ ፈ ረ ዩ ል ኝ ። ኤ ይ ነ ሱ ኛ ው ሂ ኂ፡ ሁ ሉ፡ ያ ዝ ኋ ቸ ው። ነ ገ ራ ቸ ው ኀ ፡ ኤ ከ ክ ለ የ ው፡ ድ ረ ከ ፡ ኅ ዱ። በ ሥ ር ዓ ት፡ ኤ ኮ ረ ኔ ቸ ቀ ለ ሁ። ወ ሉ ም ፡ ሁ ሉ፡ ኤ ሁ ኝ ፡ በ ኤ ማ ዚ ኤ ኅ ሐ ር፡ ፊ ቃ ድ፡ በ ኤ ጂ ፡ ነ ው። ይ ህ ነ ኛ ም ፡ መ ጣ ፊ ፡ ወ ረ ፡ ሰ ም ተ ው ፡ በ ደ ሰ ኛ ፡ መ ል ዱ ም ፡ ኤ ኛ ዲ ይ መ ሉ ኝ ፡ ኅ ዱ ፡ ነ ው ።

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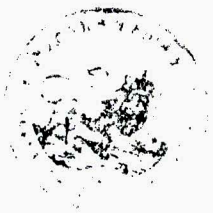

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በ ወ ረ ኤ ሉ ፡ ካ ተ ማ ፡ ሐ ኛ ፈ ። ,

IOR, R/20/A/401, Abyssinia no. 1, 1871–72, Correspondence with Menilek, fols 42–43, Amharic original; fols 38–39, English translation by Johannes Mayer dated 22nd June; FO 95/731, no. 140, German and English translations. With the exception of a few minor differences and the comparison of Minīlik's gift to Victoria with the poor widow's offering of her last copper coin in the temple, the content of this letter agrees with that of no. 83. The circumstances indicate that Minīlik probably did not know that the earlier version had been sealed and dispatched.

More thought was clearly given to the dating of this letter.. Instead of "in the year of Yohannis" we find "after the birth of Christ" and the place is specified as "Werre'īlu in Wello". The copy is, moreover, carefully penned by an Ethiopian scribe, and sealed at the bottom.

The translation was produced "on request" by the Protestant missionary Johannes Mayer. Active in Begēmdir during the reign of Tēwodros, Mayer had turned to Shewa after the British campaign was over. His translation is in some respects more careful than Taurin's.

An odd detail is that Mayer took the liberty of introducing the king as *Niguse Negest* Minīlik "*of Shewa* in Ethiopia" (my emphasis), instead of just "Ethiopia". He saw to it that his translation, dated Werre'īlu 22 June, was made official by the king's seal. Finally he added that Minīlik would be grateful for a German copy of the answer to his letter in order to facilitate a correct translation.

Whatever the circumstances surrounding the writing of this letter, the rivalry between Catholic and Protestant missionaries for influence at Minīlik's court emerges quite clearly from the situation. Oddly, the Amharic text which the queen received was the version in which the Catholics were involved, while the original of the final version ended up in the archives of the India Office.

Minīlik was not given the satisfaction of receiving a reply from the queen, or even directly from her government. Instead, the Political Resident at Aden, J.W. Schneider, was instructed to reply. On 1 February 1873 he wrote as follows:

> "We have received Commands from the Great British Government to write to you and say that Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to accept the bracelet, the receipt of which we duly acknowledged in our letter dated the 31st December 1872. We have been desired at the same time to inform you with every expression of friendship and goodwill that Her Majesty cannot hereafter receive presents and letters from the Rulers and Princes of Abyssinia, as Her Majesty is not prepared to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of that country. We shall be glad to hear from time to time of the happiness and prosperity of Your Majesty and of the many people committed to your care and protection by Almighty God."

Document no. 87

Yohannis IV to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm [31 July 1872]

After having offered my greetings suitable to Your Highness's exalted position, and enquiring after your health, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th of Muharram 1289, explaining the violence, plunder and murders committed by Welde Adiyabo Mirrach (Valadedyāboumarah) in the countries of Taka (Tākeh), Barya (Bārayāt) and Bazēn (Bazat), and many of the people were carried off as slaves to be sold, demanding the restoration of the property plundered and the perpetrator to be sent to you for punishment.

I have to state to Your Highness in reply that the above-mentioned countries, from time immemorial up to this day, belong to Abyssinia, and that the outrages which Your [Highness] speaks of were on the contrary committed upon our merchants, some of whom were murdered and others were carried off as slaves to be sold; I have, in consequence, ordered the commander of my troops there to chastise the guilty persons and to prevent the reoccurrance of such unpleasant events for the future; not any of my people have ever encroached upon Taka (Tākèh).

As to Your Highness's demand for the perpetrator to be sent to you, it is not by any means lawful, as no government will deliver up its own subject to another for punishment.

I have also to state to Your Highness that the iniquity and malice of some persons, who must be fond of shedding blood, have created these painful events, as I understand, Munzinger (Monsinger) Bey has, by order of Your Highness, collected an army and has entered the countries of Mensa (Monssess), Halhal (Halhāl) and Hamasēn (Khamassin) which are situated between the Abyssinian and Egyptian territories, Hamasēn is the original capital of Abyssinia, and the two former places took their names from the latter; from these countries my kingdom extends as far as the coasts of the Red Sea; we hope that the countries on the coast which have been taken from us may be restored.

The officials of Your Highness's government on the coast not being satisfied with this have begun to encroach upon other parts of Abyssinia.

No doubt Your Highness's conscience will point out that a neighbour ought to be at all times as a beloved brother, but if a brother plunders the lands of his brother, what affection exists between them! If Your Highness desires to argue respecting the territories in question you can enquire of the Europeans residing there, and moreover, if you wish the friendship between us to be durable, Your Highness must not listen to the sayings of mischievous persons, and (that) you must also give orders for the withdrawal of your troops; but on the other hand if Your Highness has a design to seize the abovementioned places, let me know; at all events I expect an answer from Your Highness to my letter.

ENA, Abyssinie 20/9/1 or AoI, C. 32, fols 354–355, English translation of an Arabic original, or an Amharic original first translated into Arabic. The letter is written to refute accusations made in a letter from Ismā'īl *Pasha* dated 24 Muharram 1289 (=3 April 1872). In December 1872 Stanton sent a French version of this letter to Earl Granville (FO 78/2229, no page or folio nos.), and it also reached the German government (AAPA, IB 9, Abessinien 1). There the date of the letter is given as 25 Abīb 1288 which, corrected to 1289, corresponds to 31 July 1872. In Ismā'īl's reply the letter (ENA, Abyssinie 20/9/1, C. 32, fols 356–357), is referred to as dated 25 Abīb *1589* (Era of the Martyrs) which leads to 31 July *1873*! Apparently the two last figures of the respective calendars have confused translators or copiers. For the events described, which led eventually to the war with Egypt, see also Douin, III, 2, pp. 337–49; Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 295–97; Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 47–48.

The letter is reproduced as preserved in its English translation. Only obvious orthographical errors in the text have been corrected, and the names of persons and places spelled with the standard spelling used in *Acta Aethiopica*, followed by the spelling of the preserved text in brackets. Welde Ṣadiq Mirraḥ, referred to as "Valadedyāboumarah", "Ebn Edyabou Marach" in the French version, was the son of the earlier governor of Adiyabo, Mirrach Welde Sillasē (Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 209 och 297, n. 41).

Document no. 88

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 13 Aug. 1872

Victoria, queen of Great Britain and Ireland and all its territories. [Letter] sent by King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories.

I was very pleased when I heard that you had received from the hands of my servants my letters and the gifts I had dispatched. I was also exceedingly pleased when I received the letters signed by your hand and the ten boxes containing [the] excellent gifts. Your servant called Captain Prideaux (Kapitēn Pīrīdo) came to Massawa via Aden, on a steamship, with your letter and gifts. He sent me ten boxes. He sent me a message (saying), "I have come leaving one box [behind] in Aden. I shall send it to you later."

You know the history of Ethiopia. A Muslim rebel called Mehammed Grañ rose up in our country. He killed a king. He slaughtered [and] killed all the Christians. He shed the blood of all Christians. He set fire to and burnt down all the churches. He forced the surviving believers out of their country and they were exiled into the desert.

And now, there is in my domain a district which is called Azebo. The people who live there are Muslim Galla. They rebelled and I marched against them. By the power of God, after I had succeeded with the matter for which I marched out, I returned to my city Adwa. Behind my back, Ismā'īl Pasha (Isma'ēl Basha), calling himself king, sent Munzinger Bey (Minsejir Bē) with many soldiers, appointing him over Mereb Melash—half of Tigray—[and] all the borderlands (*yedaryedarun ager*) of Ethiopia. Moreover, these Shanqilla are those who killed your countryman Mr. Thomas (Mistir Tomas) with his wife [and] with his men. They kill all the merchants who move from Tigray to Welqayit and back (from Welqayit). They shed the blood of all Christians. Because of all this wickedness of theirs, I appointed and sent one servant of mine, my *dejjazmach,* so that he might punish those [people]. Ismā'īl Pasha (Isma'ēl *Basha*) wrote to me, saying like this, "Punish this servant of yours for me. Otherwise, send him to me so that I may punish him the way I wish."

A few days earlier you had written and sent me a letter telling me to listen to your advice. And when I listened to your advice and remained quietly in my country, *Wagshum* Gobezē, gathered all his troops and came to fight me. But I defeated him, by the power of God. I captured him with his officials [and] with his soldiers. He is still with me. And now judge all the injustices Ismā'īl Pasha has committed against me, [when] I have not injured him even with one unnjust act. Among (lit. of) all the kings of Europe, I have no other friend whom I trust except you. For a Christian is the friend of a Christian. Beginning from [the days of] Mehammed Grañ until now the Christian kings of Ethiopia have been growing weaker, whereas the Muslims are growing stronger. They think the country that they have in their hands is not enough for them, and they want to rule the whole of Ethiopia in its entirety.

Until now I had the hope that by the might of the English government my country, which the Muslims took by force over the centuries, would be restored to me. But now they want to dominate the whole of Ethiopia, everything that is in my hands. I have written all this to you, saying to myself that I ought to listen to all the advice you may give (lit. tell) me. For I do not want the blood of all the Christians to be shed without [first] hearing your advice. I am sending this letter with your trusted countryman called General Kirkham (Kerkam). As I am in a hurry, I have told him, "Come [back] very quickly bringing the reply with you." Moreover, I ask for one thing from you. I would like you to send me a suitable man, who will observe all the wrongs I am suffering, who will not leave me, whose conduct is agreeable to [other] people. It is in order that he be a witness for me. I shall pay (lit. give) his salary.

Moreover, the painting called *Kurate Ri'isu* is a painting of our Lord, of our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. King Tēwodros took it from Gonder to Meqdela together with many books. It is painted along its edges with gold; the centre in colours (lit. paint). I would like you to send it to me. There is also a book called *Kibre Negest.* It went at the same time (lit. together). It is [a book] which tells about all the regulations of the officials and of the churches of my country. Things have become confused (for

me) in my country. And now I would like you to arrange to look for them, both the *Kibre Negest* and the *Kurate Ri'isu*, wherever they might be, and send them to me.

Moreover, let me tell you something. Listen to me. [It is] the matter of the Catholics. They told me, "We shall teach our religion in your country." But I replied to them, "I am baptized in the name of the Trinity. I believe [in] Christ of the Gospels, and the one who shall teach me is the one at Alexandria, who sits on the chair of Mark, who has [received] the share of Mark. (And) I have priests, whom he has appointed, who teach my people." I also said to them, "If you want to teach, there are in this world many gentiles who are not baptized in the name of the Trinity, who do not believe [in] the Christ of the Gospels." I said to them, "Teach those." It is because of this (matter) that they sent a letter to *Wagshum* Gobezē, telling him to come. They are the ones who caused the shedding of the blood of the Christians (who are) in Ethiopia.

Moreover, they built a church in my country without my permission. They made all the people mutinous outlaws, saying, "Come to us. Refuse to pay taxes." And I sent one of my officials telling him to go and collect the taxes. Those [people] said, "No, we refuse to pay taxes." When the official whom I gave orders to and sent off set fire to the houses of those rebels, he set fire to them at the same time (lit. together). Look into the matter of the Catholics; they [intend] to defame me (lit. my name). The one who is doing all this to me is Munzinger Bey [Minsinj Bē]. He boasted to me saying, "I shall bring the Turks and have you killed." Look at the wrong [done] to me. Also, when I sent you a paper, a letter, recording all the wickedness of the Catholics, Munzinger Bey seized it at Massawa and threw it into the sea. I am writing the letter because I trust you. Now, do not get tired of me saying, "The issues are too many."

Written in the town of Adwa, on the 8th day of Nehasē, in the year of grace 186[4].

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

FO 95/731, no. 143, Amharic original and English translation; copy of the translation in FO 1/27B, fols 8–12. The English version ends with the statement, "Translated by the King's Interpreter to General J.C. Kirkham, by order of Yourness, King of Kings of Ethiopia, at Adwa, on the 10th day of August, 1872." "Yourness" is also used in the translation itself. It is difficult to understand how Yohannis has become "Yourness". An Ethiopian can hardly have pronounced the name in such a way that it led to "Yourness", and Kirkham must have known that "Yohannis" was "John". The date of 10 August probably indicates that the letter was drafted then but penned in the version dispatched only three days later.

The opening paragraph refers to the gifts sent to Queen Victoria as early as August 1870 with Birru and Mirṣha Werqē (nos. 53–54 and 62). Apparently the British government took Kirkham's mission more seriously. than the earlier Ethiopian attempts to establish friendly relations with Great Britain. He was after all a British officer. Replies from both Victoria and Granville were prepared (dated 18 December). In both Yohannis is told how concerned the British government became when his letters arrived, but also that they had been assured by *Khedive* Ismā'īl that his intentions were peaceful (FO 1/27B, fols 30–36)

This is only one—though the most important—of six letters from Yohannis, dated 8 Nehasē and sent to Europe by the hand of Kirkham, a British officer who had entered the service of Yohannis. The other addressees were Earl Granville (no. 89), and the heads of state of Russia, Germany, Austria and France (nos. 90–93). The handwriting seems identical in all the Amharic originals, and they are all sealed with the emperor's new seal.

It was only on 10 October that Kirkham informed the British government of his arrival in London; two months later he reported that he was leaving for Vienna (FO 1/27B, fol. 18 and 28).

For a summary of the Kirkham mission to Europe and its failure, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 297–304.

Document no. 89

Yohannis IV to G.L.-G. Granville, 13 Aug. 1872

ከው፡በሌትዮ ጵያ፡ያሉ፡የሕዝብ፡ክርስቲያንን፡ያም፡ያሰፈሰሱ፡እነ
ያ፡ናቸው።፡ደ ግሞ፡ካሰፈታዪ፡ቤተክርሰቲያን፡ሰሩ፡ካነሬ፡ሰዝው
፡ሁሉ፡ኑ፡ወደኖ፡ግብር፡ለንዳትገብሩ፡ለሱ ለቸው፡እኔም፡ለንድ፡ሹ
ሚነ፡ዛድ፡ግብር፡ለሙ ጣ፡ብዩ፡ሰደድ ሁት፡እነዚያም፡እም ቢ፡ለንገብር
ሙ፡ለቴ፡ፈዝጄ፡የሰደድሁት፡ሹመኔ፡ቤታቸው ን፡ሲ ለቀጥ ል፡ለብሮ፡ተ
ኮሰባቸው።፡የኔን፡ሰም፡ሲ ለከፉት፡ነ ሙ፡ይህ ን፡ሁ ሉ፡ግ ፍ፡ይሙ ልኝ፡ይ
ህ ን፡ሁሉ፡የ ሚ ሉ፡ቋ ፎ ቅ፡ም ጉሉ ፎር፡ነ ሙ፡ቁ ር ክ፡መ ር ቺ፡ጪ ጥ ቹ፡
ለሰገድልህ፡ለ ሰ ሁ፡ብ ሎ፡ሬ ከ ሩልኝ፡ግ ሬ ን፡ይ ሙ ት።፡የ ኮ ቶ ሊ ኮ ቸ ን፡የ
ክ ፍ ታ ቹ ን፡ሁ ሉ፡መ ሮ ቀ ት፡ጽ ሬ፡መ ደ ና ት፡ብ ሰ ድ።፡ያ መ ን ሰ ጅ ር፡ቤ ፡ት
ያ መ ት፡ያ ጥ ዋ፡ሳ ይ፡ከ ባ ህ ር፡ለ ገ ባ ሙ።



ኮ ሽ ሐ ሬ፡በ ጊ ሎ ን፡ነ ሐ ሴ።፡በ ነ ወ ጂ የ
ጂ ወ ፬ ለ መ ት፡ያ መ ሰ ሩ፡በ ለ ይ ዋ፡
ከ ኮ ሠ ን።

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories reach my honest, loyal friend Granville (Grand Bīl).

How are you, [though known to me only] by hearsay? I am well, together with all my people, thank God. Now, the letter has reached me. When I read it and understood it, I was very pleased. I also received the queen's letter, sealed and written by her (hand). I received ten boxes containing excellent gifts. Captain Prideaux (Kapitēn Pīrīdo), however, informed me, "One box is left behind at Aden. I shall send it to you." I am not [so] sorry that my messengers did not reach the English government (*bēte mengist*), [the reason being] that Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) is my great enemy and does not wish me to become friends with the English government. Therefore it is he who stopped them, closing the way.

And now, listen to all the things I shall tell you. Pass judgement, since you are my friend. In my country Azebo, a Galla rebel arose aginst me. I marched out to punish him, and by the power of God I succeeded. When I was away on this duty, I discovered that Ismā'īl Pasha had occupied my country behind my back. And now, pass judgement in this matter, whether Ismā'īl Pasha is my friend or my enemy (in this matter). With [this] letter for you I have sent a letter to the queen of England, Victoria. I have sent all these letters with your trustworthy countryman. He is called General Kirkham (Kerkam). He has lived with me for three and a half years. He knows everything. Ask him [about] everything, [ask him] if my message is false.

Let me tell you something else. Listen to me. The painting known as *Kurate Ri'isu* is [a painting] of our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. King Tēwodros took it together with many books. It is painted along its edges with gold; the centre in colours (lit. paint). Besides, the *Kibre Negest* tells about the regulations of our country, of its scholars, of all its officials, of the land [and] all the churches. I would like

you to search for these two, the *Kurate Ri'isu* and the *Kibre Negest*, wherever they might be, and send them to me. I have also written [about them] in the queen's letter.

Mr. Henry Samuel King (Hēnerī Samu'ēl Kīñ) has written to me, saying that the English government has told him, "Unless you get a letter from King Yohannis, we will not listen to you, to your business as his representative, his consul." Now, I have appointed him my representative, my consul. Therefore, listen to all the issues for my sake, so that he can carry out all my business [and] all my work for me in London. I shall send him a paper with a seal.

Moreover, let me tell you something. Listen to me. [It is] the matter of the Catholics. They told me, "We shall teach our religion in your country." But I replied to them, "I am baptized in the name of the Trinity. I believe [in] Christ of the Gospels, and the one who shall teach me is the one at Alexandria, who sits on the chair of Mark, who has [received] the share of Mark. And I have priests, whom he has appointed, who will teach my people." I also said to them, "If you want to teach, there are in this world many gentiles who are not baptized in the name of the Trinity, who do not believe [in] the Christ of the Gospels." I said to them, "Teach those." It is because of this (matter) that they sent a letter to *Wagshum* Gobezē, telling him to come. They are the ones who caused the shedding of the blood of the Christians (who are) in Ethiopia.

Moreover, they built a church in my country without my permission. They told all the people, "Come to us. Refuse to pay taxes." And I sent one of my officials to go and collect taxes. Then those [people] said to him, "No, we refuse to pay taxes." When my official whom I sent off with orders set fire to their houses, he set fire to them at the same time (lit. together). [The purpose] is to defame me (lit. my name). Look into all this wrong for me. The one who is doing all this to me is Munzinger (Minsijir). He boasted to me saying, "I shall come, guiding the Turks, and have you killed." Look at the wrong [done] to me. Also, when I sent you a paper, a letter, recording all the wickedness of the Catholics, Munzinger Bey (Minsijir Bē) seized it at Massawa and threw it into the sea.

Written in the town of Adwa, on the 8th day of Nehasē in the year of grace 1864.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

FO 95/731, no. 144, Amharic original and English translation; copy of the translation in FO 1/27B, fols 14–16. This letter is largely a copy of Yohannis's letter to Victoria of the same date (no. 88). The paragraphs about Ahmed Grañ and the conflict with *Wagshum* Gobezē have been omitted and the accusations against *Khedive* Ismā'īl are briefer, apparently because Yohannis expected that Kirkham would be given the opportunity to report these events to Granville in person. On the other hand, the issue of Henry King's appointment as Ethiopian consul in London is added in the above letter, no doubt in order to get this settled during Kirkham's visit there.

The passage with the accusations against the Catholics and Munzinger is omitted from the translations of both letters, in all probability because Kirkham was aware that accusations against Europeans would do more harm than good to Ethiopia's cause. That Kirkham was involved in producing the English versions is beyond doubt.

Document no. 90

Yohannis IV to Ferdinand I (in fact Franz Joseph), 13 Aug. 1872

ይድረሰ፡ከ፩ሰተርደ፡ሰግጥሩር፡ፈርጀናዴ።።።። የተሳከ፡ከግጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዮሐንስ፡ዘኢ
ትዮጵያ፡ወ ኩሉ፡ሰጅ ያሚ ሃ። እስከ፡ዛሬ፡ዲ ረስ፡ ይ ዝ ዲ ቢ፡ ሰ ልችዋ ኩ ሰ ዋ ያመ። ምነው፡ የ ያመ
ጥ ፡መግባ ጅ፡ በእስ ላ ሞ ች፡ ሃይልና፡ ክፉት፡ተዘግቶብ ኝ፡ ሰልና፡ ባገ ሬ ያመ፡ጉዲ ይ፡ ቢ በዛብኝ።
ነው፡ሰ ባቶቺ ዎ ና፡ሰ ባ ቶ ች፡ ከ ፫ ፬ ሰ መት፡ጀ ያመ ሮ፡ እስ ከ፡ዛ ሬ፡ ዱ ረ ስ፡ ወ ዲ ፫ ች፡ነ በ ሩ። በብዙ፡ዘ
ዉ ና ት፡የቀ ረ፡ወ ዲ ጅ ነት፡እር ሰ ዎ ና፡እኔ፡ ልና ፈ ው፡ እ ፈ ልጋ፡ ሰ ሰ ሁ። ዲ ሩ፡ ግን፡ በ ይ ዝ ዲ ዉ፡ እንዲን
ፍ ቀ ር፡የክር ስቴ ያን፡ ወ ሳ ቶ ች፡የእስ ዓ ፌ ል፡ ባ ሻ፡ ሰ ወ ች፡ ቱ ር ኮ ች፡ እ ሰ ሳ ሞ ች፡ መ ግ ባ ጅ፡ ዞ ጉ ዝ ች። ባ
ገ ሬ፡ ሰ ዘ በ፡ የ ዐ ፈ ሳ ል፡ የ ጋ ሳ፡ የ ሰ ሳ ያ ም፡ ሰ ጊ ር፡ ሰ ሰ፡ ከ ር ሱ፡ ሸ ፍ ታ፡ ቢ ነ ሳ ብ ኝ፡ ሰ ር ሱ ን፡ ሰ ዝ ጥ ሩ ት፡
ዘ ዐ ው ት ሁ፡ ሰ ር ሱ ን ም፡ በ ሕ ግ ዘ ሰ ብ ሔ ር፡ ሃ ይ ል፡ ሰ ጠ ፍ ሁ ት። ወ ጀ፡ ከ ሉ ማ ር፡ ሰ ጅ ጭ ብ መ ሰ ል፡ ቱ ር
ኮ ች፡ እ ስ ላ ሞ ች፡ የ እ ስ ዓ ፌ ል፡ ባ ሻ፡ ሰ ዎ ች፡ ሰ ገ ሬ ን፡ ይ ዘ ው ት፡ ፩ ገ ኘ ሁ፡ ሬ ታ ሂ ዉ። ግን፡ እ ኔ ን፡ ሌ እ
ሰ ልሙ፡ ሰ ዝ ቢ ነ ም፡ሁ ሉ፡ ባ ር ያ፡ ሰ ጅ ሮ ግ ሙ፡ ሰ ሸ ጡ፡ ነ ው። ሰ ሁ ን ም፡ እ ኔ፡ ክ ር ሰ ቲ ያ ኑ፡ እ ሰ ሳ ጅ ፌ ሽ ን፡
ሰ ዝ ቢ ም፡ሁ ሉ፡ ባ ር ያ፡ ሁ ን፡ ሴ ሸ ጥ፡ እ ን ጂ ደ ወ ጁ፡ ፊ ው ቃ ሰ ሁ። ም ነ ው፡ ጭ ኑ፡ ክ ር ሰ ቲ ያ ን፡ ነ ዋ ና። ይህ
ነ ን፡ ይ ዝ ዲ ቢ፡ የ ኻ ኩ ሰ ዋ፡ የ ግ ሬ ን፡ የ ተ ባ ሩ ት ን፡ ሠ ሬ ሌ ሰ ዘ ሙ ት፡ ዝ ዬ ነ ው። ኧ ሁ ን ም፡ ይ ግ
ሞ፡ ደ ው ቃ ሉ፡ ፌ ት ዮ ጵ ያ፡ እ ን ደ፡ ሰ ን ጅ፡ ሰ ሱ ት፡ እ ን ጂ፡ ሆ ነ ች፡ በ እ ስ ዓ ፌ ል፡ ባ ሻ፡ በ ቱ ር ክ፡ ተ ከ ባ፡
እ ን ጂ ሰ ች። የ ክ ር ሰ ቲ ያ ኖ ች፡ ይ ም፡ ሰ ማ ጥ ሰ ሰ፡ ይ ፈ ልጋ-ሉ። በ እ ግ ዘ ኣ ብ ሔ ር፡ ሃ ይ ል፡ እ ኔ፡ ከ ሕ ዝ
ቤ ን ሬ፡ ጂ ህ ና፡ ነ ኝ ፡ ሰ ር ሰ ዎ ያ ም፡ ከ ሕ ዝ በ ዋ ን ሬ፡ በ ጤ ና፡ እ ን ጂ ኖ ሩ፡ ከ እ ግ ዘ ኣ ብ ሔ ር፡ እ ሰ ም
ን፡ እ ሰ ሁ።



ተጽ ሕ ፈ፡በ ፷ተ ን፡ነ ሐ ሴ፡
በ ፲ወ ፷ ፱ ፷ወ ፬ ዕ ለ ተ፡ምሕረት
በ እ ፍ ዋ፡ከ ተ ማ።

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories reach Emperor Ferdinand (Anperer Ferdīnand) of Austria. Until now I have not written a letter to you, because the route to Massawa is closed to me through the power and wickedness of the Muslims. It is also because I was too occupied with the affairs of my country.

Your fathers and my fathers have been friends since 300 years ago until now. I would like you and me to revive the friendship that was interrupted for a long time. However, in order that we might not establish friendship through letters, the enemies of the Christians, the men of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), the Turks, the Muslims, have closed the road for me. There is in my country a district of the Galla, of Muslims, called Azebo. When a rebel rose against me there, I marched out to destroy him. And by the power of God, I destroyed him. When I came back to my town Adwa, I found my country occupied by the Turks, the Muslims, the men of Ismā'īl *Pasha*. Their desire, however, is to make me a Muslim, and to enslave all my people and sell them. Now, since you are a steadfast Christian, I know that you do not wish that I, a Christian, should become a Muslim, and that all my people should be enslaved and sold. The reason why I have written you this letter is that you should hear the news of the injustice I have suffered. And now you know that Ethiopia is like an island, that it is encircled by Ismā'īl *Pasha*, by the Turks. They want to shed the blood of the Christians. By the power of God, I, together with my people, am well. I shall pray to God that you too, together with your people, may remain in health.

Written in the town of Adwa, on the 8th day of Nehasē, in the year of grace 1864.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

HHS, PA VIII/78, Amharic original. Ferdinand I had abdicated in favour of his nephew Franz Joseph as early as 1848. It is odd that the letter should nevertheless have been addressed to him.

Document no. 91

Yohannis IV to Alexander II, 13 Aug. 1872

ይድረስ፡ሓበ፡ዘተሰምአ፡ዚናሁ፡እምጽንፍ፡እስከ፡ጽንፍ፡፡ዘኮነ፡ከመ፡ቈስጠንጢ
ኖስ፡መልእልተ፡ኩሉ፡ፍጥረት፡፡እስክንድር፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘሀገረ፡መስኮ
ብ፡ወሮም፡ወኩሉ፡አድያሚሃ፡፡=፡፡የተሳከ፡ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዮሐንስ፡ዘኢ
ትዮጵያ፡ወኩሉ፡አድያሚሃ፡፡እንዴት፡ነዎ፡እጅጉን፡እኔም፡ይህና፡ነኝ፡እግዚአብሔ
ር፡ይመስገን፡የፍቅር፡ምልክት፡ይብዳቤ፡ሰድጄለዎ፡ነበር፡መድረሱን፡አሳወቅ
ሁም፡ምላሹም፡አልመጣልኝም፡፡በእግዚአብሔር፡ሓይል፡በክርስቶስ፡ቡራኬ፡ባባ
ቶቼ፡መንግሥት፡ባባቶቼ፡አልጋ፡ተቀምጨ፡አለሁ፡፡አሁንም፡ይብዳቤ፡ጻፍኩለዎ፡
የኔን፡መልካም፡ወሬ፡ሊሰሙ፡ዘንድ፡፡ይግሞ፡ጥኑ፡ክርስቲያን፡እንይሆኑ፡አውቃለሁ፡
ክርስቲያንን፡ሁሉ፡እንዲወዱ፡አውቃለሁ፡፡ይግሞ፡የኢትዮጵያን፡መንግሥት፡ታሪክ፡
እንዲያውቁ፡አውቃለሁ፡ባገሬ፡አንድ፡አገር፡አለ፡አዘቦ፡የሚባል፡የጋሳ፡የሰሳም፡አገር፡
ከዚያ፡አንድ፡ሺፍታ፡ተነሳብኝ፡እርሱን፡ለማጥፋት፡ዘመትሁ፡እርሱንም፡በእግዚአብሔ
ር፡ሓይል፡አጠፍሁት፡፡ወይ፡ከተማየ፡አድዋ፡ብመለስ፡ቁርኮች፡የአስማኤል፡ባሻ፡ሰዎ
ች፡አገሬን፡ይዘውት፡አገኘሁ፡፡ፈቃዳቸው፡ግን፡እኔን፡ሊአሰልሙ፡ሕዝቤን፡ሁሉ፡ባርያ፡አዩ
ርገው፡ሊሺው፡ይፈልጋሉ፡፡አሁንም፡እኔ፡ክርስቲያኑ፡ልሰልም፡ሕዝቤም፡ሁሉ፡ባርያ፡ሁ
ኖ፡ሊሺኖ፡እንዲይወዱ፡አውቃለሁ፡፡ምነው፡ጥኑ፡ክርስቲያን፡ነዎና፡ለኔም፡ዘመዴ፡ነዎ፡
በሃይማኖት፡አንድ፡ነነ፡ይኸነን፡ነገር፡ሊአውቁት፡እወድአለሁ፡፡በእግዚአብሔር፡ሓይል፡እ
ኔም፡ይህና፡ነኝ፡ከሕዝቤ፡ጋራ፡፡ለእርሰዎም፡ከሕዝበዎ፡ጋራ፡በጤና፡እንዲኖሩ፡ከእግ
ዚአብሔር፡አለምን፡አሳሁ፡፡

ተጽሕፈ፡በጽቀን፡ነሐሴ፡በ፡ወጽየጋወበ
አመተ፡ምሕረት፡በአድዋ፡ከተማ፡፡



May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories reach Alexander (Iskindir), king of kings of the land of Russia (Meskob) and Constantinople (Rom) and all its borderlands, whose fame is known from one end [of the earth] to the [other] end, who like Constantine has been [raised] above all [other] beings.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. I sent you a letter, a sign of friendship. I do not know whether it has arrived, for no reply to it has come to me. By the power of God, by the blessing of Christ, I have been installed in the kingdom of my fathers, on the throne of my fathers. And now I have written a letter to you so that you may hear the good news about me. Also, I know that you are a steadfast Christian. I know that you love all Christians. I also know that you are acquainted with the history of the Ethiopian kingdom.

In my country there is a district called Azebo, a district of Galla, of Muslims. A rebel rose against me there. I marched out to destroy him. And by the power of God I destroyed him. When I came back to my town, Adwa, I found my country occupied by the Turks, the men of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). Their desire, however, is to make me a Muslim, and to enslave my people and sell them. Now, I know that you do not wish that I, a Christian, should become a Muslim, and that all my people should be enslaved and sold. It is because you are a steadfast Christian and to me you are a (lit. my) friend. We are one in religion. I would like you to know about this matter.

And by the power of God, I, together with my people, am well. And I shall pray to God that you, together with your people, may remain in health.

Written in the town of Adwa, on the 8th of Nehasē, in the year of grace 1864,

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

AVPRI, F. Politarchiv, D. 2000, fol. 13, Amharic original; fols 11–12, attached documents concerning the letter.

The appeal for assistance against Ismā'īl *Pasha's* Egypt was obviously directed to Queen Victoria and Lord Granville in the first place (nos. 87 and 88), but it is interesting to note that, either on his own initiative or advised by Kirkham to do so, Yohannis addressed his appeal for Christian solidarity to a further four heads of state in Europe. On the main issue, the Egyptian attack, it is obvious that one of the three letters to the rulers of Russia, Germany and Austria has been used as a draft for the other two.

The earlier letter referred to in this one was most probably a letter written by *Dejjazmach* Kasa to Alexander II in July 1871, at the same time as he wrote to Sir Robert Napier and Queen Victoria announcing his victory over Tekle Gīyorgīs (nos. 73 and 75). It has been impossible to locate that earlier letter in the Russian archives. Perhaps it shared the fate of other letters allegedly stopped and destroyed by Munzinger at Massawa. In the following letter to Wilhelm I (no. 92), Yohannis refers to this matter.

Russia seems to have been even less concerned about the fate of Ethiopia than Western Europe. It was reported from St. Petersburg to Bismarck that the Russian government paid little attention to events in Abyssinia, and that Alexander was not expected to consider any intervention to support Yohannis (AAPA, I.B. 9, Afrika. Abessinien 1, no. 140, Alvensleben, 25 October 1872).

Document no. 92

Yohannis IV to Wilhelm I, 13 Aug. 1872

ይድረስ፡ዓበ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዊልያም፡ዘሀገረ፡ነምሳ፡፡ ፡፡ የተሳከ፡ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዮ
ሐንስ፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ወኩሉ፡አድያሚሃ፡፡ እንዴት፡አሉ፡ከጻፍኩለዎ፡እስከ፡ዛሬ፡ድረስ፡እኔ፡
ደህና፡ነኝ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡፡ የጻፍኩለዎ፡ይብዳቤ፡ባይገባ፡አይዘኑ፡፡ምነው፡የክርስ
ቲያን፡ጠላቶች፡ቱርኮች፡ከመካከላቸን፡አሉና፡፡ ይብዳቤ፡ጽሬ፡ብሰድ፡ከምጥዋ፡ሳይ፡ይዘው፡ከ
ባህር፡ከእሳት፡ያገቡታል፡፡ስለዚህ፡ነገር፡በኔ፡አይዘኑ፡፡አሁንም፡ይህነን፡ይብዳቤ፡ጻፍኩለዎ፡በ
መልካም፡መልእክተኛ፡በሎገያን፡፡አሁንም፡ልነግሮዎ፡የጠላቶቻችን፡የስላሞችን፡ነገር፡ይ
ስሙኝ፡፡ባገሬ፡አዘቦ፡የሚባል፡የጋሳ፡የስላም፡ ፡ ፡አገር፡አለ፡ከርሱ፡ሺፍቷ፡ተነሳብኝ፡እርሱ
ን፡ለማጥፋት፡ዘመትሁ፡እርሱንም፡በእግዚአብሔር፡ዓይል፡አጠፋሁት፡፡ወይ፡ከተማየ፡አድዋ፡
ብመለስ፡ቱርኮች፡እስላሞች፡የእስማኤል፡ባሻ፡ሰዎች፡አገሬን፡ይዘውት፡አገኘሁ፡፡ፈቃዳቸው፡
ግን፡እኔን፡ሊያሰልሙ፡ሕዝቤንም፡ባርያ፡አድርገው፡ሊሺጡ፡ነው፡፡ አሁንም፡እኔ፡ክርስቲያኑ፡እስ
ላም፡ሁኘ፡ልኖር፡ሕዝቤም፡ሁሉ፡ባርያ፡ሁኖ፡ቢሺጥ፡እንዳይወዱ፡አውቃለሁ፡ምነው፡ጥኑ፡ክርስቲ
ያን፡ነዎና፡፡ይህነን፡ይብዳቤ፡የጻፍኩለዎ፡የግሬን፡የተገፋሁትን፡ወሬ፡ሊሰሙት፡ብዬ፡ነው፡፡እኔ፡
ከሕዝቤ፡ጋሬ፡ይህና፡ነኝ፡በእግዚአብሔር፡ዓይል፡፡ለርሰዎም፡ከሕዝበዎ፡ጋሬ፡በጢና፡እንደኖሩ፡
ከእግዚአብሔር፡እለምን፡አለሁ፡፡



ተጽሕፈ፡በ፰ቀን፡ነሐሴ፡በ፲ወ፰፻፹
ወዐ አመተ፡ምሕረት፡በአድ፡ከተማ

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories reach King of Kings Wilhelm (Wīlyam) of the land of Germany (Nemsa). How have you been, from when I wrote to you [last] until now. I am well, thank God.

Do not be sorry, if the letter I wrote to you did not arrive. It is because the enemies of the Christians, the Turks, are between us. When I write [and] send a letter, they take [it] at Massawa [and] throw it into the sea [or] into fire. Do not be displeased with me over this matter. And now, I have written this letter to you [and sent it] by a reliable messenger through London. Now, let me tell you about the affairs of our enemies, about the Muslims.

Listen to me. There is in my country a district of the Galla, of Muslims, called Azebo. A rebel rose against me there. I marched out to destroy him. And by the power of God, I destroyed him. When I came back to my town Adwa, I found my country occupied by the Turks, the Muslims, the men of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). Their desire, however, is to make me a Muslim and to enslave my people and sell them. Now, since you are a steadfast Christian, I know that you do not wish that I, a Christian, should become and live as a Muslim, and that all my people be enslaved [and] sold.

The reason why I have written you this letter is that you should hear the news of the injustice I have suffered. By the power of God, I, together with my people, am well. I shall pray to God that you too, together with your people, may remain in health.

Written in the town of Adwa on the 8th day of Nehasē, in the year of grace 1864.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

AAPA, IB 9, Abessinien 1, Amharic original, English and German translations. The letter was forwarded from London on 22 October. "Nemsa" normally stands for Austria, but was used also for Germany in the 19th c.

The Turkish authority that sought to prevent Yohannis's correspondence from reaching Europe at this time was none other than Munzinger, the former British and French consul, now Egyptian governor of Massawa. That the letters of August 1872 passed through was most probably because they were carried by Kirkham, a British officer.

Document no. 93

Yohannis IV to Adolph Thiers, 13 Aug. 1872

[To] Mr. Thiers, president of the French Republic. [From] Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and of all its territories.

I have not written to you until now because I have learnt that you are at war with Germany, and because I know that for this reason you are occupied. From the time of King Louis Philippe your country and mine were friends, and now I have recovered the country of my fathers. I occupy the throne, and I would like ourselves and our countries to be allied. There is a province in my kingdom called Azebo Galla in which a rebel has risen up against me. I have marched against him; and by the power of God I have defeated him and he has been killed.

But when I came back to Adwa, my capital, I found that the Turks sent by Ismā'īl *Pasha* had captured part of my kingdom. They would like me to become a Muhammadan and my people to be sold as slaves. But I know that you would not like me to become a Muhammadan or that my people should be sold as slaves, as you are a true Christian and we are but one before Christ. Now judge all these matters for me.

I thank God that I am in good health, and that my people are prosperous. I pray to God that you will remain in good health and that you and your people will be prosperous.

Transmitted by the interpreter of the king to General J.C. Kirkham by the order of Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia at Adwa the 10th day of August 1872.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 115, French translation. It has not been possible to locate any Amharic version of this letter. As in the case of the translations of the preceding five letters, this translation is dated 10 August, but there is no reason to believe that an Amharic original would not have been dated 8 Nehasē, *i.e.* 13 August, as the other letters sent with Kirkham were. As in the translations of the letters to Queen Victoria and Lord Granville, the king's name is rendered "Yourness" both at the top and at the bottom of the document, followed, however, by "Johannes" within brackets at the top.

Document no. 94

Welde Maryam to K.W. Almqvist [Sept. 1872]

I stood up from my home and went to a school and from there I intended to go to Jerusalem to study. I then arrived close to the village where these people were staying, to a village called Ṣe'azega. When I came to the village, I asked, "What is it that these people are doing?" The people of the village told me, "They preach the Gospel." Then I arrived in the village where they taught, and they received me well. Now I wish that I could come to you. Do not forget me in your prayers. The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Missions-Tidning, 1872, p. 82, Swedish translation by the missionary B.P. Lundahl, who apparently sent the translation to Sweden enclosed in a letter dated 30 September. The opening lines of the letter were obviously omitted when the letter was translated.

The writer was a young man of about 21 who had arrived from Shewa one year earlier, and thus one of the six (the Welde Maryam defined as a Galla) listed in document no. 80 above. While the desire to study and to go to Jerusalem were apparently present in the writer's mind before he met Swedish missionaries, the closing blessing may well be the way his first Evangelical teachers taught him to close his short epistle.

Document no. 95

Yohannis IV to Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux, 17 Sept. 1872

መልእክት፡ዘንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዮሐንስ፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ወኩሉ፡አይያሚሃ፡፡
ይድረስ፡ካባ፡ዮሐንስ፡እንይት፡ሰነበቱ፡እኔ፡ይህና፡ነኝ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመስ
ገን፡ይብዳቤዎም፡ደረሰኝ፡መነጠሩንም፡ተቀበልሁ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይስጥልኝ፡
እንኬን፡ከናተ፡ካባቶቼ፡ከወንይሞቼ፡ከክርስቲያኖች፡ጋሬና፡ፍቅር፡ከአሕዛብ፡
ጋሬ፡እንዎ፡ይፍቀሬል፡አሁንም፡እኔ፡ፍቅር፡እወይአለሁ፡፡ የይብዳቤውን፡ታ
ላቅ፡ምላሺ፡ለቁንስል፡ፈረንሳዊ፡እነግሬለሁ፡፡ነገር፡ግን፡ከቁንስል፡ፈረን
ሳዊ፡እስከንገናኝ፡ደረስ፡የኮቶሊክ፡ቆሳውስት፡እናስተምር፡ብለው፡ካገሬ፡
አይዙሩብኝ፡፡



ተጽሕፈ፡አመ፲ኑ፡ለመስከ
ረም፡በ፲ወ፲የ፲ወ፲ሰ፡አመ
ተ፡ምሕረት፡፡

በአይዋ፡ከተማ፡፡

May the message from King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia and all its territories reach Father John (*Abba* Yohannis).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. Your letter has reached me, and I have also received the binoculars. Thank you. Let alone with you, my fathers, my brothers, [who are] Christians, one can become friends even with heathen. Now, I desire friendship. I will tell the French consul my definite (lit. great) reply to your letter. Until the French consul and I meet, however, the Catholic priests should not travel (lit. move around) in my country with the intention of teaching.

Written in the town of Adwa on 8 Meskerem, in the year of grace 1865.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

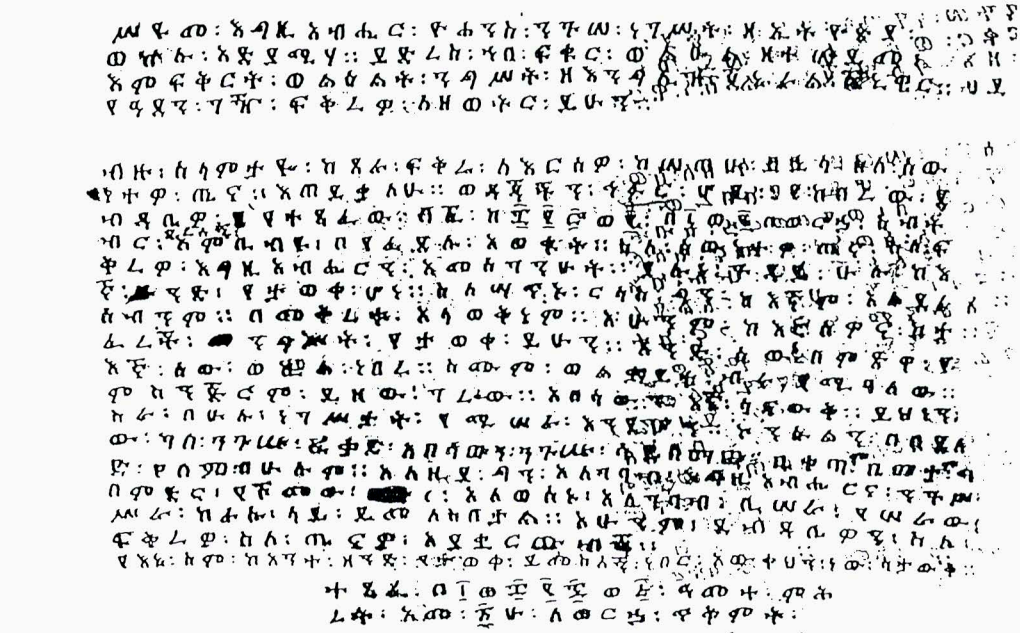
AEA, Amharic original. This letter was published in O'Mahoney, II, p. 148.

The addressee *Abba* Yohannis was no doubt the Catholic missionary Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux, who seems to have been on better terms with the king than were the other members of the mission. Yohannis IV defends himself against the prevalent accusations of being xenophobic and fanatic. This early primary source, on the contrary, points to an attitude very much like the one Tēwodros expressed in his first year as ruler of Ethiopia (ACTA II, nos. 4 and 5).

Document no. 96

Yohannis IV to J.W. Schneider, 29 Oct. 1872





Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May [the letter of] the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories, reach the beloved and exalted governor of Aden, General Schneider (Jenēral Shēnīwēr), [who is] appointed by the beloved and exalted queen of England—may your friendship [for me] endure for ever.

After passing on many greetings [expressing] my sincere (lit. pure) friendship for you, I inquire about your personal health. O, our venerated friend, your esteemed letter which was written in 1872 on the 12th of the month of September has reached me. I have read it, I understood every word (lit. letter by letter). I thanked God for your health and your friendship.

All the matters you raised (lit. told) are known to us. As for the box of bullets, however, it has not reached us. We do not know why it remained behind. Now be it known to you and to the venerable queen.

There was at at Massawa a man who was our agent. He (lit. his name) is called Welqaytē Birru. Without our knowing his offence, Munzinger (Misinjir) seized him and flogged him. If this procedure is followed by all governments (lit. deed is done by all kings), [and] if he has offended the consul, it does not matter at all if he is punished [and] beaten without the permission of the king, without the king knowing his offence. If, however, the man (lit. that one) who is appointed by God, and on [this] earth by the king, does what he should not do, goes beyond the limit and acts unduly, the action he has taken will return upon him.

And now, do not cease [writing] me your letters about your friendship and health. I thought my name was known to you. Is it intentionally or unintentionally [that you have written as you have]?

Written in the year of grace 1865 on the 20th of the month of Ṭiqimt.

IOR, R/20/A/409, Aden Settlement Records, Abyssinia file, p. 583, Amharic and Arabic original; pp. 579–80, English translation. The Arabic text, in the same handwriting as a letter to Schneider in Arabic alone three months later (no. 101), is not only part of the original document. The letter was almost certainly composed in Arabic, as indicated by the Arabic style, for instance the opening sentence of the second paragraph "After passing on many greetings [expressing] my sincere (lit. pure) friendship for you, I inquire about your personal health."

A copy of the translation is found in F.O. 1/28, fol. 341. Apparently Yohannis was not, at the time this letter was written, aware of Munzinger's changed role from European consul to Egyptian governor of Massawa.

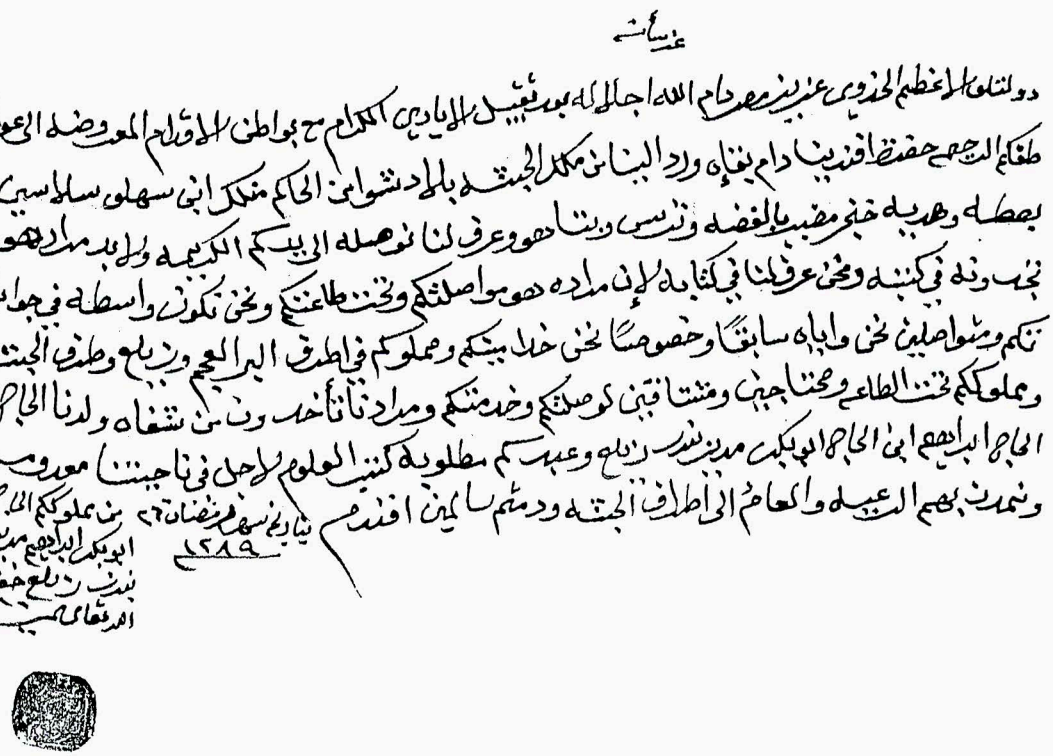
The word translated "venerated" in the phrase "O, our venerated friend" is actually a Gi'iz word, ዝኽሩ, with the negative connotation "ashamed, disgraced, infamous". In all probability the scribe did not know its meaning and used it instead of the Amharic አኽሩ, which in the rare cases when it occurs means "venerated, revered, respected". This agrees with the corresponding word in the Arabic text, which means "dear, beloved, respected".

The question which closes the letter is puzzling. It may have been added by the scribe to indicate that the king had been improperly addressed. The line just above the dating seems in fact to have been added after the letter had once been completed.

Birru Ṗēṭros, here called Birru Welqaytē (see ACTA I, no. 134), was clearly one of the best educated and most active of his generation of Ethiopian intellectuals. We are fortunate to have discovered, among the preserved papers of Antoine d'Abbadie, no less than nineteen letters (ACTA I and II, *passim*) by his hand. He served Tēwodros for some time after his return from Malta and Egypt, but then moved to northern Ethiopia where he was engaged in trade. At the time of this letter he was apparently King Yohannis's agent at Massawa. Yohannis does not reveal the cause of Munzinger's ill-treatment of Birru. It may have been a question of commercial rivalry, but just as likely a desire on the part of Munzinger to silence a witness to his own political activities in collusion with *Khedive* Ismā'īl.

Document no. 97

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 27 Nov. 1872



May his power be sustained.

To the illustrious, the great *khedive*, the ruler of Egypt—may God safeguard his glory.

After kissing the noble hands together with the soles of the feet, what we present for your kind consideration (lit. is presented to your compassionate affection), our noble *effendi*—may God prolong your (lit. his) life—is that we have received from the king of Abyssinia and the land of Shewa, the ruler Minīlik ibn Sahle Sillasē, letters and a gift consisting of a dagger inlaid with silver, a spear and a gilded armlet, and he told us to send it to Your Highness (lit. your noble hand). You will, no doubt, discover the intention from his letters.

As for us, he informed us in his letter that his desire is to be your correspondent, and subject to you. And we will be the agent for your letters, since we were previously in contact with him, and especially since we are your servant and slave in the lands of the non-Arabs and in Zeyla and in the lands of Abyssinia. And your servants are under your orders, and are in need of and long for your correspondence and attendance.

It is our hope that you will accept from the lips of our son *Ḥājj* Ibrāhīm ibn *Ḥājj* Abū Bakr, *mudīr* of the port of Zeyla and your servant, his request for books of science, since they are wanting in our region. Through them we will civilize the subjects (lit. herd) and the people [at large] as far as the borders of Abyssinia. May you, *effendi*, be protected.

Dated in the month of Ramaḍān, the 26th, 1289.

From your servant *Ḥājj* Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm, *mudīr* of the port of Zeyla. May God Almighty protect him. Amen.

Seal: Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 130, Arabic original. At first sight the words in smaller handwriting at the top of the letter look like a pious expression referring to the power of God (which would require "His" instead of "his"). It is difficult, however, to accept that the verb *'azza* could refer to God in this way, and we have therefore assumed that the reference is to the *khedive*.

We have not been able to find the letter from Minīlik himself, nor have we been able to establish whether it actually reached Cairo or not. Douin refers to the Maia Sanieh register of arrrived correspondence for a letter from Munzinger to the *khedive* about Ibrāhīm Abū Bakr's mission (Douin, III, 2, p. 363, n. 3), and quotes Ismā'īl's reply at length from a copy at the Quai d'Orsay(!), but has nothing to say about Minīlik's letter itself. The reported content may well reflect what Abū Bakr wanted Ismā'īl to believe about his influence in the area rather than Minīlik's own message. Abū Bakr's letter to Minīlik the previous year (no. 65) does not exactly indicate an atmosphere of confidence and friendship. It is a pity therefore that we have no way of finding out what Minīlik wrote to Abū Bakr in connection with the above letter.

Document no. 98

Hayle Ab Tesfay to K.W. Almqvist [Dec. 1872]

May [the letter] sent by *Qēs* Hayle Ab, Ṣe'azega, reach Master Almqvist (*Memhir* Alm Kuwīst). How are you, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay, to the extent of heaven and earth? We in this place, in the town called Ṣe'azega, are very happy for the messengers of the Gospel whom you sent us. We, the people who live in Ṣe'azega, have received the books: the New Testament, the Catechism [and] the *Heart of Man*. Because you have arranged for us to get all these in our [own] language, the light has been revealed to us. We used to live in darkness. Thank you. But pray for us. We beg you to love us as Our Lord says in the Gospel of John, chapter 13, verse 34, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Again, Paul says in I Corinthians, chap. 13, v. 13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

And now I would like you to know about the following (lit. this) matter. For all my countrymen have become my enemies, saying, "He is going to bring into our country the religion of the Europeans, of the Swedes." But about these Paul says in [II] Timothy, chap. 3, v. 5, "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." And I would like to run away from them, if God allows me. If possible I shall teach with my brothers, living at Ṣe'azega with Lundahl (Lundal), Lager (Lagir), and Hedenström (Hedinstrom). Otherwise I shall go into exile. In the Gospel of Matthew, chap. 5, v. 10, it is written (lit. says), "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I have sustained many, many insults from them. But I am happy. Matthew, chap. 5, v. 11, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

Grieve, however, for the customs and the wickedness of the country. They live in vanity and with false teaching, forgetting what Paul said, I Timothy, chap. 4, v. 1 to 5, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Therefore, have compassion with this country, pray for it also, in order that the light of the Gospel may be revealed to it, so that He opens the doors of their conscience for them. As for myself, I have examined your books, the worship order of your meetings which say thus to the churches that are in Abyssinia, "It is not so that we tell you to abandon your customs and your teaching to follow ours, but we stretch out our hands in love to you." The words of Paul say thus, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." I have examined and liked [what I found]. I pray that the traditions of Abyssinia be abandoned for they are bad. And now, pray for me and for my brothers, for us who live in Ṣe'azega so that evil customs may depart from us. For He says to all, "For whatsoever you ask in my name, you shall receive (lit. take)."

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator who is in our midst, be with you all who are there. Amen.

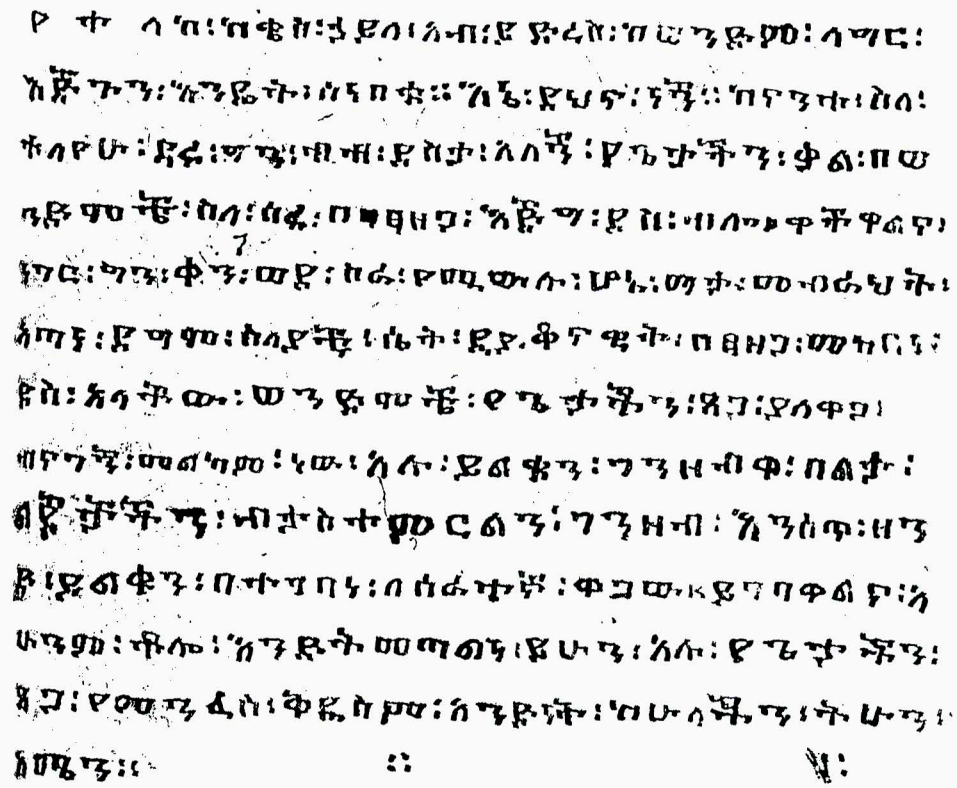
SS.EFS, S 1.2, E 1.2, Amharic original and Swedish translation, the latter published in *Missions-Tidning*, 1873, p. 16. The letter was forwarded with a letter from the missionary B.P. Lundahl 25 December (*ibid.*, p. 15).

Qēs Hayle Ab Tesfay was an Orthodox priest of the Gīyorgīs church at Ṣe'azega. He first met the Swedish missionary P.E. Lager in July 1872, and was associated with the work of the missionaries until his death in the aftermath of the battle of Wekkī Dibba four years later (Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*, pp. 173–78, 185–87, 194–200).

The writer has provided references for the first six of eight quotations from the New Testament. They and the seventh (from II Thess. 5, v. 21), have been rendered as in the King James Version of the Bible. The final one, which may well be a quote from a number of different passages in the gospels, has been translated literally from Hayle Ab's text.

Document no. 99

Hayle Ab Tesfay to P.E. Lager [Dec. 1872?]



May [this letter] sent by *Qēs* Hayle Ab reach Brother Lager.

How have you been, really? I am well, [except] that I am separated from you. But I have much joy because the word of Our Lord has spread among my brothers in Ṣe'azega; for they [too] are very happy. However, they work throughout the day. In the evenings we have no light.

Moreover, we have taken counsel at Ṣe'azega about that woman, the deaconess. They were pleased. My brothers said, "It is good that we get the grace of Our Lord without cost. Especially if she could teach our children for us, living her [own] expense. Since the worker in particular deserves his pay it is proper for us to give money." They said, "And now see to it that she comes to us soon."

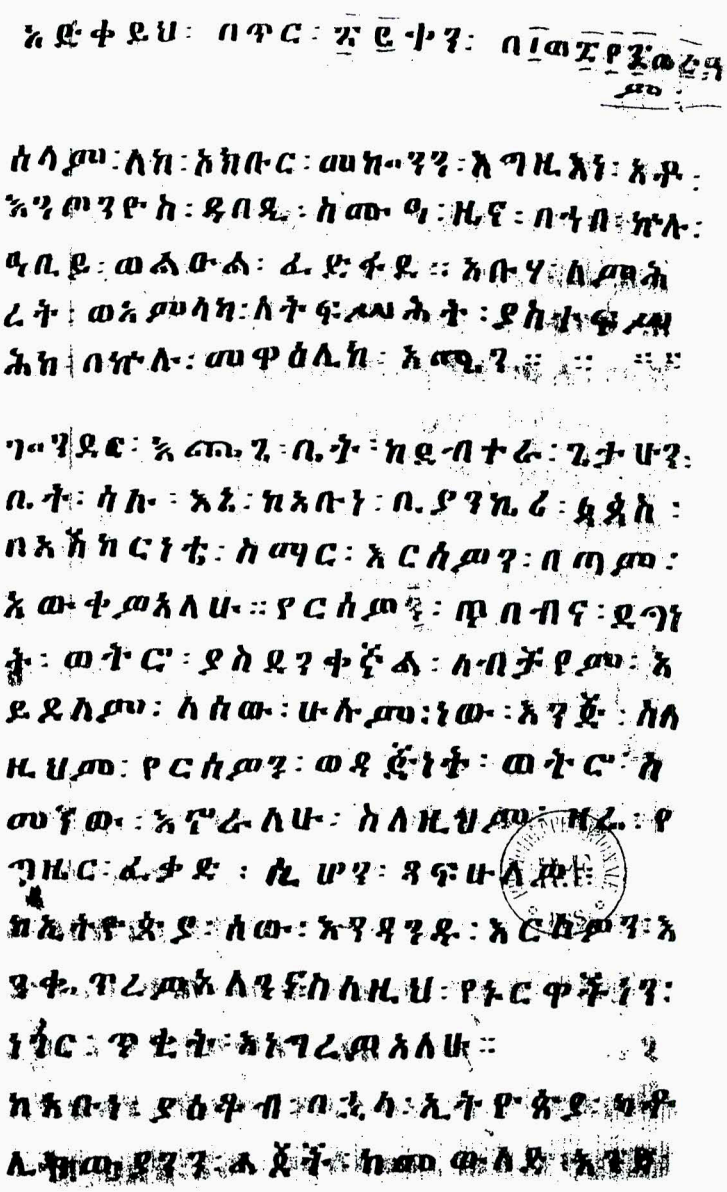
May the grace of Our Lord and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all. Amen.

SS.EFS, S 1.2, E 17, Amharic original and Swedish translation, the latter published in *Missions-Tidning*, 1873, p. 92. The translation is introduced by Lager's information that the letter was written soon after the letter addressed to the director of the mission in Stockholm (no. 98). It was presumably forwarded to Stockholm to support requests for women missionaries for medical and teaching duties.

The issue of how to make better candles in order to facilitate reading in the evenings was in fact discussed by Lager and priests at Ṣe'azega.

Document no. 100

Yosēf to Antoine d'Abbadie, 29 Jan. 1873



Adi Qeyih, on the 22nd day of Ṭirr, in the year of grace 1865.

Peace be to you, O honoured lord, our master, Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (*Ato* Inṭoniyos Dabedī), illustrious amongst all and exceedingly great and exalted. May the Father of mercy and the God of happiness make you happy throughout all your days. Amen.

I knew (lit. know) you very well when you were in Gonder in the house of *Debtera* Gētahun at Ichegē Bēt, when, in my young days, I was studying with the bishop, *Abune* Biancheri (Bīyankerī). Your wisdom and kindness constantly amaze me. It is not only towards me, but it is towards all the people. Therefore, I always long for your friendship.

So, when it became the will of God, I have today written to you. Since we consider you as one of the people of Ethiopia, I shall tell you a little about our lives.

It is known that, after *Abune* Ya'iqob, Ethiopia has become barren with regard to (lit. from) bearing Catholic children. And this is because she cannot get a proper husband. Those that exist (lit. there are) are like sheep without a shepherd. The Lazarist (Lazaristī) missionaries who are [here] at this time, how-

መከነች፡የታወቀ፡ነው፡፡ይህም፡አውነተኛ፡
ባል፡አጥታ፡ነው፡፡ያሉትም፡ጠባቂ፡እንደ
ሌላችው፡በጎች፡ናችው፡፡በዚህ፡ዘመን፡ያ
ሉት፡የሳዛርስቲ፡ሰባክያን፡በኢትዮጵያ፡የ
ጰሊቲክ፡ሥራና፡ገንዘብ፡ለማብዘት፡ለውዳ
ሲ፡ክንቱ፡ክነገሥታት፡ቤትም፡ገብተው፡ለመ
ሸም፡ለመሸለም፡ነው፡እንጅ፡የሚደክሙ
ት፡ለማስተማር፡አይደለም፤ይህም፡ሊታወ
ቅ፡በምጽዋና፡በሞገስ፡ሆነ፡ቀጥሎም፡ሃ
ይማኖት፡ሥራት፡ለመጠየቅ፡ለመጫወ
ት፡በፍቅር፡የሐበሻ፡ሰው፡ወዳ፡ቢታችው፡
ቢመጣ፡በቁጣና፡በበትር፡አባረው፡ደጅ፡
ዘግተው፡ይሰዱታል፡ስለዚህም፡ሰው፡ሁ
ሉ፡ጠላችው፡፡በፖሊቲክም፡ነገር፡ከደጆች፡
ጐበዜ፡ወረቀት፡በሰደዱ፡ጊዜ፡ያንወረቀት፡
ከድል፡በኋላ፡ደጆች፡ካሳ፡አፄ፡ዮሐንስ፡አ
ግኝተው፡ቢያነቡት፡ብዙ፡የማይገባ፡ነገር፡አ
ገኙበት፡በዚያ፡ተቈጥተው፡ቤተ፡ክርስቲ
ያናትን፡አቃጠሉ፡እኔ፡ያለሁበትንዳ፡አገርና፡
ሐሳይን፡ዘረፉ፡የሐሳይን፡መስሉ፡የአድቀይ
ህን፡ግን፡አሕተመስሉም፡፡እኔ፡ያለሁባት

ever, engage in political work in Ethiopia, to increase money, for vainglory, to be appointed and to be decorated by entering the houses of kings; they are not [people] who strive to teach.

The proof of this is that they made their residences at Massawa and Bogos (Moges). And then, if an Abyssinian comes to their house in friendship to ask about religious regulations [and] to discuss, they chase him away in anger and with the stick, and they send him away by closing the door. For these reasons all people hate them.

When they sent a letter concerning political affairs to *Dejjach* Gobezē, *Dejjach* Kasa, [later] *Aṣē* Yohannis, discovered that letter after [his] victory, and when he read it he found a lot of improper things in it. Angered by this, he burnt down churches. He pillaged the country in which I live, and [also] Halay. He restored [the property] of Halay, but did not restore [that] of Adi Qeyih. The district in which I live is Adi Qeyih. There we had built a church with pillars of stone.

As I said earlier, the king burnt it down. He pillaged the land, without sparing [even] clothes. (And) I saved only myself; otherwise all my belongings were looted. I said (lit. saying) to myself, "I shall not leave them in a time of hardship", and I stayed with them. For these peasants did not find a father who comforted them. No one

አገር፡ አድቀይህ፡ ናት፡ በርሱዋም፡ በደንጊያ፡
አዕማድ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ሰርተንባት፡ ነበር፡
በፈት፡ እንደተናገርሁ፡ ንጉሥ፡ አቃጡልዋት፡
አገሪቱንም፡ ልብስ፡ ሳይቀር፡ ዘረፍዋት፡ እኔም፡
ራሴን፡ ብቻ፡ አወጣሁ፡ እንጅ፡ ባንድ፡ ዕቃየ፡ ሁሉ፡
ተዘረፈ፤ በመከራ፡ ጊዜ፡ አልተዋቸውም፡ ብየ፡
ከኒያ፡ ጋራ፡ ነበርሁ፡ እኒህንም፡ ባሳገሮች፡ ያጠና
ናቸው፡ አባት፡ አሳገኙም፡ የጠየቃቸውም፡ የ
ለም፡ እኔ፡ ብቻ፡ ከኒያ፡ ጋራ፡ እናራለሁ፡
ስናርም፡ ከንጉሥና፡ ከመኳንንት፡ ተቆቅሬ፡
ሁሳችን፡ በያለንበት፡ አገር፡ መኖር፡ እንድንችል፡
አደርጣሁ፡ ለንጉሥም፡ ነገርሁ፡ ከፈረንሳዊ፡
ከንሱል፡ እንዲቶቀሩ፡ ከመንግሥትም፡ እንዲ
ቶቀሩ፡፡ ንጉሥም፡ ወደ፡ ከንሱል፡ እንገናኝ፡
ብለው፡ ወረቀት፡ ሰደዱ፡፡ ከንስልም፡ ወደ፡ ን
ጉሥ፡ ለመገናኘት፡ በመጡ፡ ጊዜ፡ በታላቅ፡ ክ
ብር፡ ተቀብለው፡ ሲሔዱም፡ ሸልመው፡ ሰደድ
ዋቸው፤ እኛም፡ ያለመከራ፡ በደኅና፡ ባጀነ፡፡

አእጣዚእነ፡ ኖላዊ፡ ዘመጽአ፡ እምቤተ፡ ሳዛርስቲ፡
ኢየአምር፡ አባግዒሁ፡ እስከ፡ ይእዜ፡ ወአባግዕ
ኒ፡ ኢየአምራ፡ ኖላዊሆን፡ እስመ፡ ኖላዊ፡ ኮነ፡
ዘይርኢ፡ ህየንተ፡ አባግዕ፡ ፍናወ፡ ከመ፡ ነጋድ
ያን፡ ዘይነግዱ፡ ዘልፈ፡ በባሕር፡ ወበበድው፡ ነጋ
ድያንሰ፡

visited them. Only I remain with them.

While I lived in friendship with the king and the notables, I saw to it that all we monks could stay wherever we were. I also told the king to become friends with the French consul, and to become friends with his government. And the king sent a letter to the consul saying, "Let us meet". And when the consul came to meet with the king, he received him (lit. by receiving him) with great honour, and when he left he sent him off, having decorated him. (And) we live fairly well, without hardship.

O our master! The shepherd who came from the Order of the Lazarists does not, until now, know his sheep. And the sheep do not know their shepherd. For the shepherd is one who, instead of [guarding] the sheep, watches the routes like a merchant who trades all the time across sea and desert. Merchants strive to gain profit, but he [does so] where there is no profit.

I beg you, master, that you make this known to Master Etienne (Itēn), the father (*abba*) of the Lazarists. For we have been abandoned and oppressed in every way, like sheep that have no shepherd.

Before, our maintenance was from mission money. But now, behold, two years have passed since they prohibited us [from receiving anything]. They thoroughly (lit. completely) hate us, de-

ድያጓሰ፡ይፃምው፡አረባሐ፡ፃዋይ፡ውእቱሰ፡በዘ
አልቦ፡ረባሕ፡፡ እስእለከ፡እግዚአ፡ከመ፡ታኢም
ሮ፡ዘንተ፡አእግዚእ፡ እቴን፡አበ፡ሳዘርስቲ፡ እ
ስመ፡ንሕነ፡ከነ፡ግዱፋን፡ወግፉዓን፡በኵሉ፡
ከመ፡አበግዕ፡ዘአልቦ፡ኖላዊ፡፡
ቀድሞ፡መግባችን፡ከሚሲዮን፡ገንዘብ፡ነበረ፡
እሁን፡ግን፡ከነሱነ፡እነሆ፡ሁለት፡ዓመት፡
አለፈ፡ እኛን፡ጨርሰው፡ጠልተው፡ምክ
ራችነን፡ንቀው፡ቦታችነን፡ለቀው፡ኑርዋቸው፡
ምጥዋና፡ቦገስ፡ነው፡፡

ክቡር፡ጊታ፡ሆይ፡ ስለ፡ካቶሊክ፡ሃይማኖት፡
ንዴት፡በዝቶብኛልና፡እንዲ፡ብልሀተም፡
በስፍራየ፡የምቆምበት፡ገንዘብ፡እንዲያስቡ
ልኝ፡እለምናለሁ፡ብዙ፡የግዚአብሔር፡ሰዎ
ች፡ባገራችሁ፡ይገኛሉና፡ምጽዋትም፡ቢሆ
ን፡ወይም፡የምችለው፡ነገር፡በዚህ፡ቢኖር፡
እንዳቅሜ፡እሠራለሁና፡ስለዚህ፡አሳቤን፡
ሁሉ፡ከርሰም፡ሳይ፡እጥሳለሁ፡፡

ስጊታ፡እቴን፡ጥቂት፡ጽፌአለሁ፡በሮማይ
ስጥ፡ግን፡ፍሬ፡ቢገኝበት፡ባይገኝበት፡አላው
ቅም፡እርሰም፡ይከጡልኝ፡፡

የሐበሻ፡ወሬ፡አሁን፡እንዲህ፡ነው፡

spise our advice and, abandoning our dwelling places, they reside at (lit. their residences are) Massawa and in Bogos.

O honoured master! As I have so much concern for the Catholic faith, I beg you to give me the money, according to your judgment, which will enable me to stay where I am. For many men of God are found in your country. And I will work according to my ability, if it is [the matter of] alms or if there is anything [else] I can do here. Therefore, I unload all my cares on you. I have written a little in Latin (lit. Romayisṭ) to Master Etienne. I do not know whether it will bear fruit or not. [Please] forward it for me.

The news of Abyssinia at present is like this. In Tigray, *Dejjach* Kasa has become king, being named *Aṣē* Yohannis. *Ras* Wereñña rules beyond the Tekkezē as far as Qwara [and] up to Ṭheṭheho. Beyond Ṭheṭheho [the country] including Yejju [and] Lasta is ruled by Alī Birru, the son of Farīs Alī. *Wagshum* Teferī rules Seqoṭa with the permission of *Aṣē* Yohannis. Adal Tesemma, the grandson of *Dejjach* Goshu rules Gojjam. Minīlik rules from Wello up to Shewa.

Debtera Asseggaheñ has not returned since he went to his country Wadla. Behold, for close to two years now, we have not heard any news about him. *Aṣē* Yohannis has now started to march on

በትግሬ፡ ደጃች፡ ካሰ፡ አፄ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ተብለው፡
ነግሠዋል። ከተከዚ፤ ወዲያ፡ ማይ፡ እስከ፡ ቋ
ራ፡ እስከ፡ ጨጨሆ፤ ራስ፡ ወረኛ፡ ይገዛል፤
ከጨጨሆ፡ ወዲያ፡ የጁን፡ ሳስታን፡ ጨምር፡
የቀሪስ፡ አሊ፡ ልጅ፡ አሊ፡ ብሩ፡ ይገዛዋል። ስቂ
ጣን፡ ዋግሹም፡ ተፈሪ፡ በአፄ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ፈቃድ፡
ይገዛሉ። ገጃምን፡ አዳል፡ ተሰማ፡ የደጃች፡
ገሹ፡ የልጅ፡ ልጅ፡ ይገዛል፤ ከወሎ፡ እስከ፡ ሸዋ፡
ምንይልክ፡ ይገዛል።

ደብተራ፡ አሠጋኸኝ፡ አገራቸውን፡ ዋድላ፡ አንደ፡
ሔዱ፡ አልተመለሱም፡ እነሆ፡ ፪ኛ፡ ዓመት፡ ሊ
መላ፡ ቀርቦአል፡ ወሬያቸውን፡ አላገኘነም።

አሁን፡ አፄ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ወደ፡ አማራ፡ አገር፡ ዘመቻ፡
ተነስተዋል፤ ጋሉ፡
ደጃች፡ አርአያ፡ ለካቶሊካውያን፡ መልካም፡ ያደር
ቦገስን፡ ቱርክ፡ ይዘታል፡ አሁን፡ ወደ፡ ሐማሴን፡ የ
ሚወጣ፡ ይመስላል።

እፎ፡ አርመምክ፡ አንተ፡ እንዘ፡ ይነሥኡ፡ ቱንባሳ
ት፡ ብሔረነ። ፡፡፡ Comment se porte Madame votre femme.
ለእመ፡ ፈቀድክ፡ በል፡ ሊተ፡ ሰላመ፡
ለእግዝእትነ፡ ብእሲትክ፡

አባ፡ ዮ። እምዮሴፍ፡ ቂሊኮ፡ ዘአድቀ
ይህ፡

Amhara. *Dejjach* Araya is doing good for the Catholics.

The Turks have occupied Bogos. It now looks as if they will go up to Hamasēn. How come you are quiet when the Muslims are taking our country?

If you allow [me, please] give greetings from me to our lady, your wife.

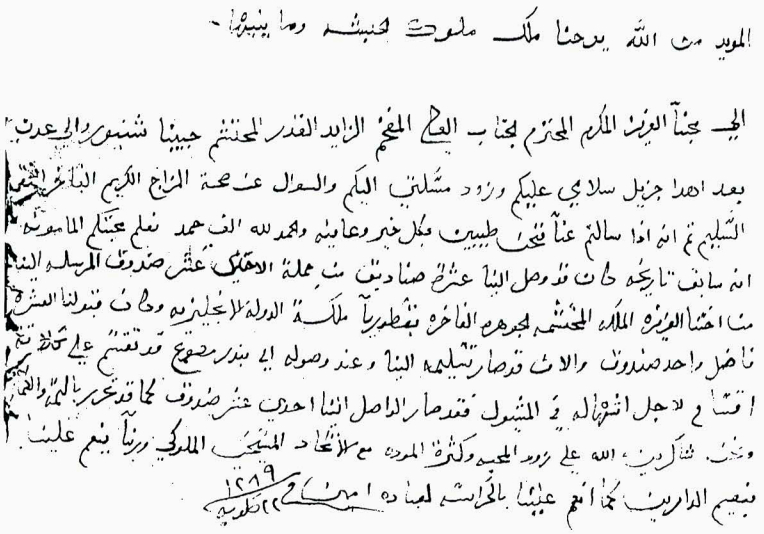
Abba Yo. From Yosēf, [the] priest of Adi Qeyih.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 244–46, Amharic and partly Gi'iz original. The writer was almost certainly an *Abba* Yosēf from Gonder, known only by his first name. He does not appear in O'Mahoney's list in *The Ebullient Phoenix*, I, appendix II, but is entered as ordained by Mgr. De Jacobis in the list, vol. III, p. 202. Since it is highly unlikely that *Abba* Yosēf would ever have been known as "*Abba* Yo", we must assume that Yosēf decided to make a fresh start with "from" and failed to strike out the three letters he had already written.

Document no. 101

Yohannis IV to J.W. Schneider, 29 Jan. 1873





Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To our beloved and esteemed, venerable and respected, noble lord, the highly honoured and respectfully ranked, our beloved Schneider, governor of Aden.

Following my extended greetings to you and the providing of my comfort for you, and the question of the health of your noble, fragrant, pure and perfect temper—then, if you ask about us, we are well, in full health and strength. Praise be to God, a thousand times (lit. praises).

We inform you, O beloved [and] trustworthy, that we have at an earlier date received ten boxes out of the eleven sent to us from our esteemed sister, the respected queen, the splendid jewel, Victoria, the queen of England (lit. English land). We had received the ten, one box remaining. Now it has happened that it has [also] been handed over to us. When it reached the port of Massawa it was divided into three parts to facilitate the transport. Now eleven boxes have reached us, complete and in full accordance with what was stated.

We thank God for the increase in friendship and the growth of love together with the concord of Christian sovereigns. May the Lord favour us with the blessings of our two countries, as he has favoured us by the protection of the faithful. Amen.

22 Ṭūbā 1289.

IOR, R/20/A/409, Aden Settlement Records, Abyssinia file, p. 585, Arabic original; p. 581, English translation. F.O. 1/28, fol. 343, is a copy of the English translation.

The box which had been withheld contained ammunition (see no. 96).

Document no. 102

Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec, 18 Feb. 1873

Gonder, the 18th day of February.

From King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia to the consul of France at Massawa.

My dear friend,

I send you my sincere compliments and in addition I give you good news. By the grace of God I have entered Gonder safe and sound. *Ras* Wereñña has surrendered to me with his whole army.

His people, the people of Welqayit, of Mogadē(?) and of all Amhara, have likewise rendered their submission. *Ras* Adal of Gojjam is on his way; within eight days he will be in my camp.

Do not pay attention to false news which my enemies and liars spread. The truth always comes out.

Write to me. Give me the news; and I on my part will do the same. My dear friend, rejoice as I rejoice. I know that my good fortune will make you happy.

May God be with you.

The imperial seal.

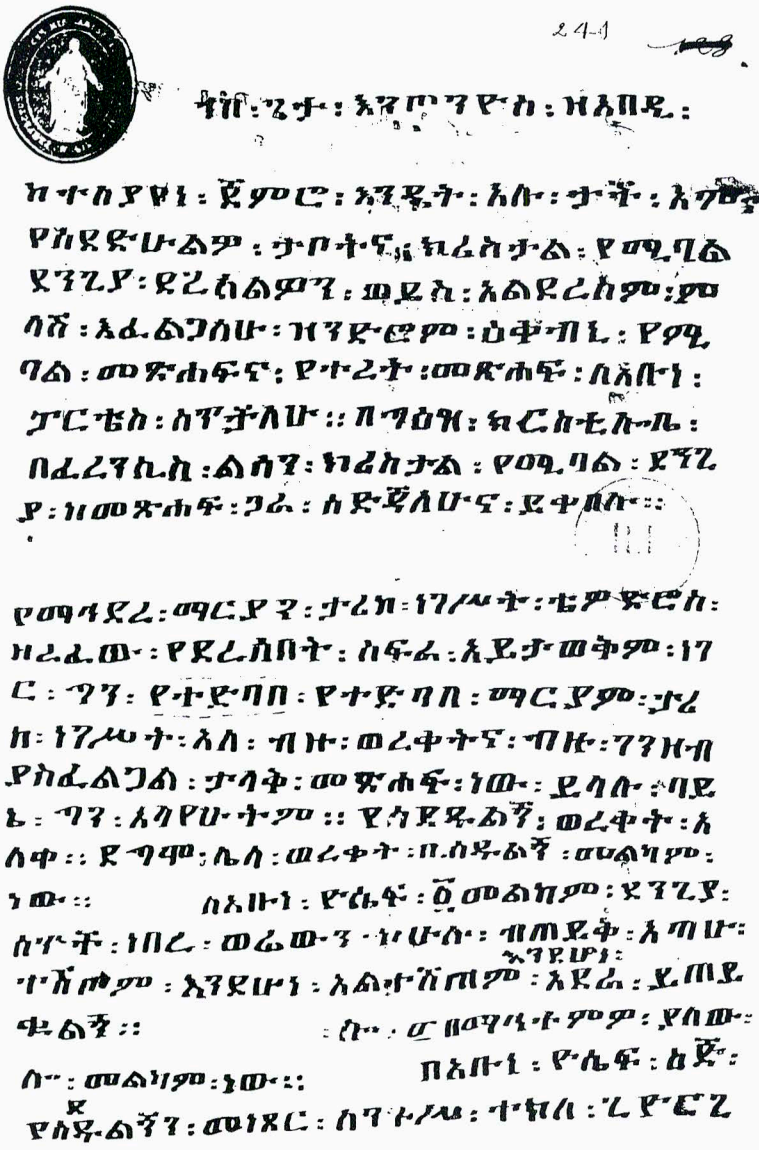
AECPC, Massaouah 3, 357v–58r, French translation copied in a letter to Paris from the French vice-consul, Chocquin de Sarzec, at Massawa.

This is the first of six letters written by Ethiopians—in addition to Yohannis, one each from Minīlik and Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq—to Munzinger's successor as French consul at Massawa. Unfortunately the Amharic originals do not seem to have been forwarded to Paris, except perhaps the letter from Minīlik published by *Blattēngēta* Hiruy (no. 118). Although there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of this letter, and of the two which Yohannis addressed to de Sarzec from Gonder the following month (nos. 107 and 108), it is quite possible that the consul has taken considerable liberties in composing his texts. Neither the opening phrase above "My dear friend", nor the closing phrase "Your devoted friend for ever" in the following letters, are likely to have been penned by an imperial secretary. "Mogadē" is most probably an error by the translator, misreading "Ṭegedē"or "Ṣegedē".

The French president, Patrice MacMahon, replied on 10 June 1873, congratulating Yohannis and exhorting him to forbid slavery and protect foreigners (AED, C 41, Protocole, no no.).

Document no. 103

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 2 March 1873



ለአቡነ፡ዮሴፍ፡ይድረሳቸው፡ዘአበዲ፡

ከተስያየነ፡ጀምሮ፡እንዴት፡አሉ፡ታች፡አግኘኽ፡ የሸደድሁልም፡ታቦትና፡ክረስታል፡የሚባል ደንጊያ፡ደረሰልሃ፡ወይስ፡አልደረሰም፡ም ላሽ፡እፈልጋለሁ፡ዘንድሮም፡ዕቅብኔ፡የሃሚ ባል፡መጽሐፍና፡የጉረት፡መጽሐፍ፡ለአቡነ፡ ፓርቴስ፡ሰዎቻለሁ።። በግዕዝ፡ክርስቲሎቤ፡ በፈረንሲስ፡ልሰኝ፡ክሪስታል፡የሚባል፡ደንጊ ያ፡ዘመጽሐፍ፡ጋራ፡ሰድጀለሁና፡ደቀበሉ።።

የማሳደረ፡ማርያን፡ታሪክ፡ነገሥት፡ቴዎድሮስ፡ ዘረፈው፡የደረሰበት፡ስፍራ፡አይታወቅም፡ነገ ር፡ግን፡የተድባበ፡የተድባበ፡ማርያም፡ታሪ ክ፡ነገሥት፡አለ፡ብዙ፡ወረቀትና፡ብዙ፡ገንዘብ ያስፈልጋል፡ታላቅ፡መጽሐፍ፡ነው፡ይላሉ፡ባይ ኔ፡ግን፡አላየሁትም።። የሳደዱልኝ፡ወረቀት፡አ ለቀ።። ደግሞ፡ሌላ፡ወረቀት፡ቢሰዱልኝ፡መልካም፡ ነው።። ለአቡነ፡ዮሴፍ፡ይ መልክም፡ደንጊያ፡ ሰዎች፡ነበረ፡ወሬውን፡ነሡሱ፡ብጠይቅ፡አጣሁ፡ ተሸሙም፡እንደሁነ፡አልተሸጠም፡እኛ ደሆነ፡እደሬ፡ይጠይ ቁልኝ።። ለ፡ሥ ር ዘማሳሉትምም፡ያሰው፡ ለ፡መልካም፡ነው።። በአቡነ፡ዮሴፍ፡ይ ደ፡ የሰዱልኝን፡መነጸር፡ሰጣሁለሥ፡ተከለ፡ሂዮሮጊ

To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedī).

How have you been since we parted? Did you receive or did you not receive the *tabot* and the stone called crystal which I sent you the year before last? I want a reply.

This year, too, I have given a book entitled *Iqebenī* and a book of tales to Father Barthez (*Abune* Partēs). [See to it that you] receive them, as I have sent with the book a stone called *kristīlobē* in Gi'iz and *cristal* in the French language.

Tēwodros took the *Tarīke Negest* of Mahdere Maryam by force. It is not known where it has ended up. However, there is the *Tarīke Negest* of Tedbabe Maryam.

Much paper and much money is needed. They say it is a big book, though I have not seen it with my [own] eyes. The paper you sent me is finished. It would be good if you sent me (other) paper again.

I gave a beautiful stone to Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf). When I asked everyone for news about it, I did not get [any]. Please inquire for me, if it has been sold or has not been sold.

ለ: the ለ in your press is good.

አበርክቶው፡ነበረ፡በሰጠሁት፡በወሩ፡ድ
ል፡ሆነ፡፡ የመፈት፡ፕሽብ፡የማ
ነግር፡መጽሐፍ፡ቀድሞ፡ለምኘዎ፡ነበረ፡
ምነው፡ነሠኝ፡ ዘሬም፡ተስፋ፡አለኝ፡፡

ተጽሕፈ፡እምልደተ፡እግዚእነ፡በ፲ወ፰፻
፰ወ፷አመት፡በሳበ፡ኢትዮጵያ፡፡ወበሳቲ
ኒ፡በ፲ወ፰፻፡፸ወ፫አመት፡አመ፡፳ወ፬
ለየካቲት፡፡

(ደብተራ፡አሰጋሽኝ፡)

I presented the binoculars you sent to me by the hand of Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf) to King Tekle Gīyorgīs. Within a month, however, after I had given [them] to him he was defeated. I asked you before for a book which describes the science of the earth. Why have you refused me [one]. I still hope.

Written in the year 1865 after the birth of our Lord according to the Ethiopian calendar, and according to the Latin in the year 1873, on Yekkatīt 24.

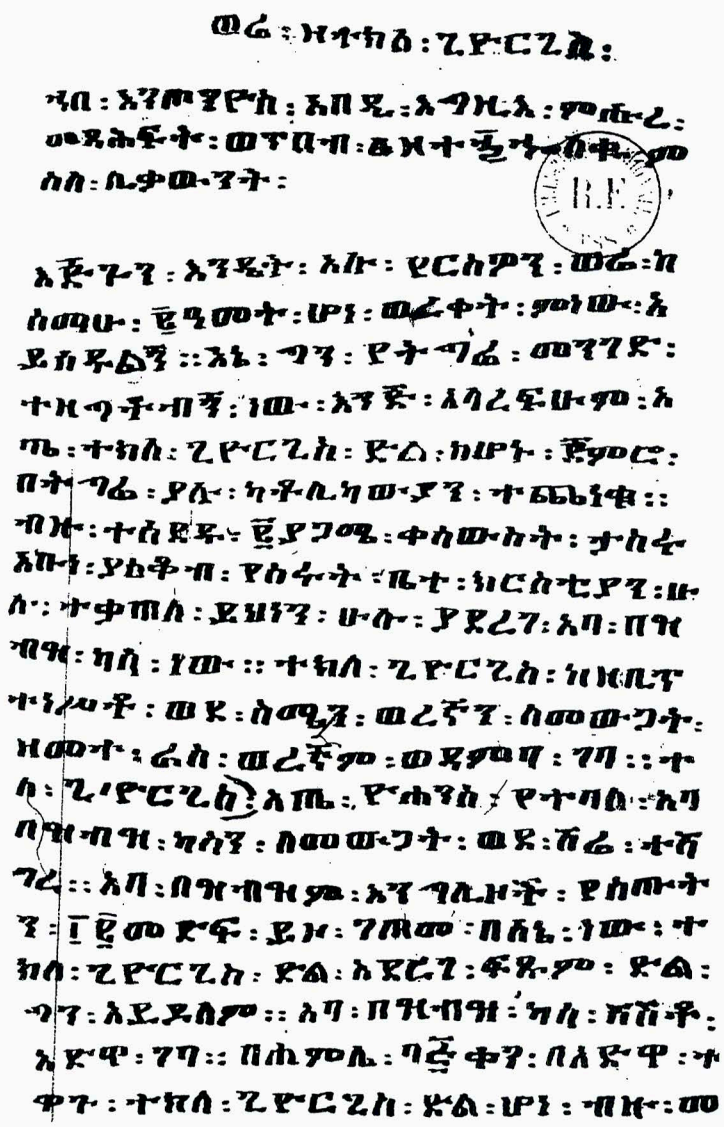
Debtera Asseggaheñ

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 241, Amharic original. It is impossible to know whether "Yekkatīt" refers to the Ethiopian month or to the European month of February. In the latter case the actual date is 24 February. This letter was not published by Conti Rossini.

The remark about "ሎ in your press" shows how closely Asseggaheñ followed linguistic matters. Antoine d'Abbadie must have sent him a Gi'iz or Amharic text printed in France. It is hardly likely that Asseggaheñ was referring to the printing press of the Catholic mission established ten years earlier (O'Mahoney, II, pp. 23–24).

Document no. 104

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie [March 1873]



News about Tekle Gīyorgīs

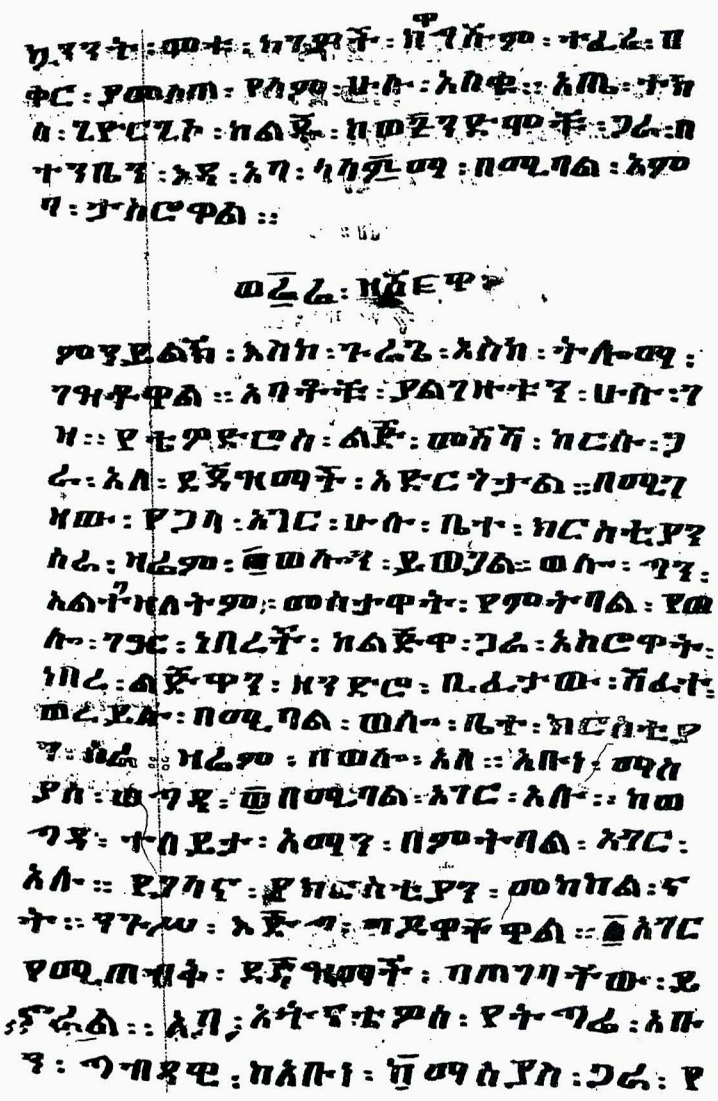
To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Abbedī), versed in literature and wisdom and numbered among scholars.

How are you, really? It is now two years since I heard news about you. Why have you not sent me a letter? For my part, I have not ceased trying, but the Tigray road has been closed to me.

Ever since *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs was defeated, the Catholics (who are) in Tigray have been distressed. Many have gone into exile. Two priests from Agamē have been imprisoned. All the churches which Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune* Ya'iqob) built have been burned down. The man who did all this is Abba Bezbiz Kasa.

Setting out from Zebīṭ, Tekle Gīyorgīs marched to Simēn to attack Wereñña. But *Ras* Wereñña escaped to (lit. entered) an *amba*. To fight against Abba Bezbiz, [also] called *Aṭē* Yohannis, Tekle Gīyorgīs crossed over into Shirē. And Abba Bezbiz, with the 12 cannon that the English gave him, joined battle. It was in Senē. Tekle Gīyorgīs was victorious. However, it was not a complete victory.

Abba Bezbiz Kasa fled and entered Adwa. On the fifth day of Hamlē they fought at Adwa. Tekle Gīyorgīs was defeated. Many notables from



among the Agew died. No one except *Wagshum* Teferī escaped. They all perished. Tekle Gīyorgīs is imprisoned with his son [and] his brothers in Tembēn, on an *amba* called Inda Abba Selama.

News about Shewa

Minīlik rules as far as Guragē [and] as far as Tulema. He rules a lot (lit. everything) that his fathers did not rule. Meshesha, the son of Tēwodros, is with him. He has made him a *dejjazmach*. He has built churches all over the lands of the Galla whom he rules. He is still fighting the Wello. The Wello, however, have not submitted to him. There was a ruler of Wello called Mestawat. [Minīlik] imprisoned her together with her son. When he released her son this year, he rebelled. [Minīlik] built a church in Wello, at a [place] called Werre'īlu. Now he is still in Wello.

Bishop Massaja (*Abune* Masyas) is in a district called Wegda. He lives at a place in Wegda which, to be specific, is known as Aman. It lies between the Galla and the Christians. The king is facing a serious problem. [Massaja] has a *dejjazmach* close to him who looks after the security of the district. *Abba* Atinatēwos, the Egyptian bishop of Tigray, has anathematized, so that the people of Shewa do not associate with *Abune* Massaja, so that the king does not allow *Abune* Massaja to stay [and] so that he does not go to Wello.

ሸዋ፡ ሰው፡ ሁሉ፡ እንዳይነኖ፡ ንጉሥም፡ አቡነ፡
ማስያስን፡ እንዳያኖር፡ ሙጃ፡ ወሎም፡ እንዳይሄ
ድ፡ ገዛት፡፡ ምንይልኽ፡ ትን፡ ግዝቱን፡ አልሰ
ማም፡ አለ፡ ጋላ፡ ቢያስተምሩ፡ አልክለክልም
እኔም፡ ፈረሴ፡ ክቻስ፡ እስከ፡ ትግሬ፡ እሄዳለ
ኁ፡ ብሎ፡ መሰስ፡

የጎጃም፡ ወሬ፡

አራስ፡ አዳል፡ የጎሹ፡ ተሰማ፡ ልጅ፡ ነው፡ የ
ተድላ፡ ጋሉን፡ ልጅ፡ ደጃዝማች፡ ደስታን፡
ይዞ፡ በአጤ፡ ተክለ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ በአጠ፡ ጊዜ
አራስ፡ ተባለ፡ ዛሬም፡ ጎጃምን፡ ዳሞትን፡
አገውን፡ እስከ፡ ደንገሬል፡ በር፡ ይገዛል፡፡

የስሜን፡ ወሬ፡

አራስ፡ ወረኛ፡ የማጀ፡ ወልደ፡ ኪዳን፡ ልጅ፡ ነ
ው፡፡ በአጤ፡ ተክለ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ ጊዜ፡ አራስ፡
ተባለ፡፡ ዛሬም፡ ከቋራ፡ ከወልቃይት፡ ጀም
ሮ፡ እስከ፡ [illegible]ጨጨሆ፡ ገዛቶዋል፡፡ አጅ
ግ፡ በርትቶዋል፡

የአሊ፡ ብሩ፡ ወሬ፡

አራስ፡ አሊ፡ ተብሎዋል፡ ከጨጨሆ፡ በ
ላይ፡ ይገዛል፡፡ ያለጋሪ፡ ብሩ፡ ልጅ፡ ነው፡
ብዙ፡ ፈረስ፡ አለው፡ ፍጥ፡ ጥቂት፡ ነው፡፡

Minīlik, however, has refused to heed the anathema. He replied (saying), "I will not stop him if he teaches the Galla, and if my horse can endure I shall go to Tigray."

News about Gojjam

Ras Adal is the son of Goshu Tesemma. He was nominated *ras* when he captured and handed over *Dejjazmach* Desta, the son of Tedla Gwalu, to *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs. And now, he rules Gojjam, Damot [and] Agew, as far as Dengel Ber.

News about Simēn

Ras Wereñña is the son of Maje Welde Kīdan. He was appointed *ras* during the reign of *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs. And now, he rules all the way from Qwara [and] Welqayit as far as Ṣheçheho. He has become very strong.

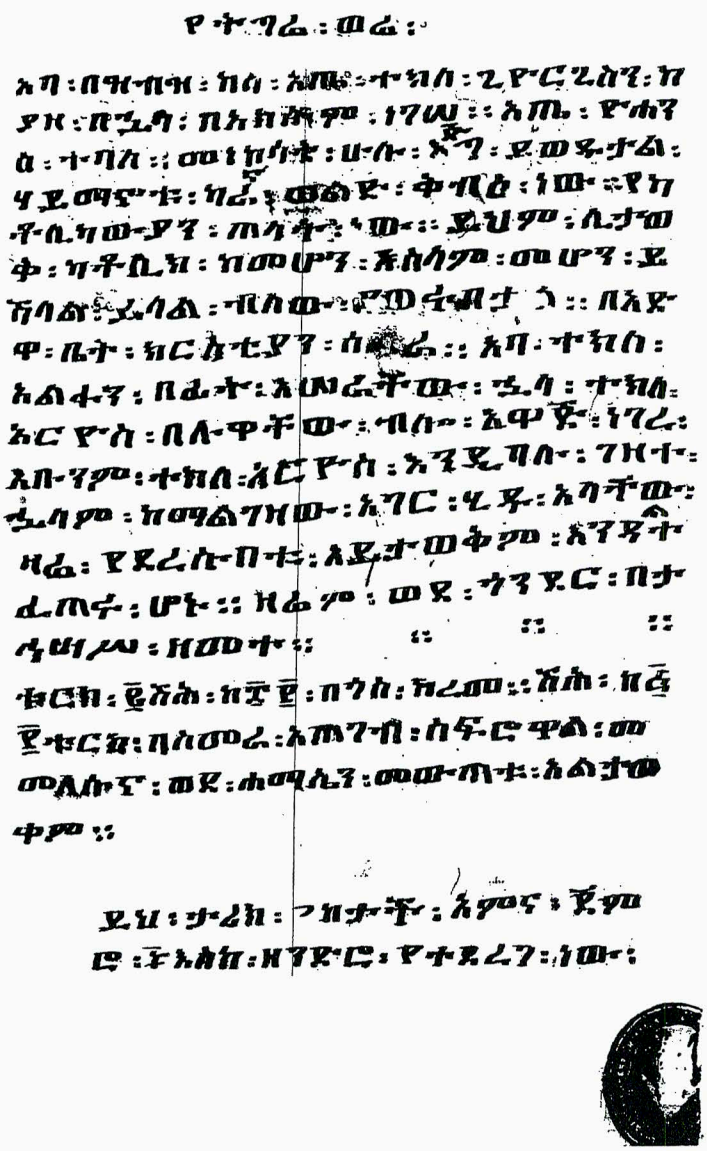
News about Alī Birru

He is called *Ras* Alī. He rules beyond (lit. above) Ṣheçheho. He is the son of Alīgaz Birru. He has many horses; [his] guns are few.

News about Tigray

After Abba Bezbiz Kasa had captured *Aṭē* Tekle Gīyorgīs he was crowned at Aksum. He was named *Aṭē* Yohannis.

All the monks love him very much. His faith is *karra* and *weld qib*. He is the enemy of the Catholics. In order that this might be known, they spread rumours about him, alleging that he had said that it was better to become a Muslim than a Catholic. He built a



church at Adwa. At first he imprisoned *Abba* Tekle Alfa, then he made a proclamation telling [people] to call him Tekle Aryos. The bishop also ordered, under pain of excommunication, [people] to call him Tekle Aryos. Then he told him to go to a land outside his authority. Today, nobody knows his whereabouts. It is as if he had not been born.

And now, in Tahsas, [Yohannis] went on a campaign to Gonder.

Two thousand eight hundred Turks passed the rainy season in Bogos. One thousand five hundred Turks are camped near Asmera. It is not known whether they will withdraw or (whether they will) advance into Hamasēn.

These events (lit. this history) took place from the year before the last until this year.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 253–254, Amharic original. This document is letter no. XIV in the publication of Conti Rossini.

Debtera Asseggaheñ summarizes the events of 1871 and 1872. He had written several letters in December 1870 but had apparently found it difficult to send messengers through northern Ethiopia since then. As both the coronation of Yohannis and the occupation of Bogos are mentioned, the month of Tahsas referred to cannot be earlier than December 1872. The fact that Alī Birru, who died in July 1873 (Rosenfeld, p. 57), is mentioned as alive and ruling also points to the earlier half of 1873, as does the information that Yohannis had marched to Gonder (see no. 102). This document lacks both opening phrases and dating. Consequently, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was attached to a dated letter, and no. 103 above, dated 2 March 1873 is the the most likely.

Document no. 105

Minīlik to Pierre Arnoux, 3 March 1873

Letter from Minīlik, king of kings of Ethiopia, to M. Pierre Arnoux at Massawa.

How are you, before having made your acquaintance? By the grace of God I am well, and so are all my armies.

I have received your letter which gave me much pleasure, because you wrote me the history of Ethiopia and because before knowing me you have thought about such great things for me. I thank God because you have informed me that my enemies want to take my country, and ardently wish to do so.

I thank you because you have thought of establishing friendship between me and the French, whom I love very much; because you have promised to arrange for arms to come to me through Obok and assist me properly to renew Ethiopia; because you wish to introduce into my country the laws and industry of yours; in short because you have given me good advice only and that you have chosen me, among all the other kings and emperors of Ethiopia. For all this I thank you again. May God make you great and preserve you.

You have promised me, if I so desire, to come to me, passing through Tigray. I feel great joy. I want you to come as quickly as possible so that we can agree on everything you have written to me about.

I love the Europeans very much; I wish to see you; I shall open my heart to you.

If you pass by Paris before coming to me, bring me some of those rifles, of which you tell me that five shots can be fired in one minute and which bring death at [a distance of] three thousand cubits. I shall pay the cost. Of the other matters we shall speak when you are here.

I also feel great joy for the words of Samuel. They please me. I thank Christ for having preserved the faithfulness of this friend.

I have been on an expedition for a long time in the lands of the Galla, who cause me trouble. Do not take offence if I have not received your messengers well enough and rewarded [them] as I would have liked. I have not wanted to compel them to come to my city to reward them better because you advised me to send them to you at once.

Be it God's will that we see each other before long. In the meantime live well.

Written the 25th of February 1865 in the camp of Werre'īlu, the land of the Galla, corresponding to 27 February 1873.

The seal of the king.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 337-38, French translation copied into a long report by Pierre Arnoux preserved in AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 334–449. Most likely "fevrier" in the date stands for Yekkatīt, as it is followed by the year according to the Ethiopian calender. A 'corresponding date' is supplied, most probably by Arnoux himself. It is obviously wrong.

See L. Louis-Lande, "Un voyageur français dans l'Éthiopie Méridionale", *Revue des deux Mondes*, 30, pp. 877–903, for an account of this French traveller's contacts with Minīlik; also Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 84–87.

Document no. 106

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs *et al.* to E. Chocquin de Sarzec, 13 March 1873



With this petition, written by five clans of Asawirta, we, being on our way to the French consulate, ask for the counsel and confidence of Your Excellency.

We, from the time of our parents and our forefathers, have had no taxes laid upon us by the Egyptians. And now they ask taxes from us which are not due to them and not our obligation. Our ruler and our lord is the king of Ethiopia, and we beseech you, the French consul; our hope is that you may protect us and protect the kingdom of Ethiopia.

We protect the caravans when they descend from Ethiopia, and we escort them to the capital of the kingdom. And when the caravans ascend we give them people from our side who escort them to safe country.

And we (one word illegible) coming to Your Excellency and Your Highness are:

Shum Ḥumad al-Dīn 'Asākarī *Shum* Mūsā 'Asālashīn *Shum* Umar Dalalīsh
Qāḍī Umar of the five houses of Asawirta.

Seals: *Qāḍī* Umar; *Shum* Ḥumad Dīn, 90; *Shum* Umar, 90; *Shum* Mūsā, 90.

Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs the Ethiopian.

Seal: Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs.

Dated in the year 1290 in Muḥarram, in the month of Meggabīt (Makābīt), on the fifth.

AECP, Massaouah. 3, fol. 354, Arabic original. In all probability the initiator of the letter was either de Sarzec or Samu'ēl Gīyorgīs, who had long acted as an intermediary between foreigners and his countrymen (see no. 34).

The letter is reported in de Sarzec's dispatch to Comte de Rémusat at the French Foreign Ministry on 14 March 1873 (fols 348–353). De Sarzec writes that he had "ce matin" received a visit by the principal *shaykhs* of the Saho who had always been dependent on Abyssinia, and now wanted to be saved from the ambitions of the Egyptians by accepting French protection. The Arabic forms of the signatories' names are reproduced here as written. See document no. 181 for different, and from an Ethiopian point of view, more intelligible forms of the same names. The seals (with the figures 90) were clearly made for the occasion, 1290 beginning 1 March 1873.

Document no. 107

Yohannis IV to E. Choquin de Sarzec, 20 March 1873

Gonder the 12th day of Meggabīt.

King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia to his intimate friend de Sarzec, consul of France at Massawa.

My Friend,

I am sending this letter to you, which may well surprise you. But first of all I beg you to accept my sincere and boundless compliments. So, please listen to me.

You know, very dear friend, all that we have spoken about at Adwa regarding the Turks. You have promised me to do everything as far as your government is concerned so that it may defend my interests. You have asked me to give you instructions about it and I have confirmed it to you verbally and in writing.

Now, my very honourable friend, I beg you to observe and judge. You know that I have never done anything wrong to Ismā'īl *Pasha*, neither to him nor to anyone else. In this respect you should remember what I told you at Adwa. So listen.

Instead of evacuating Bogos, which they occupy without cause and which is not their territory, the Turks have just taken possession of yet another part of my empire, a Christian country, the kingdom of Qwara. By means of money they have carried off children, male and female, and sent them to Egypt. Other Christians have been seized by force, treated like slaves and sent to Cairo. All the inhabitants are fleeing; the country is devastated. As for me, taking your good advice, I do not intend to do anything before knowing the opinion of the European Powers.

Keep your promises; preserve your friendship for me. Myself, in the presence of God, I will always preserve mine for you. The European Powers have always been protectors of the Christians. Why has not the injustice of the Muslims against the Christians today been suppressed?

I ask you to send a copy of this letter to the European Powers as quickly as possible. You have promised me to do so, and I have full confidence in your promises because I know your character. Until now nothing in your conduct has been able to change my opinion. Continue your friendship for me; I shall never renounce your services.

I beg you to buy me two Arab horses, one yellow as gold and the other all red, without any white spot on the four legs or on the forehead. Please do this as quickly as possible, and I shall pay what is necessary.

I very much want to have news often from you. Do not listen to the words of our enemies. They are capable of separating friends.

Your devoted friend for ever.

Imperial seal.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 3, fols 362–63, French translation inserted in a letter from de Sarzec to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris on 30 April 1873. It is obvious that de Sarzec has edited Yohannis's letter. The paragraph beginning "Instead of evacuating Bogos" is placed in brackets, probably because de Sarzec wanted to emphasize that this passage was translated literally. The content as a whole, however, reflects the king's sentiments and the arguments he used in other preserved letters from this period. See O'Mahoney, II, pp. 147–151, quoting J. de Coursac, *Le Règne de Yohannès depuis son Avènement jusqu'à ses Victoires de 1875 sur l'Armée égyptienne*, Romans, 1926, for a long discussion between de Sarzec and Yohannis in December 1872, apparently leading to a trustful relationship between the two.

Document no. 108

Yohannis IV to E. Choquin de Sarzec, 24 March 1873

Gonder the 16th day of Meggabīt.

Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia, to his intimate friend de Sarzec, consul of France at Massawa.

I am writing to you again. The day after the day when I addressed my previous letter to you, dated the 12th day of Meggabīt, I received your good and very important letter. The letter made me very happy. Thanks for your good services and for the good will you have for me. I have read this important letter, I repeat to you, with the greatest pleasure. At present I fear the Turks. I will write to you at greater length soon, when General Kirkham has returned to me.

Shortly after the day when I sent you my first letter, of the twelfth, I received another letter from the *pasha* at Khartoum, in which he declared that he is not speaking of these Christian lands of mine which have always made up part of my kingdom as long as Ethiopia has existed, [but] "that where he has passed through—and this, I repeat, in entirely Christian country, in the midst of my subjects, in the centre itself of Abyssinia—this will from now on be the frontier between the Turkish and Abyssinian governments."

I have received yet another letter of the same kind from Massawa, from 'Abdallāh *Effendi*, a letter in which 'Abdallāh *Effendi* declares to me, "that the lands of the Danakīl and of Arafalī(?)—which are, however, clearly my country, [belong] to me, and to the land of all the kings of Ethiopia, my predecessors—have been pillaged by an Abyssinian called Welde Kīdan, and that he, 'Abdallāh *Effendi*, as a consequence informs me that he has had Turkish soldiers pillage these lands (or Abyssinian territory), which is the same thing, kill the inhabitants there, burn the houses there and, in short, do as they like in my country."

You know their plans. They are trying, starting from the current [situation], to take possession of Abyssinia—which they will never get, thanks to Providence and the assistance of my friends. Judge carefully, my dear friend, the injustice which these people are committing against me.

You have written to me that Catholic missionaries, two in number, have arrived at Massawa in an English steamship. When you were at Adwa, we talked a lot about them, and we had even ruled out(?) allowing their entry into the country. Nevertheless, now that I have received your letters, and in order to please my friend de Sarzec, I have arranged that these missionaries should come to where I am. I shall also give instructions for them to stay some time with me.

All the land of Ethiopia is from now on subject to me. If I still have some difficulties with the kingdom of Shewa with regard to the complete unification of the country, these difficulties are of short duration and soon removed in one way or another.

Let these men come here, to me, and I shall then send them back satisfied and shall give them guides to go to Shewa. Meanwhile refer them to *Ras* Barya'u. I have given the necessary orders, so that they will be well received and then escorted to me. I am carrying out your will; carry out mine.

Your devoted friend for ever.

Imperial seal.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 3, fols 362–63, French translation inserted in a letter from de Sarzec to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris on 30 April 1873. In this letter the date and the first line are placed in brackets, as is the paragraph beginning "Shortly after". The clauses within quotation marks probably indicate direct speech in the original.

Document no. 109

Minīlik to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem, 8 May 1873

31

የተሳከ፡ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ምኒልክ።
ይድረስ፡ኅበ፡አበው፡ኢትዮጵያውያን፡ዘሀለዉ፡በኢ
የሩሳሌም፡ውስተ፡መቃብረ፡እግዚእነ።
እንዴት፡አሳችሁ፡እጅጉ፡ኀኒ፡በእግዚአብሔር፡ቸር
ነት፡ደህና፡ነኝ። ሠራዊቴም፡ሁሉ፡ደህና፡ነው።
ሁለት፡ጊዜም፡የሰደዳችሁልኝ፡ወረቀት፡ደረሰኝ። እጅ
ግም፡ደስ፡አለኝ። ራባችሁን፡ጽማታችሁን፡ግፋችሁን
ም፡ሁሉ፡ስለሳካችሁብኝ፡እጅግ፡አዘንሁኝ። ነገር፡ግን፡
መልክታችሁ፡ሁሉ፡በዘመቻ፡ሳለሁ ፡ስለመጣ፡አዘገሁ
ባችሁ። አሁንም፡እነሆ፡አምስት፡መቶ፡ብር፡ሰድጄላችኋ
ለሁና። አባቶቼ፡አትዘኑብኝ። እዘኑልኝ፡እንጂ። የወሎ፡
ዘመቻ፡ገንዘቤን፡ስለአበሳሽው። ባገሬ፡ብዙ፡ብር፡ስለ፡አለመ
ገኘቱ። አሳንሼ፡ሰድጄላችኋለሁና፡አትቀየሙኝ። መቼም፡
ቢሆን፡ስንቃችሁ፡ነኝና። በጸሎታችሁ፡ሁሉ፡አትርሱኝ።ባ
ገሬ፡የሚገኘው፡ፈረስ፡በቅሎ፡ነው። በዚህ፡ቢሆን፡ፍጹም፡
ደስታ፡ደስ፡ባሠኘኋችሁ፡ነበር። ዳሩ፡ግን፡በወዴት፡ደልፋ
ል። በነዚህ፡እስላሞች፡ክፋት፡ልቤ፡ስለ፡ሻቀለ። እነአባ፡
ወልደ፡ማርያምን፡ብዙ፡ጊዜ፡አንከራተትኋቸው። የእግ
ዚአብሔር፡ፈቃድ፡እስኪፈጸም፡ድረስ። አሁንም፡አባ
ቶቼ፡ይህ፡ሁሉ፡የተንኰልና፡የክፋት፡አይምሰላችሁ። እ
ግዚአብሔር፡በሠጣችሁ፡ኃይል፡ሁሉ፡አስቡልኝ፡እንጂ። ቅ
ር፡አይበላችሁ። ። የሰላም፡አምላክ፡ጤና፡ይስጣች
ሁ። ። በ፲ወ፲የ፡፲ወሶ፡ዓመት፡እምልደተ፡እግዚእነ።
በግንቦት፡በሰቀን። በብሔረ፡ሻዋ። በልቼ፡ከተማ፡ተጻፈ።



May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik reach the Ethiopian fathers who live in Jerusalem, by (lit. in) the tomb of our Lord.

How are you, really? By the grace of God, I am well, and all my army is well.

The letters you sent me twice reached me. And I was very pleased. [But] what you wrote (lit. sent) to me about your hunger, thirst and oppression made me extremely sorry. However, since all your messages came while I was on a campaign, I delayed [my response].

And now, as I have sent you five hundred thalers, do not be unhappy with me, my fathers, but pray for me. Since the Wello campaign drained (lit. spoilt) my resources, and since there is not much money in my country, I have sent you very little. Do not feel angry with me. At any time I am your provider. Do not forget me in any of (lit. all) your prayers.

What one finds in my country are mules and horses. If it could be done by these, I would make you happy beyond measure (lit. perfect happiness). But what way would they reach you (lit. pass)?

Because I am (lit. my heart is) worried due to the wickedness of these Muslims, I have made *Abba* Welde Maryam and his companions wander from place to place, until the will of God be fulfilled. And now, my fathers, do not think that all this is due to malice and wickedness. Do not feel disappointed, but pray for (lit. think of) me with all the strength that God has given to you.

May the God of peace give you health.

Written in the year 1865 after the birth of our Lord, on the 1st of Ginbot, in the land of Shewa, in the town of Lichē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

DS, no. 31, Amharic original. This is one of the Jerusalem letters published by *Abba* Matēwos in the recent publication *Debre Silṭan be-Īyerusalēm*, Jerusalem, 1996, p. 40.

Apparently the monks had written letters asking Minīlik to assist them, and finally sent a delegation headed by *Memhir* Welde Maryam to plead with the ruler of Shewa. Document no. 81, written to this very *Memhir* Welde Maryam the year before, shows that it was not easy even for Yohannis to collect money for the upkeep of the monastery.

Document no. 110

Yohannis IV/J.C. Kirkham to G.L.-G. Granville, 13 May 1873

The Camp, Ambatchara
near Gondar
Abyssinia
May 13th 1873

Sir,

His majesty King John of Ethiopia, has authorised me under his seal, to lay before your Excellency the following statements.

In answer to Ismael Pacha's assurance to your Excellency that no part of Abyssinian territory has been invaded by the Egyptian troops, His Majesty informs you that besides the province of Bogos which you must already know has been occupied for many months; they have taken possession of the province of Ailet, putting the Naib in chains, and erecting a steam saw mill at a place on the road from Massâwa to Asmâra called Subargumé, where they have cut down many trees on Abyssinian territory for the use of the Egyptian government. Metemma, also, which is known to belong half to Egypt & half to Ethiopia, has recently been occupied entirely by the Egyptian troops. His Majesty's governor, Shekh Jumar, has been put in chains, the taxes due to the Abyssinian crown have been collected by the Egyptian authorities, and Egyptian troops are quartered on the town.

On this side they have also sent plundering parties as far as Quarra and Wakhni, which latter place is more than half way from Metemma to Gondar.

Between Massâwa & Metemma, the whole of the low lands have been invaded, and on the other side of Massâwa, Mennsa, Ailet, Zula, Semhari, Dankali, and the province of Amphilea, have been occupied. These facts are I think a sufficient reply to Ismael Pacha's assurance to your Excellency; and Mr. de Cosson the bearer of this letter can testify to the occupation of the province of Ailet and the town of Metemma, as he has travelled through those places.

Ismael Pacha's statement that His Majesty did not reply to one of his letters is equally incorrect. All the Viceroy's letters have been answered but the bearer of His Majesty's last letter to His Highness has been detained at Cairo, and no answer returned.

All that His Majesty desires, is that the frontier which was recognized at the time of the Magdala campaign should be preserved. Lord Napier of Magdala and General Merewether are both acquainted with the frontier then recognized by Egypt, and if Ismael Pacha will respect that frontier, and withdraw his troops from those places in Abyssinian territory which he has occupied, all dispute is at an end. If not the King of Ethiopia begs her Majesty's government, or the British government and any of the other European powers to arbitrate on this case, and determine what are the true frontiers.

His Majesty trusts that His Highness the Viceroy will be as willing to abide by their decision as he is, and he hopes that Her Majesty's government will bring all its influence to bear to bring about an amicable settlement of this dispute; thus avoiding a long and bloody war which would otherwise be inevitably forced upon His Majesty for the protection of his country and subjects, which are daily being taken from him. He appeals to Her Majesty, as he and the Abyssinian people look to the English as their best friends, and are sure that Her Majesty will always wish to maintain the cause of justice, and defend a Christian country from attack.

Another question of much importance which His Majesty wishes to refer to you, is the injustice of Abyssinia possessing no port by which she may communicate freely with the Christian powers of Europe; and he protests against the occupation of Amphilla bay by the Egyptian troops. At the time

of the Magdala campaign it was known that Annesley bay and the province of Amphilla belonged to Abyssinia. By the occupation of the coast, the Egyptians have completely isolated Abyssinia from the rest of the world, preventing trade with Europe by the heavy taxes they impose on both exports and imports. If, however, the European powers will secure to Abyssinia an outlet on the Red Sea, His Majesty is prepared to enter into the most liberal treaties of commerce with them.

His Majesty also knowing that it is the wish of Her Majesty and the English nation that slavery should be abolished in all parts of the world, and as it is equally distasteful to himself as a Christian sovereign; he promises to put an end to all traffic in slaves in his Kingdom, and to declare all slaves now existing in Abyssinian territory free men. The purchase and sale of slaves is only carried on by his Mahommedan subjects, but he will put in force such laws as shall effectually stop it. These statements will I think satisfy your Excellency that His Majesty is influenced by the strongest desire to increase the prosperity of his nation, and cement the friendly relations already existing between Abyssinia and the powers of Europe.

His Majesty is now in possession of the whole of Abyssinia, and therefore able to put in execution the plans which he has formed for the advancement and civilization of his country.

As Mr. de Cosson has travelled through this country, His Majesty takes the opportunity of forwarding this letter to you by him, as he will be able to give your Excellency any further information you may require upon the present position of Abyssinian affairs.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your obedient humble servant,

J.C. Kirkham.

General Abyssinian army.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

To His Excellency
The Rt Hon Earl Granville K.G.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

FO 1/27B, fols 46–48, English original. As this letter was reportedly written on behalf of Yohannis and sealed with the king's seal, it has been included as a letter from the king, with Kirkham's name added. Both style and content show, however, that no Ethiopian was directly involved in the preparation of the letter. The signature is authentic but the handwriting is not Kirkham's. In all probability the letter was actually penned by the English traveller E.A. de Cosson, who had joined Kirkham when the latter returned to Ethiopia in February 1873. Kirkham wrote to Granville from Adwa on 18 March (fol. 42) that Yohannis had gone to Gonder, where he would follow him within a few days. He reported that the king had received the submission of *Ras* Wereñña and Alī Birru.

De Cosson was to be the bearer of the letter and to testify to the correctness of its contents. On his return to London on 30 July 1873, de Cosson reported to Lord Granville that he was the bearer of two letters from Yohannis to the British government (fols 67–68). For the circumstances surrounding the preparation of the letter and two more to follow (nos. 111 and 113 below), see E.A. de Cosson, *The Cradle of the Blue Nile. A visit to to the court of King John of Ethiopia*, London, 1877, vol. II, pp. 33–36, 101–141.

The Foreign Office seems to have been aware that the conflict was becoming serious. Consul Stanton reported that the *khedive* had called Munzinger to Cairo, and that he had himself had an interview with Munzinger who had declared, however, that it was all exaggerations, that there was no real danger of a conflict breaking out; Bogos would very shortly be pacified (FO 1/27B, fols 50–54). As might be expected, Granville's reply to Yohannis, dated 30 October, was based on Munzinger's assurances (fols 86–89).

This letter is published with the orthography of the original.

Document no. 111

Yohannis IV to G.L.-G. Granville, 15 May 1873



Written in the city of Gonder, on the 8th day of Ginbot, in the year of grace 1065 (*sic*).

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories, reach Earl Granville (Ērl Grand Bīl).

How are you, really? I, with all my army, am well, thank God. Two letters have been sent to me by the hand of General Kirkham (Kerkam). I have received one from the queen [and] one from you. [After] I had [them] translated into the language of my country, I read and understood them. I was very pleased. All the notables and all the people of my country were very pleased, saying, "We have found a helper for our king and for us, for the Christians."

The reply which Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) gave you saying, "I have not written that the land [this] side of the Mereb is mine, my frontier; I do not rule [any] Ethiopian territory, nor do I intend to occupy [any]," is all untrue. There is not one word of truth in it.

The lands he has occupied on the other (lit. that) side of the Mereb [are]: Qeyih Barya, Ṣellīm Barya, Bogos, Te'ander, Habab, Mensa, Aylet, Asgedē Beqla, Zula, Tora, Somhalī [and] the country which is below [the hills] of Anfīla. All these are the territories (lit. *merēt)* of Hamasēn. But he has completely occupied it all. These are the lands which he has occupied beyond the Mereb. Now, what is left of Hamasēn is one district on the plateau where the noblemen reside [and] where they enjoy [cool] air.

As to the matter of Shanqilla, the whole world knows that it is my domain. When the Shanqilla killed the brother of Mr. Powell (*Ato* Pawil), I sent troops (lit. army), saying to myself, "His blood is my blood" [and] avenged his blood." Mr. Powell and Mr. Jackson (*Ato* Jankīl) know that it is my country, [which I] administer with justice and firmness.

Moreover, below Gonder there is a land called Wehnī, where the sons of kings used to stay. He sent an army there from below [and] seized it, saying, "It is mine." My vassal (who was) at Metemma named *Shaykh* Jima (*Shēh* Jima), he imprisoned, flogged and took to Egypt (Misir). He also pillaged his country.

[Ever] since Tēwodros died until my [time] he has not stopped trying to take away my country, all these districts which I have enumerated. Let alone other [matters], you know about the boundaries of Ethiopia and Egypt. Besides, let your world histories testify (for me) as to whether I or he is the aggressor.

In addition, he has called the Ethiopians murderers [and] plunderers. Ought not people who do not pay tribute to [their] king [and] who rebel be imprisoned and have their property confiscated (lit. be despoiled by law). All such people have been condemned by the Apostles, by St. Paul, and by the *Fitha Negest.*

The matter over which I fought with the Shanqilla [is] the [case of the] great monastery of Waldibba, where the friends of God live, the saints, who preach the gospel, teach the faith and intercede with their prayers for all the people. When they dragged them out, slaughtered, [and] finished them, when they refused to pay [me] my tribute and rebelled, I sent an army and attacked them. I plundered them.

When I sent my own servant, telling him to punish the wrongdoers, [Ismā'īl] wrote to me saying, "Send me your servant, that man who attacked the Shanqilla [and] I will punish him." While I was living peacefully in my own country, in the kingdom that Christ gave me, he sent me an order as if I were (lit. taking me for) his vassal, saying, "I will punish your servant." He sent me such abuse; [please] judge for yourselves.

Moreover, [please] listen to me so that I may tell you one thing. Listen to me, o my friend! Ismā'īl *Pasha* is doing all these things because he is determined to reign with force (lit. in the flesh), to eradicate the Christian religion, to plant the religion of Muḥammad, [and] to create slaves for the devil. As for the religion of Jesus Christ, are not you, our beloved brothers, striving [and] exerting yourselves more for it [than I]?

And now, make them give me an outlet on the seacoast, through which I can exchange letters and messengers [and where] trading can take place. Anfīla and Zula have been my districts since early times. Know, then, that if I do not get a port, I shall remain shut in, without a road [and] the friendship of my brothers, you the kings.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

FO 95/732, no. 150, Amharic original and English translation. A copy of the translation is also found in FO 1/27B. The translation is profusely annotated with explanations and alternative renderings, as well as with a number of references to literature about Ethiopia such as Munzinger's *Ostafrikanische Studien*, Heuglin's *Reise nach Abessinien, den Gala-Ländern, Ost-Sudan und Chartum in den Jahren 1861 und 1862* and Markham's *The Abyssinian Expedition.* While the translator, a Dr. G. Sauerwein, seems to have been well acquainted with the literature, he was evidently not so well informed about recent events. He has solved the mistake in the dating by assuming that the last figure rather than the second had been forgotten and arrived at "1870". Unaware of the Powell affair he has concluded that "Pawil" and "Jankīl" refer to peoples and not persons. The latter he reads as Danakil.

Dated only two days after the letter in English (no. 110) and containing much the same material, this letter was most probably intended to replace the one in English. At any rate its existence shows that Yohannis was not satisfied with Kirkham speaking for him.

The problem was that Yohannis wanted to take the opportunity of sending his replies to Granville's and Victoria's letters by the hand of Baron de Cosson (see doc. 110), who was, however, in a hurry to leave Amba Ṣhara. In addition de Cosson states that he wanted a specific commitment from Yohannis that he would abolish the slave trade. On this matter Yohannis reportedly stalled. According to de Cosson's narrative, Yohannis's scribes were busy all day the 12th of May with the letters without finishing. De Cosson had decided to leave the 13th. Finally the king's secretary Mahdere Qal (see ACTA II, no. 1 and no. 217 below) brought a letter which de Cosson returned because it did not mention the slave trade. It was in this situation that Kirkham prepared what de Cosson calls "a draft" with a clause on the slave trade to take to Yohannis for approval the following morning. De Cosson left without anything, but a messenger caught up with him when he was about to leave Gonder the 16th bringing with him "the letters [thus apparently both Kirkham's and the king's own] from the king to Lord Granville, promising solemnly, if the English Government wished it, to use every means to abolish the slave-trade in Ethiopia." See de Cosson, II, pp. 105–116, 140–142. The paragraph on the slave trade in Kirkham's letter is nevertheless missing in the king's own letter.

In all probability Kirkham pursuaded Yohannis (or Mahdere Qal?) to seal the "draft" (no. 110) in order not to have to rewrite the Amharic letter. In addition to the mistake in the date there are other indications that the Amharic letter was also written in some haste. Since the *Barya* are not divided into *qeyih* and *ṣellīm*, it must be assumed that the intention was to write Qeyih *Mare'a* and Ṣellīm *Mare'a.* The mention of "Somhalī" is puzzling. Somali territory does not lie beyond the Mereb and was not involved in the conflict in 1872. In all probability the writer intended to write Semhar, which is listed by Kirkham.

Document no. 112

Yohannis IV to Birhane Mesqel, 3 June 1873

ለህልእነት፡ዘስዬመ፡አጣዘዱ፡አብሐሩ፡ዮሐንስ፡ንግሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ወነሙ ሉ፡ ስ
ድያሚሃ፦ ይድኅን፡ከመምሐር፡ብርሃነ፡መስቀል፡እንዴትነዎ፡ እኔ፡ደኅና፡ነኝ፡እጣዘዱ አ
ብሐር፡ይመስጣቹ፦ እር ስዎ፡አባት፡ሁነው፡ነር ስዎ፡ያሉ ት ን፡ማኅብር፡ቅኽሽ፡ብር፡ስድ ፪
ልዎ፡አለሁ፡በእጣ፡ገብረ፡ማር ያምን፡ወኪል፡እኁ፡ነዝያው፡ቤተ፡እጣዘዱ፡አብሐር፡ለማሂ ግለጣ
ል፡ ይኁ፡ለማሪጠኖ፡ይብስ፡ልመግዛኻ፡ላው ሂልይሂ፡አት ነጠ፦ አባቲ፡ገብረ፡ማር ያም፡ወኪ
ል፡ይሁኑ፤ ፰ው፡ነ፡አት ናቲዎ ስ፡ነኑ፡ሃ ይ ማኖ ት፡ ከመምሐርና፡ከወኪል፡ፈቃዱ፡የወጣ፡ሰው፡
ነገ ሂማሪ፡አይኑር፡አው ጥታ ኾሁ፡ስሂ ኡ፡ት፡ገ፣በ፡ኝ፡አት ስጠ፦ አቡጓም፡ገዝተዋ ል፡እኾ ም፡
ነገሥታ ት፡አዘናል፡ቃሳችን፡ት አዛዘ ጉ፡ሃ ራ ይ ስ፡የወ ኪ ል፡አባ፡ገብረ፡ማር ያም፡ቃ ል፡
ት አዛዝ፡ይልልማ፡ሰው፡ምን፡ም፡አት ስጠ፦ ኮነ ዲም፡አይኑር፡አው ጥታ ኾሁ፡ከይ ዜ፦
በ፲፰፻ ፷፭ ኀመት፡ምሕረት፡ጣጣቦት፡ ፳ ፯ ቀ ን፡ተ ጽ ፈ ፡በአጣባ፡ጣ ራ፡ ፡ ፡

Document no. 113

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 4 June 1873

ሎ ዮ ሕ ፈ ሎ ፡ በ ገ ጎ ኝ ጀ ር ፡ ከ ሎ ማ ። ። አ መ ፡ ፲ ወ ፲ ኦ ፲ ፩ ፲ ፪ ፲ ፫ ወ ፭ ፯ መ ሎ ፡ ም ሕ ረ ሎ ፡

መ ል እ ከ ሎ ፡ ዘ ሠ ጀ መ ፡ እ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ዮ ፈ ኝ ። ። ኝ ጉ ለ ፡ ሃ ግ ለ ሎ ፡ ዘ አ ሎ ዮ ፭ ፱ ። ። ወ ከ ሎ ፡ እ ጅ ጀ ማ ሂ ። ። ። ። ጀ ዮ ረ ከ ፡ ከ ከ በ ራ ዙ ፡ ከ ታ ፈ ራ ዙ ፡ የ እ ኝ ግ ሏ ዝ ፡ ኝ ግ ለ ሠ ሎ ፡ ቤ ክ ሎ ር ጀ ። ። በ እ ወ ሃ ኑ ሎ ፡ የ ል ብ ፡ የ ቍ ቅ ር ፡ ሰ ኅ ም ታ ዬ ኝ ፡ ጀ ቀ በ ሉ ኝ ። ። የ ሰ ጀ ዲ ል ኝ ኝ ፡ ጀ ብ ዲ ቤ ፡ በ ጀ ነ ረ ል ፡ ክ ር ካ ም ፡ እ ጅ ፡ ሎ ቅ በ ል ሁ ። ። አ ኝ ብ ቤ ም ፡ ባ የ ሁ ሎ ፡ ። ጊ ዚ ፡ እ ጅ ግ ፡ ጀ ከ ፡ አ ለ ኝ ። ። እ ግ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ያ መ ከ ግ ኝ ል ኝ ። ። ከ ጀ ብ ጀ ቤ ቍ ም ፡ ቃ ል ፡ አ ገ ኘ ሁ ። ። በ እ ኔ ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ እ ኝ ጀ ፡ ጣ ሩ ። ። እ ኝ ጀ ፡ ጀ ከ መ ። ። ለ እ ከ ፡ ማ ኤ ል ፡ ባ ሻ ፡ ጀ ብ ጄ ቤ ፡ ጽ ፈ ው ። ። እ ከ ፡ ማ ኤ ል ፡ ባ ሻ ም ፡ የ ጀ ብ ጄ ቤ ቍ ፡ ም ሳ ሽ ፡ የ ሰ ጀ ጀ ል ቍ ፡ እ ው ነ ሎ ፡ አ ጀ ጀ ለ ም ። ። የ ኤ ሎ ዮ ጽ ጀ ኝ ፡ የ አ ግ ፈ ኝ ፡ ዙ ር ያ ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ እ ኝ ጀ ፡ ጀ ዘ ፡ ነ ው ፡ አ ል ለ ቀ ም ። ። ሀ ለ ሎ ፡ ሀ ለ ሎ ም ፡ ለ መ ያ ዝ ፡ እ ሳ ረ ፈ ል ኝ ም ። ። ሞ ራ ም ፡ እ ኛ ጃ ለ ፡ ነ ው ፡ አ ል ሂ ጀ ም ። ። ሌ ሳ ፡ የ ማ ም ነ ው ፡ ዝ ር ዙ ፡ እ ው ነ ሎ ፡ ሮ ፡ ወ ጂ ፡ ከ እ ር ሰ ቍ ፡ በ ቀ ር ፡ የ ለ ኝ ም ። ። ጀ ህ ኝ ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ማ ለ ዙ ፡ የ ክ ር ስ ዚ ያ ኝ ፡ ጠ ባ ቂ ፡ እ ግ ጀ ሆ ኑ ፡ እ ው ቃ ለ ሁ ና ። ። እ ሁ ኝ ም ፡ ጀ ዲ ሎ ፡ የ እ ስ ላ ም ኝ ፡ ለ ሠ ራ ፡ ሁ ለ ። ። እ ሎ ዮ ጽ ጀ ኝ ፡ የ ክ ር ስ ዚ ያ ኑ ኝ ▸ እ ገ ር ፡ ወ ጂ ፡ እ ስ ላ ም ፡ ሃ ጂ ማ ር ፡ ዮ ፈ ኝ ። ። ኝ ጉ ለ ፡ ሃ ግ ለ ሠ ሎ ፡ ዘ አ ሎ ዮ ፭ ፱ ። ። ወ ከ ሎ ፡ እ ጅ ጀ ማ ሂ ። ። ። ።

Written in the city of Gonder, on the 28th of Ginbot, in the year of grace 1865.

May the message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories reach the honoured, the respected English queen, Victoria (Bīktoriya). [Please] accept my truly heartfelt greetings of friendship.

I received the letter you sent me from the hands of General Kirkham (Kerkam). I was very pleased when I read and understood it. May God reward (lit. thank) you on my behalf. In your letter I found the statement that you worked hard [and] tired yourself on my behalf by writing to Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). However, the reply that Ismā'īl *Pasha* sent to your letter is not true. He is still in occupation of all the surroundings of Ethiopia, of my country. He has not withdrawn. Day after day he has not refrained from occupying [what belongs to] me. His army is where it has been, it has not withdrawn.

I have no strong [and] truthful friend whom I trust other than you. And I am saying all this because I know you are the protector of Christians. And now, look at all the deeds of the Muslims. It is to convert Ethiopia, the land of Christians, to the Muslim religion and to introduce slavery. All this is not my wish. By the power of God, all Ethiopia is in my hands ever since I became king until now, without the blood of one Christian being shed. May you be aware of the wrong I have suffered. Ismā'īl *Pasha* wants me to fight with him, to shed my blood in vain.

Until now I strictly follow the advice you gave (lit. advised) me. You told me, "Be friends, agree, be reconciled with your neighbour," saying, "Reconciliation [and] friendship are good before God and man." He would not let me live, heeding your advice, living peacefully (lit. resting quietly) in the kingdom of my fathers, which God gave me, [and] protecting my poor. And now, observe the injustice I am suffering. The intrigues of Ismā'īl *Pasha* are many. In order that I not be on friendly terms with you, he has prevented me from getting an outlet on the shores of the Red Sea (lit. Salt Sea). But, trusting under Christ in you, I maintain peace while I, by the power of my Lord, consolidate my kingdom.

I have written an important letter to your official, to Earl Granville (Īrl Grand Wīl) [about] all my affairs. I have sent the Cross of Solomon to your son, to Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (Albert Idward Prans of Wīls), as a token of friendship for you and the prince, your son. Accept this letter from the hands of Baron de Cosson (Baron Dikason), your countryman and my friend, who came to my country [and] was travelling around.

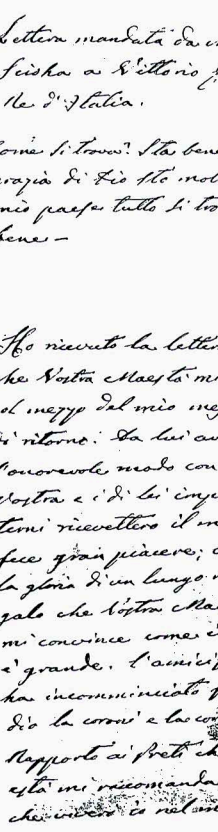
Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

FO 95/732, no. 151, Amharic original and translations into English. The clean copy of the translation has the date "the twenty seventh day of May" for *28* Ginbot which is, however, correctly converted to 4th June 1873. The letter to Granville referred to in the last paragraph was obviously Yohannis's letter of 15 May (no. 111), which caught up with de Cosson a day or two after he had left Gonder for Metemma and Khartoum (de Cosson, II, p.140–141). Although the above was written three weeks after de Cosson had left, it was obviously Yohannis's intention that de Cosson should somehow or other get it and deliver it to Victoria. By the time it was written, de Cosson was already at Khartoum, at the end of June he was at Sawakin, and in July he delivered the king's letter addressed to Granville.

We do not know when the above letter to Victoria reached de Cosson, but it was only in December that he wrote to Granville from Italy, enclosing what he called a "duplicate" (in fact a very free translation) of it. He was then advised that he should forward the letter and the cross (FO 1/27B, fols 94–102).

Document no. 114

Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II, 5 June 1873



Lettera mandata da Menilik Re di Scioa a Vittorio Emmanuele Re d'Italia.

Come si trova? Sta bene? io per la grazia di Dio sto molto bene, ed il mio paese tutto si trova molto bene –

Ho ricevuto la lettera e la cassa che Vostra Maestà mi ha spedito col mezzo del mio messaggiere di ritorno. Ha lui avendo visto conoscevole modo con cui la Maestà Vostra e i di lei cinque gli sudditi temi ricevettero il medesimo mi fece grato piacere; che Dio la Maestà la gloria di un lungo regno. Il regale che Vostra Maestà mi mandi mi conferisce come il di lei paese è grande. L'amicizia che oggi ha incominciato fra di noi Dio la conservi.

Rapporto ai preti che Vostra Maestà mi raccomanda fino a tanto che vivero io nel mio regno

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ገ ዥ ው ፡ ኢ ጣ ሊ ያ ።
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አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ቸ ር ነ ት ፡ ደ ህ ና ፡
ነ ኝ ። ሠ ራ ዊ ቴ ም ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ደ
ህ ና ፡ ነ ው ።
በ እ ፡ መ ል ክ ተ ኛ ፡ እ ጅ ፡ የ ሳ
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አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ያ ክ ብ ር ው ፡ የ ሳ
ዲ ዱ ል ኝ ፡ በ ረ ከ ት ፡ ያ ገ ር ው
ን ፡ ታ ላ ቅ ነ ት ፡ ያ ስ ታ ው ቀ ኛ
ል ። ዛ ሬ ፡ የ ተ ጀ መ ረ ው ን ፡
ፍ ቅ ራ ች ነ ን ። እ ግዚ አ ብ
ሔ ር ፡ ዲ ጩ ር ስ ል ን ።
የ ቀ ሳ ው ስ ጉ ች ን ም ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡
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May [this letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of the land of Shewa reach Victor Emmanuel (Fiqṭor Amanu'ēl), king of Italy.

How are you? I am well, by the mercy of God. All my army is also well.

I have received the box which you sent by the hands of my messenger. I was very happy to hear that you and all your notables had honoured my messenger. May God give you honour.

The gift you sent me makes the greatness of your country known to me. May God bring to its fullness the friendship of ours which has been initiated today.

And concerning the matter of the priests, let your heart know that as long as I live they shall not be harmed [anywhere] in my kingdom. As for the craftsmen and merchants, who may come from your country, I shall protect them in a satisfactory manner, if they reach my country.

However, as there are wicked heathens along the route, it is better if we help each other by consultation. When I search for and find all unknown things, which are in my country, I shall send [them to you], with

Stia pure tranquilla che non avranno a soffrire; coloro poi dei sudditi di Vostra Maestà, i quali o per istruirsi, oppure per motivo di negozio verranno nel mio regno, io procurerò di dare ai medesimi tutta la libertà e sicurezza possibile. Tuttavia non posso celare, che per arrivare fino al mio paese vi sono cattivi pagani selvaggi per i quali vi sarà bisogno di consiglio tra lei e me.

Sto facendo una collezione di oggetti i più curiosi ed interessanti per la Maestà Vostra; subito che la raccolta sarà abbastanza interessante glie la spedirò con un'altro messaggiere.

Che Iddio ingrandisca il regno della Maestà vostra, e le dia tutta la desiderata salute.

Scioha nella villa di Licée il 29. Maggio 1865. del computo abissino, corrispondente 31. Giugno 1873. del calcolo europeo.

እንዳይጐዱ፡ ሐብዎ፡ ይወቅ፡፡ ካገርዎ፡ ስለሚመጡ፡ ብሐሐተኞች ና፡ ነጋዶች፡ ወዳገሬ፡ ቢደርሱ፡ በደህና፡ እጠብቃቸዋለሁ፡፡ ነገር፡ ግን፡ በመንገዱ፡ መካከል፡ ክፉ፡ አረማውያን፡ አሉና፡ በምክር፡ ብንረዳዳ፡ ይሻላል፡፡ ባገሬ፡ የሚገኘውን፡ እንግዳ፡ ነገር፡ ሁሉ፡፡ ፈልጌ፡ ሳገኝ፡ ሰው፡ ጨምሬ፡ እሰዳለሁ፡፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ መንግሥቱዎን፡ ያስፋ፡፡ ጤና፡ ይስጥዎ፡፡

፲፰፻፡ ፰፡ ፭፡ ፈመት፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡፡ በግንቦት፡ በ፳፱ቀን፡፡ ፲፰፻፡ ፸፫፡ ፈመት፡ በኤውሮጳ፡፡ በሰኔ፡ በ፲፪ቀን፡፡ በብሔረ፡ ሻዋ፡፡ በሐቺ፡ ከተማ፡ ተዳፈ፡፡ ፡፡ ፡፡



[my] men. May God extend your kingdom. May He give you health.

Written in the town of Lichē on the 29th day of Ginbot, in the year 1865 according to the Ethiopian [calendar], on the 12th day of Senē, in the year 1873 according to the European.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of Judah has prevailed.

IIAO, Miscellanea, fasc. 4, Corrispondenza tra Menelik e Vittorio Emanuele II, 1872–73, Italian/Amharic original. The document was once placed in ASMAI 36/1–3.

The dating of this letter is very confused. The Amharic version is clearly dated 29 Ginbot 1865, which corresponds to 5 June 1873. The writer has converted this to 12 Senē 1873, using "Senē" for "June". The Italian version—in Massaja's handwriting—has "29 Giugno (corrected Maggio) 1865", followed by two illegible digits and "Giugno 1873". Typescript copies are dated both 30 and 31 (*sic*) June. In *L'Italia in Africa, Etiopia/Mar Rosso,* vol. I, p. 78, note 67, Giglio dates the letter 28 June, citing ASMAI 36/1–3.

Document no. 115

Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq to E. Chocquin de Sarzec [July 1873]

Ras Barya'u to de Sarzec, the consul of France at Massawa.

(Abyssinian greetings as usual).

Blatta Gebre Kīdan, the representative of *Dejjach* Gebru in the province of Hamasēn, informs me that Munzinger Bey has just taken possession of and occupied the following districts of his by Egyptian troops: Dekandu, Adi Hamēnē, Dembē, Gorgīdu, Dehindek, and Mellasenay.

Munzinger gives as the reason for these invasions that these districts are part of the Muslim territory which he has occupied, which is false. Why these new acts of hostility? This is a very serious matter, and [something] which it is important that the Powers know about.

Please inform your government of our protest.

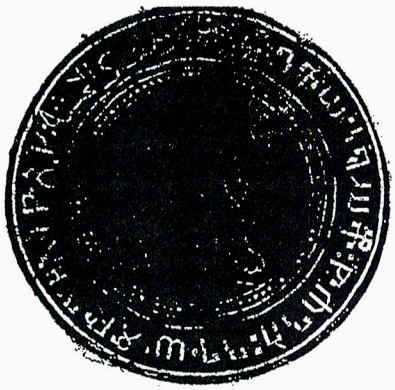
Seal of the *ras*.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 3, fol. 381v, French translation inserted in a letter from de Sarzec to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris on 19 July 1873.

During the reign of Tēwodros Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq had been a high official in Tigray—deputy governor with the title of *azmach*— under *Ras* Baryaw Ṗawlos (no. 18). Elevated to the rank of *ras* by Yohannis, he became one of the emperor's most trusted officials and generals, second in command at the battle of Gura in 1876 (Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 69, 274). In Yohannis's absence on an expedition to Gonder (nos. 102, 111) *Ras* Barya'u was in charge at Adwa. The *Dejjach* Gebru mentioned was in all probability a *Wagshum* Gebru who was governor in Hamasēn for some time in the first half of the 1870s (Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 320, 378).

Document no. 116

Yohannis IV to W. Schimper, 20 Sept. 1873





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ከ አ ዛ ፡ ሽ ም ብ ር ፡፡ እ ን ዲ ት ፡ ከ ረ ሙ ፡፡ እ ኔ ም ፡ ሠ ራ ዊ ቲ
ም ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ደ ህ ና ፡ ነ ኝ ፡፡ ቸ ሩ ፡ እ ሳ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ደ ክ በ ር ፡ ደ
ጠ ስ ገ ን ፡፡ የ ኢ ት ዮ ጵ ያ ን ፡ ነ ገ ሥ ታ ት ፡ ታ ፈ ክ ፡ እ ን ጠ ን
ዮ ስ ፡፡ ከ ሚ ካ ኤ ል ፡ ጋ ራ ፡ መ ጥ ቶ ፡ የ ነ በ ረ ው ፡፡ ቀ ድ ቶ ፡
ወ ስ ደ ፡ ከ ሣ ሳ ተ ም ፡ አ ሳ ብ ቶ ታ ል ፡ አ ሉ ና ፡፡ ደ ብ ዳ ቢ ፡ ሰ
ደ ው ፡ እ ን ዲ መ ጣ ል ኝ ፡ ያ ድ ር ጉ ፡፡ እ ኔ ም ፡ ወ ዳ ጅ ነ ቱ
ን ፡ አ ሳ ጠ ፋ ም ፡፡ በ እ ሳ ዚ አ ብ ሔ ር ፡ ኃ ደ ል ፡፡

ተ ድ ሕ ፈ ፡ በ ደ ብ ረ ፡ ታ ቦ ር ፡ ከ ተ ሚ ፡፡
አ መ ፡ ፲ ወ ፩ ለ መ ስ ከ ረ ም ፡ በ ፲ ወ
፰ ፻ ፷ ወ ፯ ዓ መ ተ ፡ ም ሕ ረ ት ፡፡

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories, reach Mr. Schimper (*Ato* Shimbir).

How have you passed the rainy season? I and all my armies are well. May the merciful God be honoured and praised. Since it is said that Antoine (Inṭoniyos) who came with Michel (Mīka'ēl) has copied [and] taken the history of the kings of Ethiopia [and] that he has printed it, [please] write and have [a copy] brought for me. By the power of God, I shall not forget [your] friendship.

Written in the town of Debre Tabor, on the 11th of Meskerem, in the year of grace 1867.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 261, Amharic original. For Schimper see ACTA, vol. I, no. 50; II, no. 133.

Document no. 117

Minīlik to Jean-Marcel Touvier, 31 Jan. 1874

የተላከ፡ ከንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ምኒልክ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡
ይድረስ፡ ኣበ፡ አቡነ፡ የሐንስ፡ ከቶሊካዊ፡፡
ኤጅጉን፡ እንዴት፡ አሉ፡ በዜና፡ ከነማኅበርዎ፡፡ የኔንም፡
ደህንነት፡ ቢጠይቁ፡፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ይመስገን፡ ከነ
ሠራዊቴ፡ ደህና፡ ነኝ፡፡ ከዚህም፡ ሰላምታ፡ በኋላ፡፡ ደ
ብዳቤ፡ ልሰድልዎ፡ አሰብሁኝ፡፡ የፍቅር፡ ምልክት፡፡ የር
ሰዎንም፡ ደግነት፡ ርእሰ፡ መማክርት፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ ነገረ
ኝ፡፡ ስለዚህም፡ ነገር፡ ፍቅርዎን፡ ፈለግሁኝ፡፡ ከኤ
ውሮጳ፡ ነገሥታት፡ ሁሉ፡ ጋራ፡ እንዲያፋቅሩኝ፡፡
ይልቁንም፡ ከፓሪስ፡ መንግሥት፡ ጋራ፡፡ ብርሃን፡
በኢትዮጵያ፡ እንድትገባ፡ እንዲጥሩልኝ፡፡ እኔም፡
በቸሎቴ፡ ምክርዎን፡ እሰማለሁኝ፡፡ በክርስ
ቲያን፡ ሥራት፡ ይርዱኝ፡፡ በተቻለዎ፡ ሁሉ፡፡
ደብዳቤዎ፡ አይለየኝ፡፡ ነጋይኝ፡ ሠራተኞ
ኝም፡ ሁሉ፡ በርሰዎ፡ ደብዳቤ፡ ቢመጡ፡ እቀበላለ
ሁኝ፡፡ ደግሞም፡ ቢሆንልዎ፡ ቤተ፡ መንግሥትን፡
የሚያጠና፡ ተግባር፡ ይፈልጉልኝ፡፡ እኔም፡ ወሬታዎ
ን፡ እመልሳለሁ፡፡ ወደ፡ ፓሪስ፡ ደብዳቤ፡ የፍቅር፡ ም
ልክት፡ ሽድጃለሁና፡፡ ደርሶ፡ ቶሎ፡ እንዲመጣልኝ፡
ምላሹ፡፡ ይጣሩልኝ፡፡ አይርሱኝ፡ ይዘኑልኝ፡፡ ፡፡



በ፲ወ፰፻፡ ፰ወ፯፡
ዓመተ፡ ምሕረት፡
በጥር፡ በ፳፬ቀን፡፡
ወሎ፡ በሀገረ፡ ማሻ፡ ተጻፈ፡፡

May [this letter] sent by Kings of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach Mgr. Touvier (*Abune* Yohannis), the Catholic.

How are you and your congregation, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay? If you ask about my health, thank God, I and my army are well.

After this greeting—I thought of sending you a letter, a sign of friendship. The head of the counsellors (*ri'ise memakirt*), Gīyorgīs, told me about your kindness. Therefore I seek your friendship so that you may make me a friend of all the kingdoms of Europe, in particular of the government in Paris, [and] so that you may do your best for me in order that light may be introduced into Ethiopia. And I will follow (lit. listen to) your advice as far as I can.

Help me in a Christian manner. As far as it is possible for you, let me not be deprived of your letters. If merchants and artisans come to me with your letters, I shall welcome them. And, if it is possible for you, look for ways and means for me to strengthen the state (lit. palace), and I shall repay your favour. I am sending a letter to Paris as a sign of friendship. Do your best for me, so that it gets there and the answer comes to me quickly. Do not forget me. Pray for me.

Written in the year of grace 1866, on the 24th day of Ṭirr, in the town of Masha in Wello.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of Judah has prevailed.

AEA, Amharic original. This letter was published in O'Mahoney, II, p. 165. The copy has been furnished by courtesy of *Abba* Tewelde Hagos, Adigrat.

Note that Touvier, usually known as *Abune* Yosēf (see no. 78), is here called *Abune* Yohannis.

Document no. 118

Minīlik to E. Chocquin de Sarzec, 31 Jan. 1874

የተላከ ፡ ከንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ ምኒልክ ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ። ይድረስ ፡ ከቆንስል ፡ ፈረንሳዊ ፡ ደሳርዘክ ። እጅጉን ፡ እንዴት ፡ አሉ ፡ በዜና ። የእኔንም ፡ ደህንነት ፡ ቢጠይቁ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ይመስገን ፡ ከነሠራዊቴ ፡ ደኅና ፡ ነኝ ። ከዚህም ፡ ሰላምታ ፡ በኋላ ፡ ደብዳቤ ፡ ልሰድልዎ ፡ አሰብሁኝ ። የፍቅር ፡ ምልክት ። የእርስዎንም ፡ ደግነት ፡ ርእሰ ፡ መማክርት ፡ ጊዮርጊስ ፡ ነገረኝ ። ስለዚህም ፡ ነገር ፡ ፍቅርዎን ፡ ፈለግሁኝ ። ከኤውሮጳ ፡ ነገሥታት ፡ ሁሉ ፡ እንዲያፈቅሩኝ ። ብርሃን ፡ በኢትዮጵያ ፡ እንድትገባ ፡ እንዲጥሩልኝ ። እኔም ፡ በችሎቴ ፡ ምክርዎን ፡ እሰማለሁኝ ። በክርስቲያን ፡ ሥራት ፡ ይርዱኝ ። በተቻለዎ ፡ ሁሉ ፡ ደብዳቤዎ ፡ አይለየኝ ። ነጋዶችንም ፡ ሠራተኞችንም ፡ በርስዎ ፡ ደብዳቤ ፡ ሁሉ ፡ የመጣውን ፡ እቀበላለሁኝ ።

ደግሞም ፡ ቢሆንልዎ ፡ ቤተ ፡ መንግሥትን ፡ የሚያጠና ፡ ተግባር ፡ ይፈልጉልኝ ። እኔም ፡ ወረታዎን ፡ እመልሳለሁ ። ወደ ፡ ፓሪስ ፡ የሚሔደውን ፡ ወረቀት ፡ አይተው ፡ ቃሉን ፡ አስተርጕመው ፡ ያድርሱልኝ ፤ ሌላ ፡ አይወቀው ፤ ምላሹ ፡ ቶሎ ፡ ይምጣልኝ ። እግዚአብሔር ፡ ለመገናኘት ፡ ያብቃን ።

በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፯ ፡ ዓመተ ፡ ምሕረት ፡ በጥር ፡ ፳፬ ቀን ፡ ወሎ ፡ በሀገረ ፡ ማሻ ፡ ተጻፈ ።

May [this letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach the French consul, de Sarzec (Desarzek).

How are you, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay? If you ask about my health, thank God, I and my army are well.

After this greeting—I thought of sending you a letter, a sign of friendship. The head of the counsellors (*ri'ise memakirt*), Gīyorgīs, told me about your kindness. Therefore I seek your friendship so that you may make me a friend of all the kingdoms of Europe [and] so that you may do your best for me in order that light may be introduced into Ethiopia. And I will follow (lit. listen to) your advice as far as I can.

Help me in a Christian manner. As far as it is possible for you, let me not be deprived of your letters. I shall accept all traders and artisans who come with your letters.

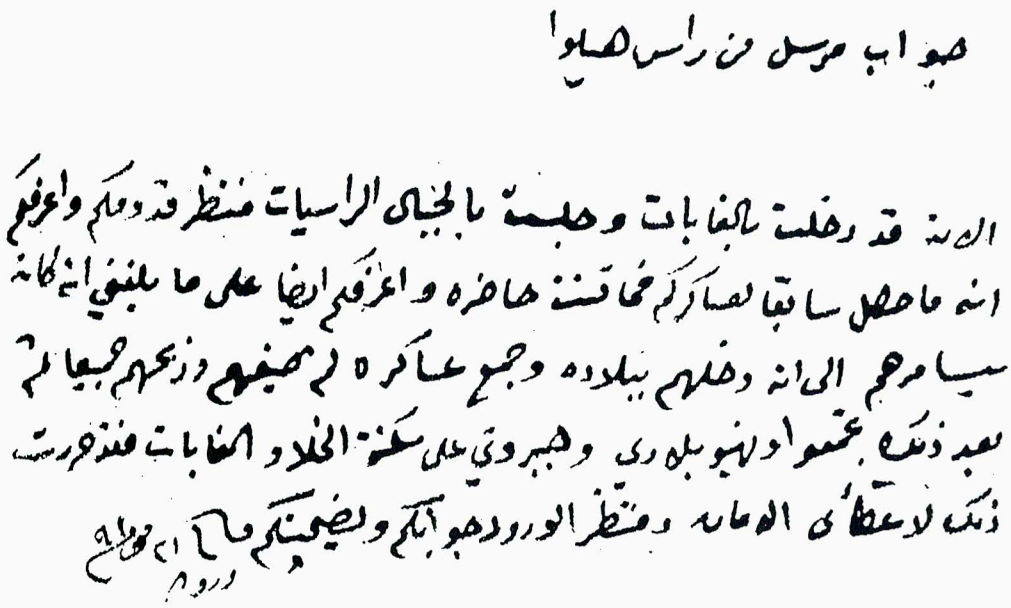
And, if it is possible for you, look for ways and means for me to strengthen the state (lit. palace), and I shall repay your favour. Take a look at the letter that is going to Paris; have it translated and take it with you there. Let no one else know about it. See to it that the answer comes to me quickly. May God help us to meet each other.

Written in the year of grace 1866, on the 24th day of Ṭirr, in the town of Masha in Wello.

Hiruy Welde Sillasē, *Tarīke Negest*, p. 71, printed Amharic text. *Blattēngēta* Hiruy's *Tarīke Negest* was in the stage of being printed in 1936 when the Italians entered Addis Abeba and prevented its publication. See Asfa-Wossen Asserate, *Die Geschichte von Šawā (Äthiopien) 1700–1865*, pp. 18–21. It has not been possible to trace a copy of this letter in the French archives, nor has it been possible to consult the document used by Hiruy in any collection in Ethiopia. Thus it is impossible to know if Hiruy had an original letter which was never dispatched or a draft or copy at his disposal. The content of this letter to the French consul is almost identical with that of the letter to Mgr. Touvier (no. 117). Both speak of a letter to be forwarded to Paris. Unfortunately it has been impossible to find any trace of that letter.

Document no. 119

Haylu to anonymous, 10 March 1874(?)



A letter sent by *Ras* Haylu.

Now, having gone into the woods and encamped in the high mountains, awaiting your arrival, I want to tell you about what happened to your soldiers before. I was not present—but I tell you what I have heard: that he was talking friendly to them until he had brought them into his lands. He collected his troops, then he destroyed and slaughtered all of them. After this they came together, and pillaged my lands and forced me to live in the clefts and the woods. I have written this to be given security, and I am waiting for the arrival of your letter and your advice. Greetings.

21 Muḥarram(?) [12]91.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 135. Copy of an Arabic original or a translation of an Amharic letter, in all probability not complete.

It can be safely assumed that the writer was *Ras* Haylu, the governor of Selewa in the 1870s. He was the only *ras* named Haylu involved in the Ethio-Egyptian conflict. In his index Douin did not differentiate between *Ras* Haylu and *Dejjazmach* Haylu Tewelde Medhin, but the latter can be excluded, as neither he himself nor any chroniclers of his life refer to him as a *ras*. As for the addressee, the fact that the document is preserved in the Egyptian archives points to an Egyptian official. The problem is the date. The year '91' (18 February 1874–6 February 1875) is very clear, but the name of the month is difficult to read. The content of the letter, moreover, seems to fit the situation in *late* 1875, when Yohannis was mobilizing to face the Arakīl/Arendrup expedition and *Ras* Haylu refused to follow orders (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 770, 858, and Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, p. 60).

Recognizing that the letter may well have been written later, we have nevertheless decided to follow Douin (French typescript translations at ENA) and accept the date, albeit questionable, presented in the document itself.

Document no. 120

Yohannis IV to whom it may concern, 6 April 1874



ጠመ ልኡክ ፡ ዘ ሥዩ ወመ ፡ ኢሳ ዘኤ አነበ ሐኤ ር ፡ ዮ ሐ ኛ ስ ፡ ኂ ጥ ለሠ ፡ ኒ ገ ሥ ሎ ፡ ዘ ኤ ሎ ዮ ጹ ሂ ፡ ወ ነሶ ኤ ጹ ሂ ዓ ለሚ ሃ ። ኣ ጿ ፡ ለዓ ር ቲ ኛ ፡ ሮ ፡ ሰ ጽ ፡ መ ጸ ሃ ፡ ሳ ው ና ፡ ጺ ህ ና ፡ ኦ ጅ ጋ ኹ ሁ ፡ ዙ ቀ ኦ ፡ ሳ ኻ ሁ ። ። ጺ ህ ና ፡ ኣ ጹ ር ጋ ኹ ሁ ፡ ኔ የ ሺ ኻ ሁ ፡ ስ ጺ ዲ ፡ ኑ ፡ አ ገ ፉ ኛ ፡ የ ለሚ ሂ ጹ ፡ ኔ ው ና ። ሞመ ሳ ቡ ኛ ሞመ ፡ ለመ ጠ ጡ ኛ ሞመ ፡ በ ሃ ጺ ረ በ ኑ ፡ ስ ጡ ቹ ። ።

ኑ ጽ ሕ ፌ ፡ ዐ ጉ ሴ ጉ ፡ ኽ ቱ ወ ፡ ኣ መ ፡ ሠ ሁ ፡ ስ መ ጋ ዚ ት ፡ ዘ ፣ ወ ፡ ፫ የ ፡ ፫ ወ ፸ ዓ መ ት ፡ ኦ መ ሕ ረ ቅ ፡

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion of Ethiopia. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

Message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories.

As Mr. Martin Flad (*Ato* Martīn Flad) is my friend [and] is returning to his country, [please] receive him well; send him off with a nice escort. Give him his food and his drink wherever he spends the night.

Written in the camp of Gulīt on the 30th of Meggabīt, in the year of grace 1866.

Private archives of the Flad family, St-Légier, Switzerland, Amharic original. Rev. Flad had gone to Ethiopia to deliver a letter from Earl Granville to Yohannis. He was apparently well received, but failed to persuade Yohannis to permit free access to Ethiopia for European missionaries. He was "refused permission to set up a missionary school in the country, the King not wishing to have Europeans settled in Abyssinia" (FO 78/2342, fols 170–73).

Document no. 121

Yohannis IV to Edward Stanton, 6 April 1874

Royal Camp Golat, Godjam,
April 6th, 1874

From The King of Kings Johannes of Ethiopia.

To General Stanton. R.E.C.B. Consul General for Egypt.

I send you my compliments. How are you? I thank God that I and all my people are well thanks be to God. The letter which you have sent to me by Mr. Flad I have received thanks be to God; but now I cannot send the answer, but I hope to send it soon. I sent my messenger to Ismail Pacha and he kept him for one year, and sent him to me back without any answer. I thank you much for the services you have done for him by sending him back to me.

Translated by: Maduakal Chief Interpreter,
Copied by: J.C. Kirkham.

FO 78/2342, fols 176-177, copy of an English translation by Mahdere Qal, brought to Cairo by J.M. Flad. (no. 120).

The letter is reproduced with the orthography of Kirkham's copy. As the letter was translated by the king's secretary, the original was most probably not forwarded.

Document no. 122

Yosēf to Antoine d'Abbadie, 3 Sept. 1874

በአድቀይህ፡ ተጻፈ፡ በነሐሴ፡ ፳፱ቀን፡ በሸህ፡ ከ፰፻፰፯ በኢትዮጵያ
ቍጥር፡

እጅግ፡ ለከበሩ፡ ጌታችን፡ እንጦንዮስ፡
እጅጉን፡ እንዴት፡ነው፡፡ በሳንተ፡ ቍጥር፡ በሸህ፡ ከ፰፻፸፫ዓመት፡
የጻሁለም፡ ወረቂት፡ ቢደርስለም፡ ባይደርስለም፡ አሳውቅም፡
ምሳሸም፡ እስከ፡ ዛሬ፡ ጠብቂ፡ አሳገኘሁም፤ እርሰም፡ አምኘ፡
ዘመድ፡ ብየ፡ ከሐበሻ፡ ወደ፡ ፓሪስ፡ ስርሰም፡ ጽፌ፡ ሞሳሽ፡ አል
ባ፡ ብቀር፡ አዘንሁ፡፡ በፊትም፡ የጻፍሁለም፡ ያውቃሉ፤ እስከ፡ ዛ
ሬ፡ ቀጅሼ፡ ምጽዋት፡ አገኝ፡ ነበር፡ አሁን፡ ግን፡ አቡነ፡ ዮሴፍ፡
ጳጳስ፡ በፊት፡ ወደ፡ ፓሪስ፡ የጻፍኸውን፡ ወረቀት፡ በሐሰት፡
ጽፌ አለሁ፡ ካሳልህ፡ የቅዳሴ፡ ምጽዋት፡ አታገኝም፡ አሉኝ፡ እኔ
ም፡ እውነቱን፡ ሐሰት፡ ነው፡ ልል፡ አልችልም፡ አልሁ፡ በዚህ፡ ነ
ሉኝ፡፡ አሁን፡ እርሰም፡ እንደ፡ ብልሀተም፡ የምቀድስለት፡ ም
ጽዋት፡ የሚሰጥ፡ ቢገኝ፡ ይፈልጉልኝ፡ ወይም፡ ሌላ፡ ብልሀት፡
እንዳለም፡ እንደውቀተም፤ ወረቀት፡ ቢሰዱልኝ፡ ከሰባክያን፡ እን
ዳይሆን፡ ከሌላ፡ ሰው፡ እንጅ፡ አይሰጡኝምና፤ ይብተራ፡ አሰ
ጋኸኝ፡ ዘንድሮ፡ አልመጡም፡ ግን፡ በአማርኛ፡ የቲረት፡ መ
ጻፍ፡ ወደርሰም፡ እንዲደርስ፡ ለሰባክያን፡ ላዘርስቲ፡ ቢሰ
ጥዋችውወደርሰም፡ ሳይሰዱት፡ ለራሳቸው፡ አድርገውታል፡
አባ፡ ዱፍሎ፡ ከሚባለው፡ ቂስ፡ ፈረንሳዊ፡ ከርሱ፡ እጅ፡ አለ፡
ልከው፡ ያስወስዱት፡፡
የሐበሻ፡ ወሬ፡ እንዲህ፡ነው፤ አዲ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ገጎምን፡ ዘርፈው፡
አምባ፡ ጫራ፡ አሉ፡ በገጎም፡ ሹመው፡ የተውትን፡ ደጀት፡
ደስታን፡ አዳል፡ ተሰማ፡ ድል፡ መታው፡ እርሱንም፡ ገደለው፤ አሁ
ን፡ አዳል፡ ተሰማ፡ ገጎም፡ ጠቅልሎ፡ ይዝዋል፡ የጁንና፡ ላስታን፡
ዘንየ፡ ብሩ፡ የሚባል፡ ሽፍታ፡ ይዘታል፡ በጌምድርን፡ ራስ፡ ወልደ፡
ማርያም፡ ሽፍታ፡ ይዘታል፡ ትግሬን፡ የንጉሥ፡ ልጅ፡ ይገዛዋል

Written at Adi Qeyih, on the 29th day of Nehasē 1864 according to the Ethiopian calendar.

To our highly honoured master Antoine (Inṭoniyos).

How are you, really? I do not know whether the letter I wrote to you in 1873, according to your calendar, reached you or not. I have waited until today [but] have not received your reply. Trusting you and regarding you as my friend, I wrote from Abyssinia to you in Paris; I felt unhappy when I got no reply.

You know what I wrote to you before. Until now I have been earning [my] living (lit. alms) by saying Mass. But now Monsignor Touvier, the bishop (*Abune* Yosēf, *pappas*), has told me that I will not receive [my] maintenance (lit. alms) for Mass unless I say that I lied in the letter which I wrote to Paris before. I told [him] that I cannot say that the truth is false. For this reason he deprived me [of my maintenance].

Now, in your wisdom find out for me if there is anyone who will contribute (lit. give alms) so that I can say Mass; or, if you have any other idea, [which] you think [is better]. If you send me a letter, let it not be through the missionaries, for they will not give it to me, but through other people.

የሸዋ፡ ንጉሥ፡ በወሎ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ያሠራል፡
የሰባክያን፡ ወሬ ያሠ፡ እንዲህ፡ ነው፡፡ ፕሮት ስታንት፡ በአይለት፡
ቤት፡ ሰርተው፡ ሐማሴን፡ እየወጡ፡ ብዙ፡ ብር፡ እየሰጡ፡ አያሌ፡
ሰው፡ ቢያስቱ፡ የሐማሴን፡ ካህናት፡ ሁሉ፡ ተሰብስበው፡ ጉባዔ፡
አደረጉ፡ ካቶሊክ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ ሊቀበሉ፡ ምክር፡ በጨረሱ፡ ጊ
ዜ፡ ከኔያ፡ ፩ ሰው፡ በቦግስ፡ ያሉ፡ ሰባክያን፡ ላዛርስቲ፡ በሣጠ
ም፡ ሥጋ፡ ይበላሉና፡ እንደነዚህ፡ ፕሮት ስታንት፡ ናቸው፡ አለ፡
ይህን፡ በሰሙ፡ ጊዜ፡ ትተውት፡ ተበተኑ፡፡

ይህ፡ አባ፡ ዱፍሎ፡ የሚባል፡ ቂስ፡ ከጐንደር፡ ጀምሮ፡ አስከዚ
ህ፡ መልካም፡ ወሬ፡ አልተወራለትም፡ በርሱም፡ ምክንያት፡
አያሌ፡ ሰዎች፡ ወዳ፡ ስሕተት፡ ሔዱ፡ በዚህ፡ ሁሉ፡ ምክንያት፡
ብዙ፡ ነገር፡ ተበላሽት ዋል፡ የላዛርስቲ፡ ስብከት፡ አሁንም፡ አ
ለቅነት፡ ተሹ ሙዋል፡ ብዙ፡ ነገር፡ ሰይመጣ፡ አይቀርም፡፡

ሰድ ሚና፡ ጤና፡ ይስጠም፡፡

ዮሴፍ፡ ቀሲስ፡ ካቶሊካዊ፡፡

Debtera Asseggaheñ has not come [back] this year. When, however, he gave the Lazarist missionaries (lit. preachers) a book of tales in Amharic, so that it might be forwarded to you, they did not send it [but] appropriated it. It is in the hands of the French priest called *Abba* Duflos (Duflo). Write and get it (lit. take it away).

The news of Abyssinia is like this. Having pillaged Gojjam, *Aṣē* Yohannis is [now] at Amba Ḉhara. Adal Tesemma has defeated *Dejjach* Desta whom [Yohannis] appointed over Gojjam [and] left behind there. He killed him.

Now Adal Tesemma controls the whole of Gojjam. A rebel called Zegeyye Birru controls Yejju and Lasta. A[nother] rebel, *Ras* Welde Maryam, controls Begēmdir. Tigray is administered by the king's son. The king of Shewa is building a church in Wello.

The news of the missionaries is as follows. All the priests of Hamasēn gathered together and held a meeting in order to accept the Catholic religion, when the Protestants, having built a station (lit. house) at Aylet and having proceeded to Hamasēn, misled many people by distributing a lot of money. After they had finished their discussion, one man from amongst them said that, since the Lazarist missionaries who were in Bogos ate meat during Lent, they were like these Protestants. When they heard this, they dropped [the idea] and dispersed.

From Gonder up to here nothing good (lit. no good stories) is said about the priest called *Abba* Duflos. Many people have slipped into error because of him. For all these reasons many matters have gone wrong with the Lazarist mission. And now he is made the head. Many things are sure to follow.

May He give you long life and health.

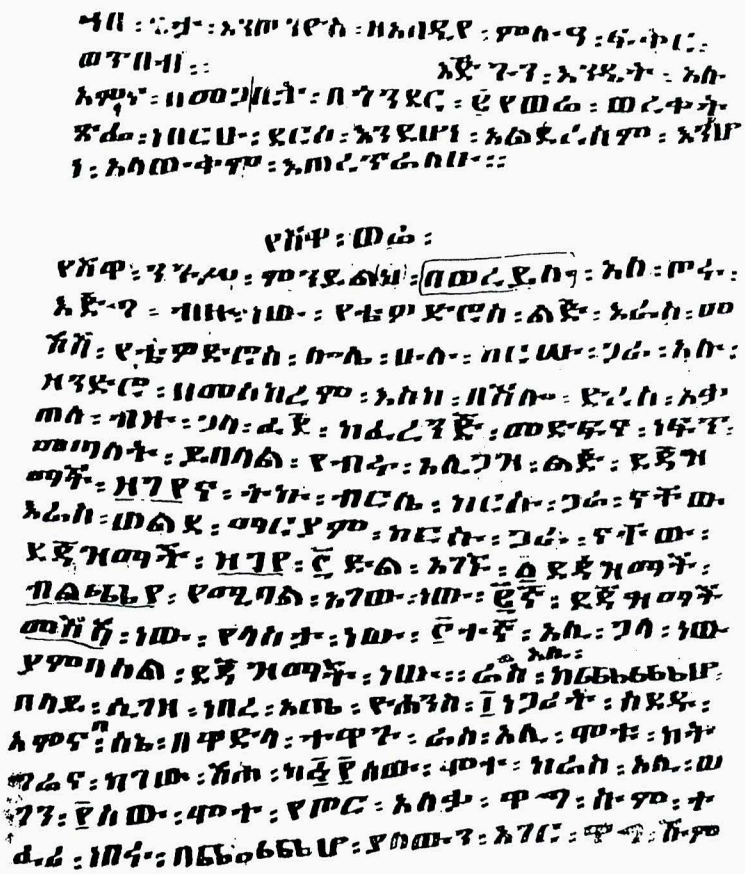
Yosēf, Catholic priest.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 274, Amharic original. See no. 100 above for the earlier long letter from this Catholic priest referred to in the beginning of this letter. Yosēf apparently belonged to the group of Ethiopian priests who were very critical both towards the leadership of the mission in general and the pro-Egyptian stand in the Ethio-Egyptian conflict taken by Mgr. Touvier and Father Duflos, among others (see O'Mahoney, II, pp. 163–79).

The Protestans referred to in this letter were the missionaries of the Swedish Evangelical Mission. see nos. 80, 98–99.

Document no. 123

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 9 Nov. 1874



To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'abedīye), [who is] full of friendship and wisdom.

How are you really? Last year in Meggabīt, I wrote from Gonder two letters with news. I do not know whether or not they have reached [you]. I have doubts.

News of Shewa

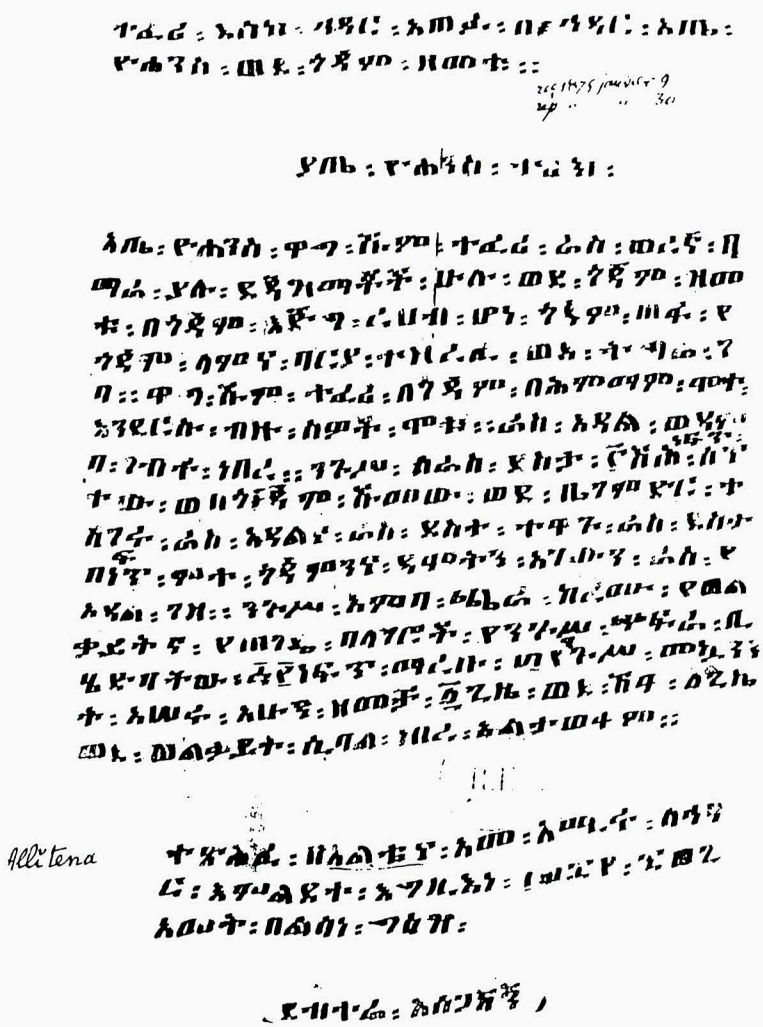
The king of Shewa Minīlik is at Werre'īlu. His army is very big. Tēwodros's son *Ras* Meshesha [and] all Tēwodros's retainers are with him. In Meskerem this year, he burnt everything up to Beshilo [river]. He killed many Galla. It is said that he received cannon and rifles from the Europeans.

Dejjazmach Zegeyye, the son of Birru Alīgaz, and Tikku Birillē are with him. *Ras* Welde Maryam is with him. *Dejjazmach* Zegeyye won (lit. met with) three victories. The first is [against] the Agew called *Dejjazmach* Bilçhaye. The second is [against] *Dejjazmach* Meshesha. He is from Lasta. The third is [against] Alī. He is a Galla. He is *Dejjazmach* of Ambasel. *Ras* Alī was ruling beyond Çheçheho.

Aṭē Yohannis sent ten kettledrums. They fought at Wadla last year in June. *Ras* Alī died. One thousand and five hundred men from among the Tigreans and the Agew died. One hundred men from the side of *Ras* Alī died. *Wagshum* Teferī was the commander of the army. Until the month of November, *Wagshum* Teferī devastated the country around Çheçheho. In November *Aṭē* Yohannis went on a campaign to Gojjam.

The history of *Aṭē* Yohannis

Aṭē Yohannis, *Wagshum* Teferī, *Ras* Wereñña [and] all the *dejjazmaches* who are in Amhara went on a campaign in Gojjam. A serious famine occurred in Gojjam. Gojjam was devastated. The cattle (lit. cows) and slaves in (lit. of) Gojjam were looted. They were taken to Tigray.



Wagshum Teferī died of illness in Gojjam. Many people died like him. *Ras* Adal mounted an *amba*. The king crossed to Begēmdir after giving three thousand guns to *Ras* Desta and appointing him over Gojjam. *Ras* Adal and *Ras* Desta fought. *Ras* Desta died from a gunshot. *Ras* Adal rules Gojjam, Damot and Agew. The king passed the rainy season at Amba Ṣara.

When the troops of the king marched against the peasants of Welqayit and Ṭegedē [the latter] captured 500 guns. They imprisoned thirty of the king's notables. Now it is said that there will be a campaign, at one time to Shewa, at another time to Welqayit. It is not known.

Written at Altēna, on the first of Hidar, in the year 1867 after the birth of our Lord, according to the Ethiopian calendar (lit. the Gi'iz language).

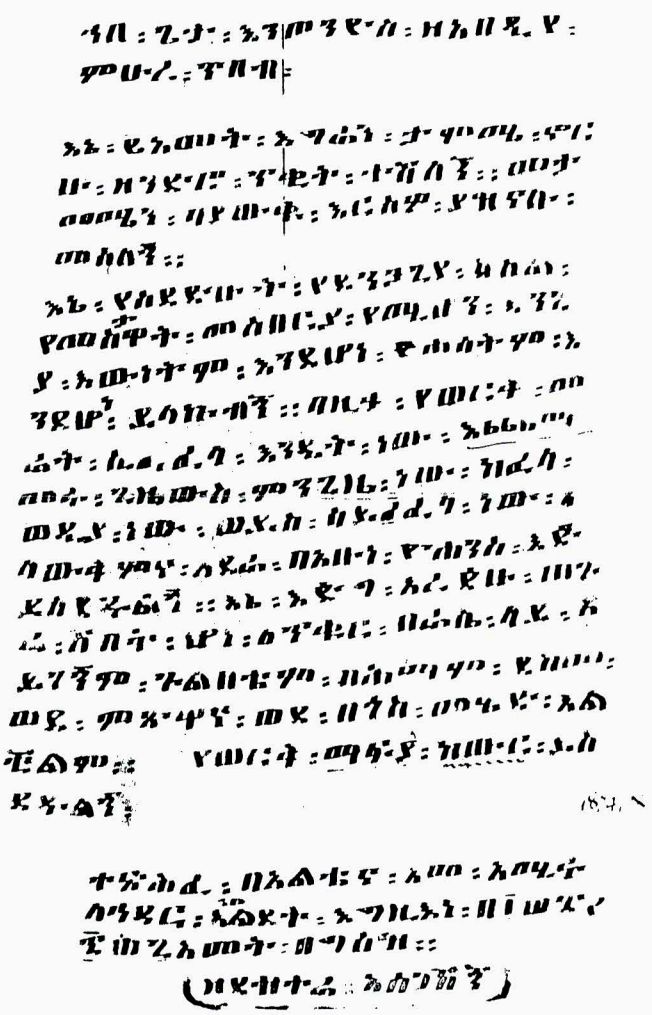
Debtera Asseggaheñ.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 255v–256r, Amharic original. This is document no. XV in Conti Rossini's publication.

Antoine d'Abbadie acknowledged the receipt of this letter and the following on 30 January 1875. He complained, however, that the two letters from Gonder referred to in the opening paragraph above had not reached him, in fact that he had heard nothing from Asseggaheñ for a very long time. He may of course have been wrong. At any rate the Gonder letters eventually reached Paris (nos. 103 and 104 above).

Document no. 124

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 9 Nov. 1874



To Master Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Ze'Abedīye), learned in science (*ṭibeb*).

For two years I have lived with sick legs (lit. my legs sick). I am a little better this year. It is because you did not know I was ill, [otherwise] it seems to me you would be sad.

[Please] write to me whether it is true or false that the stone coal I sent can serve as stone for cutting (lit. breaking) glass. When the soil [which contains] gold is heated, how is the mercury added? At what moment is it [added]? Is it after it melts [lit. boils] or before it melts? As I do not know, please write to me by the hand of Father John (*Abune* Yohannis). I have become very old. My hair has become white. Not one single black [hair] can be found on my head. My strength has declined through illness. I cannot go to Massawa and Bogos. Send me a crucible for melting (lit. boiling) gold.

Written at Altēna, on the first of Hidar, in the year 1867 after the birth of our Lord according to the Ethiopian (lit. Gi'iz) [calendar].

From *Debtera* Asseggaheñ.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 257, Amharic original. The *Abune* Yohannis referred to in this letter is the Lazarist missionary Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux, who was appointed to Altēna in June 1874, but called to Paris in August.

Apparently Asseggaheñ hoped to receive information for his experiments when Coulbeaux returned, which he did by the end of the year.

This letter was published by Conti Rossini (no. XVI), but omitted by Fusella in his translations into Italian.

Document no. 125

Minutes from inquest regarding the death of E. Dissard, 29 Jan. 1875

Procès-verbal of the decease of Mr. Dissard, Eugène, aged 25, native of Romans, and of Mr. Beranger, Henri, aged 32, native of Sisterou.

Assassinated among the Adal, [while] taking part in the French expedition to Shewa (Abyssinia). Having departed from Ambabo on the Bay of Tajura on Tuesday the 22nd of September with the caravan of *Amīr* Abū Bakr, the governor of Zeyla, under the command of *Ḥājj* Dā'ūd, native of Tajura, we had as [our] guide *Ḥājj* Muḥammad, son of the *amīr* and second in command of the caravan in question.

Yesterday, the 24th of October, we arrived at 9 o'clock in the morning in the valley and on the plateau of Asayalē Daba, in the province of Obenu among the tribe of the Gali'ēla, to the east of the stream Hoffelot(?). We spent the day there without any incident, our guides themselves having assured us that there was no danger. We went to bed, leaving the first watch to Mr. Philippe Jaubert. Mr. Beranger replaced him, and then the turn came to Mr. Dissard.

The latter no doubt gave in to fatigue, and fell asleep on a folding stool opposite the bed of Mr. Arnoux, the chief of the expedition. A native of the tribe of Asa Hēmara, who had found his way into the caravan and had probably hidden behind a camel, took the opportunity and struck him a blow from behind with a spear. The blow entered between the two shoulder blades, a little to the left, and at the place of the heart. He had the strength to run a distance of 15 to 20 steps; then he uttered a faint cry and fell on his back, dropping his weapon (he was armed with a gun with its sword bayonet fixed). It was about 1 o'clock in the morning.

At the same moment another native, also of the same tribe of Asa Hēmara, approached Mr. Beranger, sleeping on his back, and struck him in the same way with a thrust of [his] spear in the stomach, a little above and to the left of the navel. The blow also cut all the way through, making a hole also in the blanket and the mat which was under him. He, too, had the strength to take four or five steps and, uttering a dreadful cry which awoke us and probably saved the four of us, he came and fell over Mr. Pierre Arnoux, drenching him with his blood. His death was immediate.

Mr. Dissard's wound was eight centimetres wide; Mr. Beranger's began with a width of eight centimetres on the abdomen and was three centimetres on the back. When we wanted to examine Mr. Beranger's wound we found with horror that his intestines had fallen out.

We laid them on the mats and wrapped them in blankets, having had the chiefs of the caravan verify the horrible assassinations.

The assassins had fled under cover of the night, and could not be overtaken. When the day dawned we wrapped [the corpses] in a length of white cloth and placed them in a grave dug during the night by the members of the caravan. After having called aloud for vengeance and said a last farewell to our brothers, so cowardly assassinated, we had them covered with earth, and placed on top a pile of stones in order to prevent wild animals from finding the place where they rested and disturbing it..

The *procès-verbal* of these two deaths has been prepared by the survivors of the expedition in the presence of the heads of the caravan.

Drawn up in two copies at the camp of Asayalē Daba on the 25 th of October 1874.

The leader of the expedition P. Arnoux
Signature of L. Pequignot
Signature of *Ḥājj* Da'ud, head of the caravan
Signature of Yeko, son of Melko(?)
Signature of the interpreter Yosēf Kasa
Signature of Ph. Jaubert
Signature of Muḥammad Abū Bakr
Signature of *Ḥājj* 'Alī, son of *Ḥājj* Khalīl.

In the year 1875 on the 29th of January in the presence of His Majesty Minīlik, king of Shewa, His Grace Monseigneur Massaja, bishop of Cassia, vicar apostolic of the land of the Galla, Monseigneur Taurin, appointed bishop of Adramytte, coadjutor of the said prelate, the Very Reverend Father Louis de Gonzague, missionary apostolic, Mr. Pierre Arnoux, Mr. Philippe Jaubert, Mr. Leon Pequignot, Frenchmen all three of them, companions of the assassinated foreigners, Mr. Mayer of the Protestant mission, *Ḥājj* Da'ud, head of the caravan, *Ḥājj* Muḥammad, son of Abū Bakr, second head of the caravan, *Ato* Werqē, emissary of the king, who accompanied the caravan, Yosēf Kasa, interpreter of Mr. Arnoux, Welasma Abegaz, governor of the frontier of the Adal, *Azzazh* Welde Ṣadīq, minister of the king's palace, *Qeñazmach Ato* Ṭenfu, *Aleqa* Zeneb, *Azzazh* Welde Gīyorgīs, *Fītawrarī* Mengesha, *Ato* Mesmaye, *Ato* Shewa Reged, *Aleqa* Kīdane Maryam were present.

The above *procès-verbal* having been read, it was recognized that all the circumstances and the details of the said document were perfectly in agreement with the truth and that there was nothing to add to it or to change in it.

In faith of which the members present competent to sign have placed their signatures on the present documents in the year and on the date which follows:

The royal city of Lichē 29 January 1875.

Signature of F. Taurin, bishop
Seven Amharic signatures

Signature of F.G. Massaja, bishop
Signature of Louis de Gonzague, missionary apostolic
Signature of Johannes Mayer
Three signatures, two Amharic, one Arabic

Seal of the king of Shewa.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 222–223, French translation. This document contains two separate reports, dated 25 October 1874 and 29 January 1875, respectively. The first, however, seems to have been regarded as provisional, pending a verdict by King Minīlik and his court in the presence of the most influential foreigners in Shewa at the time. The preserved French translation also gives the impression that we are dealing with one document only.

With no preserved Amharic text and a French copy which is difficult to decipher it has been impossible to identify all the proper nouns with certainty. Of the geographical names the stream ("torrent" in the French text) of "Hoffelot" is left with a question mark as both the first letter and the end of the word are uncertain. We are very grateful to an Afar friend, Kontie Moussa, for having assisted us with Asa Hēmara, Asayalē Daba and Gali'ēla. Yeko, son of Melko ("Iecco fils de Melko" in the French text) could be either an Afar name—Melko does occur as such—or an Amharic name, in which case the father's name would be Melku. Since the reading of "Iecco" is uncertain the question must be left open. The caravan had been on its way for one month, and may well have reached the area of Mount Obenu (represented by "the province of Obnu" in the text), approximately 11° N, 41.5° E. Unfortunately the translator has not bothered, or has been unable, to reproduce the signatures of the Ethiopians signing on 29 January.

In a long narrative written later by Arnoux (Afrique 62, fols 334–449) and cited by Zewde Gabre-Sellassie (p. 85), dates and names are apparently quite confused. The attack, for instance, is dated 25 September instead of 25 October, and Pequignot is called Tequinol. On the other hand, the interpreter called Yosēf Kasa in the document above is identified in Louis-Lande's account in *Revue des deux Mondes* (p. 880), as Yosēf Nigusē, later to achieve fame as Minīlik's interpreter and translator.

Document no. 126

Minīlik to Ismā‘īl Ibrāhīm, 1 April 1875

የተሳከ፡ ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ ምኒልክ፡፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡
ይድረስ፡፡ ተከበረው፡ ከታፈረው፡፡ እስማኤል፡ባሻ፡፡
ንጉሠ፡ ምሥር፡፡
እንዲት፡ነዎ፡እጅጉን፡፡
እኔ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡ደህና፡ነኝ፡፡ ሠራዊቴም፡
ሁሉ፡ደህና፡ነው፡፡
ምሥርና፡ሀበሻ፡ ድምበረኞቹ፡ናቸውና፡ እንፋቀ
ር፡ብለው፡ጸብዳቤ፡ሰደውልኝ፡ነበር፡፡
ይኸም፡ነገር፡ለኔ፡ጣፈጠኝ፡፡ እጅግ፡ደስ፡ብሎኛልና፡፡
የዚህን፡ነገር፡ውል፡የሚቆርጥልኝ፡፡ የማምነውን፡የም
ወደውን፡ራስ፡ብሩን፡ከባሻ፡ ምስንጅር፡ድረስ፡ሰድ
ጂዋለሁ፡፡በመካከላችን፡ጠብ፡ እንዳይነሳ፡ ድኃ፡ እንዳ
ይበደል፡፡
በ፲፰፻፡፰፯፡ዓመት፡እምልደተ፡እግዚእነ፡ኢየሱስ፡ክርስቶስ፡ገ
በወርኃ፡መጋቤት፡በ፳፬፡ቀን፡፡
በወረኢሉ፡ከተማ፡ተጻፈ፡፡



May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach the honoured [and] respected Ismā‘īl *Pasha* (Isma’ēl *Basha*), the king of Egypt (Misir).

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well. You sent me a letter saying, “Since Egypt and Abyssinia are neighbours, let us be friends.” This (matter) is agreeable (lit. sweet) to me. I am very pleased.

I have sent *Ras* Birru, whom I trust and love, to Munzinger *Pasha* (*Basha* Misinjir) to conclude an agreement about this matter on my behalf, so that no conflict arises between us [and] so that the weak will not be the victims of injustice.

Written at the town of Werre’īlu, on the 24th of the month of Meggabīt, in the year 1867 after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ENA, Soudan 5/2/1, Amharic original. This letter seems to be the earliest preserved letter from Minīlik to *Khedive* Ismā‘īl. A letter reportedly written in February the year before, asking for “trustworthy persons having a profound knowledge of arts and crafts”, could not be located in the archives. Ismā‘īl’s reply to that letter was mistakenly sent to Yohannis, but apparently Minīlik had also received some message to which the above was the reply.

By the time this letter was written *Ras* Birru, the former *aleqa* and chief counsellor of Yohannis (nos. 53 and 62), had abandoned his former master and offered his services to Minīlik. In fact he may well have been Munzinger’s agent, and thus in the service of the Egyptians. Whether he, and Minīlik, actually knew what Munzinger had in mind is difficult to establish with certainty. At face value the above letter is no more or less than a request to be left in peace. Birru took the letter to Munzinger. They went to Egypt, and returned together at the head of one of the expeditions that invaded the Horn of Africa in September 1875. They perished when their force was attacked and almost annihilated on the way through Awsa to Shewa.

For Minīlik’s attitude once the magnitude of the Egyptian threat to Ethiopia had become clear, see no. 173 below. See also Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 310–315; Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 55–57.

Document no. 127

Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 22 May 1875

የተሳከ፡ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ምኒልክ፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡ይድረስ፡፡
ወደ፡ወዲጀችን፡የከበሩ፡የታፈሩ፡፡እስማኤል፡ባሻ፡ንጉሠ፡ም
ስር፡፡እጅጉን፡እንደት፡ነዎ፡፡እኔም፡ከሕዝቡ፡ጋራ፡ደኅና፡ነኝ፡እ
ዝአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡፡ፍቅርዎ፡ከልቤ፡ተዋሕደአል፡፡ከሞት፡በ
ቀር፡ከፍቅርዎ፡የሚለየኝ፡የለም፡፡ሬስ፡ብሩን፡እንደኔ፡በነገር፡ሁ
ሉ፡ውል፡የሚቈርጥልኝ፡ከሰደድሁ፡በኋላ፡ሊቀ፡ጳጳሳት፡ባገ
ርዎ፡እንደተሾመ፡ሰማሁ፡፡ከግብፅ፡ጋራ፡ሃይማኖታችን፡አ
ንድ፡ነው፡፡ሳገራችን፡ጳጳስ፡አልመጣልነም፡፡አሁን፡እንፈልጋ
ለን፡ለሊቀ፡ጳጳሳቱ፡እንዲያዙት፡፡ምሳሹም፡ከሬስ፡ብሩ፡ጋራ፡እ
ንዲመጣልኝ፡፡በማኸሳችን፡መንገድ፡ከተገለጠ፡በኋላ፡ጳጳሱን፡የ
ሚቀበሉ፡ሰዎች፡እሰደለሁ፡፡እንግዲህም፡ወዲህ፡ሳገር፡የሚሰማ
ማ፡ለነጋደች፡ለባሳገሮች፡ደስ፡የሚያሰኝ፡ለቤተ፡መንግሥትም፡
የሚበጅ፡ነገርን፡ሁሉ፡እየተማከርነ፡በወረቀት፡ቃላችን፡አንድ፡እ
ንዲሆን፡በማኸሳችን፡ጠንተ፡የሚኖር፡መልካም፡ሥራት፡ለልጅ፡
ልጅ፡የሚጠና፡እናደርጋለን፡፡
የፍቅር፡ምልክት፡እንዲያዩልኝ፡ጥቂት፡ሰድጀአለሁ፡፡ጋሻ፡በተዋ፡፡



በ፲ወ፲፻፲ወ፯፡አ፡
በ፲፭ቀን፡ግንቦት፡፡
ተጻፈ፡

በወረኢሉ፡ከተማ፡

May [this letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia reach our friend, the honoured and respected Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) king of Egypt (Misir).

How are you, really? I with [my] people am well, thank God. Your friendship has penetrated deep into (lit. become one with) my heart. Nothing but death can separate me from your friendship.

After I had sent *Ras* Birru who on my behalf will conclude an agreement on all matters, I heard that a [new] patriarch *(līqe pappas)* had been consecrated in your country.

Our religion is the same as that of (lit. with) Egypt. A bishop (*pappas*) has not come to our country for us. Now we want you to instruct the patriarch. Let the reply come to me with *Ras* Birru. I shall send people who will receive the bishop as soon as a road has been opened between us.

And so, we shall make a good agreement (lit. regulation) on paper so that our words agree, [an agreement] which will suit [our] countries, which will please merchants and peasants, which will benefit [our] governments, which will be respected (lit. firm) between us [and] which will be respected by future generations. I have sent a few things, a shield [and] an armlet, so that you may regard [them] as tokens of friendship from me.

Written at the town of Werre'īlu, on the 15th day of Ginbot 1867.

Seal: King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia.

ENA, Soudan 5/2/6, Amharic original. It may be a coincidence, but it seems odd that Minīlik should have used his old seal from before 1870 for this letter, written as it is from the same place and within less than two months after his previous letter to Ismā'īl (no. 126). A likely explanation is that the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' seal was in the hands of people at the court close to the Catholic missionaries, and that Minīlik did not want the Catholics, whose influence at his court would almost certainly suffer from the arrival of a Coptic bishop, to know of his initiative.

Document no. 128

Birru Welde Gīyorgīs to Eugène Boré, 13 June 1875

In the year of grace 1867, 7 June (13 June 1875)

May it reach our illustrious Father Boré, the superior of the priests of St. Vincent.

I greet Your Reverence and ask you to remember me in your prayers. In the past, not knowing your missionaries, I had them expelled, but now that everything concerning them is well-known to me, I receive them with pleasure. Moreover, I urgently request that the entire country should know the mission and that all the people of Abyssinia should be instructed by it. Know that henceforth I am separated from the Copts. It is you who are my father; have pity on me.

Make me known also to your friends. I hope to come to you one day, if success crowns my efforts, and if, through Bishop (*Abouna*) Joseph, you should choose to summon me. May the Lord deign to grant us this meeting face to face!

Ras Birru Gīyorgīs.

Written at Massawa.

Annales de la Propagation de la Foi, vol. 48, p. 92, French translation. The writer, whose name is given in the printed text as "Ras Berout Guiorguis", is without doubt that well-known emissary of both Yohannis and Minīlik called *Aleqa*, then *Ras*, Birru Welde Gīyorgīs (see nos. 53 and 62).

The "Abouna Joseph" referred to in the letter is almost certainly Bishop Touvier, who was the vicar apostolic in Ethiopia at the time, and known as *Abune* Yosēf (see no. 78 *et al.*).

In this letter Birru is no doubt expressing his own personal views and expectations. At any rate it is hardly compatible with Minīlik's own letter to *Khedive* Ismā'īl only a few weeks earlier, asking him to instruct the new Coptic patriarch to send a bishop to Shewa (no. 127).

Document no. 129

Welde Sillasē Kinfu to the British and Foreign Bible Society [June? 1875]

To the most honoured and loved Bible Society, in London.

We, the people, priests, and deacons, expelled from Hamassien and its capital, Tzaasaga, take the liberty to inform you only a little of the great sufferings which all those have sustained who read the Bible in the province of Hamassien, which belongs to Abyssinia. Long ago we had heard that many messengers of the Gospel had been sent to Abyssinia, but none of them did set his foot upon Hamassien. Why not? Because the time had not yet come.

But in the year 1868 the Lord looked mercifully down upon Hamassien, and threw, as it were, many Holy Scriptures into our houses. We took them up and read them. With great joy we assembled, read, and investigated them; and in course of time we found out the errors of our Church, and we began to lower our confidence and regard in her. Hence the priests and monks three full years spoke against us, excommunicating us, and exciting the people against us. Four times they gathered an assembly for expelling us from Hamassien. The fifth time they took us to Ras Barca, the Governor of Tigré, telling him these people must be stoned. When we were brought before him, he ordered our hands and feet to be fettered with chains. At last he said, 'Now pay me wages for your having been put in chains.' We gave him money, whereupon he freed us from chains, and said, 'Now go, and teach no more.' But we could not hereafter discontinue reading the Gospel, and speaking about it with the people, and therefore our impeachers grew more numerous. We were compelled to take refuge on the Egyptian territory. After some time, when the effect of the strong hot winds in the lowland worked powerfully upon our frame, part of our fellow-sufferers returned to our country. The priests and monks again were gathering a large assembly for bringing about our entire destruction. There came a certain Ledj Markos, with many soldiers, and maintained that he had been appointed chief-priest of all Hamassien, and that he was desirous of binding the headman of this religious movement. But the people of Tzaasaga, the capital of Hamassien, united in declaring to him, that if he would not unfetter their chief-man they would fight with him. There were three princes, the sons of former governors, who made this declaration. When Ledj Markos knew this he became afraid, and released our chief-man.

When the priests and monks heard this, they went to the King Johannes, and to the archbishop, to accuse us and the three princes. The king and the archbishop wrote a letter to the Governor of Hamassien, that he should bring us and the princes fettered to the court; but the governor sent word to the king, saying, 'Why shall we expel our people from Hamassien? They pay us their tribute; why should we concern ourselves with their souls and faith?' The king then kept silence.

But afterwards, when we heard the resolution of the king and the bishop, we quitted our country and property, and fled at night to the wilderness; also the three princes fled to the wilderness, when they learned that the king had given orders to fetter them.

All our brethren who remained in the country, and with whom the Holy Scriptures were found, were imprisoned, and their property was confiscated.

Furthermore, the king and bishop sent a herald throughout Hamassien, saying, 'We bless him who has taken the property from them (the Bible-readers), but bring their hands to us (meaning that their hands should be cut off).'

We then built huts in the wilderness of Genda, but hearing that the chief-priest of Hamassien gathered soldiers to fall upon us suddenly, we left our huts, and fled in the winter season to the Egyptian territory, and stayed in the wilderness of Ailat, but the climate of that place did not agree

with us. Our native country is high, cool, and very healthy; but Ailat is a hot valley, therefore we all fell sick from fever—men, women, and children, not one excepted. But the Lord, of His great mercy, granted that none of us died, and gave the sickness such a turn that one after the other fell sick, so that the first were able to assist the last, and *vice versâ*; whereas of the people who came to Ailat, to use the hot sulphuric mineral waters, more than one hundred died, besides four Europeans. This strange occurrence surprised all the people of Hamassien, so that many were induced to search after the true doctrine.

The real cause of our being persecuted is this: the priests said to us, 'Do abandon the Bible, receive as true books those which we have written, and which do not agree with the Scripture. Receive the worship of the virgin Mary, of pictures, of the Cross, and of the Saints and Angels, as these intercede for us, and reconcile us to God; but reject the Bible, and never speak about it to any man, else your hands and feet will be cut off.' This is the reason for which we have been persecuted and driven to the wilderness, where we have met with great miseries.

Now this is our petition. We wish to live in our country, plough our land with our own cattle, serve the king with our bodies, but with our souls we wish to be subject to Christ. On this account we entreat you, most concernedly, that you will implore our king and bishop to grant us freedom of conscience. If it cannot be done, we are like fish out of water. In every case pray for us.

We have three times sent letters to our king and bishop, and supplicated for freedom; but we have never received any favourable answer, and are now like sheep scattered on the mountains, and given over to the beasts of prey, so that anyone who meets us may plunder and destroy us. We, the expelled and bereft ones, are 120 persons, and 33 priests and deacons. Evangelical liberty is denied to us.

We were much rejoiced at learning that you have abolished slavery in all lands, except in Abyssinia. Slaves want freedom only for the body, but we, being believers in Christ, have neither liberty for the body nor for the soul, but we hope in our Lord and Saviour. However, we have ventured to tell you only a small part of our tribulations.

This is written to the honoured and loved Bible Society at London, by the people, priests, and deacons expelled from Tzaasaga and all Hamassien, by the hand of Debtera Wolda Selassie. May God hear us!

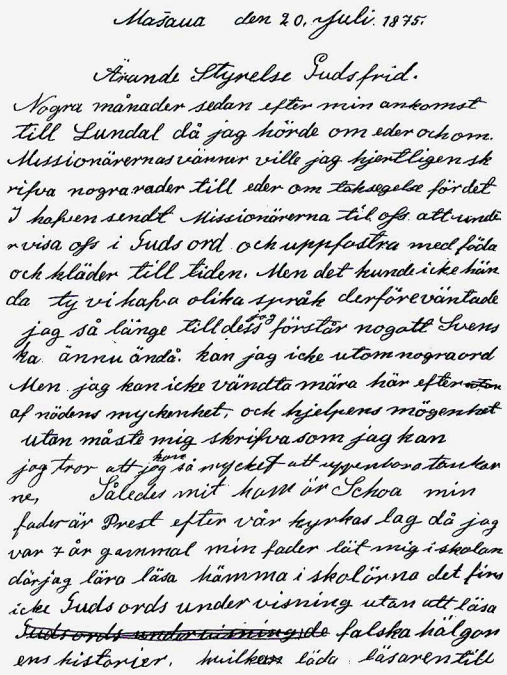
Bible Society Monthly Reporter, Nov. 1, 1875. English translation. According to an introduction to the printed letter it was forwarded to the Committe in Amharic, obviously with the above translation into English. It has, however, been impossible to locate the original in the archives of the Bible Society.

Debtera Welde Sillasē had been associated with the early Protestant missionaries (CMS), and had received education at St Chrischona. He was at the time of this letter apparently the leader of the new Bible study movement in Hamasēn and representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society there (Arén, pp. 17,178, 189–191).

The letter is reproduced with the orthography and punctuation of the printed English text. "Ras Barca" is an obvious error and should be read *Ras* Barya'u.

Document no. 130

Welde Haymanot to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission, 20 July 1875



Massawa den 20, juli 1875.

Ärande Styrelse Guds frid.

Några månader sedan efter min ankomst till Lundal då jag hörde om eder och om Missionärernas vänner ville jag hjertligen skrifva några rader till eder om tacksägelse för det I haften sendt Missionärerna til oss att undervisa oss i Guds ord och uppfostra med föda och kläder till lifvet. Men det kunde icke hända då ty vi hafva olika språk derföre väntade jag så länge till dess jag förstår något Svenska ännu ändå kan jag icke utom några ord Men jag kan icke vändta mera här efter af nödens mycket, och hjelpens mögenhet utan måste mig skrifva som jag kan jag tror att jag så mycket att uppenbara tankarne, Således mitt Namn är Schoa min fader är Prest efter vår kyrkas lag då jag var 7 år gammal min fader lät mig i skolan där jag lära läsa hämma i skolönna det finns icke Guds ords undervisning utan att läsa ~~Guds ords undervisning~~ falska hälgons historier, hvilkens läsa läsaren till

Massawa the 20th of July 1875

Esteemed board,

[The] peace of God [be with you].

Some months after I came to Lundahl, when I heard about you and about the friends of the mission, I sincerely wanted to write a few lines to you, thanking you for having sent missionaries to us to teach us the word of God and bring us up with clothes and daily food. But it could not be done, because we have different languages; therefore I waited so long until I understood some Swedish. So far, however, I know but a few words. But I cannot wait any longer, because of the great suffering and great [need for] help, but have to write as I can. I believe that I know enough to reveal my thoughts.

Thus, my home is Shewa, my father is a priest according to the law of our church. When I was seven years old my father made me [go] to school where I learned to read. In the schools at home there is no teaching of the word of God, except the reading of histories of false saints, which lead the reader to foolishness and not to understanding.

But later, when I was 15 years old, I came alone to Amhara land to learn the Ethiopian language, and I learned it in two years in Lasta in the house of a language teacher in the town of Lalībela; the town is called by the name of the builder. There was a king many years ago whose name was Lalībela. In this town he built ten extraordinary churches. They are not built in stone and clay but cut out of the stone of the mountain. There is a book which describes it. The essence [of it] is: When Lalībela had completed these churches the Lord God came down to the blessed Lalībela and promised him that everyone who came to this place would save himself and seven others. Now there are festivals three times a year, and to each festival many hundreds of people gather. The false teaching here in Abyssinia is as if it were truth, and no one doubts it, but most of the people do not observe it, perhaps not one in a thousand, not because they do not have the truth but they do not have time for what belongs to the soul; if God's word comes they do not accept it.

It happened in our time that an Abyssinian Christian who lives far away on the border of Galla that, when he heard about Lalībela, he came here to Lalībela. Near the town there was a village, he rested there before he entered the town and gave his flour to a woman to bake for him. Then she asked him where he came from and where [he was going]. He replied, "From far away to Lalībela." She [asked], "What person is it, and his churches, that many people come there?" He [replied], "Haven't you heard about him, and not been there?" She [said], "I have heard but not been there." Then he was distressed and said, "You who do not (*sic*) profess that you have a soul, instead of going morning and evening since it is so close to you, you have not been there once."

In the Abyssinian church they baptize and celebrate Holy Communion, but they do not read the Bible in order to correct their behaviour as the Scriptures teach, but have many such doctrines which do no good. Before I left Lalībela we, I and two of my comrades, consulted each other [about] travelling to the tomb of the Saviour in Jerusalem, since it is much more precious (esteemed) than Lalībela. But when we came close to Massawa we heard that no one is allowed to enter the ships without payment, and none of us had any money, for we said: When we get there we will live in the desert on the fruits of trees and we will not buy [anything] with money. Then we said to each other that if we could go ourselves we would do so, and besides (lit. now) the Lord is not one who looks at the outside only, but also the inside, the desire of the heart. Therefore we know that he gives us credit for it in the same way as those who have left, since he understands our desire to go and our regret at not being able to go to his tomb. We were three persons. Two returned again to Amhara, but I wandered about in Hamasēn together with my master's son, Welde Maryam, looking for teachers, but there were no great teachers who can teach Ethiopian as in Amhara. Then we said, "Let us go to the white (lit. red) priests in Belesa and listen to what they teach, so that we can speak about them when we come home."

We came to them and said, "We want to become your disciples," and they received us, and this was three years ago, in the month of July. And when we listened to the words of the Gospel they attracted us, and we renounced the faith of our homeland, and desired to be firm in that. Lundahl taught us from the Bible at morning and evening prayers for two years. When we reached the third year, [and] Lundahl went to you, Welde Maryam died, as you have heard.

The teacher during this year was Månsson. Because of this we experienced more trouble, since he could not teach us much because he did not yet know the language, and we did not know sufficient Swedish so that we could be taught in that [language]. My trouble is that I was not able to learn languages. I had learned geography, history, and crafts (lit. work) during these three years; it was enough for me. Now I had thought of going to my parents to read to them. Here in the school we were five Amhara boys, three recent arrivals, one a year ago. When Lundahl came he said to us, "Onesimus is my friend, the small boys are my children; they can stay here, but you must seek work in order to make a living." Now one [of us] has gone to Egypt, two to Abyssinia, and one works at Massawa, but I would be in difficulties if I went to Abyssinia. They will capture me because of the faith I have. I cannot go to Egypt, where I would get a job, because I do not have money (for the journey). Now I have heard that there are nice German and English schools in Syria where I can learn a lot. I beg you to give me money for the journey. I thank you for all your gifts to us.

Now during the summer Månsson has gone to Abyssinia. Lundahl and his children with his friend Onesimus are at Aylet where they are running the school. But I am keeping watch over the house at Massawa as long as I am there.

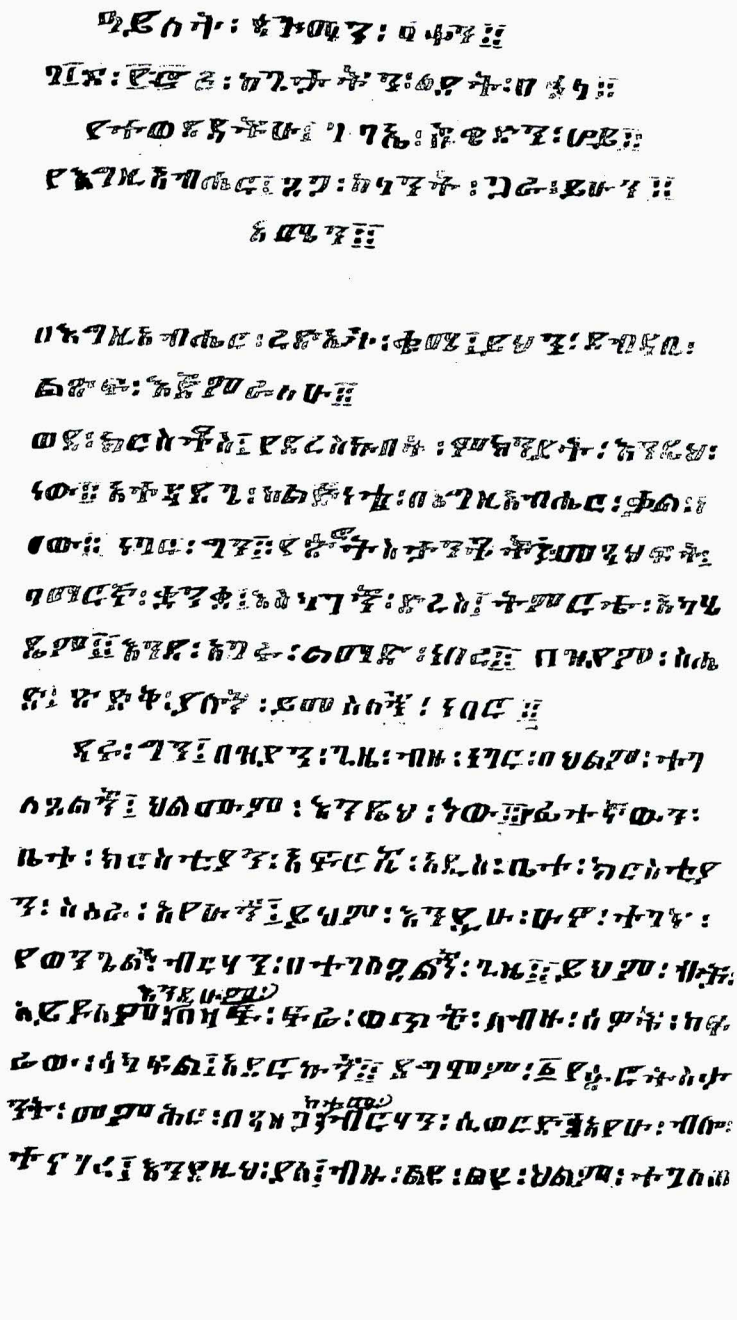
Your humble servant
D. Welde Haymanot.

CSA, Uppsala, Swedish original. The writer is always referred to by the missionaries as Welde Haymanot. What the 'D' stands for in the signature is difficult to say. It may be the initial of his own name, Welde Haymanot being that of his father, but it is also possible that he was a deacon in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and indicated this by the 'D'.

Welde Haymanot had arrived at Massawa, about 17 years old, three years before he wrote this letter, the first written by an Ethiopian in the Swedish language. He had studied with the other pupils of the small mission school at Massawa for two years. The first page of the long letter is reproduced here to illustrate his knowledge of the language and in particular the skill with which he used the Latin script. The letter was printed in *Missions-Tidning,* 1875, pp. 148–149, "with only a few corrections" (*ibid.*, p. 136). When his teacher B.P. Lundahl went to Sweden for a year, Welde Haymanot felt that he was no longer learning anything and left the school.

Document no. 131

Hayle Ab Tesfay to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission, 8 Sept 1875



Aylet, the 4th of Pagumē in the year 1875 after the birth of our Lord.

O beloved congregation of Sweden! May the grace of God be with you. Amen.

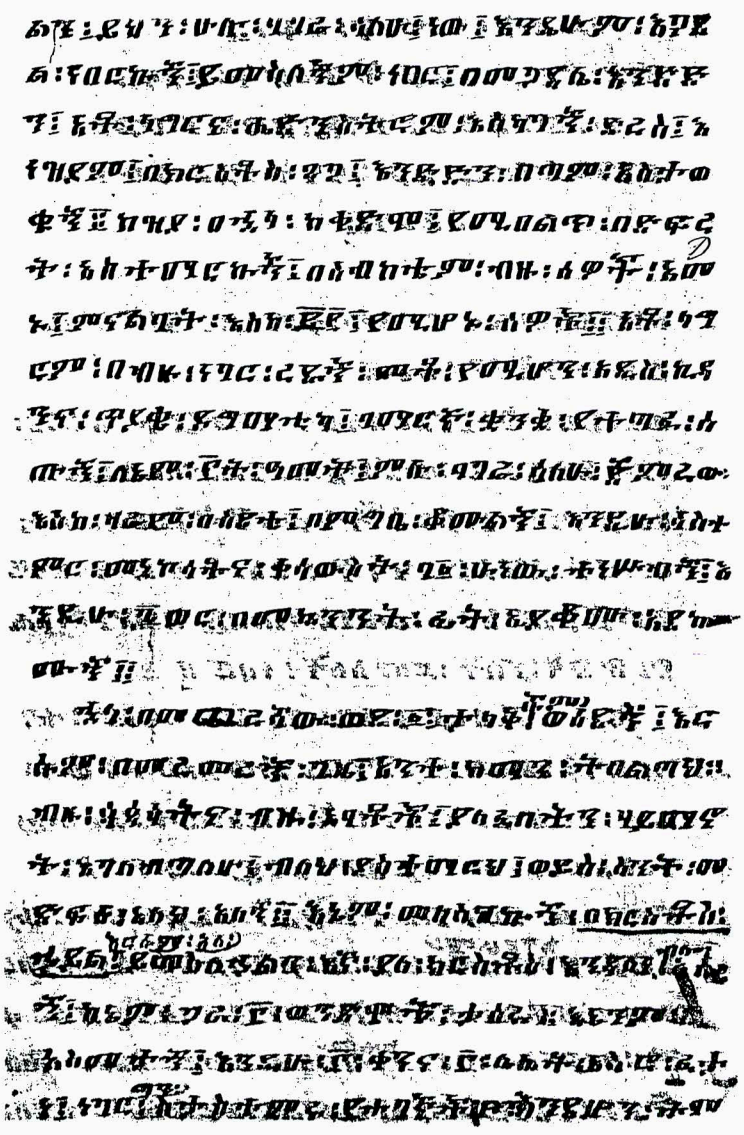
Surviving (lit. living) with the help of God, I begin to write this letter.

The reason for my coming to Christ is like this: I was brought up from my childhood with the Word of God. But until I got the book of the Protestants in the Amharic language, my knowledge and conduct was according to the custom of the country. And when I went on in that way, I thought I was righteous.

But during that time many things were revealed to me in dreams. And the dream was as follows: I saw myself destroying the previous church and building a new church. And [things] happened like that when the light of the Gospel was revealed to me.

It was not this only, but I also climbed a fruit tree and stayed the night distributing of its fruit to many people.

A Protestant teacher, too, said that he saw light descending upon the town of Ṣe'azega. Many dreams like this have been revealed to us. All this took place while I was in my country. And in this manner I struggled, believing that



I would be saved by my efforts, until I met Mr. Lager (*Ato* Lagir) and Hedenström (Hēdinstrom). They made it very clear to me that I would be saved by the grace of Christ.

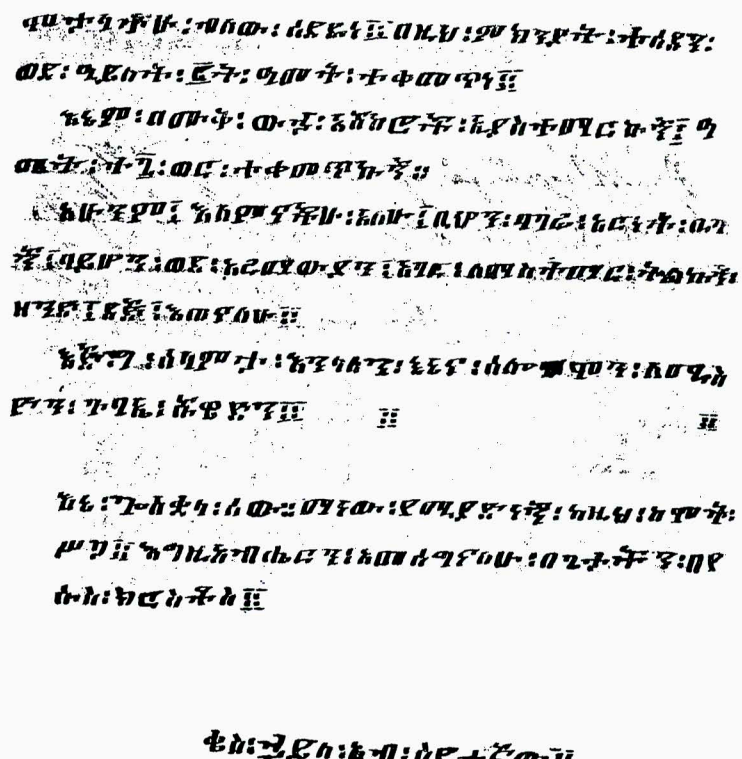
Then I taught with courage more than ever before, and many believed through my preaching, perhaps about two hundred persons. Mr. Lager helped me with many things.

He gave me about one hundred New Testaments and cathechisms (lit. questions about dogmatics) written in the Amharic language. And starting from the time when I was in my country, and in my exile until today, he also supplied me with my food for three whole years.

When I taught in this way monks and priests united and rose against me. And so they exhausted me by bringing me in front of officials for six months. After that they finally brought me to a higher official.

And after having investigated me he said to me: "Than whom are you more knowledgeable, that you teach with the intention of overturning the faith which has sustained many bishops and fathers, or how many cannon do you think you have?" And I answered [him], "[I will overcome] with the power of Christ."

And he asked, "Do you believe that we do not live with Christ?" Together with me three brothers were imprisoned; he also had me beaten.



And without any reason he imprisoned us for three days and three nights, and [then] he released us. However, they let us go saying, "If you are found teaching once more you will die." And they let us go.

Because of this we went away to Aylet and lived two years [there]. And I stayed at the hot springs one year and seven months, teaching young people.

And now I beg you; I ask your favour that you send me to teach, if possible to my country, if there is freedom; if not, [let me go] to the lands of the heathens. I and Selomon send many greetings to the Swedish congregation.

O wretched man that I am, who shall save me from the death of the body? I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Qēs Hayle Ab, the exile.

CSA, Uppsala, Amharic original. A translation into Swedish is found in *Missions-Tidning*, 1875, p. 136. There "a fruit tree" has become "a heap of fruit" and "two hundred" converts have become "a thousand". The most important discrepancy is that "A Protestant teacher also said that he saw light descend upon the town of Ṣe'azega" has been rendered "Moreover when the sun went down at Ṣe'azega I saw a Protestant teacher".

In this letter the month is stated in the Ethiopian calendar, the year in the Gregorian.

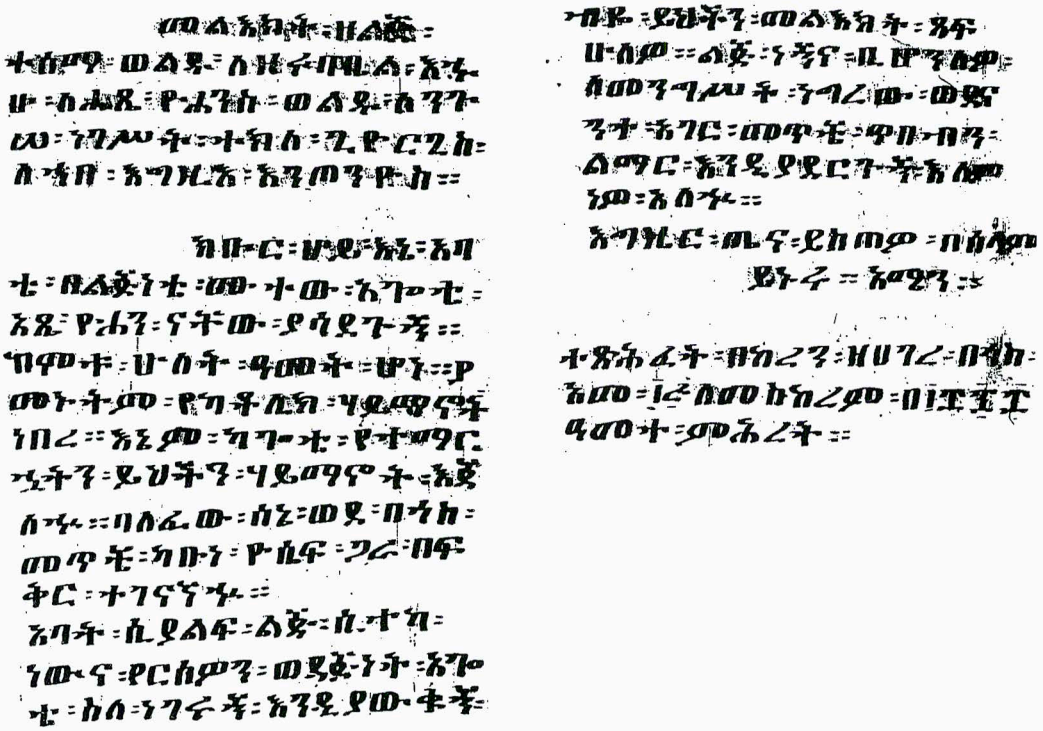
Qēs Hayle Ab had written a letter to the Swedish Evangelical Mission headquarters in Stockholm in 1872, soon after his first contacts with Lager and Hedenström (no. 98 above).

Hayle Ab's commitment to reform and his association with the Swedish missionaries no doubt provoked opposition by itself. But the political situation, with more than two years of Egyptian pressure and outright aggression, and the Ethiopian responses also played their role in creating refugees and exiles at this time.

The Selomon referred to was *Qēs* Selomon Aṣqu, another Orthodox priest from Ṣe'azega, who joined the early missionaries in the hope that they would contribute to the revival and reform movement in the Orthodox church (see Arén, pp. 104, 186–189).

Document no. 132

Tesemma Zerubabēl to Antoine d'Abbadie, 25 Sept. 1875



Message from *Lij* Tesemma, the son of Zerubabēl, brother of *Aṣē* Yohannis, son of King of Kings Tekle Gīyorgīs, to Master Antoine (*Igzī'i* Inṭoniyos).

Your Honour! Since my father died during my childhood, it was my uncle *Aṣē* Yohannis who brought me up. It is two years since he died. He was of the Catholic faith. And educated by my uncle, I, too, have embraced this faith. Last Senē I came to Bogos and met in friendship with Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf).

As it is so that when a father passes away the son takes the place, [and] as my uncle told me about your friendship, I am writing this letter to you, to introduce myself to you (lit. so that you may know me). Since I am a young man, I beg you, if it is possible for you, to tell the government to arrange for me to come to your country to study (lit. learn wisdom).

May God give you health. Peace be with you. Amen.

Written at Keren in the land of Bogos, on 15 Meskerem, in the year of grace 1868.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 602, Amharic original.

The *Aṣē* Yohannis referred to in this letter is Yohannis III, who was emperor at Gonder in the 1840s. See nos. 12 and 13. For *Abune* Yosēf see nos. 78–79.

Document no. 133

Muḥammad ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Shakūr to Muḥammad Ra’uf, 6 Oct. 1875

الحمد لله وحده والصلوة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده

اقول وانا محمد بن علي امير بلاد الهرر تحت طاعة الله ورسوله ثم تحت طاعة الاعز الاجل فخر الاسلام
والمسلمين ناصر شريعة سيد المرسلين كافل جيوش المنصورة محمد روف باشه رفع الله قدره وامضى عزائمه
الذي هو تحت العزيز الاكرم والوزير المكرم ذوي الفتوحات المتجددة في كل آن والمزايا التي يتحلى بعقود حسنها
جيد الزمان مولانا الخديوي اسماعيل بن مولانا ابرهيم لازالت كواكب سعوده زاهرة المطالع ومواكب جنوده
قاهرة الطلائع طائعا مختارا في صحتي وسلامتي قابلا مسلما انا واهل طاعتي ومملكتي كما ذكرته ولمن ذكرته
وارجوا من الله تعالى ان يديم الصولة الخديويه ورغبتي ان اكون تحت طاعة الحكومة الخديوية لا أمن على نفسي
ومالي وعيالي واتمنى من السعادة الخديويه مكافاة لصداقتي لها ان يصدر لي فرمانا كريم ان الامارة لي ولذريتي
من بعدي هذا مادمت صادقا انا وذريتي والله يوفقني لطلبات ولي نعمتي الخديوي الاعظم وارجوك ايها
الباشا ان تعرض هذا للخديوي الاعظم

الامير محمد بن علي
بن عبد الشكور
امير هرر

محرر نهار الربوع
٨ شهر رمضان
بالاهلة و٧
منه بالحساب
١٢٩٣ سنه

Praise be to God alone and blessings and peace be upon him after whom there will be no prophet.

I declare [as follows]. I, Muḥammad bin ʻAlī, the *amīr* of Harer, in obedience to God and His prophet, and also in obedience to the most honoured, the most illustrious, the glory of Islam and the Muslims, the supporter of the law of the Master of the prophets, the guarantor of victorious armies, Muḥammad Ra'uf *Pasha*—may God increase his power and fulfill his plans—who is under the mighty lord, the venerable ruler, endowed with conquests which are constantly repeated, and privileges which adorn themselves in the pearlstring of their beauty, the excellent of [our] time, our lord, *Khedive* Ismāʻīl, the son of our lord Ibrāhīm—may the stars of his happiness rise in brightness and the squadrons of his soldiers advance in victory—surrender completely of my own free will and in full possession of all my senses, I and the people under my control and my country, as I have said [before] and even if I had not said so.

I entreat God Almighty to make the authority of the *khedive* everlasting. My desire is to be under the rule of the *khedive* so that he may protect myself, my property and my family, and I hope that, as a reward for my friendship, His Highness the *khedive* will issue a generous *firmān* for me, so that the emirate will belong to me and my offspring after me. This will keep me and my offspring loyal forever. May God help me to fulfill the demands of my benefactor, the great *khedive.*

I ask you, O *pasha,* to show this to the great *khedive.*

Written on Wednesday, the 4th of the month of Ramadān locally [determined], and the 7th of it as computed, in the year 1292.

Seal: Muḥammad al-Amīr bin ʻAlī al-Amīr bin ʻAbd al-Shakūr.

Amīr Muḥammad bin ʻAlī bin ʻAbd al-Shakūr, *amīr* of Harer.

ENA, African Archives Carton 111 (earlier reference: Soudan Carton 3), Dossier 3/2/1, Arabic original. Douin quotes a slightly different text from a report to the *khedive* dispatched by Ra'uf *Pasha* on 18 October (Douin, III, 3A, p. 619, n. 3).

Muḥammad ʻAlī ʻAbd al-Shakūr was the ruler of Harer when the Egyptian occupation took place in 1875. The above letter and no. 134, written on the same day, are the primary sources on the Ethiopian side for the surrender of Harer to Muḥammad Ra'uf *Pasha.* According to Douin's account of the expedition, Ra'uf debarked at Zeyla on 9 August and started inland on 18 September, arriving at Jeldēssa on 3 October. Reportedly, just before arriving there he received a letter in which the *amīr* of Harer declared his submission. This was followed up by a delegation led by the son of the *amīr* on 6 Oct. (Douin, III, 3A, pp. 603–607).

The conversion of the date of the above letter presents a problem. In 1292 A.H. the 7th of Ramadān coincides with the 7th of October. The problem is that the 7th was not a Wednesday but a Thursday, and mistakes with regard to the day of the week are rarer than mistakes regarding the day of the month. The explanation is that the letters were dated "Wednesday" because that was the day when the decision was made and the letters drafted, but the 7th because in the Orient the new day actually begins at sunset. Giving preference to "Wednesday" and taking "the evening" in the second letter into consideration, we have opted for 6 October in the Gregorian calendar.

The letter was handed over to Ra'uf *Pasha* on the sixth (possibly the seventh) of October at a place called Shēh Sherbīn, and five days later the Egyptian commander entered Harer, meeting resistance only from some Oromo along the route. The *amīr* had apparently made up his mind not to resist the Egyptians. By surrendering without resistance and welcoming Egyptian suzerainty he evidently hoped to retain the position as *amīr* for himself and his heirs. See Douin, III, 3A, pp. 611–14; Salvatore Tedeschi, "L'emirato di Harar secondo un documento inedito", *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici*, Rome, 1974, pp. 497–498.

Document no. 134

Muḥammad ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Shakūr to Muḥammad Ra’uf, 6 Oct. 1875



ورد من محروس
بندر الهرر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بمنه تعالى ولطفه

اهداء تحيات ساميات وتسليمات فاخرات تخص حضرة الجناب الساطع والضياء اللامع
بهجة الزمان فخر اهل الجود والاحسان نعني به محمد روف باشه سلمه الله تع امين وبعد اهداء
جزيل التحيه اليكم فقد ورد علينا مشرفكم العزيز المرقوم في كونه صحبه خادمكم الحاج امان والحاج عمر
ليلة الثلوث عم رمضان فحصل به الانس التام فقبلناه وقراناه وفهمنا معناه من اوله الى منتهاه
وكذلك الباقيين فحمدنا المولى لصحتكم وعافيتكم التي غاية المقصود من الملك المعبود وما ذكرته من
الخديعة منا لكم مع القبائل لا تسمعوا له لانه كلام الحاسدين وخادمكم الحاج امان كفاية اذا
شاف شيء الذي ما يليق منا وقد توجه اليكم مع اعيان البلد هم القاضي عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن
والسيد احمد ابو بكر عبد القادر والحاج عمر عراله والحاج يوسف برخدله ومعهم نجلنا الحاج
يوسف ان شاء الله تع تتكلمون فيما يصلح بيننا وبينكم ونحنا معتمدين على الله ثم على ما ذكره
خادمكم المذكور ولكان سابقا ولدنا وذ الحين مع الزيادة واسمعوا ما يذكروه اعياننا مع الولد
الحاج يوسف بالعهد والميثاق ويسمعون ما تذكرون كذلك بالعهد والميثاق وعرفناكم سابقا
نحنا تحت طاعة الله ورسوله وتحت طاعة الخديوي اسماعيل والله على ما نقول وكيل وارسلنا
لكم مركوب خيل الذي ما يليق بجلالكم فتفضلوا بقبوله فنرجوه يكون مركوب العافية والسلام ختام
مع ابلاغ جزيل التحية والاكرام الحاضرين بذلك المقام وعليكم خاصة بالف الف سلام

حرر ليلة الربوع
شهر رمضان
١٢٩٢

r.

يسلم الرقيم بعون البر الرحيم ليد الاكرم المكرم الاجل الامجد المحترم محمد روف باشه حفظه الله تع آمين

v.

Seal: Muḥammad al-Amīr bin ʿAlī al-Amīr bin ʿAbd al-Shakūr.

Arriving from the city (lit. port) of Harer, the protected.

In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful.

By the strength and benevolence of the Almighty.

Presenting lofty greetings and splendid salutations to His Excellency, the shining honour and brilliant light, Fortune's favourite, the glory of the people of bounty and goodness—we refer to Muḥammad Raʾuf *Pasha,* may the peace of God Almighty be upon him. Amen.

After the presentation of abundant greetings to you—your friendly letter written at Kuta arrived with your servants *Ḥājj* Amān and *Ḥājj* ʿUmar on Tuesday evening the third of Ramadān. Perfect politeness befell him. We met him and invited him and understood his intentions from the beginning to the end, and likewise [those of] the others. So we praised the Lord for your health and well-being, which is the utmost intention of the Lord of the Believers. As for what you said about our cheating you with the tribes, [O] God, do not listen to it, for this is the talk of the envious. Your servant *Ḥājj* Amān will suffice [as witness]. If he had seen something which is not suitable for us, then he would have come to you with the nobles of the land. They are the judge, ʿAbdallāh bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, and Sayyid Aḥmad Abū Baḥr ʿAbd al-Qādir, *Ḥājj* ʿUmar ʿAdāla, *Ḥājj* Yūsif bin Khadla, and our son *Ḥājj* Yūsif. If it is the will of God Almighty you will speak about how to reconcile us and you. We rely on God and then on what your servants, the above-mentioned, said.

Previously our son [was sent], but now [others are sent] in addition. Listen to what our notables, together with our son *Ḥājj* Yūsif, declare in terms of a treaty and charter. They will likewise listen to what you say about a treaty and charter. We have told you previously that we are under obedience to God and his prophet, and under obedience to *Khedive* Ismāʿīl. And God is the trustee for what we say.

We have sent to you a horse for riding. It is not [a] suitable [gift] for someone like you, but please accept it. We hope it will be a bearer of health.

Concluding regards together with the conveyance of abundant greetings and deference for those present at the court, and for you in particular a thousand, thousand greetings.

Written the evening of Wednesday, the 4th of the month of Ramadān 1292.

verso:
May the letter—with the help of the Creator, the Compassionate—be delivered into the hands of the most noble and illustrious, esteemed and glorious Muḥammad Raʾuf *Pasha*. May God preserve him. Amen.

ENA, African Archives Carton 111 (earlier reference: Soudan Carton 3), Dossier 3/2/2. Arabic original.

See document no. 133 for the context and dating of this letter. While no. 133 is a straight-forward declaration of surrender, addressed as much to *Khedive* Ismāʿīl as to Raʾuf *Pasha*, the above (written in the evening) reveals that negotiations were taking place at Harer and that opinions differed about how to handle the situation.

The brief note on the far right of the *verso* with the figures 8643, stating that the letter had reached the land of *Shaykh* Zidbī, must have been added in connection with the forwarding of the letter.

Document no. 135

Adam Asihabiyyē to Muḥammad Ra'uf, 17 Oct. 1875



In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. Praise be to God alone.
May God keep him joyful, our lord and great sovereign,
the respected, the noble—the excellent, the magnificent,
the king of the subjects (lit. necks) of the nations,
the lord of the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs—the preferred in might and grace,
and favor him with the most glorious salutation—and the blessed and most splendid exultation,
and support him in strength and consolidation—in elevation and solidification—in purity and peace,
in conduct and achievement—in victory and government—in conservation and care.
May he uphold your triumphant rule and eliminate your gloom in this world and the hereafter,
heir to the wisdom of the Master of the messengers,
vindicator of the wronged in the face of the oppressors—haven of the orphans and the poor,
the good counsellor of the Muslims and the humble,
who abides by the *Sunna* of the Master of the messengers,
lord of the rulers—revealer of the law and the precepts—first among equals,
answerable to the pious king—trusting in benevolent compassion,
just king and chief of the best commanders—shadow of God on His earth,
one of the seven whom God protects in the shadow of his throne,
imām celebrated for confirming with his consent the establishment of this religion,
may his rule last forever, in truth: 'Proclaim, "He is God, the One [and only God]."'
May his rule be everlasting, and may his feet be lifted unto heaven, and may he reach the sublime knowledge. God is the one who answers supplications. Amen.

Poem:

As if you were the sun and the kings the stars—When it rises the stars do not appear.
You dressed the loins of Adam in garments of glory—The request is not fulfilled except by you.

I mean Ra'uf *Pasha*. May God extend your time and increase [your] authority, may He uphold your joy and annihilate your enemies and crush your enviers with the justice of Muḥammad and his family.

This letter comes from Jarso the protected to the city of notables. Here all is well, and the movements are calm by the grace of God Almighty. Amen.

Moreover, O commander of the faithful, we praise God for your safe arrival and good condition. O, our lord, we are the followers of the Jarso and we were fighting together with *Amīr* Nūr, the commander of the warriors, the killer of the infidels. And the Jarso did their utmost for (the sake of) the city of Harer, until this very day. As for us, we have fought for the religion of God until now. We praise God and thank Him. Until now we obey God, the *sulṭān* and you. We are your soldiers and do not disobey your command, from what you have commanded us. Concluding greeting.

Moreover, you see coming to you with my letter my son Warfa bin *Gerad* Adam. O, our lord, send us a letter without delay with all facts and we will rely on it for your orders to us. Your instruction we have heard, examined and accepted. We have raised our heads and stood up before you. We praise God for your well-being and good condition. Concluding greetings.

Dated in the month of Ramaḍān, Sunday the 14, the year 1292.

The message comes from *Gerad* Adam. We praise God Almighty. Amen. A M E N.

verso:
May the letter be delivered into the hands of the most noble and illustrious Muḥammad Ra'uf *Pasha*. May God Almighty preserve him.

ENA, African Archives Carton 111 (earlier: Soudan Carton 3), Dossier 3/2/3, Arabic original.

The writer was an Argobba, son of Asihabiyyē. Assuming that "Sunday" is correct, Ramadān 14 (a Thursday) must have been locally determined (see no. 133). The correct date is 17 Ramadān (= 17 October). Jarso stands for a place and a tribe or clan north-east of Harer. For the notes at the end, see no. 134.

Document no. 136

Yohannis IV to Arakīl Nubar, 18 Nov. 1875



Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.



The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To the respected commanders, the beloved officers, Arakīl (Rākin) *Bey* and the conscripted Egyptian troups, the officers and the sergeants. After presenting greetings to you and royal wishes for you, we inform you that it is among the basic rules which are accepted by all kingdoms in the entire world that no one attacks his neighbour across an established boundary, on any excuse [whatsoever]. Now a full-scale aggression has been committed against our boundaries and districts and all the dependencies of our kingdom.

But since patience is prescribed by God, we have remained patient until now. Not only this; entirely unexpected, the attacks struck us. All this is because of the advice of evil people who do not fear God and who have no experience in running different kingdoms under the authority of the Mighty and Wise. Now as for you, your attack on our boundaries and intrusion into the interior of our lofty kingdom is not in your own interest; nay, as we have said, it will not lead to peace. God has covenanted my soul and body for your soul and property, so that no single hair will disappear from your heads. But because of your recklessness, and your intrusion into our kingdom and your lawless war against us, your arms must be handed over. Then, if you like to stay with us you will find complete peace, but if you like to turn back to your country you can do so with an escort of soldiers without harm or trouble. These are my words. What remains is in God's hands, He who upholds everything by His reliable covenant. A reply to this message is called for. Concluding greetings.

9 Hatūr 1868.

ENA, Soudan 5/1/1. Arabic original. The Arabic of this letter lacks most of the characteristics of Arabic epistolography. It may well have been dictated or drafted in Amharic and hastily translated. We have come to the conclusion that "Rākin" must be an error for "Rakil", *i.e.* Arakīl.

Arakīl Nubar *Bey* was a nephew of Nubar *Pasha* and had been appointed governor of Massawa and Semhar in late 1873 (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 700–701). He accompanied the Egyptian force under Colonel Arendrup and died at Gundet on 16 November. When Yohannis wrote the above letter two days after the battle he apparently thought that Arakīl had remained with the reserves at Adi Qwala or possibly escaped from the battlefield at Gundet. For the battle and its immediate consequences, see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 774–792; Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 318-324.

Document no. 137

Yohannis IV to E. Chocquin de Sarzec, 18 Nov. 1875

Letter from Yohannis, by the grace of God king of kings of Ethiopia and all its dependencies, to the consul of France, Mr. de Sarzec.

How are you? I and my soldiers are safe and sound, thanks to heaven and to the intercession of the saints, and by the God of the (one word illegible).

Good news! I have prevailed! By the grace of God I have defeated my enemies. Of all the Egyptians who had invaded my country not a single one has survived; all are dead.

I am delighted (lit. my heart is in the joy); rejoice, too, with me, my friend. Come now without losing time.

Written at Adi Qwala 9 Hidar 1868.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 4, fol. 42v, French translation. The letter is quoted, apparently in extenso, in a dispatch dated 24 December from Consul de Sarzec to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris.

Consul de Sarzec had become the friend and confidant of Yohannis soon after his appointment as Munzinger's successor in 1872 (see nos. 102, 107 and 108). After a visit to France he had arrived at Adwa with gifts for Yohannis, not long before the latter departed to fight the Egyptians at Gundet. Written only two days after the battle (see no. 136), this letter must have been the earliest announcement of the Ethiopian victory to any representative of a European power. Apparently Yohannis was eager to inform the consul further about the battle, and therefore urged him to come to Adi Qwala at once.

Document no. 138

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 7 Dec. 1875



May the message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the English queen, Victoria (Bīqtorya). How have you been, really, from the last time I wrote you until now? I and my army are well, glory and praise be to the merciful God, the God of the saints.

I have earlier sent letters to all the kings, writing about all the injustice that Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha)* has committed against me. As for replies, however, except from you I got no replies from the other kings. And secondly, in order that I do not write [and] send again, let alone the letters which were sent by me, even the letters that were coming to me from abroad, he would tear up and throw into the sea. And the reason for his doing like this is that he plans to occupy the lands of Abyssinia. It is in order that you do not prevent him, saying, "Why do you invade the country of [another] people, and why do you shed the blood of Christians?" He made [someone] called Munzinger (Misinjer) a messenger of Satan. Saying [to Isma'ēl] "I shall make you the ruler of Abyssinia", [Munzinger] took all my country. The districts that used to pay tribute to me are: Asgedē Beqla, Halhal, Bogos (Moges), Habab (Hibub), Qeyih Barya, Ṣellīm Barya, Doglel. All these used to pay tribute to me on orders from my officials. He has occupied all the lands from here as far as Metemma. I do not have an outlet; the door is closed to me so that I cannot correspond with you. But he writes that I have committed injustices which I have not committed, and that I have done things which I have not done. In order not to write about all the injustice he committed against me, I gave up, saying, "What way can [the letter) pass?" I have written once about all the injustice he has done to me and sent [the message] to the kings. [Then] I have kept quiet, expecting them to separate (lit. until they separated) us, saying, "You, do not cross this [line]; and you, do not cross this."

Now, when I came back to my city Adwa after an expedition to a land of pagans, he had gathered and sent an army, saying, "Go to his city and attack him." And they came and invaded Hamasēn. My officer who was in Hamasēn withdrew and came to me. When we then asked them why they had come, they said that they had not come to occupy land; they had a different mission (lit. message). They took off from there and invaded Serayē (Serawē). And they hastened from Serayē and came closer. They camped near my town, [at] a distance of six hours' journey. I said to myself, "Am I going to be captured sitting down?" Since it is the man who does not want to die who fights back, I marched out and engaged them in battle. By the power of God, except for a few men who where taken captives, all the rest were wiped out.

Ever since the world was created, an injustice such as this has not been committed against anyone [else], only against me. Judge (lit. see) for yourself! From now on he will not shy away from doing wicked things. As for me, am I [someone] who would abandon my country and run away (lit. go anywhere)? I would rather accept whatever comes. But as you are the custodian of the Christians, see to it that we remain in our respective territories. For I am not less than my fathers, the kings, who came before me; and he is not greater than his fathers, who came before him. What [good] is it if people's blood is shed in vain?

Written in the town of Adwa, on 28 Hidar, in the year of grace 1868.

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

FO 78/2632, fol. 100, Amharic original; fols 95–96, English translation. The latter may in fact be a draft rather than a translation. It is dated 26 Hidar 1866 (*sic*), *i.e.* two days before the Amharic, and signed "Secretary and first interpreter of his Majesty Johanesse T. Maderakal". The English is more colloquial than the Amharic and very expressive. Munzinger is described as "the Devel and the chef of it". Grammar and spelling on the other hand are very poor. The task of bringing the letter to England was entrusted to Kirkham. In September he had asked the French consul for protection (ENA, Soudan 5/1/4), but in January he was arrested at Massawa, and died in Egyptian custody. A note (FO 78/2632, fol. 97) states that the translation was found with the original amongst his belongings. This explains why the letter, when it eventually reached England, was filed under Turkey rather than Abyssinia or Royal Letters.

For Qeyih and Ṣellim Barya, see note of document no. 111.

Document no. 139

Yohannis IV to Patrice MacMahon, 9 Dec. 1875



49



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories reach the French court, President MacMahon (Prezīdant Makma'o), the head of the republic.

How are you, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay? By the kindness of God and by the intercession of our Mother Zion I and my army are well, glory and praise be to the God of the saints.

By the hand of the French Consul Sarzec (Sarzek) I have received these: a two-barrelled gun which can be loaded through its chamber, with its ammunition, four Chassepot (*saspo*) rifles with their ammunition [and] six revolvers which fire six rounds (lit. six six times), together with their ammunition. It has reached me. Thank you. Because you have sent me a friendly gift, I am thinking of sending you a friendly gift that will make you happy.

Written in the town of Adwa on 27 Hidar, in the year of grace 1868.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 4, fol. 49, Amharic original; fol. 50, French translation. The Ethiopian date 27 Hidar has been entered as 24 Hidar in the French translation.

Document no. 140

Minīlik to Pius IX, 10 Dec. 1875

ፅሚነልዝ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት
ዘኢትዮጵያ



Scritt. Refer.nei Conressi
Africa Centrale etc.,vol.8
f. 469

Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia.

May [the letter] from Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach our father, the blessed Pius (Piyos), the pope of Rome (*ri'ise līqane pappasat zeromya*).

O our father!

The powers of your virtue and of your holiness have reached me. It is fitting to highly praise the one who guards the chair of St. Peter.

O our father!

You have not failed to hear about the benefits I have derived from those apostles, Bishop Massaja (*Abune* Masyas) and his companions, who came to teach the people whom God has made me rule. Take note of what I have done that might please you and of my establishing of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

O, our holy father! Do accept with pleasure the gift from me which I sent to you with Mr. Arnoux (*Ato* Arnus), considering it as a gift from a son.

Bless me as well as my army and my people. Do not forget me in your prayers in order that I may defeat Muslims and pagans so that the name of Jesus Christ may be honoured.

Written in the town of Lichē, the first of Tahsas 1868.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASCPF.SRC, Africa 8, fol. 469, Amharic original; fol. 468, French translation. The letter is the earliest preserved on this stationery with Minīlik's name (note the exceptionally odd spelling 'Mīnilik') and title printed at the top together with a representation of the Lion of Judah. The stationery, used also for two preserved letters to *Khedive* Ismā'īl (nos. 164 and 172) was almost certainly brought to Ethiopia either by the Catholic mission or by Pierre Arnoux. Apparently it was not used after Arnoux had left the country.

Document no. 141

Yohannis IV to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 13 Dec. 1875



A letter from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia, the master by God's command, who sits on the throne of his father David, to the esteemed Ismā'īl Pasha.

My question extends beyond your state of health. As for us, we are well as far health goes, God be praised. We inform you that we and you were in that perfect friendship which is without suspicion.

Then you made Munzinger, who is called Satan, a governor in the administration of our area and he made us enemies with you. Later, when we had departed to the country of the Azebo, you ordered the deployment of troops in our country. But we said that no doubt, after you had realized that the country is not subject to your authority, you would certainly restore it to us. Thus we kept quiet. But now, also, when we were in the country of Amhara and after our return to our city Adwa, you ordered your troops to march on us, seize us (by hand) and bring us to you.

As far as we are concerned, it is always of the power of God that we boast, and it is not for us to boast of our own strength. When we heard of the aggression and the deployment of troops at Ginda, we still remained quiet. From that place they set out and invaded Hamasēn. But we still remained patient. From Hamasēn they set out and invaded the region of Serayē, and from Serayē they set out and even entered and captured the region of Gundet, close to our city. So we said to ourselves: What can be done about this? So we stood up against them, and God the Righteous gave them into our hands. In the encounter they were unable to endure more than one hour. And now, because of what God did for us for the glory of his splendour, all those who escaped death—the dead only excluded—all of them—here they are—are coming to you. As for the slaves, we ordered them to go to you. But they refused, saying, "We were bought with money; this was originally our country and no other." So they refused to go to you.

Now, my brother, you are not greater than your father, and we are not less than our fathers. What does it benefit you to destroy the boundaries of [my] kingdom by this kind of action? It is not good. It is rather permanence and stability in our respective places which is preferable and more desirable. If on the contrary, we and you continue to commit aggression and spread enmity and shed the blood of the soldiers of the two armies, God who knows the truth will be sad because of the shedding of the blood of all of them.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 137, archival copy of an Arabic original or the translation of an Amharic original. If originally written in Arabic it was not penned by an Arabic scribe, since it lacks the usual characteristics of Arabic epistolography.

The text is introduced by the sentence: "Copy of a message from King Yohannis, the king of Ethiopia, dated 4 Kihak in the year 1867". A note on the back of the document correctly rectifies 1867 E.C. to 1868 E.C. stating: "Taken from the file of the year 1267 (sic). Date of the document 4 Kihak 1868 Abyssinian calendar, and not the year 1867 as written in the document. 4 Kihak 1868 Abyssinian calendar is equivalent to 15 al-Qa'da, 1292 Hijra and 13 December 1875 A.D."

Yohannis was apparently quite willing to release all the prisoners of war and send them back to the Egyptian side. The problem was that some, called "slaves" in the letter, claimed that they had been "bought with money" and preferred to remain in Ethiopia, which they identified with their own country, the Sudan.

The translation in Douin III, 3B, pp. 850–851, erronously gives Asmera for Amhara.

Document no. 142

Mirçha Werqē and Gebre Maryam to Kīrillus V, 24 Jan. [1876]

ይድረስ፡ኀበ አብ ክቡር ትሩፈ ምግባር ርቱዓ ሃይማኖ
ት፡አርቶዶክሳዊ፡ገብሩ፡ወሐዋርያሁ ለኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ሊ
ቀ፡ጳጳሳት፡አባ ቱርሱስ ዘነበረ፡በመንበረ ማርቶስ ወንጌላ
ዊ፡ስላም፡ለክ፡ኦአቡየ ወፍቱርየ ወስላመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡የሃሉ
ምስሌክ፡አሜን፡ባንት፡ጸሎት፡አመ፲ወፀለጥር፡ምኖጥ፡ጸሓና፡
ገባሁ፡ዲገረም ወረ፡ጸሓና፡ስማሁ፡ር[illegible] አሳገኘሁ፡እንጂ ተጽ
ሕፈ፡አመ፲ወ፯ለጥር፡በምኖጥ

ይቤ ልጅ፡ምርጫ፡
ወርቱ፡



አነሂ፡አኤምሳ አአጻዊክ፡ወአገሪክ፡ወአነክር፡ብዝኃ ኂሩትክ አአቡ
የ፡ተዘከረኒ፡በጸሎትክ፡አስመ፡ጸሎተ፡ጻድቅ፡ይሰምዕ፡እግዚአብሔር ይቤ
ወልድክ፡ኃጥአ፡ወአባሲ፡

አለታ፡ገብረ
ማርሃም፡

May [this letter] reach the venerable father, the virtuous in deeds, upright in faith, the Orthodox, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, the patriarch *Abba* Kīrillus, who sits on the chair of Mark the Evangelist. Peace be to you, O my father and my friend. And may the peace of God be with you. Amen.

Thanks to your prayers I arrived safely at Massawa on the 14th of Ṭirr. I have heard good news about my country. I have not found out, however, if it is reliable.

Written at Massawa, on 17 Ṭirr.

[So] says *Lij* Mirçha Werqē.

Seal: *Lagi*(?) M.M. Warkee; *Lij* Mirçha Werqē.

I kiss your hands and feet, and I marvel at the abundance of your kindness, O my father. Remember me in your prayers, for God listens to the prayers of the righteous. [So] says your son, the sinner and offender,

Aleqa Gebre Maryam.

Ghali collection, Cairo, document no. 42, Amharic original. This letter was apparently written when Mirçha Werqē and Gebre Maryam had just returned from a visit to Egypt, and probably to Jerusalem. Since it was only in 1874 that Kīrillus was consecrated patriarch the earliest possible year is 1875. The most probable date is, however, January 1876, when Mirçha Werqē was in Cairo as Yohannis's agent in the peace negotiations after the battle of Gundet in November 1875. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 330–334.

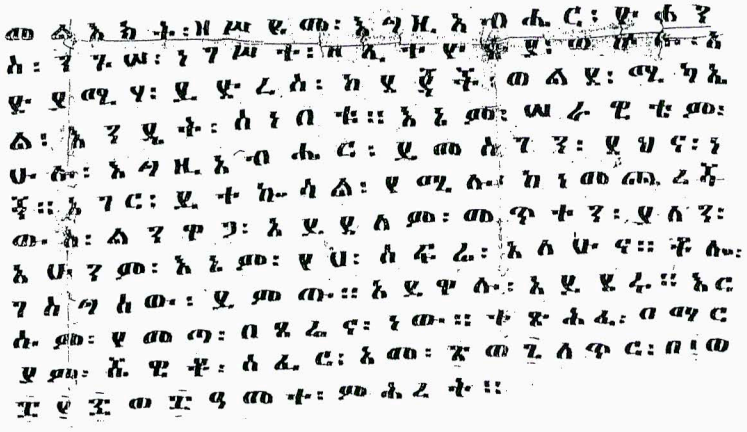
Aleqa Gebre Maryam is most probably the *Abatē* Gebre Maryam sent to Jerusalem by Yohannis in 1873 (see no. 112).

The legend of the seal used by Mirçha Werqē on this letter is partly illegible, but the design and text are the same as in his embossed seal in no. 72.

Document no. 143

Yohannis IV to Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon, 4 Feb. 1876





Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the message sent by the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia, and all its territories, reach *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl.

How have you been? Thank God, I and all my army are well. When you say that the country will be destroyed (lit. burnt), is it not in order (lit. in the end) to fight that we have come?

I am now encamped at Yiha. Come quickly, in swift marches. Do not delay. It is by [the route of] Ṣerēna that he has come.

Written in the camp of Maryam Shēwītu on 27 Ṭirr, in the year of grace 1868.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 138, Amharic original. Yohannis appointed Welde Mīka'ēl governor of Hamasēn after the battle of Gundet in November 1875, replacing *Dejjazmach* Gebru.

A month before the above letter was written Welde Mīka'ēl had reportedly declared his submission to the *khedive* in a letter received at Massawa on 9 January. On 23 January a messenger from Welde Mīka'ēl was reported at Massawa, assuring the Egyptian authorities that he had broken all relations with Yohannis and asking for a promise that he would be left in possession of Hamasēn. On 2 February Rātib reportedly received a letter with Welde Mīka'ēl's formal submission. See Douin, III, 3B, pp. 849, 853–855, 889–894.

"He" in the last paragraph of this letter almost certainly refers to the enemy, either the Egyptian army or its commander.

Document no. 144

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib *et al.* [Feb. 1876]

የቷላከ፡ከራስ፡ወልዴ፡ሚካኤል፡ዴድሬስ፡ከጌቷዬ፡ከወ
ዳጀ፡ከራቲብ፡ባሻ፡ዴሞም፡ከጌቷዬ፡ልጅ፡ከሀሰን፡ባሻ፡ከሎ
ሮንግ፡ባሻ፡ከዑስማን፡ባሻ፡እንዴት፡ሰነበቷችሁ፡እኔ፡ደ
ህና፡ነኝ፡እዝእብሔር፡ይመስገን፡ንጉሥ፡ትሳት፡ና፡አል
ተጌዙም፡ዛሬ፡ግን፡መዋሳቸዉንም፡መጊዛቸዉንም፡የሚ
ያዩ፡ሰወት፡ሰድጃለሁ፡መጥን፡ግን፡በደባ፡ቷዙአል፡ባህር፡
ነጋሢ፡ቀሳቲ፡በጐለም፡ያጐቱ፡ልጅ፡ነዉ፡ኛንትም፡ባሳባ
ት፡ባለቀሚስ፡ነዉ፡ዛሬም፡የሚሰልል፡ስኔም፡ሳንተም፡እ
ሱ፡ነዉ፡ደሞም፡ሰራት፡ሰወች፡ባሳባቶት፡አሉ፡በልብህ፡ዴ
ቀመጡ፡ቀሚስ፡የሚለብሱ፡





May [the letter] sent from *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl, reach my master and my friend Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), and also the son of my master, Ḥasan *Pasha* (Hasen *Basha*), Loring *Pasha* (Loring *Basha*), [and] 'Uthmān *Pasha* (Usman *Basha*). How have you been? I am well, thank God.

The king did not march yesterday. I have sent people who will look out if he marches today or stays. But provisions are ordered at Damba. *Bahr Negash* Qelatī is the cousin of Golem. Since early days he is the chief (*balabbat*) and the notable (*baleqemis*). At present he is the one that is spying for me and for you. There are four more chief*s*. Keep them in (your) mind so that you decorate them (*qemīs yemīlebesu*).

Seal: *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 10, Amharic original. Unfortunately several of Welde Mīka'ēl's letters are not only undated but impossible to date with certainty. The above seems to be the earliest letter preserved.

The letter gives the impression that Welde Mīka'ēl had written to Rātib *Pasha* earlier and agreed to side with the Egyptians. Douin (III, 3B, p. 849) cites a letter received at Massawa 9 January, which we have not been able to locate and which may have been known to Douin only through Rātib's preserved journal (ENA, Soudan 5/1/9). For Welde Mīka'ēl's continued contacts with the Egyptians, see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 889–899. Most of the letters mentioned were apparently not forwarded to Cairo, or have been misplaced in the archives.

"Daba" in the text is a misspelling for "Damba".

Document no. 145

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib and Ḥasan Ismā'īl [Feb. 1876]



May [this letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl, reach my brother and my friend the honoured Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha* (Mehammed Ratīb *Basha*), commander-in-chief of all the army, and the son of my master, Ḥasan *Pasha* (Hasen *Basha)*. How have you been, really?

I have heard what the peasants have told you. However, my master, I would not do what you would not approve. And I am not doing anything which would destroy the country. What you desire is the prosperity of the country, and that I get [some] benefit [from it]. So may God give you long life. I know that all your plans intend to (lit. the things you think of in your heart are to) make me happy. What you have in (your) mind is what makes the country prosper and protects the poor.

If you promise 500 for the monthly salaries of servants and vassals, all right, I am sending my servant with *Nā'ib* Muḥammad (*Nayib* Mehammed).

Seal: *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 156, Amharic original. See Douin's account of the issues brought up in this letter (III, 3B, pp. 893–94). The translation of the letter into French (p. 893, n. 2) leaves much to be desired. The last sentence, in which Welde Mīka'ēl accepts a monthly allocation of 500 thalers to pay his followers, is rendered, "Suivant votre demande, je vous envoie cinq hommes et deux fusils avec Mohamed." Our translation presupposes that the letter after ፴ is an error, which the writer had intended to replace with a ፻. It is also possible that he started to write 100 in letters but changed his mind and wrote a ፮ which, however, looks more like a ፭.

The language structure in this letter is very poor.

Document no. 146

Onesimus Nesib to the Board of the Swedish Evangelical Mission [March? 1876]

My beloved brethren, the grace of our Lord be with you.

Now I want to tell you some of the history of my childhood. My ancestors and relatives were all herdsmen and cattle breeders. But then they became farmers and merchants. My father, however, preferred to remain a cowherd. While I still was very small my father died, and my mother mourned and wept for him very, very much. About my father's death she said like this, "Now my husband is dead; now I have no one who helps me. My children are still small; the enemy will come and take them, and make them slaves." Then her relatives came to comfort her and said, "We will help you take care of the children," and so she was consoled for the death of my father. Then she returned to tend the cattle, and took us children and her brothers with her. Three months later the dry season began, and the pasturage dried up. Then we had to move away to another place where there was grass, but when the grass was finished there too we had to go four days away into the wilderness, and there we found pasturage. I was still a small boy (perhaps four years old) and stayed with my mother wherever she went. I did not want to be separated from her, because I loved her very much. Now we were there and tended the cattle in peace for seven days. But on the eighth day some men came walking past us, and they told us that enemies were coming to capture us and our cattle. Then we hurried to gather together the cattle, and fled through the whole night. The following morning we crossed a river; then we camped on a field near the river because we thought, "if the enemy comes we will be able to see him." When we had rested there a couple of hours, and the enemy had not come, we thought, "He is not coming," and we crossed the river again in order to reach the pasture.

Then all at once, like rain falling from the sky, the enemy fell upon us without our knowing from where. With their swords they first killed all our armed people; then they came to the women and children. First they took my younger brother and sister, and finally myself, as I walked holding my mother's hand. A man came running, took my hand, and pulled me to himself. My mother held the other hand, and said, "I will not let him go." Then the man drew his sword and said, "If you do not let him go I shall kill both you and him." When my mother saw that she could not save me she let go of my hand and said, "It is better that he becomes a slave than that he is killed."

When I now recall how all this happened it seems like a dream to me, even if it was a sad reality. When I had been separated from my mother I mourned very much and cried all the time, "Alas, my mother! Now I shall never meet her again." When I cried in this way the man hit me on the mouth and said, "Shut up!" He hit me like this many times, and I wept the whole way, until we reached his home. When we arrived there his wife and children became very happy that they had received a slave. The very same day I arrived they began to heap work on me, and I had to be everybody's servant. One time the husband gave me orders, another time the wife, a third time the children, so that I hardly knew whose orders I should carry out first. In addition, even the other slaves who were there with me gave me orders. I did everything as well as I could, but with sorrow and tears at the loss of my mother. I could hardly either eat or drink because of my sorrow, especially when I thought about her. When my master saw this he said, "So, now he is thinking about his mother, we shall cure him so that he does not run away from us." And so they locked me up in a room for three days, and when I wept both night and day they hit me and said, "Why do you weep?" In this despair of mine I heard a rumour that my mother was coming to look for me. Then the household said to me, "When your mother comes do not greet her, do not speak to her, do not even approach her." All this I promised to do because I was afraid, but when my mother came I forgot my promises and ran towards her and

welcomed her, for I began to hope to be allowed to return with her. The following day when she was returning she asked my master if he intended to keep me in the house, or if he wanted to sell me. When he said that he wanted to sell me my mother asked to be permitted to redeem me for the price he would decide upon. Then my mother kissed me, and left me there to go and bring the ransom for me. I wept very much because I was not allowed to go with her.

Now wrath burst upon me again because I had not kept what I had promised (to keep silent when my mother came), and they hit me very much. So that I should not get back to my home, they sold me now before my mother came, and brought me to another village. I wept all the way, and when I reproached them because they carried me away before my mother came, they said, "We are bringing you to your mother." When I heard this I became very happy, and went happily along with them, but later, when I saw that they took another road, I became so sad and weak that I did not have strength enough to walk any more, but at times they had to carry me, at times they enticed me with good food until we arrived. There they handed me over to a man, and said that I should remain quietly until they came to take me away, and this I promised. When I had waited a long time in vain, and they did not turn up, I asked the household when my owners would be coming back. "They will never come back, you belong to us; we have bought you for a horse," was the answer. Then I felt as unhappy as before, and began thinking of whether I might possibly be able to escape, and the following morning when they sent me out to work, I ran away instead. While I was fleeing it became dark before I reached any village. I became very sad because I was afraid of the darkness and the the wild animals. I did not dare to return because I was afraid of punishment; instead I found a way out by climbing a tree and resting there during the night. But I had not got far the following day before a man caught up with me and took me back to my owners. They tied me up, hands and feet, and hit me so that I got wounds all over my body, and then they sold me for four cows. Later I was sold to a man who said to me, "Now you are not going to be sold any more, but you shall become as if you were my child, and when you become older I shall bring you to your country and people. So do not run away because then both you and I will suffer." So when I had been there for two years one fine day he shaved my head with four corners. When I asked why he said that this was a sign that I was free. When I heard this I became very glad, and went out into the village to play with the children. Then the children said to me, "Alas, Nesib! Now you are going to be sold," and so it really was. Not many days later I was sold and got two masters, and when they began to fight, and one of them killed the other, the murderer fled and left me to his relatives. One day when they sent me to bring water, a man came, took the water jug from me and smashed it, and brought me many days' journey from there, in other words he stole me. Then he sold me to an Abyssinian for 200 pieces of salt, and by the same Abyssinian I was then brought down here to Massawa. Thus I had been in the hands of eight owners. Particularly in the beginning my sorrow was bitter, because I longed so much for my mother. I wept so that I got sores under my eyes, and when I wanted to wipe the tears away it hurt like fire. One of my owners in particular was harsh, and his children were like him. They said that they would sell me to cannibals, and when I came to Massawa and saw white people the first time I thought, "Alas, now I am with the cannibals." (The slave dealers know that if the enslaved children get into the hands of the Europeans they will be released, and so they frighten them and say that the Europeans are cannibals.) When I sat like this in fear a white man–Munzinger–came and took me out of the hands of the slave dealers, and brought me to his house. When he saw how scared I was he said, "Do not fear for yourself, because now you are not going to be sold any more!" I could not believe this, but thought: he is cheating me like everybody did before, and then he will eat me. But it was not like that; instead, by the grace of God I was brought to this school, and have received teaching in the truth of the Gospel here for five years.

May God, the Lord of heaven and earth, abide with you! Onesimus.

Missions-Tidning, 1876, pp. 91–92, reportedly a Swedish translation from a no longer available Amharic original.

Document no. 147

Yohannis IV to Ḥasan Ismā'īl, 11 March 1876

We send you our best greetings in our own name and in the name of our armies. We are all well, thank God. I hope that you are in good health, and that your friendship towards us is lasting. All that has happened till this day, the war between our country and the government of the *khedive* and the disturbance of the peace between the two countries, is due to Munzinger *Pasha* who has sown discord between us, whereas our friendship with our brother Ismā'īl *Pasha* was strong, and whereas we hoped that it would last. Everything has a cause. Your armies have attacked our territories. They have seized Hamasēn, and have pushed on as far as the neighbourhood of our capital. Then unfortunately the battle followed. And although God would not want anyone to shed blood, you were not satisfied with that. You came with your armies and built fortifications in our territory. We hoped that you would give us the reasons for this aggression; nothing of this has been done. Finally we were obliged to come, and the battle lasted for three successive days, during which much blood was shed both in our ranks and in yours. These measures do not please anyone, and God has not authorized them. We—you and I—are the cause. The cessation of hostilities is indispensable in order to arrest the bloodshed. If you want to start negotiations to this effect, please send a delegate, or let us know so that we might send you one on our behalf. We rely on God for the outcome. We hope that the reply to this letter will be sent even today. May God protect you.

Douin, III, 3B, pp. 976–977, French translation, most probably of an Arabic original.

Document no. 148

Yohannis IV to Ḥasan Ismā'īl and Muḥammad Rātib, 12 March 1876

At no time has history recorded a period of enmity between the Egyptian government and the kingdom of Abyssinia. No wrong-doing has been committed between these two nations, neither by one part nor the other. A sincere friendship has always linked them, but it is the great devil who causes the enmity between two brothers or two friends by intrigues which lead to war, the cause of bloodshed. As for us, we are but one with our dear friend Ismā'īl *Pasha*, the great *khedive*. In fact no disagreement exists between us and the son of our beloved brother. On our side we have, the first and the second time, been pushed to war by a case of force majeure, because the frontiers have not been respected and because you have listened to the rebels in the kingdom of Abyssinia. What is done is done. The fault rests neither with you nor with us but with the evil-doer who has provoked the shedding of the pure blood of human beings, which is categorically forbidden by every law. We have in no way attacked your frontiers. The neighbour ought to keep watch, defending the frontiers of his brother and respecting the treaties. It is preferable and more fitting that such harmony and friendship unite our two nations as in times past. We hope that you will return to your capital. We shall return all your soldiers, and you can go back home with your head held high. If you deny that sincere friendship links our two nations, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has outlined to each nation its boundaries, shall decide between the two of us. In accordance with the the tradition of friends we offer friendship or enmity.

Douin, III, 3B, pp. 977–978, French translation, most probably of an Arabic original.

Document no. 149

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib [22 March 1876]

Your letter contains no reply to the exposition contained in ours . . . You say that you have come here to investigate the aggression committed against your emissaries at Gundet. You pretend that we are the ones who have come here to deliver battle and shed blood. Now you request a delegate to discuss conditions of peace between us and to reestablish the former friendship.

We reply to you, "O you great and illustrious people, to whom God has given great intelligence to discern good and evil, were the emissaries to whom you allude ten or twenty in number, and did they come to investigate the situation? Was it we who defeated them due to their small number, or was it not, rather, a large army which attacked and penetrated into our kingdom without any authorization on our part?"

We sent an emissary in order to inform ourselves about the situation: he was arrested and kicked in the head with boots; his eyes were torn out, his ears cut off, his bowels opened. Then they arrived at the place where we were staying. We came there to find out the motives of the arrival of these armies. A distance of six hours separated us from them. They stood up during the night and came to attack us by surprise, while we were ignorant that we were in a state of war with them. Battle was delivered, they were beaten, and the soldiers who managed to escape death were sent back with generosity.

Some time later you yourself came into our country with your precious army, and without any forewarning. You have pillaged and appointed governors and proceeded with selling and buying under the guarantee of your name. Even my servant Welde Mīka'ēl, whom we appointed governor of Hamasēn, has betrayed us and joined you. You have given him sumptuous garments because he rebelled against us. You have given the reins of government to the inhabitants of Akkele Guzay in order to arouse them against us. I would never have believed that you would do things like this. We have now been forced to change [our] opinion on this subject, and we have returned home in order to consult with our government and investigate if there were any reasons for your coming here. We and all our armies were thirsty because of the lack of water. Therefore we came with our army in the hope of refreshing ourselves with the water of our river. You then attacked us with cannon and the whole army. Losses have been suffered, and we never believed that you would do such things, because we respect our old friendship with our brother the beloved Ismā'īl *Pasha*.

Our frontiers stretch from the sea and up to here, something which is well-known by all nations. These regions have belonged to us up to the present. Our beloved brother Ismā'īl *Pasha* has attacked our frontiers. It is not he who is responsible, but the evil-doers who fear neither God nor His power. At the time of our accession to the throne we hoped that our beloved brother would restore all the frontier regions which have been robbed from us. We wrote a letter on this subject to our brother, His Highness, the honoured *khedive*. Munzinger took it and burnt it. Now you have decided to request us to send a delegate to discuss the determining of the frontiers and the rights with you, and to reaffirm amity. France, England, and Russia, or any other nation, shall be made witnesses between us. Otherwise, what is the use of it?

Praise be to God, the son of our beloved brother did not lose a single hair [on his head]. I ask you to return to your government and to your country, your head held high, after having reaffirmed our friendly ties, because we are but one body. Are we not neighbours, and is a neighbour not a beloved brother? But if your plans are once more directed towards destruction, God, the master of all things, who has from the beginning laid down the boundaries of every kingdom, shall rise up between us and you in order to avenge every attack on our frontiers, in this I have sincere faith. I send you all my best greetings, and may God preserve you.

As for the commercial relations between Abyssinia and Egypt we have not given any instructions about this matter, and it is you who have forbidden the import into Abyssinia of arms and gunpowder, and seized the gift which we sent to England. Such are the reasons for the interruption of these relations.

As for us, our instructions are directed not only to Egypt but to all those who come to trade with us: English, French, and Syrian. We have abolished the duties between these merchants and us, in order to establish peace and friendship between all my brothers. I hope that after your return to your government everything will turn out for the best.

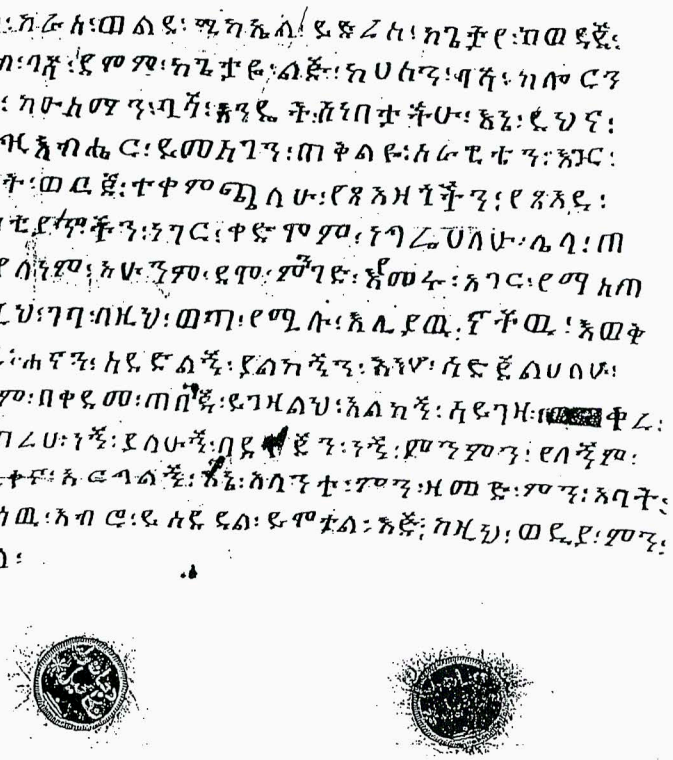
Douin, III, 3B, pp. 983–985, French translation, most probably from an Arabic original. Though the printed text of this letter has no date, it was known to have been written 14 Baramhat 1868, *i.e.* 22 March 1876 (see note 1 on p. 985). It was reportedly cabled to Cairo by Rātib *Pasha* on 25 March 1876. Douin specifies no source for the letter, only the register entries for correspondence between Rātib and the government in Cairo concerning the letter.

An Egyptian secretary on the staff of Rātib *Pasha*, called Rif'at *Bey*, was present in the Ethiopian camp. He was in fact a captive, but attempted to act as the official emissary of the Egyptian commander-in-chief. He claimed to have played an active role in the drafting of the first letters from Yohannis to Ḥasan and Rātib after the battle of Gura (nos. 148 and 149 above; see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 971–983).

The above letter, written after Yohannis had returned to Adwa, indicates a growing impatience on the side of the king. Nevertheless he apparently wanted to spare *Khedive* Ismā'īl any direct blame with regard to the Egyptian invasion, placing the blame on Rātib and Munzinger. He stresses his friendship for the *khedive* and the fact that Ismā'īl's son Ḥasan escaped injury in the battle. Though the Egyptians had lost many men at Gura, they were temporarily safe in their fortified area. Apparently they controlled the water in the area, which seems to have been one of the main problems of the Ethiopian army as indicated in this letter.

Document no. 150

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib *et al.* [March 1876]



May [this letter] sent by Welde Mīka'ēl reach my master and my friend, Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), also the son of my master, Ḥasan *Pasha* (Hasen *Basha*), Loring *Pasha* (Loring *Basha*), [and] 'Uthmān *Pasha* (Usman *Basha*).

How have you been? I am well, thank God.

Taking all my army with me, I have descended to the district of Aylet and camped. I have told you earlier about the case of the people of Ṣe'azega and of Ṣe'ada Kristīyan. We have no other enemies. Now they, too, are the ones who show the way, reporting, "He came this way [and] left that way", and who cause the land to be destroyed.

Take measures against them. You had told me to send you Hanna. Now I have sent him to you. Moreover, some time ago you told me that guns would be bought for me. They have not been bought. I am staying in the wilderness empty-handed. I have nothing. See to it so that it will be rectified. What other friend and father do I have except you? Besides going into exile [and] dying together, what more can a friend (lit. relative) do?

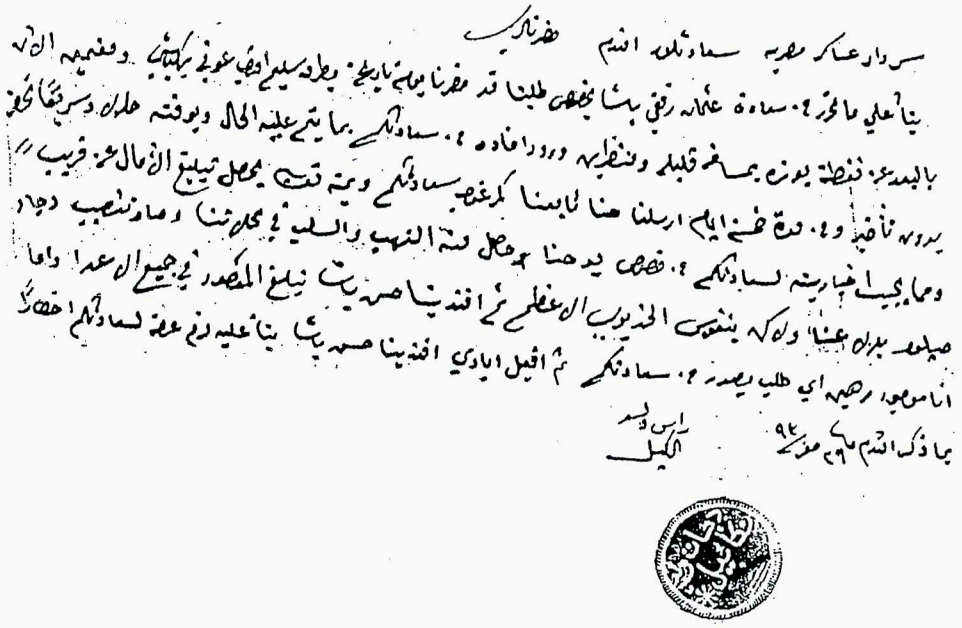
Seal: *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 53, Amharic original. This letter was most probably written in the latter half of March. Ḥasan is still present among the Egyptian commanders (he left Massawa 9 April). More important Welde Mīka'ēl writes that he has sent or is about to send his interpreter Hanna (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1082) to the Egyptian camp as requested. In his letter in Arabic dated 24 March he writes that Hanna had left five days earlier.

Apparently the people of Welde Mīka'ēl's own home area were clearly on the Ethiopian side in the conflict, and he was himself a refugee at Aylet in the lowlands. His demand was now that he be given the promised arms to defend himself.

Document no. 151

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib, 24 March 1876



His Highness the commander of the Egyptian army, His Excellency our *effendi.*

According to what was written by His Excellency 'Uthmān Rifqī *Pasha* concerning our request, we have this day met Colonel (*Bikbāshā*) Salīm *Effendi* 'Awnī. We are now staying at a short distance from the camp of Be'areza. We are waiting for the arrival of a message from Your Excellency as to what will happen now. When the time comes we will readily be present without delay. Five days ago we sent our delegate Hanna in accordance with the wish of Your Excellency (two words illegible) so that the expectations would soon be fulfilled.

What has to be reported to Your Excellency about Yohannis is that it is because of him that the pillage and the plunder has taken place in our area, and that *Dejjach* Haylu has been appointed instead of us. But now, by the soul of the great *khedive* and also of our *effendi* Ḥasan *Pasha,* we will report the intentions of all the enemies. As for me, I am here and subject to any demand that comes from Your Excellency. I also kiss the hands of our *effendi* Ḥasan *Pasha.* Thus I have been obliged to report to Your Excellency what has been written.

26 Ṣafar [12]93. *Ras* Walad Inkīl.

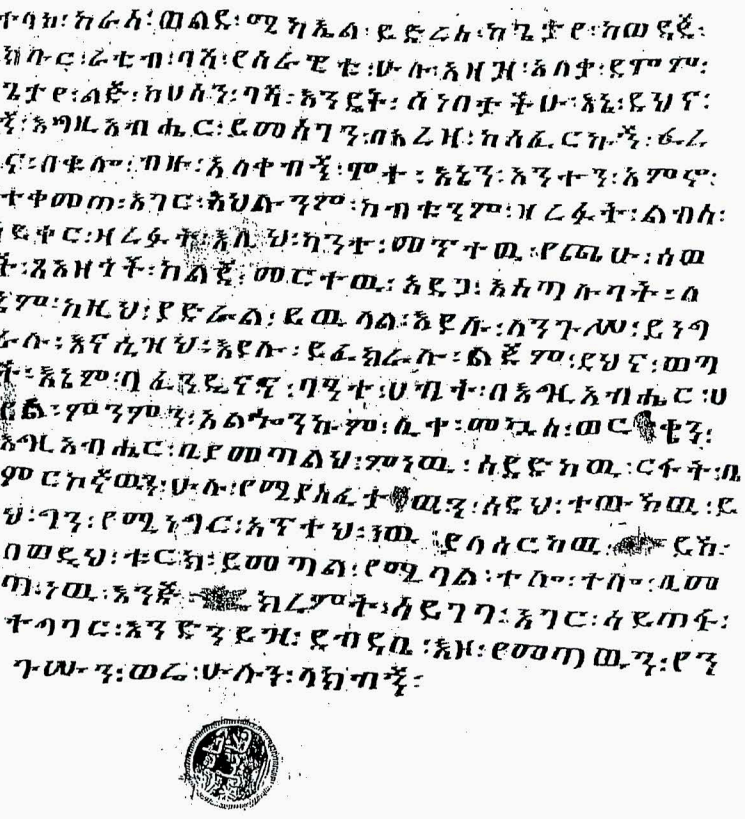
Seal: *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 139, Arabic original.

For the events recorded in this letter—the pillaging and the appointment of Haylu Tewelde Medhin as Welde Mīka'ēl's successor—see Douin, III, 3B, p. 996. Most probably "Bi'rza", written "Be'areza" in the following letter in Amharic, refers to a place called Areza with an Egyptian fort approximately halfway between Massawa and Gura ('Baraza' on pl. XVII opposite p. 864 in Douin, III, 3B), not to be confused with Areza in Serayē.

Document no. 152

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib and Ḥasan Ismā'īl [April 1876]



May [this letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach my master and friend, the honoured Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), the commander-in-chief of the entire army and also the son of my master, Ḥasan *Pasha* (Hasan *Basha*).

How have you been? I am well, thank God. After I had camped at Areza, many [of my] horses and mules were lost to me. They died.

And they pillaged the crops and cattle of the people (lit. country) who remained, trusting in me and you. They plundered, not even sparing clothes.

Those people who came and appealed to you, the Ṣe'azegans, led them to my daughter and had her attacked by surprise.

And about me they tell the king (saying), "He passes the night and stays during the day here [and there]." They boast, saying, "We shall have you captured." My daughter escaped unharmed.

By the *effendi's* and your fortune, by the power of God, nothing whatsoever has happened to me. When God brought *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē to you, why did you send him away? You sent away him who could have [been exchanged to] set free Rif'at *Bey* (Rifat *Bē*) and all the captives. You did not imprison him because you did not find someone to tell you this. About this [rumour] which is circulating that the Turks will come here, it would be [better] if they came very soon (lit. quickly, quickly), so that we may do something before the rainy season begins [and] before the country is devastated. Write to (lit. send) me about the news that has come in a letter from the king.

Seal: *Dejjach* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Dajāt* Walad Nikā'īl).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 6, Amharic original. Since Mirṣha Werqē's departure after his first visit to Rātib's camp was reported on 3 April, it can be assumed that this letter was written in early April (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 987–993).

Document no. 153

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 15 April 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الى جناب الكريم المحترم والمحب العزيز المحتشم امير الجيش المصري سعادة راتب باشا المفخم بعد اهدا ما يليق لجنابكم
من التحية والاكرام مع مزيد السوال عن صحة مزاجكم وسلامة كافة الجيش المعتصم كما نحن وجيوشنا في غاية
الصحه الكامله نعلمكم ايها الحبيب انه قد ورد الينا جوابكم الحاوي الفاظكم المانوسه وصار جميع ما شرحتموه معلوماً لدينا
وعدم ورد الافاده فهو ان لنقران قد حصل له خلل وقتياً ومتوقعين صدور الامر يومين تاريخه فكما يصدر عنه
الامر تعلمونا به فانشا الله ما يكون الا الخير والمحبه الكامله والان نعلم جنابكم ايها العزيز ان يكون ارسال نايبنا
لبنا مركاس وركي الينا كما الامل فيكم وبعد حضور الامر نرسله اليكم بلا مانع ولا تعويق والله تعالى يمن
علينا وعليكم باحظى المقصود مع دوام المحبه التامه المرجوا اجراها ودمتم بغاية الهنا والسرور

١٨٦٨
٨ رمودة
حرر
يوم السبت

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Noble Excellency, the respected and beloved, honoured and unassuming, His Highness Rātib *Pasha*, the magnificent, commander of the Egyptian army. After presenting greetings and honour befitting Your Excellency together with manifold inquiries about your noble health and the well-being of the entire occupying army—as for us and our army, we are in absolutely perfect health. We inform you, O beloved, that your letter of 6 Baramūda has reached us with your friendly words. Everything you make known has been understood by us, also that the lack of a reply to the message is because the telegraph suffered a temporary breakdown. We have by now been waiting for the promulgation of the decree for two days. As soon as the decree has been promulgated by him, you have to inform us. God willing, there will be nothing but benevolence and perfect friendship [from now on].

Now we are telling Your Highness, O most honoured, that our deputy *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē has to be sent to us as [we] expect of you. After the promulgation of the decree we will send him to you without any objection or obstacle. May God Almighty bestow blessings upon us and upon you by the provident favour and permanence of that perfect love which seeks to be fulfilled. May you live in utmost happiness and joy.

8 Baramūda 1868. Written on Saturday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 140, Arabic original.

Document no. 154

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 16 April 1876



المويد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي جناب المكرم الحبيب العزيز المحترم امير الجيش المصري محمد راتب باشا المحتشم بعد اهدا ما يليق لجنابكم من
التحية والاكرام الوافره لمقام محبتكم كما يجب نعلم عزتكم انه قد ورد الينا خطابكم المنيف المورخ ٩ برموده
وبالاطلاع عليه حمدنا الباري تعالي علي صحة واعتدال مزاجكم مع سلامة كافة جيشكم ومن
جهتنا نحن وكامل جيوشنا لله الحمد الوافي طيبين بكل خير وانه بكما تفطن محبتكم انه من محبتنا وحنوتنا
علي نجل اخينا العزيز وسراجنا التام ان لم تنقص شعره واحده من راس ولدنا العزيز لا بمرض ولا بغيره انتم تعلمون
ذلك ايضا غاية املنا هكذا والان قد صار توجه ولدنا العزيز الي اخينا الخديوي المحترم ولم راي وجهنا ولا راينا
وجهه وهذا بخلاف مامول ضميرنا لانه كان بوقت المواجهه يحصل لنا الاشتراح والمحبه الفايقه مع ولدنا الحبيب
واما ما اعلمتمونا به فهو انه بارسال خطابنا اليكم بارسال نايبنا ليكا موكاس وركي وانكم عزمتم علي ان
ترسلوه الينا ولما ان ترد الافاده يحضر بها المحب علي بيك الروبي وفيما انتم في ذلك واذ باشارة قد وردت
اليكم من طرف دولتلو افندم ناظر الجهاديه نجل اخينا الاعظم وعلي انه اوعدكم علي انه يعرض الكيفيه
لجناب اخينا المحتشم الخديوي المحترم وفي ظرف يوم او اثنين يفيدكم بما يتم عليه الحال ولاجل ذلك استنبتم
الراي ان ليكا موكاس وركي يصير باقي جنابكم الي حين رد الافاده وقد صار ارسال تصفاي هنطالو
ووصوله الينا بالسلامه فما استنبتموه فهو الاحسن وانشا الله تتم الامور علي عواقب الخير من الصلح والسلام
وتحظي نحن وانتم بكمال المحبه الرغيده الكامله السعيده ودمتم في الحظ والسعد والدنا الدايم ١٠ برموده ١٨٧٦

حرر
في يوم الاحد

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the noble and beloved, honoured and respected, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the unassuming, commander of the Egyptian army,.

After presenting greetings befitting Your Excellency, and [expressions of] profuse respect for the greatness of Your Loving-kindness, as is proper, we inform Your Illustriousness that your noble letter dated 9 Baramūda has reached us. And while examining it we praised the Creator, the Almighty, for the health and soundness of your disposition and the complete well-being of your army. On our side, we and our entire army are, abundant thanks to God, well in all respects.

As Your Graciousness knows, because of our love and affection for the offspring of our dear brother and the key to our peace, not a single hair will be lost from the head of our dear son, neither by illness nor otherwise. You know that this is the consummation of our hope. And now our dear son has gone to our brother the respected *khedive.* However, he never saw our face, nor did we see his. This went against our most sincere hopes, since on the occasion of a meeting we would have experienced happiness and perfect affection together with our dear son.

And as for what you tell us concerning our letter to you about sending [back] our deputy *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē, you have [already] promised that you would send him to us, and that when you send the reply ʿAlī *Bey* al-Rubī, the beloved, will come with it. And when you were [acting] like this, you received a message from His Highness the minister of war, the scion of our great brother, who promised you that he would present the conditions to our unassuming brother, the respected *khedive,* and inform you within a day or two about what he concluded about the matter. And because of this you approved the proposal that *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē should stay with Your Excellency until the arrival of a reply. So Tesfay Hanṭalo was sent and arrived to us in peace. What you have deemed proper is the best. God willing, this matter will end with good results in terms of reconciliation and peace, and both we and you will enjoy a pleasant, complete and happy friendship. May you live in constant prosperity, happiness and joy.

10 Baramūda 1868.

Written on Sunday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 141, Arabic original.

10 Baramūda was a Monday. An error with regard to the day of the week is less likely than one involving the date, and we have therefore assumed that the letter was written on Sunday the 9th (16 April). Since Yohannis's letter was written in reply to one from Rātib *Pasha* dated the same day, another possibility is that it was completed after sundown (see note of no. 133).

The person referred to as "our dear son" is Ismāʿīl's son Ḥasan who was present at Gura. He returned to Egypt before this letter was written. From this and other letters it is quite clear that Rātib was keeping *Līqe Mekwas* Mirṣha Werqē in his camp more or less as a hostage, or at any rate against the will of Yohannis. The messenger Tesfay Hanṭalo, written HNṬĀLŪ in Arabic, was later known as Mengesha Yohannis's envoy to Minīlik and governor of Agamē (Haggai Erlich, *Ethiopia and Eritrea During the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography of Rās Alulā, 1875–1897*, East Lansing, 1982, pp. 179–180, 190).

Document no. 155

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 23 April 1876



المويد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي الجناب المحتشم المحب الوزير المحترم محمد راتب باشا سردار العساكر المصريه بعد اهدا ما يليق لجنابكم من انواع
التكريم والتفخيم بكما يجب لجناب محبتكم مع اوفر التحية والسوال عن صحة مزاجكم وسلامة كافة جيشكم
كما نحن وكامل جيشنا بغاية الصحه التامه وبعد فقد ورد لنا جواب حضرتكم المعلن بالسرور وصفو طويتكم
وكمال الحبور علي يد حضرة علي بيك وحضرة ليكا موكاس ورقي المعينين من طرفكم ومن طرفنا في مادة
الصلح والحمد لله قد تم ذلك وتحرر شروط باتصال التجاره والبوسطه بين الطرفين نسختهم وختمهم منا
وموسولين لطرف حضرتكم لكي يصير ختمهم منكم ايضاً وحجز نسخه بطرفكم واعاده الاخري والاساري الذين كانوا
بوقت قندوت سبق ارسالهم لذاك الطرف والموجودين منهم ومن اساره هذه الدفعه في العرض هاهم موسولين
ايضاً ونساله تعالي ان يديم بيننا المحبة التامه وكمال المودة والامل تبليغ السلام الجزيل الي جناب اخينا المعظم
الخديوي الاكرم ودمتم في حفظ الباري

١٦ برموده

يوم الاحد

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

From Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the unassuming and beloved, honoured and respected, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, commander of the Egyptian army.

After presenting manifold [expressions of] respect and regard befitting Your Excellency, as is proper to the greatness of Your Loving-kindness, together with the most perfect greetings and inquiries about your state of health and the well-being of your entire army—as for us and all our army, we are in absolutely perfect health.

Now, your letter proclaiming happiness and disclosing your true mind and perfect joy has reached us by the hand of His Honour 'Alī *Bey* and His Honour *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē, who were appointed from your side and from our side for the matter of reconciliation. Thank God, this has been settled, and the provisions for the exchange of trade and mail between the two sides have been written down in their respective copies. We have stamped them and are sending them to Your Excellency so that they may be stamped by you as well. One copy is to be kept by your side and the other to be returned.

The prisoners from the time of Gundet have already been sent over there. And those of them and of the prisoners of this [last] occasion present in our camp are also being sent.

We ask the Almighty to preserve perfect love and complete friendship between us. [Our] hope is to have our abundant greetings conveyed to His Highness our great brother, the noble *khedive*. May you live under the protection of the Creator.

16 Baramūda, [18]68.

Written on Sunday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 152, Arabic original.

This letter shows a certain improvement in the negotiating situation, inasmuch as Mirṣha Werqē was finally allowed to return to Adwa together with the Rātib's own emissary. Provisions about trade and mail services apparently presented no problems, and Yohannis handed over the captured Egyptian soldiers present with him, seven who remained from the battle of Gundet and 200 from Gura, as well as seven officers (Douin, III, 3B, 1012).

Instead of signing and returning Yohannis's copy of the treaty, however, Rātib procrastinated, hoping that the military situation would improve. The issue of the prisoners of war still missing was made the excuse. The *khedive* approved the stand of his commander: "If [there is] a single prisoner [who] has not been returned to us, the clauses shall not be signed." And Douin concluded that the *khedive* obviously did not want a peace agreement" (*ibid*, p. 1017).

Document no. 156

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 28 April 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي جناب المحب العزيز المحتشم محمد راتب باشا سردار العساكر المصريه بعد اهدا ما يليق لجناب
محبتكم من التكريم والتفخيم لازال جنابكم وجيشكم في غاية الصحه والسلامه قد ورد الينا جواب محبتكم
المارخ ٢٠ برموده فبالاطلاع عليه قد حمدنا الباري علي مزاجكم السامي وعما ذكرتم من الاشتغال
وان ذلك يحتاج لمدة ويكون التشهيل قبل نزول المطر فيا ايها الحبيب العزيز ليس لمحبتكم يحتاج مده وقتيه
في شرط ما يخص ذلك لان كلنا بالضمير الصافي قد صرنا واحداً ومن بعد المحبه لم يحتاج شيئاً جمله
كافيه واما عن ما ذكرتم من جهة العبيد ويكون تاخركم في سبب ذلك فنحن سابق ارسلنا باحضار
المذكورين والمشوره صالحه فهل لاجل القليل يهلك الكثير لا سمح الله من ذلك والاحسن هو ان
تعينوا امينا من جناب محبتكم يكون فاضل بطرفنا الي حين حضور المذكورين يصير تسليمهم وارسالهم
معه برقت امينا من طرفنا الي بندر مصوع الي مودتكم فلابد ان هذا هو الاحسن ويكون في مغزتكم
كما لا يخفاكم ان ناس بلادنا فهم اشرار مفسدين غير مطيعين لله ولا لمن ايده علي عباده فاذا
استطالت مدة جلوسنا نحن وانتم فمن طينهم الخبيث فيحكون ما لا يجب ايضاحه ويوقعون ذلك علي اننا
متخاصمين لا سمح الله بذلك والان يكون في شرف علم محبتكم انه من كثرة الوخم الحاصل بالمحله التي
نحن بها فقد عزمنا علي تغيرها لاعتدال المزاج يكون ذلك في علم مغزتكم وجميع ما ارسلتموه لنا مشافهه
علي لسان دسته فقد صار معلوماً لدينا وجميع ما بنا فيحكمه لمعزة امانيتكم مشافهه ويكون منا ومنكم اقتضي
ذلك مع اتحاد المحبه الدافيه وانتم تفهمون كل الاشيا الصلحه والطالحه ومني اوفر التحيه اول
واخر لجناب مغزتكم السديد وسلامنا الي كافة من يلوذ جنابكم السامي من امرا ووزرا ودمتم ٦٨
حرر ٢١ برموده
يوم الجمعه

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

From Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the beloved, honoured, and unassuming, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, commander of the Egyptian army.

After presenting respect and regards befitting the greatness of Your Loving-kindness—may Your Excellency and your army remain in perfect health and well-being. The letter of Your Loving-kindness dated the 20th of Baramūda has reached us. While reading it we praised the Creator for your perfect health. As for what you mentioned about the goods, it will take some time, but the dispatch (lit. transport) will take place before the rains come. And, O, our dear and respected [friend], there is no need for Your Loving-kindness to specify the date in an agreement since we have all been made one in pure conscience. If there is (lit. with) love there is no need for anything else at all.

As for what you mentioned about the soldiers (lit. slaves), you will have to accept a delay with regard to them (lit. there will be a delay for you because of this). We have already written in order to bring those referred to. The proper consideration is if the many should die for the sake of the few. God forbid. The best would be for you to appoint a representative of Your Exalted Loving-kindness to reside with us until the arrival of those referred to. Their delivery and dispatch with him to the port of Massawa and [to] Your Amicability will be when our representative [is sent]. No doubt this is the best. As Your Eminence is aware, the people of our country are evil, corrupt, disobedient to God and to him whom He supports [as ruler] of His faithful. If our tenure and yours are prolonged, they will, because of their evil assumptions, talk about what should not be made known, and thus they will cause conflict between us. God forbid.

Now, may it be known to Your Illustrious Exalted Loving-kindness (lit. the honour of the eminence of Your Love) that we, because of the great crowd existing in the place where we are, have decided to change [location] in order to improve conditions. May this be known to Your Eminence. Everything you transmitted to us verbally through Desta is understood by us. And he will verbally tell Your Trustworthy Eminence (lit. the fame of Your Trustworthiness) everything about us. This is required of us and you, in addition to the unity arising from abundant love. You understand all things, good and bad.

Abundant greetings from me first and last to Your Esteemed Excellency, and our greetings to all commanders and ministers who take refuge with Your August Excellency. May you live [for ever].

21 Baramūda [18]68.

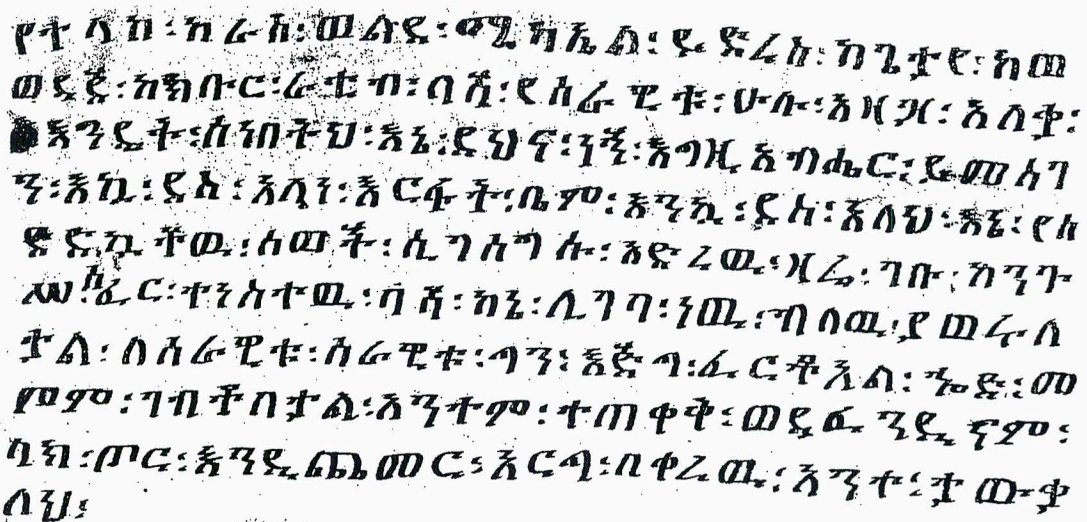
Written on Friday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 142, Arabic original.

Apparently Yohannis was eager to cooperate with regard to the main issue of the remaining Egyptian soldiers in Ethiopian hands, but disliked being faced with deadlines or threats, veiled or open. At the same time the Ethiopian side spared no efforts when it came to ingratiating themselves with the opposite party, by increasingly flattering forms of address.

Document no. 157

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [April? 1876]





May [the letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach my master and friend, the honoured Rātib *Pasha* [Ratīb *Basha*], the commander-in-chief of all the army. How have you been? I am well, thank God.

We are happy and congratulate Rif'at *Bey* (Irfat *Bē*). The people I had sent arrived today after having left the king's camp and hurried throughout the night.

They spread the rumour to the troops that the *pasha* is going to surrender to me. However, the troops are very scared, and are suffering from stomach illness. As for you, be careful. Write (lit. send) to our *effendi* and make him increase the number of the troops. For the rest, you know yourself.

Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 157, Amharic original.

Rifat *Bey* was captured after the battle of Gura, and held by Yohannis at Adwa. He returned to the Egyptian side with a number of other captured Egyptians on 23 April (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1012). Thus this letter was most probably written in the last week of April.

This is the earliest document bearing Welde Mīka'ēl's new seal with the *ras* title; he had, however, begun to use the title immediately after joining the Egyptians (see no. 144–45).

Document no. 158

Yohannis IV to Patrice MacMahon, 3 May 1876



بسم الاب والابن والروح القدس الاله الواحد له المجد

الموئيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك لحبشه وما يليها

الي جناب لمعونا لحبيب المحترم العزيز الجليل المحترم مكاناً بين ذوات حضرات جمهور دولة فرانسه الفخيمه الفاخره

صاحبة البطش والظفر للاعدا قاهره المشيده من قدم الزمن بالاعلاء الباهره المنتمية لمن تعد احدود تقليد

الممالك الفاخره السعيدة الادعام لاركان الدول المتناشره مملكة الله المجيده المنتبه بالعناصره لا زال شمس ملكها

يدوام الدهور مشيداً وتاج فخرها مخطوطاً بعهد الجيل مزيناً بعداهدي مايليق لمقامكم السامي من انواع التحية والاكرام ويكا

يجب لذوتكم من التجل والاحترام فاذا سالتم عن صحة سلامة اخيكم فنحن بنعمة ملهنا المسيح بالغاية الصحة والامان فاذا ما

تفرضه علي سامع حضرتكم العزيزة لسوالنه من مدة ثلثة سنوات الي الان كما لايخفي علمكم الحميد ان قد صار علينا التعذيب العظيم

من جناب لحبيبي المحترم وذلك طمعاً منه في اخذ الملاحه المعلومه عندكافة الدول النصرانيه انها من قديم الدهور ملاحة

كافة مملكة لحبشه خصوصياً وثانياً انه سلب منا اقاليم عديده يغتصبها جميع اخوتنا المتردين بطاعتنا من دولتكم لاجل الياهه

كبرهم وعلمها وغيرهم من كل الممالك المحترمه فالمذكور قد ضم اقاليم مملكتنا وطاصار التعذيب النظيم علينا بهذه المدة جميعه نحن يومياً نتظلم

تحريراتنا الي حضرتكم لكي يصير منكم الاسعاف الينا وان المرجو اليه قد سعد جميع ناخذ السكك لكيلا يصير وصول لجاري الي جناب

حضرة بركتكم السديد وليلا ايضاً يصير البحث ويحصل الاسعاف منكم لطاكما هو مقتضي بكل الدول الفخيمه من قد تعدا الانتزآ وايضاً لكيلا يرد

نحن بالعمل المدعا عدوه واهلك جميع امرانا ورزرانا والله المتمم لهم دعا عبيده الضعفا اما تعم جميعاً وسائك سهم الاقتيل كصنيع

تعداهم الماضي وكان هداية هقدر ١٨٧٤ ومع هذا كله لم يطلت جوابنا بالرساله لاجل الاسعاف الواجب واما هم فطالما يتراتبون علي جوابنا

المرسله لحضرتكم فيمكثوا ويمرقدنا ويمرضونا بالجر لاجل ما احداً يتطلع عليها ولاجل قطع الاخبار وتاريخ السنه عينها قد هيا جيشاً عزيزاً ايضاً

واسلمه علي يد ابنه حسن باشا محضر بلاد الكلزي وهناك صنعوا قلعة لحرب وجلسوا بها من فوق الناير لكي لعدم علم ماحضرا في سيه قد تجهز

الي تلك لجهه لنعلم ماهو فانثار الارتفرجت العساكر من القلعه واهلكها الكبير والصغير مع كافة عسكر الفاره وحتي النسا والاطفال هلكوا جميعاً

بالمدافع والصوابخ والبندق وصارجت الدما كالما علي وجه الارض ولحق كجيفة لحيوانات فانظروا هذا كله وما صارت لحرب والتعذيب الذي حرمه

الله لم احد صاره مثلما جري علينا من هذه المظالم رخص ليس لنا سعين من قديم الدهر الا الله وحضرتكم يحوطا بكل التواريخ المذكوره وان

من حضرتكم الغالبه السيده ان تسعفونا كالعوايد السابقه من المملكه الفخيمه آبيه المملكه لحبشيه كما علم حضرتكم يحوطا بكل التواريخ المذكوره وان

تحضار اكعوايد حبكم المسيحي واسعفونا بجنوا من طرف دولتكم العليا ليحضر جيشنا ويتطلع علي تلك الاسوار لحادثه جميعها ويرد ما سلب منا

من الاقاليم العديده المحرره شاقهاً لادنها الي الان هي تحت يد العساكر المرسله نحن وانتم باياً ان يسوع المسيح واحداً وندعي عضوا واحداً في

الشريف محل يحزن عليكم ان تهلك مملكه من جملة الممالك وعضو المسيح يكون سقاناً فلا سمح الله بذلك فارجوا ثم ارجوا كشف بحبة

المسيح مختار ان تسعفوا اخيكم وتردوا لنا ما سلب منا كما كل الدول من الاسعاف المتقن لارتداد المفتري ردتم بالعون ابقا والبقا

يعم الاكرم

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God. Praise be to Him.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency our dear, unassuming, honoured, revered, respected brother MacMahon (Makmā'u), President General of the Republic of the country of France, the illustrious, the glorious, entrusted with power and victory, triumphant among enemies, conspicious from the beginning of time, the brightest among stars, who takes revenge on anyone who violates the established boundaries of illustrious kingdoms, the most solid support of the heads of nations dispersed, the beloved kingdom of God, named The Imperial—may the sun of her royal power shine (lit. remain lofty) for ever and her crown of victory sealed [and] adorned by the covenant of the Gospel.

After presenting manifold greetings befitting your elevated rank, and a tribute of reverence and respect proper to Your Fraternal Excellency—if you inquire about the soundness of your brother's health we are, by the grace of our helper Christ, in perfect health and safety.

And now, what we bring to the knowledge (lit. ears) of Your Fraternal Excellency is that, for a period of three years now—which will not have escaped your vast knowledge—extensive aggression has befallen us from His Excellency, the respected *khedive*.

[The case is] that, driven by his greed, he seized the salines known among all Christian countries to be from the beginning of time, salines belonging without exception to the Abyssinian kingdom alone; and secondly that he snatched from us a number of districts well known to all our brothers, those from your country that come and go travelling in our lands, priests and scholars, as well as others from all respected kingdoms. It was the aforementioned who annexed the districts of our kingdom, and though this extensive aggression befell us all this time, we did not discontinue writing letters to Your Fraternal [Honour] even a single day, in order that we might receive help from you.

But the person referred to had already blocked all access to the routes, lest the news might reach Your Fraternal Exalted Eminence, and also lest there be an investigation, and help reach us from you, in the manner expected among all great countries, as a response to treacherous aggression; and also lest the truth be established as the real truth.

He pretends that he has been wronged by us. And as if it were we who had attacked him in what is his own [country], he mobilized without any reason a large army for revenge. And he rose up against us when we were in a place called Adwa, and killed all our commanders and governors. But God is the avenger of the shedding of the blood of his servants, the poor Christians. They were all killed, none of them were saved—except a few—as a result of their abominable aggression. And this happened the 7th of Hatūr 1868.

In spite of all this we did not fail to write for the assistance needed. They, however, discovered our letters which we sent to Your Fraternal [Honour], intercepted them, tore them to pieces, and threw them into the sea so that no one would read them, and so that communications would be cut off.

The same year he also mobilized a strong army and dispatched it under the command of his son Ḥasan *Pasha*. It came to the land of Akkele Guzay. There they built a fortress and settled in it. And because of the distress which struck us, due to our not knowing (lit. the lack of knowledge about) the reason behind their coming, we went to that place in order to find out. And what did we learn if not that the soldiers had left the fortress and killed the great and the small together with all the Christian soldiers, and even the women and the children! They all perished by means of the cannon, the rockets and the bullets. Blood poured forth like water on the face of the earth, and corpses [lay scattered] like the cadavers of animals! Look at all this, and at the destruction and aggression which God has forbidden [but which was nevertheless] committed. Nobody has experienced what has come upon us because of these outrages. From the beginning of time we do not have any helper except God and the brotherly love of your friendly nation.

And now, as Your Fraternal Honour's knowledge covers the entire royal history, we implore and entreat Your Fraternal Exalted Eminence to help us, in accordance with the previous custom of the Imperial Kingdom in relation to the Abyssinian kingdom and (one word unintelligible) in accordance with the custom of your Christian love, and relieve us by a supporter from your exalted country coming to our parts and investigating all these things which have happened, and returning what has been taken from us, from the many districts seized from us by force, for until now they are in the hands of the Egyptian soldiers.

We and you are one in the faith in Jesus Christ, and we claim that we are one member in the Most High (*sharīf*). Is it really easy for you to accept that one of the kingdoms is annihilated, and a member of Christ is treated with contempt? God forbid! I entreat and entreat once more, in accordance with my trust in [lit. eagerness for] the love of Christ and in your love, to help your brother and return what has been taken from us, since it is necessary for all nations to assist [each other] in order to deter the fabricator of lies.

May you be kept in esteem, happiness and eternal life.

26 Baramūda 1868.

Written on Wednesday.

AED, Protocole 41, vol. 46 (1869–1887), no. 2, Arabic original and French translation The use of the Arabic language in a letter to a European head of state is very unusual, but shows that Yohannis had no objection against using his enemy's language in his communication with a third person. A brief letter to MacMahon in December 1875 (no. 139), thanking him for a gift of a few rifles and revolvers brought by de Sarzec, was written in Amharic.

The above letter was most probably to be carried to France by de Sarzec who might have preferred an Arabic text, which would be understood by more people at the Ministère des affaires étrangères.

The seizing of the salines refers to the Egyptian occupation of the salt mines in April 1875 (see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 709–712; Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 300–301, 313). The event referred to as having taken place on 7 Hatūr was the battle of Gundet on 16 November 1875, where "they", meaning the Egyptians, were all killed "except a few" (document no. 136 above).

Document 159

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 5 May, 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها الخ

الى جناب المحب المحتشم العزيز الكريم المحترم محمد راتب باشا الفخم سردار العساكر المصريه بعيدا
ما يجب لمثاليكم من التكريم والتفخيم كما يجب لمقاصدت محبتكم الفخيم والسوال دايما عن صحة مزاجكم السليم
نعلم جنابكم هوانه قد ورد الينا جواب مرسلكم المارخ ٢٧ برموزه بيد دستة وحمدنا الباري تعالي على صفو
طويتكم المحبه الشمله بنعل الصلاح والسالم التامه وعلي ما ذكرتم صار كلة مقبولا لدينا علي ان جنابكم رغبتم
منا بعض مواد قليلة منها صار اجازه والبعض باقي فيا ليت جنابكم ان كلتنا هي واحده ولا تتغير البته
ونحن فيما جميع مرغوبه لاجل التحصيل على المحبه والمودة الاكيده مع جنابكم احرزنا لمعنويتكم المحترم من جهة
الامور الباقين تفهم كما خبرنا لجنابكم سابقا بانكم تجعلوا بطرنا من تعتمدوه وعند حضوركم بجهتنا نرسلهم
برغبت امينا نتظرنا بالوصول الى جناب محبتكم ومن جهة النايب عجب فيها هو قادم الى كرم محبتكم لتعلموا ذلك
صفر طويتنا من جهة مرسلكم وليس ذلك قهرا وغصبا اطلاقه على الذرايع المذكوره لان المذكور هو من الاصول
كما ان من تبعية الدوله النجاشيه لحراسة البرزر وغيرها وعند حضور الجيش المصريه قد تخلى وصار تايدا وبعد تدخان
بر حضر بطرنا وصار خاين الطرفين فلاجل هذا صار ربطه وربطه والات لاجل كرم محبتكم الدرة تدصار ارساله اليكم كما ذكرنا
ومن جهة المادة المذكوره ما ينبغا بعد حضوركم عندنا نجري عليكم ما تاعده الذرايع فحتما من ذلك ان بعد محبتكم وعقد
لسانا معكم ان يصير عليكم + من المقار شيا ولا يلبث عندكم شغله جمله كما نه وايضا آن من الامور اللازمه انكم هلبت
لكم اشغال تنتظم فيما بخص دولتكم المجيده ونحن لذلك فا لامل من مرسلكم هو ان يكون توجه محبتكم الان قبل نزول
المطر وفصل تحت لاشغالنا ولابد من ايصال ليكا مركبين وركب وسلامنا لجبل على كامل من يلوذ جنابكم الفخيم ودستم
بيوم ليحمه

1876

٢٨ برموزه

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the beloved and unassuming, honoured, respected and noble, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, commander of the Egyptian forces. After presenting greetings and respects befitting your rank, as is proper to Your Illustrious Trustworthy Loving-kindness, and after incessant questions about the complete state of your health—what we want to inform Your Excellency about is that the letter of Your Eminence dated 27 Baramūda has reached us through the hands of Desta. We thank the Creator, the Almighty, for the sincerity of your amicable intentions, comprising the establishment of reconciliation and perfect peace. As for what you wrote, we have taken account of everything. As for what Your Excellency wants from us, some of it has been fulfilled and some remains. O our beloved, our word is one and never changes. And we are [prepared] with regard to everything which you want in order to obtain the love and firm friendship of His Highness, our brother the noble *khedive.*

As for the remaining prisoners—as we wrote to Your Excellency previously—it is up to you to appoint someone here whom you trust. When they come here we will send them with our representative in order that they come to Your Eminent Loving-kindness. And as for *Nā'ib* Muḥammad, here he is, coming to Your Noble Loving-kindness, so that you know by this the sincerity of our intentions towards Your Eminence. This is not done because of coercion or compulsion. His release is according to royal legislation, since the aforementioned was originally one of the subjects of our royal (*najāshī*) nation [responsible] for the protection of the coasts and so forth. When the Egyptian army arrived he surrendered and became an officer. Then he deserted and came to us and [so] became a traitor to both sides. It was for this reason that he was arrested and chained. Now, it is for the sake of Your Dear Noble Loving-kindness that he has been sent to you, as we have said.

As for the matter which has been settled between us, we will after their coming to us treat [the prisoners] according to our legislation. Considering your love and the agreement with you, [God] forbid that anything harmful may happen to them. This should be no concern of yours whatsoever. You, too, certainly have regulations and arrangements for important matters that concern your beloved state, and we likewise. Thus we entertain the hope on behalf of Your Amicability that the returning [home] of Your Loving-kindness will take place now, before the rains come. And we will undoubtedly return to our concerns as soon as *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē has been sent. Our abundant greetings to all who take refuge with Your Illustrious Excellency.

May you live long.

28 Baramūda 1868.

Written on Friday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 143, Arabic original.

Whether *Nā'ib* Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥīm had deliberately and genuinely returned to the Ethiopian side after the battle of Gundet, or had other motives for his contacting Yohannis, is difficult to know. At any rate Yohannis had harboured misgivings about his loyalty, and kept him as a prisoner until peace seemed to be within reach. His release was probably intended as pressure on Rātib to let Mirṣha Werqē go.

Document no. 160

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 12 May, 1876



المويد من يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي الجناب الكريم المحب العزيز الحليم محمد راتب باشا الفخيم سردار العساكر المصريه بعد اهدي ما يليق لمقام
محبتكم من انواع التكريم والتفخيم كما يجب لصدق مودتكم السليم والسوال عن صحة مزاجكم الفاخر عسا تكونوا
مع كافة جيشكم في غاية الصحه والرفاهيه التامه قد ورود الينا عزيز خطابكم الجاري صدق محبتكم المورخ
٢ بشنس فبالاطلاع عليه شكرنا الله علي صحة عافيتكم وجميع ما ذكرتموه صار معلوماً لدينا حرفياً وعلي انكم كنتم عازمين
علي اجرا مرغوبنا ومحصول مقصودنا علي حسب ما ارسلتم لنا علي يد المحب علي بيك الروبي عن جهة الشخص
المفهوم والعايق ان المذكور قد ارسل ابنه الي جناب اخينا الحبيب الخديوي المحترم وادعي علي انه من خدام الدوله
المصريه فنجيب محبتكم يا عزيز هل كان ذلك من المذكور امس او الان بكما تعلمون ان المذكور كان متقلد مناعدة
اقاليم وبلاد ملوكيه وقد اخذ محصول ميريها جميعاً وقام في الغير الواجب في فعل الفساد ما بيننا وبينكم وهذه الامور
فهي ليسة بموافقه لقوانين الملوك الفخام وسابق كنا قد عزمنا علي انه اذا دخل بمصلحة معرفتكم لم يجري عليه
شيا من الاضرار والان فليس بمانع علينا شيا لان الشريحط بصانعه واما اذا كان تعويق المذكور لدخوله بيدكم
وحضوره لدينا لا سمح الله علي سبيل الفساد وسد الطرق واختطاف اموال المسالين ويكون لا سمح بذلك ضميركم يشعر بادني
خلا لابطال الصلح والوداد فالله الذي ابدعنا جميعاً من العدم الي الوجود هو يكون الحاكم المنتقم ما بيننا وبينكم ولا تلومونا في
كلامنا هذا لانه من العشم في صدق ودادكم الغالي لان كلمتنا واحده ولا تتغير البته في صلحنا ومحبتنا الثابته مع جناب
اخونا العزيز الخديوي ونفوز بجميع ما يروم جنابه الفاخر ولم حصل عندنا من الاول الي الان تقصير فيما ترومونه واما من جهة
الاسري فهو كما حررنا لجنابكم سابقاً اننا قد ارسلنا في طلبهم وعند حضورهم يكون الوصول بهم اليكم واذا كان تعويق محبتكم
من التوجه الي اخونا المكرم الخديوي المحترم هو لسبب تعويق المذكورين فاجعلوا من تامنوه مقيم بطرفنا وبحضور المذكورين
يصير ارسالهم الي جنابكم برفقت مخصوص ممن نعتمده ونومل منكم ختم كتاب الشروط وارساله الينا ومنا مزيد السلام مع
ازكي التحيات علي كلمن بمقام محبتكم الوافيه ودمتم بالخير والبقا والعافيه

٦٨
٥ بشنس

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the noble and beloved, honoured and gentle, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the illustrious, commander of the Egyptian forces.

After presenting manifold [expressions of] respect and deference befitting the [high] rank of Your Loving-kindness, as is proper to your Perfect Trustworthy Amicability, and inquiries about the state of your glorious health [wishing] that it might be, together with that of all your army, perfectly sound and completely relaxed—your noble letter dated 2 Bashans, expressing the sincerity of your love, has reached us. When reading it we thanked God for your health and well-being. We have taken account of everything you wrote, word for word.

Concerning your determination to carry out our demands and fulfill our aspirations, in accordance with what you sent us through the hands of the beloved ʿAlī *Bey* Rūbī with regard to the notorious person, the obstacle is that the aforementioned sent his son to His Highness our beloved brother, the respected *khedive*, and pretended to be one of the servants of the Egyptian kingdom. Thus we answer Your Loving-kindness, "Did this start yesterday or today?" As you know, the aforementioned was appointed by us [to preside] over a number of districts and royal lands. He took the whole amount of their collected revenues and, by corrupting our relations, undertook what is not proper.

These things are not in agreement with the laws of glorious kings. We had previously decided that if he joined the administration of Your Eminence, no harm would befall him. But now there is nothing to prevent what will happen, since evil surrounds his deeds. If the aforementioned had been prevented from falling into your hands and had come to us, God forbid, [what might not have happened] because of his path of corruption, his barring of roads and his seizure of the property of the poor! And your conscience would not have felt, [God] forbid, the slightest hesitation about cancelling reconciliation and friendship. God, who created all of us from non-existence into existence, He will be the vindictive judge between us and you.

Do not rebuke us for these words, since we are eager for the sincerity of your eminent friendship. For our word is one and the same, and does not change at all in respect to our reconciliation and firm friendship with His Highness, our brother the *khedive*. We will carry out everything His glorious Excellency wishes. And from the beginning until now we have not failed in regard to what he wants.

As for the prisoners, it is as we have previously written to Your Excellency. We have sent and asked for them, and when they appear they will come to you. And if Your Loving-kindness is kept back from returning to our brother the noble and respected *khedive*, this is because they have been kept back [from us]. You should appoint someone you trust to reside with us. When those referred to arrive they will be sent to Your Excellency in the company of someone we recognize. We expect you to sign the document of agreement and send it back to us. From us an abundance of greetings joined with the most appropriate respect to all who are in the camp of Your Trustworthy Loving-kindness. May you remain in prosperity, well-being and eternal life.

Bashans 5 [18]68.

Written on Friday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 144, Arabic original.

The "notorious person" whose name Yohannis did not even want to mention was Welde Mīka'ēl. The fact that Rātib had arranged to send the traitor's son to the *khedive* enraged Yohannis and caused this—despite the customary courteous phrases—very strongly worded letter (see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 1024–25).

Document no. 161

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 20 May 1876



الوحيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي جناب المكرم الجليل الكريم المحترم المحب الرزين محمد راتب باشا المحترم امير لجيش المصري بعد اهدا ما يليق لمقام وذاتكم السامي الفاخر الاسامه والفخامه بكما يجب لصدق محبة مودتكم النامية مع اوفر التسليمات علي عاطر ذات رويتكم الفاخره والسوال عن صحة مزاج حضرتكم الباهره عسا ان تكونوا دايما متزايدين في الراحه العاليه نعلم جناب حشمتكم المحبوبه هو انه قد ورد الينا عرض مخاطبتكم المحرره وعليما فيه نقرا الباري عليها انتم فيه من الرضا هيه مع خلوص المحبه بصفو الضمير والنيه فالذي نعلم به حضرتكم المانوسه انه قد وصل الينا برقعتان جوان ليكا موكاس وركبي خيمة وكم الكريم وذلك بخدايتها وشياتها وشياتها بكما حرر برقيكم السليم فبوصولها قبلناها منكم هديه وهدنا لحالف علي تحديث المحبه المعهوده وعلي ما ذكر جنابكم انما يكون ذلك الا من طرف جناب اخونا فديوي الاضخم فهو ايضا الحبيب العزيز ان الرسول فهو مثل من ارسله كما هو لاهق بشرف علمكم وبعده عن جهة الاسري فهو كما يعلم رب السموات انه سابق قد ارسلنا في طلبهم ولم حضروا الي الان وبوصول جوابكم الينا قد ارسلنا مرة ثانيه في حضورهم ولا يكون عندهم تكره ولا ذكره عن ذلك فبوصولهم بحضرون بطرف سودتكم الناليه التي صارت بالبواطن كالجهر الفاخر ومت جهة مسيو كلام ان المذكور من مده مديده كان يتيم بالخدمه بطرفنا وقد التجاه الامر اليه الرضا الذي به بالتوجه الي بلاده للحصول علي الابرآ من ذلك فنوصل من صدق محبتكم ان تجعلوه يتوجه لمحل وطنه كما اراد وعشب فيكم زياده علي ما روي بوعدنا من سداد هتكم البليغه وانشا الله تعالي بوصول الاسري يرسل الي حبكم جواب حبنا اليم ومني اوفر التسليمات وازكي التحيات اول راجز علي مقام حبكم الفاخر

حرر بيوم السبت ١٣ بشنس ١٨٧٦

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the venerable and revered, the noble and respected, the beloved and honoured Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the unassuming, commander of the Egyptian forces.

After presenting manifold [expressions of] respect and deference befitting Your Exalted Grace, as is proper to Your Trustworthy Prosperous Excellency, together with abundant salutations to the fragrance of your own glorious mind and inquiries about the state of health of Your Brilliant Excellency [wishing] that its most superb qualities might increase—we inform Your Unassuming Excellency that the honour of your agreeable letter has reached us.

As to its content we praise the Creator for your relaxed disposition and sincere love, caused by serenity of mind and will. What we want to inform Your Benevolent Excellency about is that we have with *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē received the protective tent of Your Noble Grace with its ceramics, its covers and its parasols, as stated in your estimable letter. When it arrived we accepted it, and praised the Creator for the renewal of unrestricted (lit. universal) friendship.

As to what Your Excellency stated, that this is from His Highness, our brother, the most illustrious *khedive*, O honoured and beloved, truly the one who is sent is like the one who sent him, as is, no doubt, [consistent] with your eminent knowledge.

Moreover, as for the prisoners, we have, as the Lord of Heaven knows, previously sent and asked for them, but they have not yet come. When your letter to us arrived we sent for them a second time. Your Eminence should harbour no misgivings or doubts about this. When they arrive they will come to Your Precious Loving-kindness, who has become like flooding streams in [our] souls.

And as for Mr. Kirkham, he has for a long time been in our service. He left the command due to illness, in order to return to his country and recover by so doing. Therefore we place our hope in Your Trustworthy Loving-kindness that you will let him go to his country as he wishes. My zeal for you exceeds what Bahta reported about the strength of your profound enthusiasm. God Almighty willing, when the prisoners arrive we will send Your Loving-kindness a letter [expressing] our love for you.

And, first and last, abundant greetings and the most delightful regards from me to Your Glorious Loving-kindness.

13 Bashans 1868.

Written Saturday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 145, Arabic original.

Kirkham had been arrested by the Egyptians in early January on his way to Cairo and London with letters from Yohannis to, among others, *Khedive* Ismā'īl and Queen Victoria. He had to hand over the correspondence, and was placed in house arrest at Massawa (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 853–58). In spite of Yohannis's plea in this letter that he be allowed to proceed to England Kirkham died at Massawa one month later (*ibid.*, 1018–20).

While *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē obviously remained the main negotiator, there were apparently others who acted as go-betweens, in this case most probably the later famous Bahta Hagos.

Document no. 162

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 21 May 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي الجناب الكريم المحب العزيز الفخيم محمد رابت باشا امير الجيش المصري الحليم بعد اهدي
ما يليق لمقامكم السامي من التبجيل مع مزيد السوال عن سعادة محبة عزتكم الجليل عسا تكونوا
مع كافة جيشكم بغاية الصحه الوافيه مع دوام محبة ودكم الناشيه فمن جهتنا فنحن وجميع جيوشنا
مع صحة المزاج بالخير والعافيه ثم انه قد وردة الينا مخاطبت مؤتمركم الشريفه وبالاطلاع عليها
شكرنا الباري تعالي علي اعتدال مزاجاتكم المنيفه وثانياً علي صدق امانيتكم وصفو طويتكم وصار
ما ذكرتم معلوماً لدينا من جهة كنتيباي تكوا من اهالي الكلاقزاس بارساله الينا وسبب تعويقه
للان لبعد المسافه فالامل هكذا كالمعهود والله يديم محبتنا تامه بغير فقود ومن جهة الاسرى
الان فعلي ما سمعنا صاروا قريبين الينا وهلبت حضورهم فهو يكون عن ويحضر معهم اليكم
جواب حبنا الفريد ومين اول واخر ازكي التحيات مع جزيل السلام علي شرف محبتكم زائدة الاحترام
حرر ١٤ بشنس ١٨٦٨
يوم الاحد

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, kings of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the noble and beloved, honoured and illustrious, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the gentle, commander of the Egyptian army.

After presenting respects befitting your elevated rank, and abundant inquiries about Your Beloved Honoured Eminence—may you with your entire army, be in the most perfect health and enduring love of Your Exalted Grace (*sic*)—as for us, we and all our army are well and in good health.

The noble letter of Your Excellency reached us, and when reading it we thanked the Creator, the Almighty, for the stability of your lofty disposition, and secondly for the sincerity of your trustworthiness and the serenity of your mind. We have understood what you wrote to us concerning the sending to us of *Kentība* Tekwa(?) of the people of Akkele Guzay. The reason for his delay until now is the great distance. But our hope, as is well-known, is that God may preserve our perfect friendship without a flaw.

As for the prisoners, they are now, according to what we have heard, close by. No fooling (*halbata*), they are here! So we will send a letter with them [expressing] our unparalleled love.

From me, first and last, the most delightful greetings and abundant regards, a superabundance of respects to Your Noble Loving-kindness.

14 Bashans 1868.

Written Sunday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 146, Arabic original.

Following this letter 65 prisoners arrived in the Egyptian camp on 26 May (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1026). The total number captured at Gundet was 80, if we are to believe the Austrian traveller Camill Russ, who was staying at Adwa at the time (*Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen*, 23, pp. 157–158).

In the second part of the good wishes for the addressee and his army, *i.e.* that they be the object of "enduring love", the mind or pen of the writer has slipped.. To wish that the army (not to speak of the commander himself) be the object of the commander's "enduring love" does not make sense.

Document no. 163

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 30 May 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الى جناب الحبيب الباهر العزيز الكريم ذا الشمل الزاهر الامين المحترم محمد راتب باشا الناظر امير الحبيش المصري بعد اهدي
وافر التحيات والتكريم كما يجب لمقام مخدومكم السليم والسؤال عن صحة مزاجكم الفخيم عما تكدرنا مع كافة جيشكم طيبين
وغاية الفرح والسرور حاصلين غب جهتنا فلله الحمد والمنه والوفاهيه الوافيه علم جناب مخدومكم هداه الله وصل الينا
خطابكم الشريف الحاوي الفاظ مزيد محبتكم المنيف وفيه ذكرتم لنا عن جهة الامور المرسولين منا اليكم انهم احكوا لكم ان عدة الله
بالدربي والوديان ومن جملة ذلك انه يحرر قبر بلاس فاصل عنده قرين الواحد يدعى فرح والاخر محمد ومرجوه بالمثل عند
باشا قبر يم انفاق وبيلة بجرجره ايضاً قرين وايضاً مرجوه بجانب ابونا المطران ابتين عشر نفراً وقبر يعدوا من اولاد الحرة
وغيرها بعوراينه وغيرها كما اوضحوا لجناب مخدومكم بحيث الثر المتين فجيب مرتكم ايها ان هذا كله كلام لا له اصل ولا فصل
ولا يحكم بالمثابعه ان هذا ايمان هرجقين اوهذا فلان خادم بنا بجهة الوجوه والحق المتغاير فعت جهة ماخذ فحن
عندنا قوانين العسكريه ان لا يصيرله ايمان احد للاتيا بدون امر اوامير يعيله كما فيه وهذا بمملكتنا عموميا وعند ورود خطاب
امانيتكم المحبوبه لدينا قد استخبرنا بالتدقيق من امرائنا ورزرائنا فلم يوجد كما اخبرتم لنا قطعاً وعما نحن فليس لنا تعلق
بهذا الامر لان يكن يجز احداً من المبين لكين خادماً لنا اوعبداً يكون لامرائنا فكما يشهد بذلك ضميركم الصافي
لاننا في هربه الاولاد قدمنا جميع الاسرى المجروحين واليمين واسلناهم سابقاً بحضوركم ولاكان احداً اخذ علينا شرطاً بذلك بل
لاجل تاكيد واثبات المحبه بالاتحاديه مع موزة اخي العزيز المكرم المشيرالمحترم وثانياً عدحضور المحب علي بيك الينا واعلامه لدينا
انه من الواجب يرجع الاسرى من بعد ارتداد هربه الماكيه فاسلناهم جميع برمتهم وما بقي الربن كما نواخاصلين بالجرح ومشابعد
وبالثاني بناً لتحديث المحبه والاتحاديه مع اخي العزيز المكرم المشيرالمحترم وثانياً عدحضور المحب علي بيك الينا واعلامه لدينا
وكلاً ان يكون بكم هكذا لان علمكم محيطاً بكل الامور والان كما يعلم الله انه من بعد البحث الشافي انه كما ذكرتم انه يجاب
ابونا المطران المحترم اثنين عشر نفساً والمذكورين قدصارا نشالهم من الرما بوقت هربه للاشفالهم ولاكانا فصلين بالجرح ومشابعد
الاسرى بجانبكم وهاهم المذكورين واصلين اليكم عقب جوابنا هذا وقد خرجنا بجملة عدداً ونحن بصفر الضير والنيه السليمه على
ما اوجدنا الواجد نفعل مايرضيه مع دواح المحبه القلبيه باتحاد الاخويه كما يليهم ابينا لانخيف في شرعه العزيز وقد قدمنا لمخدومنا جميع
مابنا واننتج عن الامر الضروري نتعلدب بكما يدمر اليكم والشاهد بالباطن . من خلقها وتحريرنا هذا اليكم ليلي اوخر شهر
اي
لديكم فصدقوا مكيلاناً ولاتجعلوا من جهتنا فكرة ولا خاطر بما ذكر لمخدومكم الاسرى قد فصل منهم احداً واخذ اكثر لاتصدقونا بما
عنه من الاسرى كما ذكر لكم وبين اول واخر اوزر السلام وازكى
قلنا لكم خاصلوا من طرفكم تاعلم لجناب مرتكم ليعلمنا بما فصل
التحيات على محبة صداقتكم العزيزه وحرر منع بالعز والهنا مع دواح البتا ١٨٧٦
٢٢ بشنس
يوم الثلثا

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the beloved and illustrious, honoured and noble, [who is] endowed with a brilliant character, the respected guardian, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the glorious, commander of the Egyptian army.

After presenting abundant and respectful greetings befitting the rank of Your Loving-kindness and the serenity of your most excellent mind, and inquiries about the state of your glorious health—may you be well and, together with your entire army, in possession of perfect joy and happiness. As for us, we praise God for health, well-being and complete tranquility.

What we [want to] inform Your Excellent Loving-kindness about is that your noble letter has reached us, carrying the words of Your Exalted Eminence. There you tell us about the prisoners whom we sent to you, that they have told you that a few men remain(?) in the villages and valleys. Two of them are [said] to be staying with *Bejirond* Gebre Sillasē, one called Faraj and the other Muḥammad; likewise with *Basha* Gebre Maryam four men and in the village of Sigirda(?) two men; also twelve men with our father the metropolitan; and [some] people kept far away by descendants of Arabs, Sudanese officers and others, which reveals to Your Excellent Loving-kindness that these [people] love the evil which ensnares.

But we answer Your Honour, O beloved, that this talk has no beginning and no end. You cannot judge on the basis of resemblance that this animal is mine, nor by the resemblance of his face or by changing appearances that this slave is my slave. And as for what has been said, we have our military regulation that no one gets his lot unless he fully and completely submits his case to a *wazīr* or an *amīr*. This [applies] throughout our kingdom.

When the letter of Your Beloved Trustworthiness reached us we interrogated our *amīrs* and *wazīrs* in minute detail. Nothing of what you told us was found, absolutely nothing. As for us, we have no interest in such matters, and have not appropriated anyone among those indicated to be a servant or slave of ours or of our *amīrs*, as witnessed by your own serene mind, since when, in the first war, we collected all the prisoners, the wounded and the sound, and sent them to your predecessor, there was no one who had made an agreement with us to do this, but it was in order to secure and confirm the unifying love for His Highness, our brother, the honoured, venerable and respected *khedive*.

And, secondly, when the beloved ʿAlī *Bey* came to us and told us that there is an obligation to send back all prisoners after the withdrawal from the royal war, we sent all [of them] with him except those who still had wounds. After they had recovered we brought them together and sent them to you. And in all this there was no force, no coercion, and no evil design of ours, but it was rather for the sake of your esteemed friendship and in order to gain your much valued respect, and furthermore to renew friendship and unity with His Highness, our brother. And now, God forbid, how can you in your [wildest] imagination accept that we are like what you have heard from the foolish talk of [our] enemies. Never and by no means should this enter your [mind], since your knowledge encompasses everything.

Now, as God knows, after careful investigation [we have discovered] that it is as you said: there are twelve persons with His Grace, the respected metropolitan. Those referred to were taken from the bloodshed at the time of the battle in order to recover. We did not recall them at the time when the prisoners were sent to Your Excellency. And now look, the aforementioned are coming to you immediately after this letter of ours. It will be as soon as we have entered Adwa.

With pure conscience and untroubled mind, as we were brought into being by the Creator, we will do what He desires with enduring and all-embracing friendship [and] in brotherly unity, as He has inspired us not to violate his sacred law. We have submitted to Your Trustworthiness everything we

had, and it is necessary that you do what you are ordered by your conscience (lit. the witness of the interior) and its Creator.

I have written this to you so that you should be aware of our abundant love for you. Trust our words, and do not harbour any preoccupation or idea about us because of what Your Trustworthiness was told with reference to the prisoners, [that is] that a single one of them remains. And if you do not believe what we tell you, send someone from your side whom Your Trustworthiness knows, to inform us who is [still] missing among the prisoners, according to what you were told.

And from me, first and last, abundant greetings and appropriate regards to Your Honoured Trustworthy Lovingkindness. May you live in esteem and happiness for ever (lit. together with the continuation of existence).

23 Bashans 1868.

Written Tuesday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 147, Arabic original.

After almost three months of peace negotiations Yohannis was apparently extremely annoyed with the repeated delays, and no longer inclined to hide his feelings. Instead of signing the peace treaty, Rātib *Pasha* had returned over and over again to the issue of the Egyptian soldiers captured after the battle of Gundet.

Yohannis would obviously have preferred to see peace formally concluded before withdrawing to Adwa. Nevertheless he decided to return to Adwa where he arrived on 1 June and dismissed his soldiers who needed to return to their villages before the impending rainy season (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 1027–28).

Document no. 164

Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 7 June 1876

ᵬሚነ ልክ፡ ንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት

ዘ ኢትዮጵያ



የ ሥላሳ፡ ነገ፡ ሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ም ኒ
ል ክ፡ ዘ ኢት ዮ ጵ ያ።
ይ ህ ረ ስ። ሥ ነ በ ረ ው፡ ነ ታ ፈ ረ ው።
ነ ኤ ስ ማ ኤ ል ፡ ባ ሻ፡ ን ጉ ሠ ፡ ም ስ ር ።
ኤ ን ጂ ት፡ ነ ዎ ።ኤ ኒ፡ ኤ ላ ዚ ኤ ብ ሔ ር፡ ይ
መ ስ ገ ን፡ ይ ህ ና ፡ ነ ኝ ። ሠ ራ ዊ ት ም፡ ሁ
ሉ ፡ ይ ህ ና ፡ ነ ው ።
በ ሐ ጂ፡ ይ ብ ራ ሂ ም፡ ኤ ጂ፡ የ ሰ ደ ጁ ፈ ኝ፤
በ ረ ነ ት ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ላ ቀ በ ል ሁ ። ኤ ላ ዚ ኤ ብ ሔ
ር ፡ ይ ስ ዋ ፈ ኝ ።
ኔ ም፡ ኤ ነ ሆ ፡ ስ ለ፡ፍ ቅ ር ፡ እ ም ስ ት፡ ጠ ባ
ቅ ኝ ፡ ሰ ድ ኝ ለ ሁ ና ፡ ይ ቀ በ ሉ ።
ጤ ና ፡ ይ ስ ጠ ዎ ።
በ ፲ ፻ ፱ ፡ ፵ ፸ ፡ ፋ መ ት ።
በ ሰ ኔ፡ በ ፩ ፡ ቀ ን ።
በ ብ ሔ ረ ፡ ሻ ዋ ።
በ ል ቼ ፡ ከ ተ ማ ፡
ተ ጻ ፈ ።



Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia.

May [the letter] sent by King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia, reach the honoured, the feared Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), king of Egypt (Misr).

How are you? I am well, thank God. And all my army is well. I have received all the gifts you sent me with *Ḥājj* Ibrāhīm (*Hajī* Yibrahīm).

Thank you. And now, I am sending you five guards for friendship's sake. [Please] accept them.

May He give you health.

Written in the town of Lichē in the land of Shewa on the 1st day of Senē in the year 1868.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ENA, Soudan 5/2/5, Amharic original. This letter with its clear date and absence of any reference to Pierre Arnoux is different from the letters and other documents (nos. 165–173), dispatched when Arnoux left Minīlik's camp on 6 July 1876 together with Ibrāhīm. It is written on the same stationery as the letter to the pope six months earlier (no. 140), but the number 'II' printed with Minīlik's name has now failed to result in *dagmay* in the text itself.

It was Minīlik's response to a very long letter from the *khedive*, dated 6 December 1875, offering to recognize Minīlik as the sovereign of Ethiopia on condition that he joined Ismā'īl's attack on Yohannis (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 821–824). Arnoux was clearly involved in a second letter to Ismā'īl (no. 173). See Douin, III, 3B, p. 1047, note 5, for Arnoux's account of the preparation of the two letters.

Ṭebaqī, here translated "guard", is in this context quite possibly a euphemism for "eunuch".

Document no. 165

Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II, 15 June 1876

Minīlik II, king of Shewa, to His Majesty Victor Emmanuel, the king of Italy, Rome.

Two years have passed since I sent *Abba* Mīka'ēl to Your Majesty in the hope of establishing relations of mutual friendship with you. Your Majesty's most gracious reply filled me with joy, and I regret that the circumstances have not permitted me to multiply the tokens of my respectful affection.

Today Mr. Pierre Arnoux, the French merchant, is preparing to return to Europe. As he has my full confidence, I have entrusted him with a very important diplomatic and commercial mission. He is also to proceed to Your Majesty to assure you of my sincere desire to entertain the most friendly relations with you for the good of the two nations.

May Your Majesty receive from his hands the several gifts which I send you as a token of my recognition. I regret that the lack of people capable of preparing a serious collection prevents me from offering Your Majesty some objects worthy of you, and of the noble people whom you rule.

If God blesses the present enterprise, if, as I hope, it attracts the sympathy of the Christian powers, I shall later, surrounded by competent persons, make efforts to respond to the expressed wishes of Your Majesty. I hope that through God's blessing and Your Majesty's assistance the barriers which separate us from the Christian and civilized peoples will be pulled down, that light will come all the way to us, and that when the route through the deserts has been opened your subjects will come and assist us in our civilizing work. May God bless Your Majesty and increase the prosperity of your kingdom and the range of your power.

Lichē the 9th of June 1876.

The royal seal.

ASMAI, 36/1–4, unnumbered, French copy, on Arnoux's personal stationery with "፩: አርኑስ: P.A." in the top left corner, and certified by Arnoux: "Je certifie et déclare que le présent écrit est conforme à l'original écrit en français et en amarinià revêtu du sceau royal des deux cotés. Zeyla le 9 octobre 1876. P. Arnoux." A note in a different hand at the top of the letter states that it is a copy of the document confiscated by Abū Bakr of Zeyla. It was forwarded to Rome with a covering letter from the Italian consul at Aden on 12 November informing Rome that the gifts had been confiscated. On 13 January 1877 the Italian consulate at Alexandria forwarded what it called "lettere autografe" from Minīlik to the king and Pope Pius. Whether they were the actual originals—some of these (see nos. 173 and 174) were either restored to Arnoux or never confiscated—or copies 'autographed' by Arnoux is impossible to say, as all attempts to locate them in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Vatican have failed. Of the letter to the pope there is unfortunately no trace whatsoever.

The dates on this and other documents carried by Arnoux (nos. 166–173) are confusing. The two letters preserved in original (nos. 173 and 174) are dated 10 Senē 1868, *i.e.* 16 June 1876. The others, in translation, are dated 9 and 10 June, but also 9 December 1875—a second French copy of the above as well as a treaty draft and a concession of a coal mine (nos. 168 and 169). On the letter to the French president (no. 167) 19 December appears instead. The December dates most probably refer to drafts later "sealed with the royal seal 9 June 1876". There is also confusion with regard to the spelling of Minīlik's name. Of the two copies of the above letter for instance, one spells "Min-hilik", the other "Minyilik". "Min-hilik" is also found in the translation of Minīlik's letter to Ismā'īl of 16 June provided by Arnoux at Cairo on 4 January 1877 (FO 78/2631). In view of the recent contacts with Rome through *Abba* Welde Mīka'ēl, and Arnoux's own interests, it seems logical that the letters to Rome and Paris took priority over the letters to Aden and Egypt (and other documents) finalized only the following day. Arnoux left Shewa in July and arrived at Zeyla one month later. There his merchandise and documents were seized by Abū Bakr. For further details, see the reports in ASMAI, 36/1-4, AEMD, Afrique 62, IOR, L/P& S/9/53, and for the whole context Louis-Lande, "Un voyageur français dans l'Éthiopie méridinale", *Revue des deux Mondes*, XXX (1878), pp. 877–903; also Marcus, pp. 44–45 and Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 85–87.

Document no. 166

Minīlik to Patrice MacMahon, 15 June 1876

Minīlik II, king of Shewa, to Mr. Marshal MacMahon, the duke of Majenta, president of the French Republic, Paris.

For many centuries attempts have been made to establish close relations between France and Ethiopia, and a number of French travellers and missionaries have come to visit my country. They have left behind good memories, and we have been given a high opinion of France.

A political and commercial treaty was concluded in 1843 between France, then ruled by King Louis Philippe, and my grandfather Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa, through the agency of Mr. Rochet d'Héricourt. This treaty was not followed up, due to the lack of easy and fast communications. I have understood that since then these obstacles no longer exist, that France has opened the sea channel of Suez in order to join the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, that since more than twelve years she is in possession of the Bay of Obok on the coast of Africa at the entrance to the Bay of Zeyla, that a steamship can proceed from France to Obok in fifteen days, and that it is possible to establish easy routes from that place to Shewa. It is Providence that has sent Mr. Pierre Arnoux to us. I have received him in my country with the greatest pleasure. My great desire has always been to have with me a serious person, well-educated and capable, and my wishes fulfilled, I thank God for having sent me in Mr. Arnoux a Frenchman, and the man I desire. I want to introduce the laws, industry, and civilization of France into my country. I want to work, with the help of good instructors and better arms, at the organization of my army on the model of the French armies.

To follow up the good relations and benevolent connections which exist between the two nations, I desire, through the agency of Mr. Pierre Arnoux, whom I have accredited with your government as my first envoy and who enjoys my full confidence, to enter into a political and commercial treaty and alliance with France on the basis of the one concluded in 1843, of which a copy is attached to the present. When concluded, this treaty can initiate the operation and give profitable results to the two nations. Mr. Arnoux has demonstrated to us the usefulness of creating a great Franco-Ethiopian company under my protection, authorized by the French government to provide development for commerce, industry, the exploitation of mines, the navigation of rivers, agriculture, and the civilization of Ethiopia. He is authorized by a special mandate to base it solidly in France.

Mr. Arnoux is instructed to tell you by word of mouth, Mr. President, of all my best wishes for France and for the French who come to Ethiopia for the purpose of commerce, industry and travel, and how I love to introduce into my country the light which it has lacked for centuries. He will tell you also that I will accept with pleasure the establishment of a French consulate in my country. I dare hope, Mr. President of the Republic, that you will reserve a good reception for my emissary and for the application which I now make through him to your government, so that our friendly relations will be extensive, lasting and profitable for the two nations, and that you will be pleased to receive through his hands the various gifts which I am sending you as tokens of my gratitude. I make vows for the prosperity of France, that God may grant you a long life, and that you will be able to leave the benefits of civilization and commerce as a heritage to the children of the two countries for many centuries.

Written at Lichē, 19 December 1875 (sealed with the royal seal 9 June 1876).

The seal of the king.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 286–87 and 436–37, copies of French text. The letter is here given the date when it was allegedly sealed by Minīlik.; we have assumed that 9 June actually stands for 9 Senē, thus 15 June. See no. 164.

Document no. 167

Treaty draft France–Ethiopia, 15 June 1876

Basis of a political and commercial treaty to be entered into between France and Minīlik II, king of Shewa, and his successors through the agency of Mr. P. Arnoux.

In view of the good relations and the benevolent connections which exist since centuries between France and Ethiopia, notably during the reigns of the kings Louis XIV, Louis Philippe, and Emperor Napoleon III, the king of Shewa desires an alliance and trade with France.

In view of the community of religion which exists between the two nations the king of Shewa dares to hope that France will in case of war with the Muslims or with other foreigners consider his enemies as her own enemies.

The French government, protector of Jerusalem, undertakes to have all the inhabitants of Shewa who go on pilgrimage respected as French subjects, and to defend them with the help of [its] representatives against the affronts of the unbelievers along the whole route. The same protection shall be extended in Syria and in Egypt, especially where there are representatives of the French government.

All Frenchmen who reside in Shewa shall be considered as most favoured subjects, and on this basis they shall enjoy in addition to their rights all the privileges which might be accorded to other foreigners.

All French merchandise imported into Shewa shall be subject to a duty of three per cent to be paid once, and this duty shall be levied in kind in order to avoid all discussion about settling the value of the said merchandise.

All Frenchmen shall be entitled to trade in the kingdom of Shewa and all other lands subject to king Minīlik.

All Frenchmen residing in Shewa, and in other lands subject to this government, shall be permitted to buy houses and land, the acquisition of which shall be guaranteed by the king of Shewa.

Frenchmen shall be entitled to resell or dispose of these same properties, and in case of death they shall pass to the heirs in accordance with French law.

Mr. Arnoux is authorized to add to and deduct from or make such and such modifications in the present treaty if the French government believes they ought to be made.

Written at Lichē, 9 December 1875 (sealed with the royal seal 9 June 1876).

The seal of the king.

AEMD, Afr. 62, fols 288 and 438, copies of French text. In the first copy this document shares the double dates—here 9 December and 9 June—of the letter to MacMahon (no. 166) as well as the choice between 9 June and 9 Senē, *i.e.* 15 June. A note at the bottom of the document reads: "L'original a été adressé sous pli recommandé, du Caire, le 6 janvier 1877, par le soussigné au Ministère des affaires étrangères à Paris. P Arnoux."

Thus we have once more a reference to an "original" being sent from Egypt (cf. no. 165), but since it has been impossible to locate this "original", we have no way of knowing if it was one of the documents taken by Abū Bakr at Zeyla and returned or only an alleged original. The wording of the document shows no indications of an underlying Amharic text. Obviously it was at the most a draft, quite possibly produced by Arnoux himself without any negotiations with Minīlik.

Document no. 168

Minīlik: concession of coal mine to Pierre Arnoux, 15 June 1876

Minīlik II, by the grace of God king of Shewa.

By this document we authorize Mr. Pierre Arnoux to cede in our name, without payment and with full ownership, to the French–Ethiopian society to be established in France, the coal mine which is found near Ṣhenno (Teianou) in the district called Kulī (Kouéli) in Shewa. In order to promote the establishment of the said company we cede, besides the mine, also the territory necessary for the accommodation of the workers and the exploitation of the coal mine. The company undertakes to construct at its expense a road as far as the river Awash for the transportation of its coal.

The definitive title of ownership of the mine and the necessary territority for the exploitation shall be delivered to the company when Mr. Arnoux returns from his voyage.

Lichē 9 December 1875.

The royal seal.

AEMD, Afr. 62, fols 281 and 290, slightly different copies of a French text. Fol. 290 has been followed where it is more explicit. This document was not updated to June 1876. Though the possibility that it was finalized on 9 December or 9 Tahsas cannot be excluded, it is placed with the other agreements entered into (or allegedly so) between Minīlik and Arnoux in June 1876. There is every reason to believe that it was sealed then, as were the following documents (nos. 169–171). The places "Teianou" and "Kouéli" have been identified as Ṣhenno and Kulī. The French spellings are included in brackets for easier identification if other French texts are consulted.

Document no. 169

Minīlik: *Mandat politique* for Pierre Arnoux, 16 June 1876

By the present mandate we authorize Mr. Pierre Arnoux, our *envoyé extraordinaire* in Europe, to represent us with His Highness the viceroy of Egypt, and with the representatives of friendly powers of Europe, whether gathered at a congress or separately, on the issue of the policy which Egypt has followed and which she intends to follow in the future with regard to Ethiopia; to demand explanations with regard to the progress of her invasion armies; to inform the powers of Europe about the actual position of Abyssinia and the dangers which threaten her; to defend the integrity of her territory and her independence; to undertake in our name all useful representations with the friendly and Christian powers of Europe in order to obtain a sincere and lasting result true to our desire and our needs; to conclude on this basis a treaty with Egypt guaranteed if possible by the powers; to secure friendly communications with Europe; to establish a policy of peace and security as far as this is possible to achieve. In one word, everything that Mr. Arnoux does in our name for the benefit and the honour of our kingdom will be considered by us as sound and valid, and we approve it all by our royal seal.

Given in our city of Lichē 10 June 1876.

The royal seal.

AEMD, Afr. 62, fols 212 and 279, copies of French text. A copy is also found at the PRO, FO 78/2631, fols 21–22. Of this document and the following two only copies dated "10 June" (for 10 Senē) have been preserved.

Document no. 170

Minīlik: power of attorney for Pierre Arnoux, 16 June 1876

Minīlik II, by the grace of God king of Shewa.

By the present decree we authorize Mr. Pierre Arnoux, our ambassador, to proceed to various governments in Europe;

to sell on the best possible terms the merchandise which we have entrusted to him as samples; to collect the proceeds thereof and the amount which he might realize from it, and make use of this as agreed between us before his departure;

to proceed to the French government in our name in order to conclude a political and commercial treaty between France and Ethiopia;

to found a large Franco–Ethiopian company under our protection to assist in the development of industry and commerce in Ethiopia;

to engage in France, on behalf of the Ethiopian government, capable people specialized in army organisation, engineers, doctors, industrialists, agriculturists, and labourers; to accompany them to Shewa as it has been agreed between us before his departure;

to make purchases on behalf of the Ethiopian government of arms, ammunition, various tools, various merchandise, everything according to what has been agreed before his departure, and in accordance with the instructions handed over.

In one word, because we have great confidence in him, by the present decree we approve as beneficial, sound and valid everything that Mr. Arnoux does for the benefit of our government in Europe.

Given at Lichē 10 June 1876.

The royal seal.

AEMD, Afr. 62, fols 280 and 289, copies of French text. The first of these two copies is dated 10 June, most probably for 10 Senē (=16 June), the second only 9 December. That this document, no less than nos. 168, 169 and 171, was initiated and drafted by Arnoux is quite obvious. Whether they were fully understood or even known to Minīlik and his advisers remains an open question.

Document no. 171

Minīlik: land grant to Pierre Arnoux, 16 June 1876

Minīlik, by the grace of God, king of Shewa.

In order to express to the French merchant Mr. Pierre Arnoux our satisfaction with the services which he has rendered us as well as those which he may still render us, and in order to encourage the introduction of European colonization in my country, we grant and give to him by the present document and with full rights of ownership a district and all its appurtenances as defined by the following boundaries and information:

The river called Awadī (Wadi) rises in the forest of Gedderech (Giderach) in the northwest and turns towards the Awash to the southeast. The torrents of Aramba-Jima (Gimma) and of the forest of Gugguf throw themselves into the Awadī. This river, which shall in its entirety be the property of Mr. Arnoux, is to form the centre and the point of departure of the boundaries of the territory concerned.

1. In the northwest, at the head of the Awadī, the concessionary shall have the right to build dams and irrigation canals on both sides of the river, and to establish works and mills there as is convenient for him. All the land reached by these canals and to be irrigated shall be his property, but the ultimate boundary in this northwest direction will begin at the ravine which cuts the route descending from Meta Amba (Mata Amba) near the Awadī.

2. Starting from this boundary and taking the bed of the Awadī as the point of departure and going towards the southwest one will arrive at the coal mine of Kulī (Kouéli) near Ḍhenno (Teianou).

3. In order to give to this property, and to this projected new European establishment, a healthy site and more elevated land, the same expanse of land as that occupied towards Kulī in the southwest shall be included towards the northeast, always departing from the centre of the river bed. These two delimitations from southwest to northeast shall constitute the full width of this land, having in the middle the Awadī and departing from the ravine which is situated at the bottom of the route of Meta Amba, as has been stated above; in addition the land from the head of the dam beyond where one can take water on both sides of the river further upstream from the limits indicated above.

4. Towards the southeast it shall be possible to expand as far as to the banks of the Awash, in order to be able to make a road for the exploitation of the coal mine also conceded.

The land thus delimited shall comprise a right-angled area the width of about 20 kilometres by the length of 50 kilometres, with Alī Gimb in the centre as a strategic and fortified position.

As of today we put Mr. Arnoux in possession of this property, which shall be guaranteed to him by us and by our successors, according to French law. During his voyage to Europe we shall eject the farmers who are settled in various places, and he shall find it entirely free on his return.

Mr. Arnoux shall be entitled to cede or give away all or part of this land as well as the streams on condition that it will all be utilized for cultivation, for irrigation, or to establish factories. He shall also be entitled and have the right to cut down trees for building in the forests of Gedderech and Gugguf.

Given at Lichē 10 June 1876.

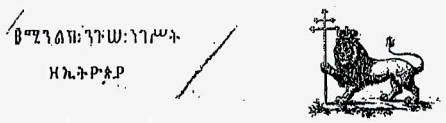
The royal seal.

AEMD, Afr. 62, fol. 291, French translation.

This grant covers a stretch of land on both sides of a contributary to the Awash called Awadī, not far from Ankober. In the French text it is mistakenly called "Wadi". The place called "Mata Amba" is Meta Amba Qilē, named after the Oromo chief Qilē. The French spellings of place names are included in brackets for easier identification if other French texts are consulted.

Document no. 172

Minīlik to Ismā'īl Ibrāhīm, 16 June 1876



ዓ፡ማ፡ቃ፡ ምኒልክ፡ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ይድረስ፡ወዳ፡ከበረው፡ ክፍ፡ ካለው፡ኢስማኢል፡ባሻ፡የግብፅ፡ጣብቻ፡ንጉሥ፡

ካግ ሥር።

የዛሬ፡ ፫ ዓመት፡ከአብራሂም፡ አቡበክር፡ጋራ፡ የሰዓዱልኝ፡ በረከት፡ ፩ኛው ዐ፡ሰገባው፡በር፡ተሰመታጠቂያው። ፩ የፈረስ፡ኮሮጆ፡ ባለቀስብ፡ ፩ቀይ ፡ጋፀህ፡ባለቀሰ ብ፡ ፫ ጠሐረ ያዘ፡ባለቀሱብ፡ ፪ መነፀር፡ ፩ የሰዓቃ፡ ልብስ፡ባለቀስብ፡ ፬ያዘገማዋ፡ ፪ሽ ጕጥ፡ ወርቅ፡ ቅብ፡ዓረሰኛ።

ዓ፡ማ፡መድኃኒ፡ የኃ.አርዉ፡ ዱብዳቤ ፡ ያመሳሽ፡ ያለፈው ፡ ጠየቅቢት፡ስዴጃለሁ፡ስ ሁን፡ ዱግጣ፡አት፡ቄፕሮስ፡ ኑርኩ፡ የፈረግሲስ፡ነገሬ፡ ወዱ፡የው ርም ፡የሚመለስቢሆ ን፡ኑርሱ፡ም፡የማያመጡ፡ለው፡ስለሆነ፡የመንግሥትኅና፡ የንግድን፡ ጉዳዱ ፡ሁሉ፡ከሄዱ ያ ደርግልኛ፡ አዝኃርዋለሁ። ኑርሽ ያ፡ም፡ ዘንድ፡አነዱዳርስ፡ አዝኃርዋለሁ። የተወደደው ን፡ ም ኮቴን፡ አግዱያከረዱ፡ ስለሁለቱ ያ፡ ሕዝብ፡ዱ፡ነገት፡ የጥቅር፡ መግናኑት፡ ው ል፡አግዱ ደዱ ርግ። ከርሱ፡ም፡አኔ፡ ጥቂት፡ የጥቀር፡ በ ረከት፡ ያ፡ሠክር፡ አንዱ ሆን፡ ይቀበሉልኛ። ነ ራስ፡ ብ ራ ፡ ጋራ፡ በ ረከትና፡ ዓ፡በዳቤ፡ስዴ ፡ ፮ሰላለሁ፡ ያሉኝ ፡ ግ ር፡ አለፀ ረስልኛል።

አሁን ያ፡ ጠ ል ካ ያ፡ ሥራትና፡ጥቡብ፡ንግዱ ያ ፡ በአገሬ ፡ አገባለሁ፡ ብዩጋ ያ፡ሬ ፡አአሁ።ዓ፡ማ፡ቅ ያ፡ አግ ሬ ዱ፡ት፡ቴና፡ ከየው ርም፡ ነገ ሥ ት፡ ወዳ፡ት፡ቴ፡ የ ቁ ር፡ መግናኑትን፡ ው ል፡ ያ፡ ዓ፡ርግ ፡ አ ፈ ለ ጋ አ ሁ። ይ ዘ ያ፡ አ ስ ክ፡ ባ ሐ ር፡ ዓ ር፡ ድ ረ ስ፡ ያ ግ ድ ን ፡ በ ጠ ከ ፈ ት፡ ነ ው ፡

የ ር ሱ ያ ፡ ጠ ግ ሥ ት፡ ያ ክ ር፡ አ ኔ ፡ ሥ ራ ፡ በ ር ግ ፡ የ ሚ ዱ ዋ ን ፡ ጠ ሰ ለ ኝ ፡ ን ኩ ሬ ት ቹ ን ፡ ኢ ዋ ት ፡ የ ጠ ጡ ፡ ይ ር ሱ ያ ፡ ጉ ዱ ን ፡ ከ ሰ ዉ ን ፡ ጉ ዳ ይ ፡ ግ ሬ ን ፡ ተ ዋ ጉ ት ። ዘ ሬ ው ያ ፡ አ ሳ ረ ፉ ያ ፡ ከ ኒ ያ ፡ የ ሃ ገ ፈ ኑ ት ፡ ት ገ ሪ ን ፡ ያ ዙ ት ፡ አ ሸ ገ ያ ጨ ው ን ያ ፡ ያ ዙ ት ፡ የ ሸ ዋ ን ፡ ጠ ወ ግ ሥ ት ና ፡ የ ጋ ሳ ን ፡ አ ገ ር ፡ ይ ዘ ፡ የ ነ በ ረ ፡ አ ዳ ኩ ን ያ ፡ ሐ ረ ርጌን ያ ፡ ከ ር ስ ያ ፡ ወ ታ ዱ ሮ ች ፡ አ ጅ ፡ ሆ ነ ። ዛ ሬ ፡ ጦ ሬ ፡ ባ ጠ ገ ባ ች ን ፡ ነ ው ። ፩ ስ ት ኛ ፡ ጦ ር ፡ በ ነ ጫ ፡ ዐ ባ ይ ፡ ወ ጥ ቶ ፡ በ ጋ ላ ፡ አ ገ ር ፡ ታ ያ ፡ ይ ሉ ናል። በ ሐ ረ ርጌ ና ፡ በ ዙ ዪ ፊ ፡ የ ወ ጣ ው ፡ ከ ላ ይ ኛ ው ፡ ጦ ር ፡ ገ ሬ ፡ ጉ ራ ው ን ፡ ላ ይ ፡ አ ገ ዱ ገ ና ኑ ፡ ተ ቃ ጥ ረ ዋ ል ፡ ይ ባ ላ ል። ይ ህ ም ፡ ያ መ ጡ ር ፡ አ ዱ ይ ለ ያ ው ፡ ጉ ሬ ው ን ያ መ ፡ የ ኔ ፡ ጓ ዝ ት ፡ ነ ው ።

Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia.

May [this letter from] Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured, the exalted, Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), king of the land of Egypt, at Cairo (Misr).

I have received the gifts you sent me with Ibrāhīm Abū Bakr three years ago: a curved sword with a sheath of silver together with its belt, a decorated horse saddle, an embroidered velvet cloth, five embroidered handkerchiefs, two binoculars, a coloured tablecloth, four carpets, [and] two gold-plated pistols.

Also, last Meggabīt I sent a reply to the earlier letter. And now, as Mr. Pierre Arnoux (*Ato* Ṗēṭros Arnus), a French merchant, is returning to Europe and, as he is a man I trust, I have ordered him to carry out all government and commercial business for me. I have ordered him to go to you, so that he may explain to you my most cherished wishes, so that he may arrange a treaty with you for the welfare [and] friendly relations of our (lit. the) two peoples.

[Please] accept from me, through him, some small gifts as tokens of friendship. I have not, however, received the gifts and the letter that you tell me that you have sent with *Ras* Birru. And now, I have decided to introduce good organization, crafts and commerce into my country. I also want to create friendly relations and make treaties with my neighbours and my friends, the kings of Europe. This will be [done] by opening a route to the sea coast.

The counsel of your government seems to me to be one that will prevent (lit. close the door) for my work. Your soldiers who have come to make war on my neighbours have attacked Tigray in the south (*sic*) of Ethiopia. Even now, they have not stopped. Those who have split from them have occupied Tajura (Tegorī). They have seized Awsa and the salt. The territories held by the kingdom of Shewa—the country of the Galla and of the Adal, and Harergē—have fallen into the hands of your soldiers. Now the army is close to us. They tell us that another, a third army, has advanced along the White Nile, and has been seen in the land of the Galla.

ከሁን ፡ ይህን ፡ ያህል ፡ መጣ ፡ አንበለው ። የወታደሮችህ ፡ ሥራና ፡ የወዳጅነት ፡ የቀቅር ፡ የጫ ፡ ያሳይ ፡ የፈ ፡ በጽሕፈ ፡ ቃል ፡ የተሳሳለ ፡ እኔ መስለኝ ፡ ም ። እኔ ፡ ግ ፡ የሚ ፡ ያስፈራ ፡ ነገር ፡ ነው ። በዚህም ፡ እኔ ፡ ግ ፡ አዝኘአለሁ ። ነገር ፡ ግን ፡ ከርስህ ፡ አኔን ፡ ወ ፡ ጁ ፡ ያ ፡ ን ፡ ከ ፡ ኔ ፡ ብልሣት ፡ ኔለ ፡ ፩ ፡ ሥልጣን ፡ መጥተው ፡ ኔ ፡ ወጉኖል ፡ አኔ መስለኝም ። ከገራ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሪ ፡ መጥተው ። እኒዜው ፡ ብኝ ፡ አኝዘነኝ ፡ አገኔ ። ነገር ፡ ግን ፡ ኤትዮጵ ፡ ያ ፡ በ ፡ ኔ ፡ ናግተ ፡ ጦር ፡ መከበብ ፡ በዋን ፡ ማሳየት ፡ ኔ ፡ ግባናል ።

ዝራ ፡ በግሐ ፡ ሪ ፡ ኤሮጵራ ፡ ያኑ ፡ በር ፡ ሮች ፡ በ ፡ ሕገኔ ፡ ው ፡ ቂ ፡ ያ ፡ ሮ ፡ ስ ፡ ም ፡ ያኑ ፡ በ ፡ ር ፡ ሮች ፡ ወ ፡ ዱ ፡ ኝ ፡ ኛ ፡ ጨ ፡ ር ፡ ቅ ፡ በ ፡ ተ ፡ ር ፡ ኤ ፡ ላ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ መጣ ፡ ከ ፡ ኦ ፡ ስ ። ነ ፡ ጥ ፡ ባ ፡ ሩ ፡ የ ፡ ወ ፡ ታ ፡ ዱ ፡ ር ፡ መ ፡ ሳ ፡ ር ፡ ያ ፡ ሁ ፡ ኑ ፡ ስ ፡ መ ፡ ጠ ፡ ጠ ፡ ቂ ፡ ያ ፡ የ ፡ ሚ ፡ ሆ ፡ ግ ፡ ኔ ፡ ሁ ፡ ኑ ፡ በ ፡ ሰ ፡ ው ፡ ቅ ፡ ት ፡ ኛ ፡ ለ ፡ ኛ ። የ ፡ ግ ፡ በ ፡ ዓ ፡ ው ፡ ያ ፡ ግ ፡ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ ኔ ፡ ኛ ፡ ግ ፡ ሩ ፡ ኑ ፡ ። ከ ፡ በ ፡ ዘ ፡ ው ፡ ጥ ፡ ቂ ፡ ት ፡ ቁ ፡ ው ፡ ት ፡ ኛ ፡ ዋ ፡ ሽ ፡ ኢ ፡ ግ ፡ ነ ፡ ው ፡ ኛ ፡ ኔ ፡ ግ ፡ ሣ ፡ ት ፡ ኛ ፡ ላ ፡ ኔ ። ይህ ፡ የ ፡ ሆ ፡ ነ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሆ ፡ ነ ፡ የ ፡ ፈ ፡ ራ ፡ ሁ ፡ ት ፡ ሁ ፡ ኑ ፡ ዱ ፡ ረ ፡ ስ ። ይህ ፡ ም ፡ ሰ ፡ ር ፡ ኣ ፡ ም ፡ ሰ ፡ ግ ፡ ዖ ፡ ት ፡ ኔ ፡ ግ ፡ ባ ፡ ል ።

የ ፡ ተ ፡ ጠ ፡ ራ ፡ ጠ ፡ ር ፡ ሁ ፡ ት ፡ ም ፡ ሁ ፡ ኑ ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ማ ፡ ስ ፡ ረ ፡ ዳ ፡ ት ፡ ኑ ፡ ት ፡ ኑ ፡ ር ፡ ኑ ፡ ስ ፡ ኝ ፡ ፡ ሥ ፡ ለ ፡ ማ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ጥ ፡ ኛ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፣ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ኔ ፡ ዋ ፡ ለ ፡ ሁ ፡ ። ከ ፡ ር ፡ ስ ፡ ው ፡ ዝ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ መ ፡ ለ ፡ ካ ፡ ሙ ፡ ን ፡ ፡ ሓ ፡ ሳ ፡ ቤ ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ስ ፡ ለ ፡ ም ፡ ሥ ፡ ራ ፡ ው ፡ ያ ፡ ን ፡ ፡ በ ፡ ማ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ የ ፡ ማ ፡ ስ ፡ በ ፡ ው ፡ ን ፡ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ያ ፡ ስ ፡ ረ ፡ ዳ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ የ ፡ ቀ ፡ ቅ ፡ ር ፡ ኑ ፡ ዋ ፡ ሪ ፡ ው ፡ ለ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ከ ፡ ር ፡ ስ ፡ ው ፡ ፡ ጋ ፡ ር ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ጨ ፡ ር ፡ ስ ፡ ለ ፡ ኝ ፡ ፡ ስ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ ለ ፡ በ ፡ ረ ፡ ፡ ሳ ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ፡ ቡ ፡ ኝ ፡ ረ ፡ ፡ ኣ ፡ ው ፡ ራ ፡ ፡ ኝ ፡ ፡ ያ ፡ ለ ፡ መ ፡ ሓ ፡ ን ፡ ስ ፡ ኖ ፡ ው ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ በ ፡ ማ ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ ለ ፡ ኔ ። ፡ የ ፡ ገ ፡ ግ ፡ ድ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ፅ ፡ ቃ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ዱ ፡ ህ ፡ ዱ ፡ ቅ ፡ ር ፡ ሳ ፡ ዱ ፡ ላ ፡ ለ ፡ ካ ፡ ወ ፡ ዱ ፡ ደ ፡ የ ፡ ሚ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ከ ፡ ዚ ፡ ህ ፡ ም ፡ የ ፡ ሚ ፡ ኔ ፡ ዱ ፡ ዉ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ መ ፡ ኔ ፡ ዱ ፡ ኛ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ በ ፡ ማ ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ ለ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፡ ። ፡ የ ፡ ገ ፡ ግ ፡ ዱ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ፅ ፡ ቃ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ዱ ፡ ህ ፡ ዱ ፡ ቅ ፡ ር ፡ ሳ ፡ ዱ ፡ ላ ፡ ለ ፡ ካ ፡ ወ ፡ ዱ ፡ ደ ፡ የ ፡ ሚ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ከ ፡ ዚ ፡ ህ ፡ ም ፡ የ ፡ ሚ ፡ ኔ ፡ ዱ ፡ ዉ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ መ ፡ ኔ ፡ ዱ ፡ ኛ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ በ ፡ ማ ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ለ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዱ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ ለ ፡ ኔ ። ፡ በ ፡ በ ፡ ረ ፡ ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ፡ በ ፡ መ ፡ ገ ፡ ግ ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ በ ፡ ወ ፡ ታ ፡ ደ ፡ ሮ ፡ ች ፡ ዱ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ አ ፡ ኦ ፡ ኛገ ፡ ዓ ፡ ዱ ፡ ያ ፡ ገ ፡ ዝ ፡ ብ ፡ ፡ የ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ለ ፡ ካ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ፈ ፡ ቃ ፡ ዱ ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ለ ፡ ካ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ያ ፡ ዉ ፡ ኮ ፡ ት ፡ ፡ መ ፡ ሳ ፡ ና ፡ ን ፡ ክ ፡ ዱ ፡ ኝ ፡ ዓ ፡ ያ ፡ ገ ፡ ኝ ፡ ፡ ሸ ፡ ለ ፡ ዚ ፡ ህ ፡ ፡ ኣ ፡ ላ ፡ ፡ ኣ ፡ ር ፡ ኑ ፡ ስ ፡ ኝ ፡ ፡ ሥ ፡ ለ ፡ ጣ ፡ ን ፡ ፡ ሰ ፡ ኖ ፡ ች ፡ ፡ ሸ ፡ ፍ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፡ ኣ ፡ ለ ፡ ኝ ። ፡ እ ፡ ግ ፡ ዚ ፡ ኣ ፡ ን ፡ በ ፡ ሓ ፡ ሮ ፡ ር ፡ ፡ ያ ፡ በ ፡ ሪ ፡ ል ፡ ዋ ፡ ል ፡ ዎ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ፊ ፡ ፍ ፡ ሚ ፡ ዉ ፡ ዱ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ያ ፡ ር ፡ ዝ ፡ ም ። ፡ ኣ ፡ መ ፡ ፣ ፲ ፡ ኣ ፡ ሸ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፡ በ ፲፰፻፷፰ ፡ ዓ ፡ ም ፡ ፡ ሰ ፡ ኔ ፡ ፡ ኽ ፡ ተ ፡ ማ ፡ ፡ ተ ፡ ጻ ፡ ፈ ።



It is said that the one which has come up by way of Harergē and Zeyla and the above army have made an appointment to meet in Guragē. And so this is no secret. Guragē is my domain.

Now, what shall we call this? It does not seem to me that the actions of your soldiers and the words of your letter, which reflect friendship and love, agree. It is a very alarming matter. And I am very grieved by this.

It does not seem [likely] to me, however, that you should come all the way to my country and fight me, your friend, without any reason, without any authority. It disappointed me only for the time being. However, it is our duty to point out that Ethiopia is encircled by your army.

Today the ports on the Red Sea and the ports on the Indian Ocean have prohibited everything except textiles from coming to us. Guns, powder, all military equipment, everything that could serve us for defence is explicitly forbidden. The army of the Egyptians has surrounded the whole country. After a little while it will enter my territory Awash.

If this occurs everything that I feared has happened. And it is necessary that this is pointed out to you. I have sent Mr. Arnoux to you, giving him authority to explain all my anxieties (lit. suspicions) and make clear the good intentions which I have uppermost in my mind regarding the Egyptians, so that on my behalf he may conclude a lasting treaty of friendship with you about the route [and] the port, so that we will not be hindered; so that we may use the middle route that is in the province (*aw–raja*) of Tajura; so that the movement of all merchandise, everything that comes from abroad and everything that goes there, without any exception, is not prohibited to us; [and] so that no [property] of ours is seized by your soldiers at any of (lit. all) the customs posts on the route. I have, therefore, sent Mr. Arnoux, giving him authority so that my good intentions [and] good wishes do not meet with any obstacle. He also has the authority to explain clearly to you what is not mentioned in my [letter]. Therefore, I hope he will get good results from you. May God enlighten you. And may He prolong your life.

Written in the town of Lichē on 10 Senē 1868.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ENA, Soudan 5/2/7, Amharic original; Abyssinie 20/9/1, French translation. Copies of this letter are found in AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 276–78 (Amharic and French), and in FO 78/2631, fols 23-27. "Misr" normally stands for "Egypt", but also "Cairo" as in this letter. The March message referred to has not been located.

Arnoux reportedly arrived in Cairo on 1 December. In a letter to Ismā'īl dated the 12th (Abyssinie 20/9/1, fol. 390) he explained how he had been robbed at Zeyla and had not been able to recover even the official documents.

Document no. 173

Minīlik to Charles Wodehouse, 16 June 1876

ጸግማይ፡ ምኒልክ፣ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ይድረስ፡ወዳ፡ክቡ
ረው፡የአደን፡ሸ፡ም።

የእንግሊዝ፡መንግሥት፡የኢትዮጵያን፡ጉዳይ፡ሁሉ፡እድርግ፡ብለነዋል፡በለ
ስእኩት። የልቤን፡ሐሳብ፡ሁሉ፡ለእንግሊዝ፡መንግሥት፡እንድታሳይልኝ፡ልኬአለሁ።

አሁንም፡መንግሥቴን፡ጠና፡በጠና፡አለራሁ፡ብያለሁና፡ዲስ፡ሳይሳችሁ፡እይቂ
ርም። በእግሬ፡ሥርዓትን፡ብለሳትን፡ፖበብን፡ንግድን፡የሚያገናኝ፡መንገድን፡መክፈ
ት፡ከየውሮፓ፡ነገሥታት፡ጋራ፡አመቺመሳውም፡አየውሮፓ፡የሚገባ፡መንገድ፡አሳያለሁ
አሜሬ፡ሥራየንና፡ሰግንዴን፡ጉዳዬን፡ቢመርቂለኝ፡ቢባርክልኝ፡እንግዴህ፡ከዚህ፡የ
ሚመጡትን፡ሁሉ፡ማጠናናትና፡ተሰፋ፡ያገኛሉ።

ኢትዮጵያ፡ዛሬ፡ታላቅ፡መከራን፡መትጓለጥዋ፡ነው፡ኑርዋን፡ሊያፈርሱ፡ይፈ
ልጋሉ፡የኢስማኤል፡ባሻ፡የወዳጅነት፡ደብዳቤ፡ከውሱና፡ከእነጋገሩ፡ጋራ፡አልተካከ
ለም። ኢትዮጵ ያም፡በይዙብ፡በሰዙል፡በጦር፡መከራ፡ማየተዋን፡ስትሰሙት፡እኩቀ
ራም፡የግብፁውያን፡ጦር፡ትግራ፡ድረስ፡መጣ። ዓላማ፡በ፩ጊዜ፡ዘይሳይም፡እው
ሳም፡አዳሎች ም፡ሁሉ፡ሐረር ጌም፡በኒህ፡ነጅ፡ሆነ፡ይህም፡ሁሉ፡በሕበሻ፡ጦርላ
ይ፡በ፩ጊዜ፡ወረራ፡ሆነ። ዓላማ፡ም ሥጢር፡ያለሆነ፡ያልተሸሸገ፡፩ጦር፡በጥጭ፡ዓ
ለይ፡ዙረዋል፡ሐበሻን፡ለመከበብ፡ሐረርጌን፡ንያዘው፡ጦር፡ንራ፡[illegible]ጉራጌን፡ላይ
ለመግናኘት። ምክር፡ግብፅ፡ኢትዮጵያን፡ለ መያዝ፡ስጣፈን፡እንድትረ ፈግ፡የሚ
ጠራጠር፡ሰው፡የለም። ከስከጠቅም፡መቻ፡ከግዳነነሳ፡ለማድረግ፡በፈቀዳትም፡ጊ
ዜ፡ስመ ያዝ፡ትልልቁ፡የየውሮፓ፡ነገሥታት፡ቱርኮችን፡ማቅም፡ወረራትውም፡ማስ
ጣፊ፡የሚሰናቸው፡እይ መስለኝም፡ከዚህ ም፡በ ፊት፡ዲካሞችን፡የሚያገዙ፡ነበረ፡
የኢትዮጵያን፡ነገሥታት፡ከክስላሞች፡ኑጅ፡ከግዳይወድቁ። ይህም፡ማለት፡የተሸዳበ
ውን፡ሳይማሮታችግና፡አገሬን፡ስማዳን፡መመከት፡ባይሆንልኝ፡ነው። አጥ፡ሄፕሮሰ
አ ርኑ ሰ፡የፈ ረገሲስ፡ነጋዴ፡ወዳ ፡የው ሮፓ፡የሚመ አስ ፡ቢሆን፡አ ርሱም፡የማም
ነው፡ሰው፡ቢሆን፡የመግሥቱን፡የንግድን፡ነገር፡ከግዴ ያዳርግ፡ከአጎተም፡ዘንድ፡
ከግዴ ዱርስ፡የምፈልገውን፡ነገሮ፡ከግዴ ያስረዳልኝ። ከክንግሊዝ፡መንግሥትም፡
ጋራ፡የሚ ያፋቅርን፡ውለ፡ሁሉ፡ከግዴ ያዳርግልኝ፡ስለሁለቱ፡ሕዝብ፡ይጎን ነት፡ሰ
ድ፩ዋለሁ። የተወዳዳ፡የጩኸት፡ደብዳቤየን ም፡ለኢስማኤ ል፡ባሻ፡ከግዴ ያዳር
ስ፡ለኔዋለሁ። ይህም፡የሳነሁት፡ዱብዳቤ፡በችለታ፡ያስቀረው፡ከግዴሆን፡እንግ
ው ለ ም፡ነግር፡አርሳ፡ያሳየው፡ከግዴሆን፡የፈዘን፡የጩኸት፡ዱብዳቤ፡ቅድ፡ለ ሎ

May [the letter] from Minīlik II, king of kings of Ethiopia reach the honoured governor of Aden.

Since the English government has told me that you will handle all the affairs of Ethiopia, I have sent you all my plans (lit. the thoughts of my heart) so that you can show [them] to the English government.

And now, since I intend to strengthen my government more and more, you cannot fail to be happy. I will open a road by which law and order (*sirat*), technology (*bilhat*), science (*tibeb*) and trade will be introduced.

And for imports (lit. whatever comes) from the European nations I shall show the route suitable for Europeans.

If God blesses and approves my work, my methods and my undertakings, all who come here will find encouragement and hope. Ethiopia is at present passing through a very troubled time.

[The Egyptians] want to destroy its [very] existence. The friendly letter of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) is not in line with the agreement, or with what he says. You might have heard that in the south (*sic*) Ethiopia is suffering the hardships of war. The Egyptian army has come to Tigray. And at the same time Zeyla, Awsa, and all the Adal and Harergē have also fallen into their hands. All these attacks on the Ethiopian army took place at the same time. It is also no secret, nor concealed, [that] an army has taken the route of the White Nile in order to encircle Abyssinia and meet the army that has occupied Harargē, in Guragē. No one doubts that the land of Egypt wants to occupy and suppress Ethiopia, and [that it] is prepared to occupy it whenever it likes so that it will never rise

ንድሬ. የውጭ. ነገር፡ ሹም. እንዲ ያሳይ፡ ሥልጣን. አለው፡፡ ከርሱም፡ እጅ፡ ስለዋቅ
በረከት. ፬ የአገሬ፡ ፈረሶች፡ ተቀበልልኝ፡ ፫ ለከበረው፡ የንግሥት. ልጅ፡ ፕረ
ዴጋል. ፩ ለእንቺ፡ የመተዋወቄ፡ ምልክት፡ እንዲሆን.፡ በእጫር፡ ኃይል፡ የጋድመር
ሁትን፡ ጉዳይ፡ ሁሉ፡ በዋቅር፡ እንዲ ጨረስልኝ. ተስፋ፡ አለኝ፡፡ ብርሃንንም፡ ከስከ
ኛ፡ ድረስ፡ ያድርሰው፡ መንገድም፡ ተከዋት. የንግሥት፡ ዜጎች፡ ከስከኛ፡ ድረስ.
ድርሳቸው፡ ለሥራው፡ ሁሉ፡ እንዲ ያግዙነ. ሥራቲም፡ እንዲ ያገቡልነ፡፡ እግዚአብ
ሔርም፡ የንግሥትን. ዕድሜ. ያርዝም፡ የእንግኢዝን. ፬ ድሜ (መንግሥት) ስለመጠበቅ፡ ያ
ንተንም፡ ዕድሜ. ቢጠብቅ፡ እወዳለሁ፡፡ ትልቁ፡ ሐሳቤንም፡ እንዲ. ብዙ፡ አርገሁ
ቀበልልኝ፡፡

አመ፡ ፲ ለሰኔ. ፣ ፲፰፻፰፰ በልቼ፡ ከተማ፡ ተዳፈ፡፡



again. I do not believe that the great European kings are unable to stop the Turks and hinder their invasion.

Earlier, there used to be those who helped the weak in order that the Ethiopian kings would not fall into the hands of Muslims. I am saying all this because it has become impossible for me to save and defend our insulted faith and land.

Mr. Pierre Arnoux (Ṗēṭros Arnus), a French merchant, who often travels to Europe, is a man whom I trust. He intends to come to you and conduct government [and] commercial business, and he will explain on my behalf what I want. I have, moreover, sent him to conclude a treaty of friendship regarding [our] two peoples. I have also sent him to hand over my important letter of appeal to Ismā'īl Pasha. If he ignores it or does not consider it as important, I have authorized [Arnoux] to show the copy of this letter to the Foreign Minister in London.

As a sign of friendship, [please] accept from him a gift of four horses from my country, three for the honoured son of the queen, the Prince of Wales (Prens Dēgal), and one for you, as (lit. to be) a token of my acquaintance [with you]. I have the hope that what I have started will by the power of God be concluded in friendship. And may He grant that civilization (lit. light) reaches us, and may the routes be opened and the citizens of the queen come all the way to us so that they may help us in all matters (lit. works), and introduce principles of government (lit. order) among us.

May God prolong the life of the queen. I also wish that He will preserve your life, so that you may protect the interests (lit. life) of the English government. [Please] accept my great ideas as serious.

Written in the town of Liche 10 Senē 1868.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

IOR, L/P&S/9/53, pp. 609–610, Amharic original; pp, 607–608, French translation, both sealed in blue ink. With *ye-Aden shum*, translated "governor of Aden", Minīlik obviously refers to the British resident. At the time of this letter the position seems to have been vacant with Commander Wodehouse acting for the British government.

Arnoux had written to Aden, 12 October 1876 (pp. 599–600), that all his diplomatic documents had been confiscated at Zeyla. This explains the existence of an unsealed copy of the translation with the note, "Copie des documents officiels qui m'ont été confisqués par Aboubakar pacha". Six weeks later Schneider reported (pp. 603–605) that Arnoux had been set free, and had delivered the original of Minīlik's letter to the British resident.

Document no. 174

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 26 June 1876



المؤيد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الي جناب العزيز الدر الفاخر والطعم اللذيذ محبنا المكرم المحترم محمد راتب باشا المفخم امير الجيش المصري بعد
اهدي ما يليق لجناب محبتكم العزيزه من انواع التكريم والتفخيم والسوال الزايد عن صحة مزاجكم
السليم عسا تكونوا مع كافة جيشكم بغاية الصحه الكافيه كما نحن مع جميع جيوشنا بكمال العافيه
الوافيه ثم انه قد ورد الينا جواب محبتكم المترادفه وباطلاعنا عليه حمدنا الباري تعالي على
صدق الحب والوداد وقد ذكرتم لنا بحضور المحب علي بيك من اخينا العزيز الخديوي المحترم ومحبته
الهديه وجوابات صدق الموده والمحبه القلبيه وها الان القادم اليكم ضابط قضا الدوله شلكه
الوله وليكا موكاس وركي وبجرونو بترسلاس المذكورين قد صار ارسالهم منا اليكم لاجل
تعظيم وتفخيم مرسال اخونا بكما يجب له من التحشيم الواجب لكي يكون وصوله الينا بغاية الشرف
والتكريم فبالوصول لشرف محبتكم فالمتقدم لجهة معرفتكم ليكا موكاس وركي كحسب مرسالته السابقه
اليكم فيكون من ودكم السليم تسليم علي بيك وهدية اخونا المحتشم بيد المذكور ليكا موكاس والموصي اليه
يصير التسليم منه للمذكورين اعلاه ونومل من صدق محبة شرفكم الصادق يكون ارسال المعلومين
بامرع حال كما العشم في صدق محبتكم ومنا اول واخر السلام والتحيات لمعرفتكم العاليه ودمتم
١٨٦٧
حرر
يوم الاثنين ٢٠ باوونه

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

From Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the noble, the splendid pearl and delightful taste, our honoured, respected and beloved Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, the honoured, commander of the Egyptian army.

After presenting manifold [expressions] of honour and respect befitting Your Beloved Excellency and abundant inquiries about your good health, hoping that you together with your entire army are in perfect and complete health, as we and all our army are in perfect and complete well-being. The letter of Your Enduring Loving-kindness has reached us, and when reading it we praised the Creator, the Almighty, for the sincerity of [your] love and friendship.

You mentioned to us the arrival of the beloved 'Alī *Bey* from our dear brother, the respected *khedive,* bringing with him the present and letters of sincere friendship and heartfelt love. Now, the officer in charge of court procedure, *Shaleqa* Alula, *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē and *Bejirond* Gebre Sillasē are coming to you. The aforementioned have been sent from us to you to honour and exalt the messenger of our brother, since proper respect has to be given to him so that his arrival will be in utmost dignity and respect. When they arrive to Your Eminent Loving-kindness, and *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē presents himself to Your Excellency in accordance with our previous letter to Your Faultless Grace, 'Alī *Bey* and the gift of our respectable brother should be handed over to the aforementioned, *Līqe Mekwas* Werqē. 'Alī *Bey* (lit. the former) will be presented by him to the [others] mentioned above.

In view of the sincerity of your eminent friendship we trust that the aforementioned will be sent as quickly as possible, in accordance with the fervour of your sincere love. And from us, first and last, greetings and regards to Your Exalted Eminence. May you live long.

20 Baūna 1867 (*sic*).

Written on Monday.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 136, Arabic original. The date of this letter is obviously 20 Baūna (*i.e.* Senē) *1868.*

During the first weeks of June there seem to have been no direct contacts between Yohannis and Rātib *Pasha*. A fresh attempt to negotiate was introduced with the arrival of 'Alī *Bey* from Cairo on 15 June bearing a letter and presents for Yohannis. The Egyptian demands remained unacceptable, not to say impossible to fulfill. At the top of the list was as before the restitution of the remaining prisoners of war. In a letter reported by Rātib on 21 June (but in all probability not forwarded to Cairo) Yohannis is said to have informed the *pasha* that the twelve who had been staying with the *abun* had all died from their wounds. Evidently Yohannis nevertheless expected to reach an agreement and included his most trusted general *Shaleqa* Alula in the delegation he sent to Rātib with the above letter. In addition to his position as *shaleqa*, Alula at this time filled the office of *līgaba*, a master of ceremonies with great authority at the court.

For the events referred to in this letter, see Douin, III, 3B, pp. 1032–1035; for Alula also Erlich, p. 9.

Document no. 175

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 18 July 1876



المويد من الله يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشه وما يليها

الى الجناب المكرم المحتشم الحسيب العزيز المحترم محمد راتب باشا سردار العساكر المصريه بعد اهدا
ما يليق لجناب محبتكم من التكريم والتفخيم بكما يجب لمقام امانيتكم الشهيم فمن جهتنا نحن
وكافة جيوشنا بغاية الصحه الكامله فعسا تكونوا مع جميع جيشكم بكل الرفاهيه الوافيه
قد وصل الينا جواب محبتكم وبالاطلاع عليه قد شكرنا الله تعالى عليما انتم فيه من اعتداج
المزاج الكريم وصدق مودتكم الصافي السليم قد ورد الينا جوابكم وفهمنا ما ذكرتم عن
عدم مواجهة ولدنا شكله اللوله والمرسلين اليه صحبته لطرفكم فالمذكورين قد رسلوا من
طرفنا لمقابلة المحب علي بيك مع جيشا عزيزا وعدم مواجهتكم مع محبتكم فهو من
عين العقل والصواب خوفتا من المعاتبه اللاحقه بالاحباب ولعل ذلك يكون
خيرا ومنا اول واخر جزيل السلام مع التحان والاكرام ودمتم بالهدو على الدوام ١٢ ابيب ١٨٦٨

حرر
يوم الثلثا المبارك

٢٥ جمادى الثانيه ١٢٩٤

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

From Yohannis, the elect of God, king of kings of Abyssinia and its territories.

To His Excellency, the honoured, respectable, beloved, esteemed and respected, Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha*, commander of the Egyptian forces.

After presenting honour and respect befitting Your Beloved Excellency, as is proper to the rank of Your Noble Trustworthiness—on our side we and all our army are in perfect health, hoping that you and your entire army are perfectly and completely relaxed. The letter of Your Loving-kindness has reached us. When reading it we thanked God Almighty for the stability of your noble disposition and for the sincerity of your good intentions.

Your letter has reached us and we have understood what you said about the lack of an agreement with our son, *Shaleqa* Alula, and those who were sent to you together with him. The aforementioned were sent by us to receive the beloved 'Alī *Bey* with a notable escort (lit. army). The lack of an agreement with Your Graciousness was exactly the correct and logical outcome, fearing the subsequent blame of the beloved. Maybe this is all for good. First and last, abundant greetings with regards and respect from us. May you live in peace for ever.

12 Abīb 1868.

Written on Tuesday the blessed.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 148, Arabic original.

The second and main paragraph of this letter is rather ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so. If one assumes, as we have done, that "the lack of meeting" stands for "the lack of an agreement (*i.e.* a meeting of minds)", Yohannis is here defending *Shaleqa* Alula and his other emissaries for refusing to engage in negotiations. They had been sent to *escort* 'Alī Rubī *Bey*, nothing more. The fear or apprehension would then be the natural consequence of any involvement in the difficult issues, and "the beloved", Yohannis and his court. It is not impossible, however, to read the other side, *i.e.* Rātib and/or Ismā'īl into "the beloved", thus a fear that a rejection of the terms proposed would lead to dire consequences for the emissaries while in the Egyptian camp.

In view of the peace conditions carried by 'Alī *Bey*—besides the restitution of prisoners and captured arms also an indemnity to cover the expenses of the Egyptian expedition (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1033)—it is understandable that Alula did not want to discuss them with Rātib. Obviously Yohannis himself saw no reason to discuss them either. 'Alī was sent back after two weeks at Adwa with the above letter, empty-handed as far as a peace treaty was concerned (*ibid*, p. 1038).

Yohannis had apparently come to the conclusion that there was no use negotiating with or through Rātib. He decided to send a trusted emissary of his own, *Blatta* Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr (see no. 10), to Cairo. Sahlu carried a letter for the *khedive*, which it has been impossible to locate, but which he mentioned in letters of his own while staying in Cairo (nos 190–191). He also carried a letter to the patriarch, Kīrillus V, informing him of the situation in general and of the death of *Abune* Atinatēwos in particular (no. 176).

Document no. 176

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V, 19 July 1876

[From] your true spiritual son, the obedient [son] who listens to parental orders, prostrates himself at the feet of the throne of the Evangelist, kisses the pure hands of the leadership, [filled] with abundant blessings, and asks for your effective prayers [and] for the effusion of divine mercy upon the children of the prosperous apostolic communion, to the father of all, His Beatitude, His Profound Holiness, the ascetic servant, who has received the rod of spiritual leadership from our fathers, the apostles, the glittering pearl of the radiant Church of St. Mark, the light of his evangelical teaching, the father, the master, the patriarch, *Anbā* Kīrillus, the 112th of our fathers the patriarchs who sat on the chair of the succession of Mark the Evangelist in the city of Alexandria and [in] the Negashite kingdom, the beloved by God, the man obedient to his orders, the keeper of his covenant. May God sustain his rule over us in calmness, peace and tranquillity for many years and peaceful eras.

Having prostrated ourselves at the footprints of the pure feet, accepted the blessing of the gracious hands and requested the perpetual prayers of Your Universal Fatherliness, we inform Your Holiness that the noble letter of Your Fatherliness has reached us including the mention of the bond of friendship, referring to the respected amity, which has been firm since ancient times. But enemies of the two noble and beloved countries have now extinguished its flame.

When reading the lines of Your Fatherliness to your spiritual son, joy and happiness overwhelmed us because of your familiarity with our dear brother, the respected and noble *khedive*. O respected, beloved father! Having read your letter, we confirm that what you ordered will be carried out. We have no other desire than the desire of Your Graciousness, since, as you know, there was from ancient times no enmity between us and our honoured brother, neither concerning the borders nor anything else. And there is no reason for this disagreement except the money worship of those who desire the destruction of the two countries. In accordance with your letter to us we have decided to renew the constant friendship and old relationship, to preserve what God has granted us and our brother of royal friendship, and to forgive the aggression that took place.

When we wanted a written agreement for the renewal of friendship, sealed by our seal, so that our name and seal would appear beside the name of our brother, and asked ʿAlī *Bey* to seal it like us—as he was ordered in the letter of our brother, the great *khedive*—he refused, and did not agree to put his seal on behalf of His Esteemed Majesty, our brother, but sent to ask for the permission of His Sublime Majesty. But as for your son, we are intent on the preservation of love, peace and perfect friendship, and desire the fulfillment of reconciliation.

The canons of faith according to the doctrines of the three councils—that is Nicea, Ephesus and Constantinople—have reached us. We have acted in accordance with your supreme orders, and thus seen to it that they be read in the holy assemblies and royal ceremonies. Now we want to tell Your Holiness, our father, the merciful and meek, about what has disturbed us and upset our mind, the passing away of our father, the consecrated shepherd, the pure ascetic, the pious servant, the skilled preacher, the holder of the Negashite mission, our father the metropolitan, *Anbā* Atinatēwos. His death was on 23 Baʾūna 1868. We ask you not to forget us in your prayers. . . .

13 Abīb 1868, Abyssinian [calendar].

ACOP, Arabic original copied by Anṭūn Suryāl ʿAbd al-Sayyid, for his work *Al-Kanīsa al-Miṣriyya al-Qibṭiyya wa-Kanīsa Ithyūbīyā 1855–1909,* Cairo, 1985, pp. 117–129. Despite many attempts it has been impossible for us to get access to the original of this letter. It was sent to Cairo with Yohannis's emissary *Blatta* Sahlu Gebre Igzīʾabihēr, often referred to as Gebre Igzīʾabihēr only (see nos. 10, 175, 190–192).

Document no. 177

Yohannis IV to the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem, 19 July 1876



Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

The Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories.

To the community of Jerusalem, of Dayr al-Sulṭān (Dēr Silṭan), the holy fathers who have forsaken the world, the upright in faith, followers of Christ.

How are you? By the grace of God, [and] the mediation of Our Mother Zion (lit. of Our Mother, of Zion), I and all my army are well. I am rejoicing, rejoice [with me]. In the past your compassion [and] your prayer saved us from many things [and] from much hardship, as it is said, "For the prayers of the righteous help and serve in all matters. By the prayers of the righteous a country is saved." And now, do not forget me in the future, pray for me. For the countless armies of Satan (*Legēwon*) have gone down into their eternal dwelling place. He who has understanding comprehends this.

O my fathers, I have not been able to send you those alms [ordained] from time immemorial because I have no way [of doing it]. Let it not seem to you that I am not paying attention to you. God as well as men know that I am not unconcerned about you. As your father the bishop has passed away, remember him in your communal prayers. All the men that you sent are well. May the peace of God protect you. Amen.

Written in the town of Adwa on 13 Hamlē 1868.

DS, no. 12, Amharic original. The bishop referred to as deceased was *Abune* Atinatēwos, who was reportedly wounded at Gura and died 29 June 1876.

The passage about the armies of Satan (*serawīte lēgēwon*) was misunderstood by the author of the Yohannis chronicle translated and published by Bairu Tafla, *A Chronicle of Emperor Yoḥannes IV*, Wiesbaden, 1977, where instead of *serawīte lēgēwon* we find on pp. 166–167 *serawīte gēdēwon,* translated "the men of Gideon".

Document no. 178

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [July 1876]



Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Walad Inkīl) 1293.

May [this letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach the honoured Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), commander-in-chief of the whole army.

How have you been, really? I am well, thank God. You instructed me, saying, "Go back to your country [and] live in peace. We have made peace with the king. Do not fight with *Dejjach* Haylu." I obeyed and came and camped at Danba. Setting out from Danba, I camped at Bēt Moha. I passed three nights [there]. When I was there, I sent word [to him], saying, "I have not come to fight. You, too, remain quiet." I sent to him, saying, "The *pasha* has not told me to fight." Later he set out from Ṣe'azega and suddenly attacked me at Wekkī Dibba. He himself started the shooting. My men and my son died.

After this I said to myself, what [worse] could happen to me, [and] I fought back. By the mercy of God and the good fortune of our *effendi* I succeeded. I defeated him. But now, I have come and am staying peacefully in my town, Hazega.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 8, Amharic original (referred to as no. 36 by Douin, III, 3B, p. 1037, note 3, probably an Arabic translation). The battle at Wekkī Dibba ("Dubba" in the text) took place on 17 July. The letter was written not many days later. In both places where "Danba" (or "Damba") is mentioned the writer has first written "Daba" and then inserted a ን.

Although Ismā'īl *Pasha* had instructed Rātib only a month earlier to encourage and arm Welde Mīka'ēl against a possible attack, Rātib seems to have tried to keep the two Hamasēn rivals from attacking each other. The battle in fact took place at a very inopportune moment when Ismā'īl's emissary was at Adwa negotiating for peace with Yohannis. For the context, see J. Kolmodin, *Traditions de Tsazzega et Hazzega*, *Textes tigrigna*, Rome, 1912; *Traduction française*, Uppsala, 1915, nos. 247–50; also Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, p. 81; Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 334.

Document no. 179

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Khayrī [27 Aug. 1876]

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that my sons Muḥammad and Kāmil have just returned from Shewa, where they were staying with King Minīlik.

They have come back accompanied by a person of French nationality who is also coming on behalf of the said king and who has [with him] merchandise and Abyssinian servants. When they had arrived at the resort of Mello, which is under our rule, and they stopped to rest there, several individuals of the tribe of Mehammed Hanferī (Ibn Hanfal), who assassinated Munzinger *Pasha* and his followers, attacked them at one go and killed 15 persons. When he saw this happening, my son Muḥammad and his followers fired against them and stopped them, killing more than 700 individuals among them. When they saw their chief killed and defeated by the force which my son had at his disposal they fled utterly defeated. My above-mentioned sons and those who accompanied them arrived at Zeyla in perfect health.

I believe it to be my duty to give this news to Your Excellency.

ENA, Abyssinie 20/9/1, fol. 296, French translation. The document is introduced: "Traduction d'une lettre d'Abou Bekr Pacha . . . en date du 6 chaban 1293" (corresponds to 27 August 1876). It has not been possible to find the original in the Egyptian archives.

In view of the date, which coincides with Pierre Arnoux's return from Shewa to Zeyla, and the fact that Muḥammad Abū Bakr is mentioned in other documents as a member of Arnoux's expedition, actually second in command of the caravan in the minutes of the court case regarding the death of E. Dissard, 29 Jan. 1875 (see no. 125 above), it can be taken for granted that the Frenchman referred to is Pierre Arnoux (see also no. 180). However, no attack is recorded against Arnoux's caravan on its way back to the coast, nor do we know of any other Frenchman who fits the situation described.

The only possible solution seems to be that the letter actually deals with the attack on Arnoux's caravan when it was on its way to Shewa almost two years earlier, the very incident described in document no. 125. The location of the attack, "la station de Mello" in the French text, no doubt refers to a resort, a place with water. Mello could, however, also refer to a subdivision of a clan in control of the place.

Abū Bakr's aim in bringing up that event was, no doubt, to point to the valour of his sons, and no less to the fact that they had revenged the death in November 1875 of Munzinger *Pasha* and his men.

Document no. 180

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to G.R. Goodfellow, 20 Sept. 1876

From Abū Bakr *Pasha*, governor (*muḥāfiẓ*) of Zeyla, to Major Goodfellow.

I inform you that some Abyssinian soldiers of King Minīlik, sent by him with a Frenchman by [the] name [of] Arnoux, came with my son *Ḥājj* Muḥammad Abū Bakr to Zeyla, thence to carry certain presents to Aden. My above-mentioned son brought them safely here and they arrived at Zeyla during my absence in Cairo. In the meantime differences arose between the Abyssinians, the agent of King Minīlik named Gebre Teklē and Yosēf, the interpreter, and thereupon Arnoux brought them before the court (*dīwān*) into the presence of the acting governor and complained against them that they were his servants but that, not being in further need of their services he wished to discharge them or else he would like them to be imprisoned. Then Gebre Teklē replied, "I am not his servant. The property is mine and I am the agent of Minīlik." Then the acting governor asked if he had any proof to show. Then Gebre Teklē showed a letter sealed by the seal of Minīlik to the effect that he was appointed an agent to look after his property. These were the differences that arose between them.

And after this I arrived from Egypt and called them before me, and also sent for the Europeans who were present in the town, and the assembly (*majlis*) decided that Arnoux was in the wrong. Then I settled between them, and Arnoux gave them a letter that he will not again do anything contrary. Afterwards they sent their things to the shore for the purpose of leaving for Aden, and again differences arose between them. Gebre Teklē said that he feared to go in company with that man until he had written and obtained an answer from Minīlik and that he would adhere to what he (Minīlik) might order. I told both parties to write and listen to what he (Minīlik) answers.

As to Arnoux, he was unwilling to write, but the Abyssinians wrote letters and sent them by special messenger and they are now awaiting the answer. They have presents sent with them, horses etc. Gebre Teklē wished to send the horses to your port to the persons to whom they belong, but Arnoux objected and said that he would bring the presents with his own hands to their owners.

Now the present in your name is one horse and three horses for your queen as they have spoken to me. They will not come to you till they receive the answer from Minīlik, and the horses if they remain here will become weak. If you wish send and so say. I will then send them to you and you can write to them, and if you say that they should wait for the answer it is well. As to the Frenchman Arnoux there appeared treachery on his part, and they did not confide in him because he made a wrong complaint against them, and alleged that the property was his, and when we saw this dispute between them we kept them here till they could receive an answer from Minīlik. I do not like them to be detained here but I cannot help it till the answer comes. All certainty of this you will find from Yosēf and the European (*khawāja*).

1 Ramaḍān 1293.

IOR, L/P&S/9/53, pp. 475–478, English translation attached to a letter, dated 29 September, from the political resident at Aden to India Office.

The text is reproduced as in the preserved document with the exception that the orthography has been standardized and the Ottoman terminology translated. The person called 'Kartekly' in the text is no doubt Minīlik's agent Gebre Teklē. The interpreter Yosēf is the famous Yosēf Nigusē, who interpreted in the negotiations between Minīlik and the Italians at the time of the Wiċhalē treaty.

Document no. 181

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [Sept.? 1876]



May [this letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach my master, my friend, the honoured Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), commander-in-chief of the whole army.

How have you been? I am well, thank God. People who lived quietly, hating the king but loving you and me, have been pillaged. I told you before. You said to me, "Yes, I shall have [their property] restored to them." And now, they have again killed people, looted and taken with them 500 cattle and departed. And so, send a letter now to the *nā'ib* and make them restore all the earlier and today's loot before they share it among themselves.

As for Abba Bezbiz, it is by looting grain that he has [something] to eat. Abba Bezbiz has become like this; he has ruined us killing people [and] looting cattle. It is in your hands that their cattle and they themselves are. 650 cattle of Amhur and Qeyih Kor have also been looted.

But the chiefs doing all this [are] *Shum* Aboker, Inda Feqaray Ge'aso; Wed Umaro, Inda Lelish; Umaro Wed *Shum* Abdella, Inda Lelish; *Shum* Mosa, Ishe Lashan; *Shum* Kiya, Inda Sirah.

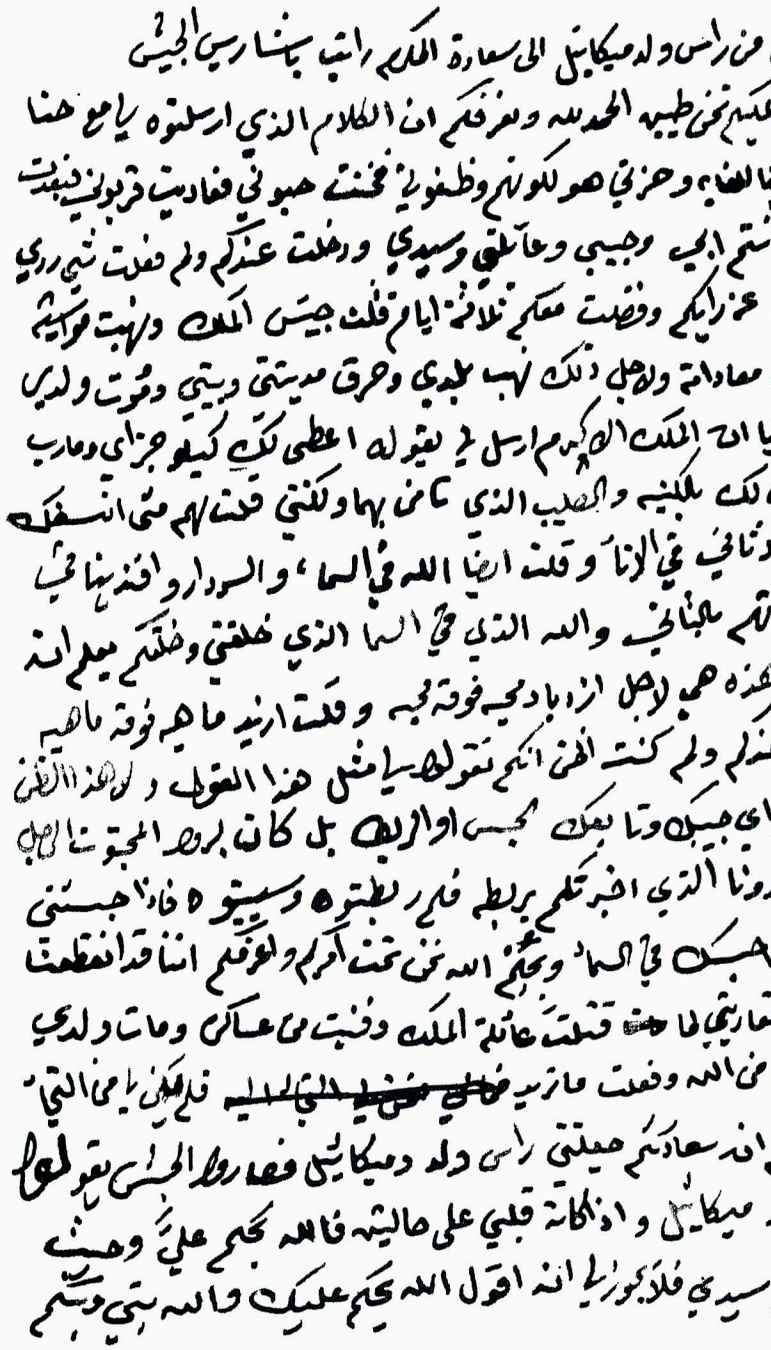
Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 158, Amharic original.

The events described in this and the following letters from Welde Mīka'ēl are difficult to date. Early September 1876 seems a likely date for the above, with nos 183–185 written later that month. The chiefs listed in the last paragraph belonged to the same Arabic-speaking Saho clans as the signatories of document no. 106. *Shum* Mosa, Ishe Lashan, for instance, is almost certainly identical with *Shum* Mūsā 'Asālashīn and "Inda Lelish" above recalls "Dalalīsh" of document 106. We have kept the "Umaro" of the original since it may be a local form of "Umar", as may be the case with "Mosa" for "Mūsā". "Ge'aso" is added to identify the Inda Feqeray in question.

Document no. 182

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [Sept.? 1876]



A letter sent from *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl to His Excellency, the respected Rātib *Pasha*, commander of the army.

After greetings (lit. 'peace be with you')—we are well, praise be to God. We inform you that the message which you sent to me through Hanna made me very sad. My sadness is due to [the fact] that when they appointed me, I betrayed them; when they loved me, I quarrelled with them; when they befriended me (lit. drew me closer), I distanced myself from them. I made you my father, my friend, my family, and my master. I joined you, and I did nothing wrong, I did not disobey your orders, and I spent three days with you. I killed the king's troops and seized his animals and became his enemy.

Because of this he plundered my country, burnt down my city and house and killed my son Mekonnin. The honoured king also sent to me saying: "I give you Akkele Guzay and Mereb Melash, I swear to you by the Church and the Cross in which you believe." But I said to him: "When water is poured out of the jug, it does not return again." And I also said: "God in heaven; the *sirdār* and our *effendi* on earth." Then I turned him down once more. God, who is in heaven and who created me and you, knows that all these actions of mine are for the [purpose of] increasing [our] friendship, and I said [to myself] that I would raise my standing and become [something] great with you.

I never thought that you would say anything like this about me, or have an opinion like this. It is not for someone like me, your friend and follower, to be arrested or chained. Barya'u, that wicked and corrupt man, was our enemy, whom I had asked you to chain. You did not chain him, but released him. If you imprison me on earth, I will imprison you in heaven.

By the law of God we are at your command, and I inform you that I have broken with the king. You became hostile to me when I killed the king's relatives and destroyed his soldiers, and when my son died. Why, if you do not fear God and do what you like—O brother—the appeal is to Him.

Let me tell you that when Your Excellency appointed me *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl, the Abyssinians began to call me "O, *Ḥājj* Welde Mīka'ēl". If I had a divided heart, God would judge me, and since Your Excellency is my master I cannot say, "God judge you". God is [the arbitrator] between me and you.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 7, Arabic copy, or possibly a translation from an Amharic original. It has not been possible to find the original of this important letter. Judging by its content, it seems likely that it was written in September 1876. The French translation provided by Douin (III, 3B, p. 1083, note 1), however, appears in connection with a covering letter(?) dated as late as 1 November.

The second paragraph recalls the battle of Wekkī Dibba and the death of Welde Mīka'ēl's son in July (no. 179), followed by a vivid description of an unsuccessful attempt (apparently not the first) by Yohannis to bring back Welde Mīka'ēl to the Ethiopian fold. This attempt could fit in between Yohannis's mobilization in mid-September and Welde Mīka'ēl's escape to Senhit at the end of the month (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1073–74), but also a few weeks later before the king's return to Adwa on 31 October after having appointed Alula governor (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1082–85). Welde Mīka'ēl gives free course to his remorse and frustration. He had done what he now regretted—and apparently found insufficient support and sympathy from his new masters.

Hanna, known as Welde Mīka'ēl's interpreter, had visited the Egyptian camp several times, and had apparently been dismissed with a harsh message, which added to his master's distress. He was sent to 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Bey* to inform him about Yohannis's attempts to come to an agreement with Welde Mīka'ēl. The Barya'u referred to was a chief in Akkele Guzay who took over Qeyih Kor when the Egyptians withdrew from there in mid-September (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1084).

Document no. 183

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Muḥammad Rātib [Sept.? 1876]



May [this letter] sent by the honoured *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach the honoured Rātib *Pasha* (Ratīb *Basha*), commander-in-chief of the whole army.

How have you been, really? I am well, thank God. I have received everything you sent me, by letter and by word of mouth, through *Dejjazmach* Gebre Maryam.

From the time when *Dejjazmach* Gebre Maryam came to you until now many of my people have died; many of my people have become ill, in addition [there is] starvation and lack of clothes. I am very sad.

Act with your [usual] generosity towards me. Under God, I have no helper other than you and our *effendi*. You [are] my helper; you my master; you my friend. As for me, I would like to come there to see your face, so you could see with your [own] eyes the multitude of my army which is starving, which is ill [and] which is without clothing.

However, I am in trouble because the animals by which I would have transported the sick and the ladies are all dead. 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Bey*'s (Al Adīn *Bē*) men are with me; they know this.

Furthermore, o my master, forgive Hanna for my sake. He told me you are angry with him. If we offend each other, if we do wrong, you must forgive, for you are our father, our friend [and] our master. Through the hands of *Ato* Nemaryam [please] provide food to my army which is at Aylet [and] at Gimhot. To the extent of your generosity send to 'Alā' ad-Din *Bey* here [about] all matters concerning my food supply.

Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 159, Amharic original. The content of this letter leads us to the conclusion that it was written in the same context as no. 181 and 182. *Dejjazmach* Gebre Maryam was one of Welde Mīka'ēl's officers. He had accompanied Hanna to Keren. The message now was that matters had not improved since then.

Document no. 184

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to anonymous [1876?]



The ammunition and the rifles which were deposited with *Shaykh* Al-Qadīm (*Sheh* Alqedīm): 124 bullets, four flintlocks (*balebulad ṭebenja*), which was kept with the companion of Selomon, [and] four rifles with simple cartridges, which was with Deggu.

Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 154, Amharic original and Arabic translation. The brevity of this note makes it impossible to establish when or to whom it was written. All that can be said with certainty is that it was written later than April 1876 when Welde Mīka'ēl began to use this seal (see no. 157).

Note that the Arabic translation has given the the name of the *shaykh* as Ḥaqq ad-Dīn, Deggu is called "Nadgouh", and the number of bullets are 191.

Document no. 185

Yohannis IV to Welde Maryam, 7 Oct. 1876



ወዘ ሐኔ ክ፡ዘ ሥሣ ዩ ወሰ፡ ኤ ግ ዚ ኤ ሽ ሐ ር፡ ዮ ሐ ን ስ፡ ን
ጉ ሠ፡ ን ግ ሥሣ ት፡ዘ ኤ ት ዮ ጵ ደ፡ ወ ንኑ ሉ፡ ኤ ዩ ደ ሚ ላ፡
ደ ዩ ረ ሰ፡ ከ ኣ ጭ፡ ወ ሓ ደ፡ ወግ ር ደ ምሥ፡ ኤ ን ደ ት፡ ኤ ለ
ነህ፡ ኤ ኔ ምሥ፡ ሠ ሐ ጊ ዜ ምሥ፡ ሁ ሉ፡ ኤ ግ ዚ ኤ ዝ ሐ ር፡ ደ ወ
ስ ግ ን፡ ደ ሃ ና፡ ን ች፡ ከ በ ጉ ን ት፡ ኤ ን ዙ፡ በ ክ ሏ ት፡ ለ ሐ መ ጣ
ሁ ምሥ፡ ኤ ግ ሐ ን፡ ለ ወጣ የ ት፡ ን ው። ጉ ር ጣ ሪ፡ ኤ ታ ግ ጣ።
ት ጽ ሐ ሪ፡ ኤ ወሠ፡ ሸ ወ ኟ ለ ወሠ ስ ክ ሪ ምሥ፡ በ ኤ ግ ኤ ር፡ ሰ
ሪ ኒ፡ በ ፲ ወ ፲ ፱ ፲ ወ ፴ ዓ ወሠ ት፡ ምሥ ሐ ረ ት።

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories reach *Ato* Welde Maryam.

How are you? I and all my army are well, thank God. I have not come for evil but for good. It is to visit my country. Do not fear (lit. doubt).

Written in the camp of Agar on 28 Meskerem, in the year of grace 1869.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 149, Amharic original.

The addressee of this letter was at the time acting as interpreter for the Egyptians at Keren. Yohannis was on a campaign to catch and punish Welde Mīka'ēl for his attack on Haylu Tewelde Medhin in July, and apparently wanted to reassure the Egyptian governor 'Alā' ad-Dīn at Keren that he had no intention of attacking him. Rātib *Pasha* reported to Cairo that the letter amounted to a declaration of war (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 1077–78). By claiming, in the very neighbourhood of Keren, that he was just visiting his country Yohannis did, however, give notice that he continued to regard Bogos as Ethiopian territory. In Douin's translation (French typescripts) *bebegunet* (for good) has become a place name "Baba Gonat".

Document no. 186

Minīlik to Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm, 14 Oct. 1876

የተላከ፡ ከንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ ምኒልክ፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡፡
ይድረስ፡ ከሐጅ፡ አቡቦከር፡ ባሻ፡፡ የሐጂ፡አብራ
ሂም፡ ሻሂም፡ ልጅ፡፡
እንዴት፡ ከረምህ፡፡ ፡፡ እኔ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡
ይመስገን፡ ደህና፡ነኝ፡፡ ሠራዊቴም፡ ሁሉ፡ ደህና፡
ነው፡፡ በዘይላ፡ ከተማ፡ የተዳፈ፡ ፪ቱም፡ ወረቀ
ትህ፡ ደረሰኝ፡፡ ፡፡ ያንተን፡ የወዳጂን፡ ምክ
ር፡ የማፈርስ ቦት፡ ምን፡ ጉዳይ፡ አለኝ፡፡ አዋ፡ አር
ኑስን ም፡ ለመልክቱ፡ ለዕቃውም፡ ዓይነተኛ፡ አድ
ርጊ፡ ሰደድሁ፡፡ ገብረ፡ ተክሌን ም፡ አሽ ከሬን፡ ሞ
ት፡ አለ፡፡ መታመም፡ አለ፡፡ ብዬ፡፡ ስለዚህ፡ ነገር፡ ሁ
ሉ፡ በከንቱ፡ እንዳይበላሽ፡ ብዬ፡፡ እንዲጠባበቁ፡
አድርጊ፡ ሰደድኋቸው፡፡ ይግሞም፡ ለሁሉ፡ ነገር፡
መሐመድን፡ አቶ ለይ፡ ብዬዋለሁ፡፡ አሁንስ፡ አንተ፡
ሣለህ፡ ምን፡ የሚቸግር፡ ነገር፡ አለ፡፡ አስታርቀህ፡
አሰማምተህ፡ ስደዳቸው፡፡ እኔ፡ አንድ፡ ጊዜ፡ የቆኖ
ገርሁትን፡ ቃል፡ የምለውጥ፡ አይደለሁምና፡፡ እር
ሱ፡ ያፍርሰው፡ እንጂ፡፡
ነገር፡ ግን፡ ስለ፡ ምልክት፡ መታመኛ፡ እንዲሆነኝ፡፡
ስጠኝ፡ ቢለኝ፡ ከእስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ የመጣልኝን፡ ደ
ብዳቤ፡ ለአዋ፡ አርኑስ፡ ሠጥቼው፡ ነበረ፡፡ አሁንም፡
አንተ፡ ተቀብለህ፡ መልሰህ፡ ስደድልኝ፡፡ ወይ፡ አዋ፡
አርኑስም፡ ደብዳቤውን፡ ስጥ፡ ብዬ፡ ጽፌ አለሁ፡፡
አንተም፡ ከእስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ ሂደ
ህ፡ ባሻ ነቶ፡ መሾም ህን፡ ሰማሁ፡፡ እጅግ፡ ደስ፡ አለኝ፡፡

May [this letter] sent by Minīlik, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach *Ḥājj* Abū Bakr *Pasha* (*Hajj* Abubaker *Basha*), the son of *Ḥājj* Ibrāhīm Shaḥīm (*Hajjī* Abrahīm Shahīm).

How have you passed the rainy season? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well. I have received the two letters written at the town of Zeyla.

What reason do I have to ignore the advice of you, my friend? I have made Mr. Arnoux (*Ato* Arnus) the chief responsible for the letter and the goods, and sent him, as well as my servant Gebre Teklē, saying to myself, "There is death; there is illness." I have sent them, arranging for them to look after each other, so that the whole business will not be spoilt. I have also told Muḥammad (Mehammed) not to separate himself [from them] in any way (lit. in all things).

And now, as you are there, what problem could there be? Reconcile them, make them agree, and send them on. For I am not a man who changes what I have once said. But he may break [his word].

However, since he asked me to give him something to serve him as a sign that he was to be trusted, I gave Mr. Arnoux the letter which had come to me from Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). But now, take it [from him] and return it to me. I have also written to Mr. Arnoux to hand over the letter.

ይልቁንም፡ ከለኔ፡ ሁነህ፡ ከምሥር፡ ንጉሥ፡ ከኤ
ስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ ጋራ፡ መነጋገር፡ ህ፡ ማኅተ ምህንም፡
መ ከጠትህ፡፡ አለልክ፡ ደስ፡ አለኝ፡፡
የአባ፡ ዋጠውንና፡ የጅማ፡ አባ፡ ጅፋርንም፡ ነገር፡፡
ኋላ፡ የምሥራ፡ ንጉሥ፡ የኤስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ ደብዳ
ቤ፡ ሲመጣልኝ፡፡ ምላሹን፡ ሁሉ፡ ኤጽፋለሁ፡፡ ኤኔ፡ ወ
ዳጅነትን፡ ከመ ፈለጎ፡ በቀር፡ ሌላ፡ ጉዳይ፡ የለኝም፡፡
ከለኔ ም፡ ከኤስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ በረከት፡ ኤንዳመ°ህ
ልኝ፡ ሰማሁ፡፡ ፡፡ የጥርኝ፡ ድመትም፡ አከፈ
ልጋለሁ፡፡ ኤስማኤል፡ ባሻ፡ የጫፈቅዱትን፡ ነገር፡
ሁሉ፡ አደርጋለሁ፡፡ ኤኔ፡ የምፈቅደውን፡ ነገር፡ ሁሉ፡
ባንተ፡ ደብዳቤ፡ ለኔ፡ ኤንዲያስቡልኝ፡ አየሁት፡፡
ቲያን፡ ገዝቶ፡ የሠጠህን፡ ገንዘብ፡ ሁሉ፡፡
ከኢጣልያም፡ የመጣልኝን፡ ከርቱኽ፡፡ የነአባ፡ ማከያ
ስንም፡ ሣጥን፡ ሁሉ፡፡ ሌላም፡ ዕቃ፡ ደጋሞ፡ መጥቶ
ልኝ፡ ኤንዳሆነ፡፡ ካንተ፡ ያለ፡ ዕቃ፡ ሁሉ፡ የኔ፡ ነውና፡፡
ቶሎ፡ ብለህ፡ ከደጅልኝ፡፡
ሠፈር፡ በመጣ፡ ጊዜ፡ ስለ፡ ባሻነት፡ ሹመት፡ ከለመ
ቀበልህ፡ ደስታ፡ የምሥራቹህን፡ ኤሰድልሃለሁ፡፡

በ ፲ ፳ ፻ ፷ ፱ ዓመት፡
በጥቅምት፡ በሯቀዋ፡
ቅዳሚት፡ በልቺ፡ ከተ
ማ፡ ተጸፈ፡፡



I have heard that you went to Ismā'īl *Pasha* and were appointed to the rank of *pasha*. I am very pleased. Above all, I am happy beyond measure that you discussed on my behalf with Ismā'īl *Pasha*, the king of Egypt, and handed over your seal.

I shall write the full reply about the matter of Abba Waṭew and Jima Abba Jifar later, when I receive the letter from the Egyptian king, Ismā'īl *Pasha*. I have no other purpose than to seek friendship. I have also heard that you have brought gifts for me from Ismā'īl *Pasha*.

I shall have [people] search for a civet cat. I shall do everything that Ismā'īl *Pasha* wishes. I noticed in your letter that he shows concern for me with regard to everything I want.

All the goods that Tian (Tīyan) bought and gave you, and the cartridges that have arrived from Italy for me, and all *Abba* Massaja's and his people's boxes, and any other goods that may have come for me, send them to me as quickly as possible, as all the things that are with you are mine.

When I reach the camp, I shall send you your congratulation presents for the happiness of your receiving the rank of *pasha*.

Written in the town of Lichē, on Saturday, the 5th day of Ṭiqimt in the year 1869.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ENA, Soudan 5/2/3 (seems also to have been numbered 5/2/8), Amharic original.

Minīlik had entrusted his mission (at least as far as Aden) jointly to Arnoux and one of his own staff named Gebre Teklē (see nos. 180 and 202). For some reason the two had quarrelled, and Abū Bakr was detaining them at Zeyla. The letter shows that Minīlik did not fully trust the Frenchman, and so wanted to reduce his authority by withdrawing the letter from Ismā'īl which Arnoux carried as evidence that he was in the confidence of the king of Shewa.

Document no. 187

Minīlik to Victor Emmanuel II, 14 Oct. 1876

Letter of Minīlik, king of Ethiopia, addressed to His Majesty Victor Emmanuel, king of Italy.

How is Your Majesty? As for me, I am well, thank God. All my army are well.

I have received the letter of Your Majesty. I have accepted the gifts which you have sent me with so much more pleasure because they are the product of the industry of your kingdom. We have recognized that Italy is not inferior in competence to any other country.

The emissaries of the Geographical Society were received with the greatest respect by us on their arrival. In accordance with the custom of my country I shall take all measures so that they will lack nothing and that their hearts will be content.

As for sending them to the south as far as the equator, it is my duty to make Your Majesty aware that these regions are not in my hands, and that I am unable to do that. As far as to the frontiers of my kingdom I can and will protect them. Outside my boundaries I fear that some accident may happen to them. This is why I notify Your Majesty in advance so that our mutual friendship will not be troubled.

Written at Lichē, our royal city, on the 5th of Ṭiqimt in the year 1869 (Abyssinian calendar), the 14th of October 1876.

Place of the seal.

ASMAI, 36/1–6, fol. 918, French translation. As in the case of several other letters to Victor Emmanuel, it has been impossible to locate the original of this letter in the Italian archives. An Italian translation appears in *BSGI*, Serie II, 1, (1876), p. 671, together with a long letter from the explorer Orazio Antinori dated 13 November.

The emissaries, who reached Lichē 28 September and were received by Minīlik on 7 October, were Antinori and Giovanni Chiarini (Giglio, pp.137–139).

Document no. 188

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 23 Oct. 1876



መልእክት፡ዘሥዩመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ዮሐንስ፡ንጉሠ፡
ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ወዝኩ፡እድያሚሃ፡ይድረስ፡
ክሬትብ፡ባሻ፡ሊቀ፡ሠሬዊት፡ዘምስር፡እንዲት፡ስነ
በትህ፡እኔም፡ሠሬዊቲም፡ሁሉ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመ
ስገን፡ይህ ና፡ነኝ፡ይብዳቤውም፡እስካሁን፡መዝግየቱ፡
እኔ፡ወዲህ፡ገሥግሺ፡ስመጣ፡እስተርጓሚ፡እድዋ፡ቀር
ቶ፡ያ፡ተገልብጠ፡እስኪመጣ፡ነው፡፡ የይብዳቤው፡ቃ
ል፡መልካም፡ነው፡፡ምላሹን፡ግን፡አለመስይዲ፡ወይ፡
እስማኤል፡ባሻ፡የሰይይሁት፡ይብዳቤ፡ምላሹ፡ስይ
መጣልኝ፡አይገባም፡ብየ፡ነው፡፡ተጽሕፈ፡በይም በዛ፡
ሰፈር፡እመ፡፲ወ፬ለ ጥቅምት፡በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፱ዓመ
ቲ፡ምሕረት፡፡

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the letter of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and all its territories, reach Rātib *Pasha* (Ratib *Basha*), commander of the army of Egypt.

How have you been? I and all my army are well, thank God. [The reason] why the letter has been delayed until now is that when I came marching here the translator remained at Adwa [and I had to wait] until that [other letter] had been translated and come here. The words of the letter are good. [The reason why] I am not sending the reply, however, [is that] I believe it is improper to send [it] until the reply to the letter I sent to Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) has come.

Written in the camp of Dembeza, on the 14th of Ṭiqimt, in the year of grace 1869.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 151, Amharic original.

Yohannis's letter to Welde Maryam at Keren (no. 186) had provoked Rātib to write to the king that if he had any communications to make they should be addressed to him (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1082). The above is Yohannis's reply—an excuse why Rātib had had to wait some days for a reply, and a reminder that the king was negotiating with the *khedive* himself and still waiting for a reply through Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr (see nos 175–176).

Document no. 189

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Rātib, 30 Oct. 1876



መልእክት፡ዘሥዩመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ዮሐንስ፡
ንጉሠ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ወኵሉ፡አድያሚሃ፡፡
ደድረስ፡ከክቡር፡ወሕፉር፡መሐመድ፡ሬትብ፡ባሻ፡
ሌቀ፡ሠሬዊት፡ዘምስር፡እንዴት፡ሰንበትህ፡እኔም፡
ሠራዊቴም፡ሁሉ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡ይህና፡ነ
ኝ፡ደብዳቤአችሁም፡ደረሰኝ፡ስለጤናችሁም፡እግዚአ
ብሔርን፡እጅግ፡አጥብቴ፡አመሰገንሁት፡፡ብላቴ፡ገብረ፡እግ
ዚአብሔር፡በመዘግየቱ፡አዝኘ፡አለሁ፡የቤተ፡መንግሥት፡ቁ
ርጥ፡አንድ፡ቀን፡አደደለም፡ተጽሕፈ፡አመ፡፲ወ፩ለጥቅምት
፡በጉራ፡ሰፈር፡በ፲ወ፰፻፰ወ፱ዓመተ፡ምሕረት፡፡

Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the letter of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia and its territories, reach the honoured and venerated (lit. feared) Muḥammad Rātib *Pasha* (Mehammed Ratib *Basha*), commander of the army of Egypt.

How have you been? I and all my army are well, thank God. Your letter has reached me. I praised God with all my heart for your health. I am sorry *Blatta* Gebre Igzī'abihēr has been delayed. Is not one day [sufficient] for a final decision by a government?

Written in the camp of Gura, on the 21st of Ṭiqimt, in the year of grace 1869.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 153, Amharic original.

Whatever Rātib answered to Yohannis's letter of 23 October, it is obvious from the above that the king was not prepared to deal with Rātib any longer. Nevertheless, and in spite of the sarcastic question ending the letter, Rātib characterized it as "moderate in contrast to his earlier letters". Note that Yohannis begins by addressing Rātib in singular as usual, but changes to the plural when he refers to the letter received.

Document no. 190

Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Jules-Alexis Des Michels, 7 Nov. 1876

May God give you a long life, and heap blessings upon you.

I will tell you why I have come here from Abyssinia—and my anxieties. A man named 'Alī Bey came to our king (lit. *sulṭān)* with gifts and a letter from Cairo for His Majesty Yohannis. He entered the city of the king with honour and was received by him with honour as well. They accepted from him everything he brought, letter and gifts. He stayed with us for fourteen days, and then he was dispatched for his return. The king spent a lot of money for him and [provided] soldiers with a band to escort him to Rātib *Pasha*. Then the king sent me with him in order that we proceed together to Cairo. Rātib *Pasha* detained him but, as for me, he did not detain me.

Among people who do not even worship God, the envoy must be able to leave.

Since my arrival in Cairo seventy-five days have passed, [but] the man who rules in Cairo has not received the gift I have brought with me. Now I desire from the consul general (*M. le Consul général*) that he arranges for me to be received by the man who rules in Cairo, and that the latter accepts the gift which I have. I want to return to my country according to the order of the king, my master.

May God preserve the French government. We are all one in religion and baptism. Remember me in your heart.

3 Hidar 1869.
7 November 1876.

Signature and seal of Gebre Igzī'abihēr (God's slave).

AECP, Égypte 58, fols 410–411, French translation. The letter is actually signed 'Guérek Zaher', which obviously stands for 'Gebre Igzī'abihēr'. The envoy's full name was Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr (see no. 10).

Sahlu had been sent to Cairo by King Yohannis for two purposes. He was to negotiate peace with Egypt when negotiations with Rātib *Pasha* led nowhere. Secondly, he was entrusted with the mission of bringing a new bishop to replace *Abune* Atinatēwos (no. 176). He had arrived at Suez 28 August. *Khedive* Ismā'īl had refused to see him, and he remained an unwilling guest at the *masāfarkhāna al-khadiwiyya*, (abbreviated "sefrehana" in the Amharic text of no. 192) for several months. Only in early December, after the French and British consuls had intervened, was he allowed to return to Ethiopia (Douin, III, 3B, pp. 1091–92).

This was by no means Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr's first mission to Cairo (see ACTA II, no. 243, and no. 10 above). Once a customs officer at Adwa known as *Basha* Mehammed, he had accepted Christianity and was then called *Basha* Gebre Igzī'abihēr (see ACTA II, no. 57), later *Blatta* Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

Document no. 191

Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Antoine d'Abbadie, 23 Nov. 1876

ዛቲ ፡መልእክት። ተብጻኅ ፡ኅበ ፡ክቡር ፡ወልዑል ።ማዕምር ፡ወጠቢብ ።እግዚአየ ፡ወፍ
ቁር ፡ሼታ ፡እንጠን ዮስ ፡ደብዳቤ ፡ሄዘ ፈ ፡ተእዝዘ ፡በመንግስተ ፡ሰይመ ፡ፈራንሳ ።
ሰላም ፡ስከ ።ወሰላመ ፡እግዚእነ ፡አ ዮሱስ ፡ክርስቶስ ።የሀሉ ፡ምስሌከ ።ወምስለ ፡ኵሎሙ ፡
አህዋ ከ ፡ወአዝማዲከ ።አሜን ።እምኀ ፡ጊ ፡ኀበ ፡ጊ ፡የሰማዩ ፡የምድሩ ፡ያህል ።እንዴት ፡
አሉ ።ከተለያየነ ፡እስከአሁን ፡ድረስ ።ክርስቶስ ፡ከተወለደ ፡ባ፲፰፻፷፩ ፡ዓ ፡ም ፡ወደ ፡ግብፅ ፡አመት ፡
ምስር ፡የመጣሁኝ ፡ጊዜ ፡፡ጳጳስ ፡ልወስድ ፡መረቀት ፡ሰድጀሰ ፡ነበር ሁ ።የዛሬ ፡፭ ፡
አመት ፡ከንድ ፡ከባንያ ፡ፈረንሳዊ ፡የሰደደልኝ ፡መረቀት ፡ደረሰኝ ።እኔ ፡ግሞ ።
ምላሽ ፡መረቀት ፡ሰድጅ ።ነበር ሁ ።የምሰደው ፡መረቀት ፡ሁሉ ፡ደረሰዎኝ ።አሁንም ፡
አጤ ፡ሮክንስ ፡የኢ ትዮ ጵያ ፡ንጉሥ ፡ልክውኝ ።ወደአስማኤል ፡ባሻ ፡አልኽቤደዊ ።
ወደ ምሰር ፡መጥቼ ፡ከሰፍረኽና ፡ተቀመርኩ ፡አለሁኝ ።ራስ ፡ሚክኤል ፡ደበደ ።ሸርሱ ፡
ደብድ ።ኑሯቸው ፡ሁሉ ፡ደህና ፡ናቸውን ።እንዴት ፡አሳች ሁ ፡ብሉ ፡አስ ፡ብሰው ፡ሰዓምታ ፡
ይንገሩልኝ ።የተለከ ፡ከብሳታ ፡ገብረ ፡እግዚአብሔር ፡ስዩመ ፡አድአቡ ፡ንጉሥ ፡ኢገሪንሲ ፡አገር ፡
ሱንደ ፡ሮማ ፡ከርሰ ፡ጋራ ፡መኖች ፡የነበር ሁኝ ።የልቡናዬ ፡ሁሉ ፡ወረቀት ፡ዝፈ ፡እንደ
ልሰድለ ፡ዓይመስኝ ፡ነው ።ወረቀት ፡ይስደልኝ ፡እንደ ሞነ ፡ተሰ ፡ብሰው ፡ይሰደዲልኝ ፡
ባ፲፰፻፷፱ ፡ዓ ፡ም ፡ወልደ
ተ ፡ክር ስቶ ስ ፡አጠ ፡አልሰረ ፡መኸሰ ፡ ሳህለ-ግብረ እንግዚአብሔር በፈ ረንጅ ፡ወርሀ ፡ቲ ፡ፕ ፡ር
ሰላሳደር ፡ተጽህፈ ፡ዘምሰር ፡ከተማ ፡ ፳፰ ፡ቀን ፡ምዓት ።
ባቡሰት ፡እደ ክሩ ኒ ።

May this message reach the honoured and exalted, the learned and wise master and friend of mine, Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (*Gēta* Inṭoniyos Dabedī), the appointed chancellor (*ṣehafe ti'izaz*) of the government of France.

Peace be to you, and may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all your brothers and sisters. Amen. How are you, really, really, to the extent of heaven and earth, from the time when we parted until now?

In the year 1861 after the birth of Christ, when I came to Egypt to take with me an archbishop, I sent you a letter. I received the letter you sent to me five years ago through a French company. I also wrote you an answer. Have you received all the letters I have sent? And now *Aṣē* Yohannis has sent me to Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), the *khedive*, and I have come to Egypt and am staying in the [*khedivial*] guesthouse (*sefrehana*). How are *Ras* Michel d'Abbadie (Mīka'ēl Dabedī), Charles d'Abbadie (Sharlo Dabedī) and all your sisters? Tell [them] for me that I sent greetings (lit. said, "How are you?"). [This is] sent by *Blatta* Gebre Igzī'abihēr, the ruler of Adi Abun. I was together with you, travelling (lit. coming) to France, London and Rome. It is because I did not get an opportunity that I did not write to you and send you a letter about everything I have in mind. If you are going to send me a letter, send [it] to me quickly.

Written in the city of Cairo (Misr), in Bulaq Idekrunī, in [the year of] the birth of Christ 1869, on the 15th of Hidar; according to the European calendar (lit. month) 23 November.

Seal: Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 252, Amharic original.

As this letter indicates, Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr was an old acquaintance of Antoine d'Abbadie. The letter he says he wrote from Egypt in 1869 is in all probability no. 10 above.

Document no. 192

Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr to Muḥammad Rātib and Muḥammad Rif'at, 25 Dec. 1876

ትብጻህ፡ኀበ፡ክቡር፡ወልውፍ፡ርዕሰ፡ሰራዊት፡ስርዳር፡ዘመንግስት፡ምስር፡ራትብ፡ባሻ፡ሰላመ፡እግዚአብሔር፡የሳሉ፡ምሰሌክ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ይዕቀብክ፡ወእግዚአብሔር፡ይፈውስ፡ህማመክ፡ወአመ፡አሰነይክ፡ጥሮት፡አመሃሁ፡ያሰኒ፡ለክ፡ፍሮተ፡ሐገርክ።ገባእኩ፡ኀራ፡ኩ፡በሰላም፡ምስለ፡ሰብአየ፡ወጓዋይየ።ሽችተውኝ፡የመጡ፡ወታደሮችም፡አስተ፡አይደሉ፡ድረስ፡የራስ፡አርአያ፡ሰው፡ይሸኖች፡ብለውኝ፡ነበር።ራስ፡አርአያ፡ርቀው፡ቁዩ፡የራስ፡አርአያ፡የ ሽችታ፡አስቲ፡መጣ፡ድረስ፡ቁዩ፡ብሳችው፡ቀኑ፡ይበዛብናል፡አስተ፡ቀይህ፡ኮር፡ሽችታ፡ስጠኒ፡ከዝያ፡ወድያ፡አገራች ን፡ነው፡አሉኝ፡አሺ፡ብዬ፡አስተ፡ቀይህ፡ኮር፡አሽነ ኪችው።ፎአ ቀልኑች።ፐ ፎ።ግመል፡የሰጡኝ ን፡ምናምን፡የ ኖነ፡የሰጠ፡ደህና፡ሰደድ ኪችው።

ዘፐወፎፎ ፎወፎ፡አመት፡ተጽሕፈ፡በተህሣሥ፡ሃስራ፡ሰባት፡ቀን፡በጉራኔ።



ሰላም፡ለነ፡ቅቅርየ፡ጣዕምር፡ወጠቢብ፡ትሁት፡ወየዋህ፡መፍቀሬ፡እግዚአ ብሔር፡ወሰብኣ፡ሠናየ፡ምግባር፡ወጥዑመ፡ቃል፡ርዱእት፡ዘ፡ሄቤ፡ፍቁርክ፡ክሳ ቶ፡ብር፡እግዚአብሔር።



May [this letter] reach the commander-in-chief of the government of Egypt, Rātib *Pasha* (Ratib *Basha*).

The peace of God be with you. May God protect you and cure your illness. As you have made my way easier, may [He] likewise improve the fate of your country.

I have reached the land of Gura in peace, together with my people and my belongings. You told me that your soldiers, who have escorted me, should be escorted [back] by *Ras* Araya's people as far as Ay Derso. [But] *Ras* Araya remained far away.

When I told them to wait until the escort from *Ras* Araya had arrived, they said that the delay would be too long. They said, "Give us an escort as far as Qeyih Kor. From there on it is our country." I said, "All right", and had them escorted up to Qeyih Kor. Nothing has happened to the 3 mules and the 12 camels which you gave me. I have sent them back in good shape.

Written at Gura in the year 1869, on the 17th of Tahsas.

Seal: Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr. Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

Peace be to you my friend, the learned and wise, the humble and guileless, the beloved of God and men, the virtuous and eloquent Rif'at *Bey* (Rifat *Bē*), says your friend *Blatta* Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

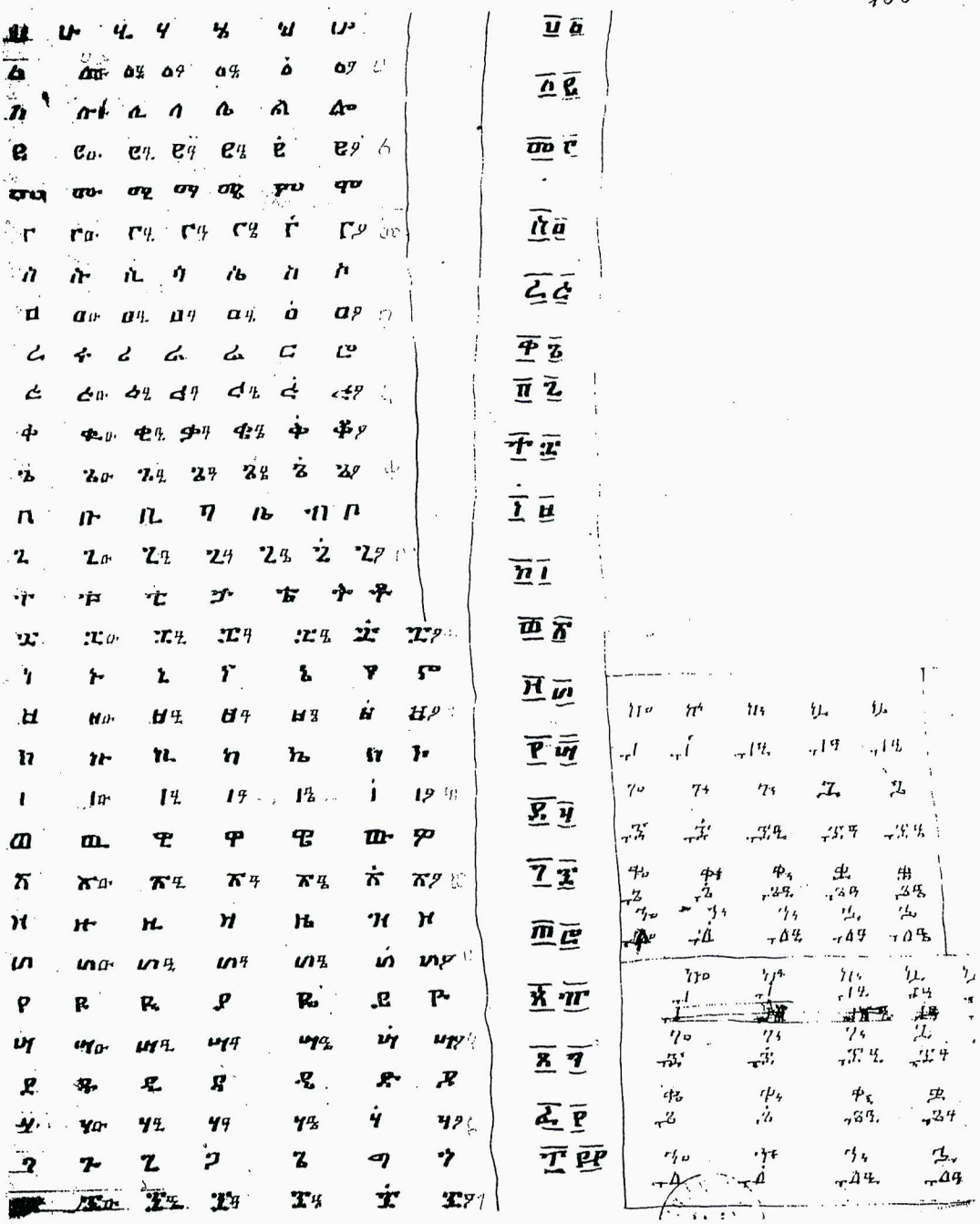
Seal: Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 150, Gi'iz/Amharic original. Having signed and sealed the letter the writer decided to add the greeting to Rif'at *Bey*, addressing it in direct form.

After more than three months Sahlu Gebre Igzī'abihēr returned to Ethiopia without having accomplished any of his two missions (see nos 175 and 176). Ismā'īl's reply to Yohannis was a brief and formal acknowledgement of the letter and gifts received, but contained no reference whatsoever to the terms of a future peace, only the expressed hope that Yohannis would take good care of their mutual friendship. As for the new bishop, as late as 22 November, Rātib had advised the *khedive* that if Sahlu demanded a bishop the matter should be dragged out, for "the king of Abyssinia cannot be regarded as such unless he has with him an Egyptian bishop. As long as this bishop is absent, the sovereignty of the king of Abyssinia does not exist" (Douin, III, 3B, p. 1092).

Document no. 193

Asseggaheñ to Antoine d'Abbadie, 21 Jan. 1877



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ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ
ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ሬ	ር	ሮ
ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ስ	ሶ
ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ
ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ
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ማረፊያ

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ፀ ፁ ፂ ፃ ፄ ፅ ፆ

ፈ ፉ ፊ ፋ ፌ ፍ ፎ

ፐ ፑ ፒ ፓ ፔ ፕ ፖ

ቅድመ ቀዳማይ ፡ ካልኣይ ፡ ሳልሳይ ፡ ራብዓይ ፡ ሓምሻይ ፡ ሳድሳይ ፡ ሳብዓይ ፡ ሸሞንተ

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ሐ ሑ ሒ ሓ ሔ ሕ ሖ

መ ሙ ሚ ማ ሜ ም ሞ

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ረ ሩ ሪ ራ ሬ ር ሮ

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[illegible]

To Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie (*Ato* Inṭoniyos Ze'abadīye), who lives in Paris.

How are you, really? I had not heard any news about you until now. But recently I received [some]. Do not forget me. There were many persons who were more learned than I [am]. All of them have died. By the grace of God I am still alive. And now I am about to go to my country. I beg you to send me knives, razor blades and scissors.

This alphabet has exhausted me. It was very difficult for me.

Why has no bishop come? I believe the dignitaries of Ethiopia would be pleased if a consul were to come now. It would be good if he lived at Adwa.

Written in the year 1869 of the birth of the Lord, on the 14th day of Ṭirr.

When I discovered this new alphabet, I was very happy. It is necessary to look at its rules very carefully. Otherwise it will not be understood. I was able to read it after having examined it several times.

(Conjugation of the Gi'iz verb *a'imere*).

To Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie, Paris, House [no.] 104.

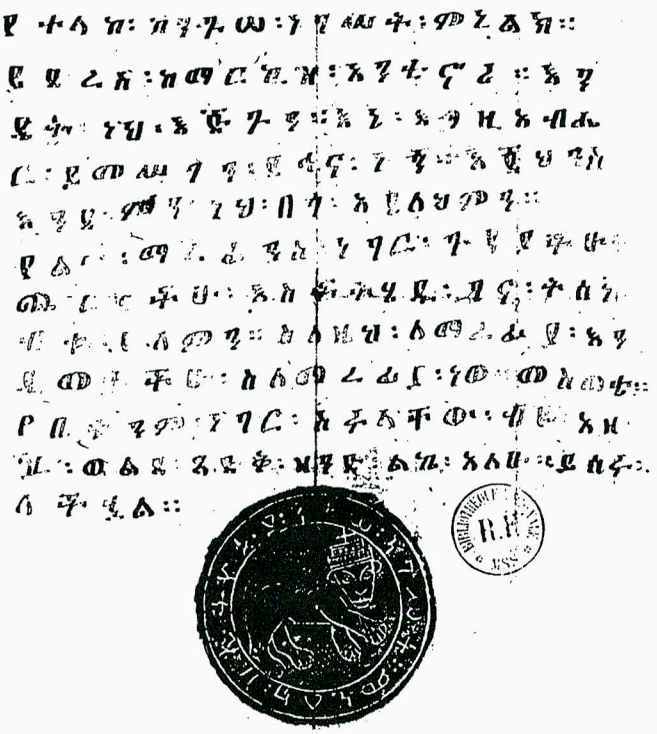
Debtera Asseggaheñ from Gult in Wadla.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 289–90 (also numbered 166–167), Amharic original.

Debtera Asseggaheñ's main purpose with this letter was quite obviously to communicate a new variant of the Ethiopian alphabet to Antoine d'Abbadie. He started by providing a table of the symbols on the *recto* and in a left column on the *verso* of the first folio (pp. 271–272 here). The word *arebī* and the names of the seven days of the week are inserted in this column. Then the text of the letter itself follows in the right column of the *verso*, with the short note about the alphabet at the bottom of the left column. On folio 290 the conjugation of the Gi'iz verb *a'imere* appears in both alphabets, followed by d'Abbadie's name and address and Asseggaheñ's signature, also written in both alphabets.

Document no. 194

Minīlik to Orazio Antinori [Jan? 1877]



May [this letter], sent by King of Kings Minīlik reach Marquis Antinori (Markīz Antīnorī). How are you really? I am well, thank God. And how is your hand? Is it (lit. are you) not well?

Will you not stay for a while until you have finished your business of Liṭ Marefīya, and [then] leave? The reason I gave it to you for a residence is that you should have a suitable place to stay at (lit. rest in). As for the house, I have sent to *Azzazh* Welde Ṣadiq to build it for you. They will build it for you.

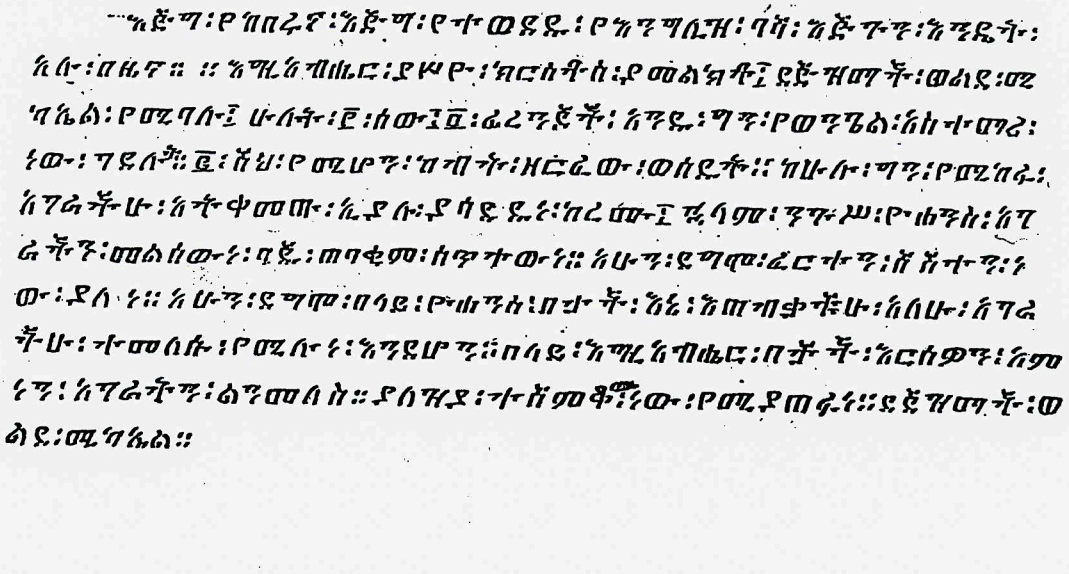
Seal: King of Kings Minīlik of Ethiopia.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 275, Amharic original.

The Italian expedition led by Antinori which was sent to Shewa by the Italian Geographical Society reached Ankober 1 October 1876. They were met by Welde Ṣadiq, who escorted them to Lichē, where they were received in audience by Minīlik. Two months later they were granted the place called Liṭ Marefīya. Minīlik's question about Antinori's hand reveals that he had been informed of the shooting accident on 3 January by which Antinori lost one of his hands (see Marcus, pp. 46–47; Chris Prouty Rosenfeld, *A Chronology of Menilek II of Ethiopia*, East Lansing, 1976, pp. 69–71). In all probability the letter was written quite soon after the accident. The note "reçu 1878, fevr 4" thus indicates the date, one year later, when Antoine d'Abbadie received and incorporated the letter into his collections.

Document no. 195

The population of Ṣe'azega to Charles Gordon [March 1877]



Highly respected and beloved English *pasha*. How are you, really, [though known to us only] by hearsay?

May God reveal to you and Christ make known to you that he who is called *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl has killed 200 men, [among them] four Europeans (*ferenjoch*), one of whom even was a teacher of the Gospel. He looted and took [with him] about 2000 cattle. Worst of all, however, he continued to tell us again and again not to stay in our country, and forced us to leave. But then King Yohannis brought us back to our land and gave us a protector over the dry season. Now we are again fleeing in fear. However, if you now tell us, "Yohannis will protect you from above and I from below; go back to your country", we shall return to our country, trusting God above and you below. Otherwise *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl will attack us by surprise and destroy us.

May the grace of God be with us all. Amen.

[The people] of Ṣe'azega.

BL, Or. 12913 (A), Amharic original. This letter and the following were written when General Gordon came to negotiate a peace settlement on behalf of Ismā'īl in March 1877.

The battle referred to in this letter is the battle between Welde Mīka'ēl and Haylu Tewelde Medhin over the possession of Hamasēn which took place at Wekkī Dibba near Ṣe'azega on 17 July 1876. For a description by Welde Mīka'ēl, see document no. 178 where other sources are cited.

The teacher of the Gospel referred to was the Swedish missionary Per Erik Lager. Hayle Ab Tesfay (nos 98, 99 and 131) was killed together with him (Arén, pp. 197–201).

Document no. 196

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Charles Gordon [March 1877]



May [this letter] sent by the honoured *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach Commander Gordon *Pasha* (*Hikum Dar* Gwerden *Basha*).

How have you been, really? I have been fasting. When I broke the fast, I became very ill. My wife, my army, all those who have been fasting, are very ill [in] the stomach. When I sent to *Mudīr* Hassen (*Modur* Hasen) and asked for medicine, nothing could be found.

And now, when I, my wife, and all my army are ill, how can my son come, leaving me behind? It is about to kill me, bloating my stomach [and] causing me bloody diarrhea. And now, my lord, I have no other friend, no other master, but you. Send me good medicine.

Earlier, *Shaleqa* Alula imprisoned my men. And I imprisoned two of his men. Then, though he said to me, "Release [your prisoners] and I shall release [my prisoners]," he went away without releasing [them]. But later, when I came to you, you told me to release the prisoners and send them off. Then, when they said they were going to my father-in-law, I told them to go to their country. [Alula] imprisoned them, saying that *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl's father-in-law had come.

And now, you know [the solution] to this. I have released those who were to be released. However, I am keeping two men imprisoned until we meet.

Moreover, you told me that a tent was being sent to me. I have heard that the tent has come and has reached Keren. But I have not received [it]. And now, send instructions to give it to me.

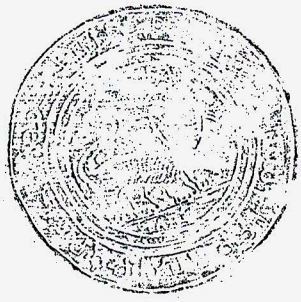
Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

BL, Or. 12913 (B), Amharic original. This letter was written when General Gordon visited Keren (see no. 195). Welde Mīka'ēl was sent for and came there to see him on 23 March.

Gordon saw Welde Mīka'ēl as one of the greatest obstacles to peace between Egypt and Ethiopia. The Hamasēnē wanted his home province back, and Gordon concluded that it was absolutely impossible for him to ask this of Yohannis. See George Birkbeck Hill, *Gordon in Central Africa 1874–1879,* London, 1899 (3rd edition), pp. 212–217.

Document no. 197

Yohannis IV to Charles Gordon, 18 June 1877



Seal: Yohannis, king of kings of Zion in Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. 1864.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach Gordon *Pasha* (Gordon *Basha*).

How are you, [although known to me only] by hearsay? I and all my army are well, thank God. The business for which I came hurrying as far as Gojjam is that he was chased away, fled and went to his country.

And where he went his wife and all his friends deserted him. And his army has collapsed.

The reason why I have not written until now is that the wrong Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) inflicted on me is great. When he sent me a present, I received his servants in a friendly manner, with respect, putting on the crown and ordering cannon to be fired. When I sent him a present [to show] friendship, he did not care to see the faces of my servants. He was even going to detain some of them. By the power of God and the might of the English they got out and came back.

Even in ancient times the borders of Ethiopia and Egypt were known among the kings. But now you yourselves are dealing with them as you like. But by what elders are they demarcated, [so] that you [can] say, "This is it; this is it"? The reason for me to give this answer is that you are my brother in friendship and faith. But as for the other Muslims, we said to one another, "Do not send me letters and I will not send you letters." As far as Ismā'īl *Pasha* is concerned, may God judge between us. Man cannot arbitrate between us, only (lit. except) God.

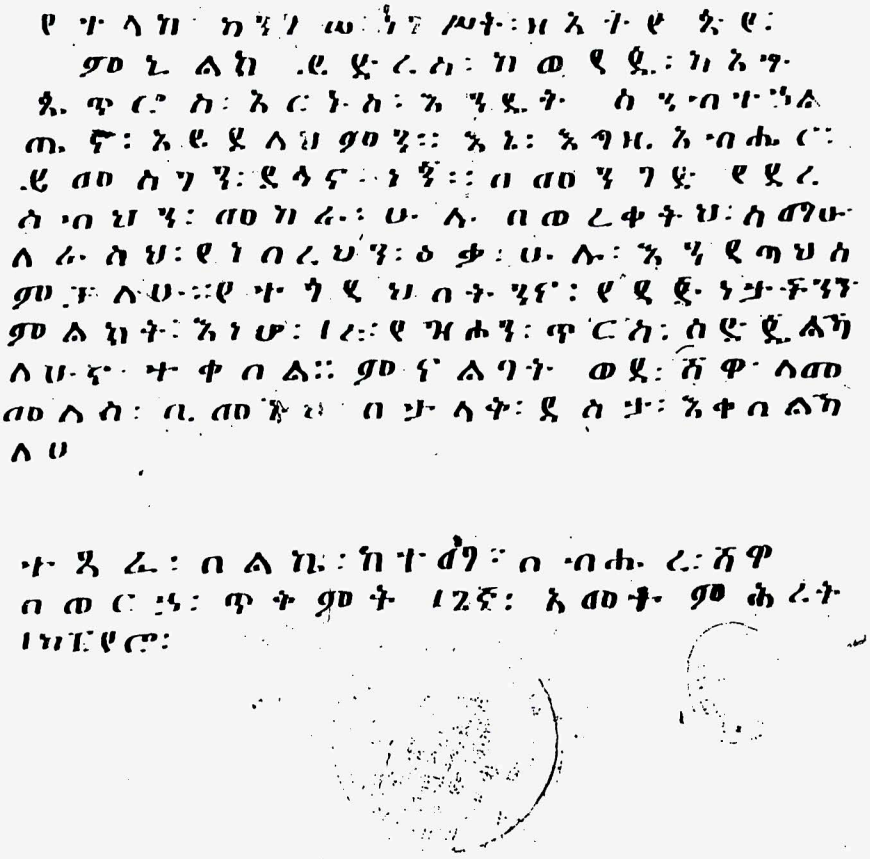
Written in the city of Debre Tabor on 12 Senē, in the year of grace 1869.

BL, Or. 12913 (C), Amharic original. The Amharic was accompanied by a translation into French, published in Hill, *Gordon in Central Africa 1874–1879*, p. 291.

Apparently relations between Yohannis and Minīlik were so poor at the time of this letter that Yohannis preferred not even to mention his rival's name. For Minīlik's expedition to Begēmdir and Gojjam and the rebellion against him in Shewa, see Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, pp. 90–91, and Marcus, pp. 50–52. For the complaint about Ismā'īl's treatment of Yohannis's envoy, see nos 190–191.

Document no. 198

Minīlik to Pierre Arnoux, 26 Oct. 1877



May [this letter] sent by the king of kings of Ethiopia, Minīlik, reach my friend, Mr. Pierre Arnoux, (*Ato* Ṗēṭros Arnus).

How have you been? Are you not well? I am well, thank God?

Through your letter I heard about all the difficulties which you encountered on your way. I have heard that you lost all your own property (lit. the goods you had for yourself). Now, because you have suffered, and as a sign of our friendship, I have sent you 15 elephant tusks; [please] accept them. If you could, perhaps, return to Shewa, I would receive you with great joy.

Written in the town of Lichē in the land of Shewa, on the 17th of the month of Ṭiqimt, in the year of grace 1870.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 291, Amharic original.; fol. 292, French translation. The latter is annotated ". . . reçue le 6 mars 1878 par la voie du Consulat de France au Caire". The seal, very weak also is the original, is the seal used in the Arnoux documents of the preceding year. Arnoux produced a set of postcards picturing this document. A note on one found in AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 271, states that it was annexed to a letter from Arnoux dated 23 July 1878. Another sample of the card is BN, Ethiop. 254, fol. 291.

"Likē" is an odd misspelling for Lichē.

Document no. 199

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to A. Depretis, 9 Jan. 1878



Praise be to God alone.

To His Excellency, the beloved minister of the Italian ruler. May God Almighty guide him. Amen.

This letter is sent from the protected port to the port of Rome. The message from our region is peace and security, welfare and calm. If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us we are all well and healthy. May God make you likewise and even more so. We write this letter to you in order to renew the covenant and friendship and to wish you well-being and health; furthermore to inform you that Mr. Martini came to us and left for Shewa in order to meet *Sulṭān* Minīlik. He reached Shewa on the wings of peace and health, and met the king. *Sulṭān* Minīlik received him with generosity, respect, and reverence. Then he left for us, for Zeyla, with our son Burhān *Effendi* Abū Bakr. [Minīlik] gave him ten soldiers and an interpreter, and they arrived to us on the wings of peace and health. We received them with respect and reverence, [a] salute and a tribute. This day [Martini] leaves for you—may God ordain peace and make him reach you in peace. We did not notice in him anything but complete kindness. We inform you, O our beloved, that Mr. Martini is sent to you by *Sulṭān* Minīlik for the sake of his request which he will relate to you truthfully. *Sulṭān* Minīlik [also] sent a letter with him. When you meet [Martini] we entreat you to comply with the request of *Sulṭān* Minīlik, for he is your beloved and friend.

As for us, our son Burhān *Effendi* Abū Bakr is going to the protected [city] to meet with our *effendi* for the sake of the request of Minīlik. On his arrival to him he will verify the content of the request of Minīlik. He will let us know and we will tell you about it.

The gift you sent us with Mr. Martini reached us, thank God for your kindness. Greet King Victor Emmanuel (*Sulṭān* Biktūr Aymānū'īl) from us. We trust in him completely. May you live [for ever].

The Governorate of Zeyla, Abū Bakr *Pasha.*

4 Muḥarram 95.

ASMAI 36/1/4, Arabic original and Italian translation.

Document no. 200

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to Jules-Alexis des Michels, 27 Jan. 1878



Sent by the honoured *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl. May it reach the French consul general who is at Alexandria.

How are you, really, [though known to me only] by hearsay? I and all my army are well, thank God.

Bishop Touvier (*Abune* Yosēf) knows that I have befriended and protected the Catholics beginning from Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune* Ya'iqob) until now. And henceforth I will befriend and protect [them]. I want your friendship, so be my friend. I shall do what I can [about] business you send to me. However, while I am in friendship with Bishop Touvier, believing I am a friend, your consul (who is) at Massawa sent me two insulting letters, written first in Amharic and then in his language. [To prove] that it is not a lie, I have sent you one to look at.

But as for the Protestant who died when I was fighting with *Dejjach* Haylu, he died when he came and said, "Let us look at the warfare of the Abyssinians." However, I did not know [about this].

Nonetheless, when I heard [about it] I sent my *blattengēta* and had him buried. Later, when his wife and brother came, I counted his things and handed them over. And they have written and given us a certificate saying, "Our property has reached us and there is no injustice [done] by his death." As for me, I want friendship with everyone. As for you, do not listen to the rumours of the enemy.

Written on the 20th of Ṭirr 1870 at Halhal.

Seal: *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl (*Ras* Waldinkīl). 1293.

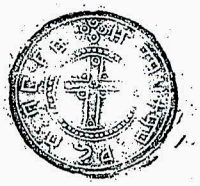
CADN, Le Caire 94, Abyssinie 1876–1881, fol. 26, Amharic original; fol. 25, French translation.

For Bishop Touvier as *Abune* Yosēf, see no. 78. That *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl should feel that he had to defend himself to a French diplomat because of the death of a Swede killed one and a half years earlier in connection with a battle (Wekkī Dibba 17 July 1876) that cost thousands of Africans their lives says a lot about the 'special treatment' demanded at the time by and for Europeans, regardless of nationality and church affiliation.

Document no. 201

Barya'u Gebre Ṣadiq to Charles Gordon, 11 May 1878





May [this] message from *Ras* Barya'u, *ri'ise mekwanint,* reach Gordon *Pasha* (Gordon *Basha*).

His Majesty is steadfast in his friendship. He has not stopped sending letters. Our friendship remains as it has been.

While I was staying quietly in my house, *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'ēl called up his army and sent his son [raiding]. From Hamasēn, Serayē and Akkele Guzay 30,550 cattle were looted. So now, look into this injustice for me. Is it with your permission [or] has he rebelled against his master?

What is the stratagem? Send me the reply very quickly if you did not give [your] permission.

From the merchants of Massawa 455 mules were also looted.

Nothing like this has ever happened in all the world. Until I get a reply to this, I will remain within the boundaries of my country.

Written in the town of Karneshim, on the 4th day of Ginbot, in the year of grace 1870.

Seal: The seal of *Ras* Barya'u.

BL, Or. 12913 E, Amharic original.

We have assumed that an 'n' or 'm' has been omitted in "deber" (third line from the bottom), and translated "boundary", which seems to agree best with the context.

Ras Barya'u was killed in a battle with Welde Mīka'ēl a few days after this letter, as recorded by General Gordon (Hill, pp. 313–314) and by the Swedish missionary Per Carlsson (*Missions-Tidning*, 1878, p. 131), thus in 1878, not 1877 as stated by Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, p. 111.

Document no. 202

Gebre Teklē to Patrice MacMahon, 17 June 1878

261

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ልፕገርያ ። ጊታ ፡ ራስ ፡ ሆይ ። ንጉሠ ፡ ዘመንጋር ያመሪ ፡ ከ ያመያመ ፡ ያልነበ
ራቸ ው ፡ ፀጉ ፡ ፀቱ ፡ የሀበሻ ፡ ነገሥታቶች ፡ በወሳይፈርስ ፡ ፍቅር ፡ በብርቱ ፡
ው ል ፡ ታረዋ ። ሰ የትግራው ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ኣፄ ፡ዮሐንስ ፡ ያፂ ፡ያመ
ኒልክን ፡ ፍቅር ፡ ለመፈለግ ፡ ሸዋ ፡ ፌዴ ፡ ንዘያያመ ፡ ብጠነከረ ፡ ኑርዋ ፡ ከተ
ፈቸሩ ፡ በኪሳ ፡ የወጂ በልጠ ው ፡ ግዛትና ፡ ዝ ው ያቸ ው ፡ ሳጠ ፡ ያመኒል
ክ ፡ ሰጡ ።

አሁን ፡ ሀ በሸ ፡ አረፈች ። በቦታ ፡ ሁሉ ፡ ያመቁጥር ፡ ከወሊያ ደርገ ። ኡሮፓ
ው ያን ፡ የወጂ ሽጋ ፡ ነገር ፡ የለያመ ። ብት ልቅ ፡ ጨነከት ፡ መጥ ራታች ው ፡ ብቻ
ነው ፡ የቸ ረብን ። ኢት ዮጵያ ው ን ፡ ሁሳችን ፡ ፊረን ሳ ው ያን ፤ ክን ጠረቸው
አቤት ፡ እን ያ ሉን ፤ ለና ፡ ዘንደ ፡ የተ ሰ ወረች ው ን ያመ ፡ እግዲያበራ ልን ፡ እን
ፀማለሳለን ።

እንሠ ፡ ሲነሳ ፡ ወረቀቱን ፡ ለአደኑ ፡ ለጌታ ፡ ቱን ከል ፡ ፊረንሳዊ ፡ አደረ ፡ ብየ
እተ ኖለው ። ከርሰም ፡ መዝፈሎት ፡ የመዲመጣ ው ን ያመ ፡ ያመሳሽ ፡ ወደ
ጌታ የ ፡ ወደ ንጉሥ ፡ እን ጂ ሰዱ ፡ ለ ያመ ን ያች ው ፡ ኩለሁ ።

ፈከ ፡ ሦ ፡ ጡ ና ያመን ፡ እረፍተ ያመን ያመ ፡ ብሁሉ ፡ ዘንደ ፡ መዘመ ደ ያመና ፡
መከበርያ ን ያመ ፡ ለመት ር ፡ እን ጂ ና ር ፡ ከመ ድ ን ኒ ፡ እለ ያመ ፡ እለ ያመናለ

በ ፲ ፩ ኑ ን ፡ ሰኔ ። በ ፲ ፱ ፱ ፫ ። ተጻፈ ፡

በአደን ፡ ከተማ ።



May [this letter] reach the honoured and respected Duke MacMahon (*Ras* Makma'on), the duke of Magenta (*ye-majenta duk*), the president of the French Republic (*ye-ferensa republīk aleqa)*.

O president (*aleqa ras*) of the Republic!

On the first day of last Yekkatīt, I gave Mr. Brémond (*Gēta* Bremo) a letter and sent him off. In that letter I wrote you as follows, "My lord King Minīlik would very much like and longs to see the French enlighten his kingdom. This letter has reached you by the hand of Mr. Goltdammer (*Gēta* Goldamīr) of Paris (lit. the Parisian). I have hope that this Mr. Goltdammer, who is known among Abyssinians, will by the decision (lit. will) of *Aṭē* Minīlik be our king's agent and representative in the city of Paris, and that he will be acceptable (lit. selected).

I have stayed in this place and waited for your letter, which would inspire the mind (lit. heart) of our king to civilize his country, to reach me very quickly.

However, in the letter which Mr. Goltdammer wrote to me on 17 Ginbot, he says that the response which we wanted has not come [until] now, and that the one called the political director, the chief of all affairs, [stated] that since the man at Aden called Mr. Arnoux (Arnus) had messed up matters before, the letter should wait until the business had been cleared up. It is true that he was sent by the king and came [here]. However, since all his actions did not agree with what he had said before, and since it does not agree with what my master has instructed (lit. given) me, it becomes my duty (lit. proper for me) to take away his authority.

But now, O my lord, Mr. President (*ras*), because I cannot wait any longer if the king calls me, I am leaving with Mr. Brémond. If it is God's will, I hope to be back with him at the end of this year. Moreover, I hope to bring back with me from my master, the king, proof of his intentions with regard to your [mutual] friendship, [news of] his well-being and his appreciation of whatever good comes from beloved France, which is dear to him and which he sees positively. May God be present [in this].

Let me tell you the news which I have received recently from Shewa [and] which has become a reason for me [to write]. O my lord, Mr. President! The two kings of Abyssinia who were in conflict for a long time have been reconciled through a firm agreement that cannot be revoked (lit. broken). The king of Tigray, *Aṣē* Yohannis, went to Shewa to establish friendly relations with (lit. get the friendship of) Minīlik. When they had become friends through a firm agreement, he gave most of the territory and his crown to *Aṣē* Minīlik.

Now Abyssinia is in peace. There is no danger anywhere to a European who wants to trade. What remains for us is to invite them insistently (lit. call them with a loud voice) so that, when all of us Ethiopians call upon the French, they will respond to our call. We ask them sincerely that they reveal what is hidden to us. Now, when I start my journey I will entrust and leave [this] letter with His Excellency the French consul (*gēta qwensil ferensawī*) at Aden. I have also requested him to send the response that comes from your government to my master, the king.

Dear President, I pray to the Saviour of the World that your peace and your being loved and respected by all will last for ever.

Written on the 11th day of Senē 1870 in the town of Aden.

Seal: *Ṣebahit* Gebre Teklē, the Ethiopian.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fol. 261, Amharic original; fols 262–63, French translation by Antoine d'Abbadie (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 291).

For Gebre Teklē and his involvement as the counterpart of Pierre Arnoux in Minīlik's attempt to establish relations with Europe in 1876, see nos. 180 and 186. From the content of the letter Gebre Teklē seems to have remained at Aden for almost two full years, waiting for a reply from France. While he was there he apparently became acquainted with the person called Brémond, who in turn used M. Goltdammer in Paris to establish contact with the French government.

Document no. 203

Minīlik to Roblī Farrag, 7 Nov. 1878

How are you? How is your family doing? By the grace of God I am well, as are also my armies.

I have received your letter and your emissaries.

You should not consider all Europeans as Turks. There are Europeans whom I love and who serve me. I request you to receive those who will be coming from the coast in my name and treat them well. Also rent camels to them. Do as you find best with those who do not come in my name, and do not let them pass. If you protect my people and my caravans I shall grant you my friendship and my protection.

With the caravan I am sending you gifts and decorations. If you are at war with Egypt, and if you have any need for me, I shall send you the troops as soon as my caravan will have arrived.

The royal city of Lichē, 7 November 1878. The royal city of Lichē, 29 Ṭiqimt 1871.

ENA, AoI, Carton 32, Abyssinie 9/1, fol. 300, French translation. The date in the Ethiopian calendar indicates that there must have been an Amharic original, but this seems to be the only version preserved of this letter. The addressee is called "Sultan Hogaze chef des Issas". In a note the translator has defined "Ougaze" as "chef", and provided the information that the actual *ugaz* of the Isa was named Roblī Farrag (Robly Farragh).

There is no reason, however, to doubt the authenticity of this letter—or of Minīlik's following three letters to European rulers—dated as as they all are in the Ethiopian calendar. That they have ended up in the Egyptian archives is just one more piece of evidence that the Egyptians confiscated the letters, and kept or destroyed whatever they liked. Minīlik was thus suffering the same communication problems as Yohannis.

Document no. 204

Minīlik to Victoria, 9 Nov. 1878

May you be exalted for your benevolence and your virtues. May there be peace between us.

Since God has placed you above all others, may he protect your precious life and your health. Receive my compliments. I kiss your hands.

You, Madame, are more powerful than I. May God protect your kingdom. I am well, thank God.

I have made peace with Emperor Yohannis. And I govern my country, which is Shewa and also the Galla. I hope that, by the grace of God and with the assistance of Your Majesty, Ethiopia will finally have its eyes opened to the light of civilization. I would like to have more missionaries.

I have heard, moreover, that Your Majesty has forbidden the slave trade. Thank God, the prisoners taken during the latest expeditions have been sent back to their families. Only the people of the coast of the Red Sea trade with them. They hide and steal the children on my frontiers and the Galla, and sell them to Egypt. The viceroy of Egypt orders his people not to trade with them, but these words come from his lips and not his heart. It is in order that, while listening to the words, you should believe and close your eyes. He and his *pashas* have their harems full of them. And for a civilized prince he is even more barbarous, by having all the children bought and brought [to him] and then emasculating them to guard his harems.

It is now one and a half years since I sent one of my people to the coast to engage in commerce. He has seen many slaves; among others a Christian girl from my country who had been stolen by the Muslim neighbours of her father's house. Unable to save her by force he bought her [back] with a lot of money. The amount was handed over in front of the governor of Zeyla. The vice political agent of Aden knows the case.

Two years ago the viceroy took all the ports of the Red Sea from Massawa all the way to Berbera, and even Harer among the Isa. He wants to possess them and exchange the crown of Abyssinia, which has a cross at the top, for [one with] a Turkish crescent. But [even] if our crown loses the cross we hope with the help of God never to become his slave.

I hope that England and all the Christian powers of Europe will consult each other and judge whether Abyssinia ought not to have a port on the coast of the Red Sea which would permit trade with my country, which does not aspire to anything but civilization.

I would like to know the will of Your Majesty. My desire is for engineers and artisans of all kinds to come and open the routes from the coast to my country.

Madam, England has bestowed enlightenment on everyone. Why leave us in the darkness? Do not pay attention to the acts of the Emperor Tēwodros. It is I, Minīlik, who asks you, as a child asks his mother, to listen to my requests in your great benevolence.

The royal city of Lichē, 1 Hidar 1878.

Translation made at Lichē 9 November 1878.

ENA, AoI, Carton 32, Abyssinie 9/1, fols 301–02, French translation.

By the time Minīlik wrote this letter to Victoria more than two years had passed since the Ethio-Egyptian war. In spite of the defeat the Egyptians continued to hold on to the coast, and prevented the letters of the Ethiopian rulers to reach their European counterparts. Thus we have found no trace of this or the following two letters in European archives.

Document no. 205

Minīlik to Alexander II, 9 Nov. 1878

Minīlik, king of Shewa, to His Majesty, the emperor of all the Russians.

May God make you greater than all.

To you, my friend, I send many compliments. My father, I kiss your hand in great friendship. You are the head of the Orthodox church, and I hope that you will increase it in all the world. I desire to see you in Jerusalem. You are too far away. I can only write to you since the routes are closed.

I am well, and so are my armies. I have made peace with Emperor Yohannis. I govern Shewa and the Galla. I hope that if Your Majesty, who is my father, would concern yourself with Ethiopia, it will become great again in sciences and arts, if Europe brings the light and the civilization. I desire that Your Majesty send me enlightened people, so that I can establish institutions in my country.

When I heard that you were fighting the Turks I instructed that prayers be said in my churches for the success of your arms, and so that God would protect you and guide you and give you the power to destroy all the unbelievers. I have heard that the viceroy of Egypt had sent an army to assist the Turks, but the rats could not devour the lions even if they were a hundred thousand against one.

I could certainly destroy the establishments of the Egyptians on the coast, but I fear that the nations will intervene and move against me. The Egyptians have set traps everywhere to kill me. They have closed the routes of the Red Sea to commerce, and the Europeans do not come up to my country except at the cost of great sacrifices and at the risk of their lives, while it would be so easy to make the routes practicable and safe so that they could take people on foot from Zeyla to Shewa in ten days. For do I not have the right to a port on the seacoast which would permit exchange and commerce for my country?

I beg Your Majesty to take these matters into consideration and accept my most sincere wishes for you and your beloved family.

Lichē, the royal city, 1 Hidar 1871.

9 November 1878.

ENA, AoI, Carton 32, Abyssinie 9/1, fols. 303–304, French translation.

In addition to the Ethiopian date the very tone of this letter indicates its authenticity. Whoever was entrusted with this and the letters to Victoria and Wilhelm (nos 204 and 206) had apparently given them up to Egyptian authorities.

Document no. 206

Minīlik to Wilhelm I, 10 Nov. 1878

Letter from Minīlik, king of Shewa to His Majesty, the emperor of Germany, king of Prussia.

Accept my compliments with my greetings. My father, I would have liked to go and visit Europe and you personally. This is impossible. Egypt holds me as if I were in prison.

May God give you as well as your children health and long life! As for me, I am well, and so are my armies. I have made peace with Emperor Yohannis and govern Shewa and the Galla.

I hope that, by the grace of God and with the assistance of Your Majesty, Ethiopia will become great again as before, and that enlightenment coming from Europe will bring science and civilization to her. If God gives me health I shall have schools built in order to have my people instructed in foreign languages. Enlightened people coming from Europe are assured in advance of my friendship and my protection. May this first letter be the sign of an alliance, and may those which follow be a hundred thousand.

Lichē, the royal city, 2 Hidar 1871. Lichē, 10 November 1878.

ENA, AoI, Carton 32, Abyssinie 9/1, fol. 305, French translation.

As this is Minīlik's first letter to a German ruler there is reason to believe that the German missionaries in Shewa influenced him to add it—the day after the letters to Queen Victoria and Czar Alexander.

Document no. 207

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V [26 Nov. 1878]

. . . . I, your son Yohannis, king of kings of Abyssinia, at the centre of the ark (*tābūt*) of the old covenant, inform Your Beatitude that I went to Shewa, and by the power of God and the Holy Ghost [the people] and their ruler (*sulṭān*) submitted to us and came under our government. We greeted each other with respect and peace, but we found them saying, "The virgin is the mother of Christ. We prostrate before her and worship her. She is equal to Christ."

We held a spiritual council with the *içhegē*, *i.e.* the metropolitan's deputy, consecrated to *Abune* (*Anbā*) Tekle Haymanot, the priests, the scholars and the monks. We showed them a book with the sayings of the ancient fathers. Then we explained the Bible and offered testimonies to them, both new and old. Finally, they submitted, believed and knew the truth. Then they said to us that during the reign of King Tēwodros there was a similar spiritual meeting attended by *Abune* (*Anbā*) Selama, and the metropolitan excommunicated us. Now the metropolitan passed away, and who will give us absolution. We answered them that since we have become one in faith and one in kingdom I shall send a letter to our father Kīrillus in Alexandria, asking him for absolution for them. Since we have thus committed ourselves to this, we ask you, O our father, to give them the absolution. . . . .

ACOP, Arabic original, translated from a handwritten, unfortunately incomplete, copy by Dr. Antūn Suryāl 'Abd al-Sayyid, who worked on the documents in the 1960's. See document no. 176 above. The date provided by Antūn Suryāl for the letter is 18 Hātūr 1871 (=26 November 1878).

Document no. 208

Minīlik to Umberto I, 6 Dec. 1878

ఆ ఇక్కడ ఎలా చదువు : గా ఫ్రెంచ్ : నీళ్ళు నాలుగు వేళ : ఏ గుర్తు ఇల్లు నాకు : ఒక వై ఏ : వ్రాయు వై గా గుర్తు : బి ఒ వై : ఫ్రీ
గుర్తు ఆకలి ఎవరు : ఎవరు ఎవరు : ఎ ఆ ఎవరు : ఎవరు ఎవరు : ఎవరు ఎవరు : ఎవరు

ଏ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟକୁ ଚାରୋଟି ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରିଛୁ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କ'ଣ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କାହିଁକି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ତୃତୀୟ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଠାରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଭଳି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ଶେଷ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ସାରାଂଶ ଦେବା ।

ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କ'ଣ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କାହିଁକି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଠାରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଭଳି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ଶେଷ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ସାରାଂଶ ଦେବା ।

ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କ'ଣ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କାହିଁକି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଠାରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ଆମେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଯେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ କେଉଁଭଳି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ଶେଷ ଭାଗରେ ଆମେ ଏହି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ସାରାଂଶ ଦେବା ।



May [the letter] sent by King Minīlik reach the honoured, respected king of Italy, Umberto (Omber).

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well.

Since you are more honoured than I, I respectfully present many greetings. May He strengthen your power and health. Thank God, my health is good. I have been longing to see you. It would have been wonderful for me. I cannot come now, however, because my country is not properly consolidated. But by the power of God it will not remain unconsolidated.

O king! With great joy I convey good news to you, my brother. I have subjugated the Amhara and the Galla of Shewa. They are under my sovereignty. Also, I am reconciled with my father [and] friend *Aṣē* Yohannis. We have become one body and one soul (lit. image). Now, by the will of God—and yours, my brother—the eyes of the Abyssinians will be opened and they will see light. The teachers of the Gospel of Christ who are in Ethiopia and Galla are doing good deeds to us. And we would have preferred them to be many. When I heard that there is a regulation in countries which have Christian laws that slaves are not to be sold, I sent back to their mothers and fathers, at one time 50,000 and at another time 20,000 Galla, whom my soldiers had captured in wars, so that I should not be excluded from the fellowship of kings who love human freedom. But for the countries that are on the other side of the Red Sea, [slavery] is their daily business. They do not have anything else. In secret they take the people that live on the frontiers of the Amhara and the Galla, and sell them to Arabia.

The ruler of Egypt insincerely instructs people, saying, "Do not sell people." This is all [just] so that you should hear it. The slaves that are with him and with the *pashas*, and in the houses of all Muslims, are innumerable. Moreover, [such is] the extent of their wickedness that these people, who claim that they have introduced European procedure, to eliminate human compassion, buy young boys and cut off their genitals to make them guards of their wives. [With] some of them, they put kohl on their eyelids and decorate them, making them wives as [in] Sodom and Gomorrah.

My brother, we who are people created in the image of the Trinity, we who are people doing our best to see the light of Europe, would you leave us to these people who do injustice, telling us to be their slaves? We do not think so. Again, do you not know that the Quran says that marrying four wives is permitted? But those who are bought with money do not matter, be they a million! A religion like that is but a religion of animals and not of men. Again you send warships, saying, "Watch out,

so that no slaves are sold in any (lit. all the) countries that border on the Red Sea." The features of the Galla, the Amhara and the Somali are alike, all of them are black. Unless he shouts, saying, "I am a Galla," how can he be identified? When a ship appears, the first thing [they do] is to hide all the slaves inside the houses. But the people of Abyssinia know the slaves and the Somali by the way they talk. Two years ago I sent my servants to Zeyla for other purposes, and to observe this whole matter. And they saw many slaves being sold. Among them they found a Christian [woman], related to an important person. They bought her back for a lot of money and paid the money in front of the *pasha* of Zeyla and had the maid returned. All this was because they could not recover [her] by force. The deputy resident (lit. second official) of Aden knows this matter. And my servants also wrote to me about the following grave atrocity. I am very sad about it. When they heard that the people of Tajura were coming by way of Awsa [bringing] slaves, they returned to Tajura. When the people of Tajura heard that such spies had come, they rose against them. One they killed; one escaped. When he was pierced by the spear that boy who died said, "My blood was shed at Tajura, and so tell my master to capture Tajura as a ransom for my blood." When they told me that he died two hours later I was extremely sad. I have left to you, my brother, the judgment [for] this. Even if it is impossible for me to occupy Tajura from the sea, it is possible for me to occupy it through its gate. However, I hope to get it by the justice of the European kings, without my waging war.

It is two years [now] since the king of Egypt, [the] *pasha,* [setting out] from Massawa, occupied Berbera [and] then Harergē. What [manner of] act is this? Is it to replace our crown, which has the cross, with his turban, which has the symbol of the moon and the star? But if indeed our crown has the cross we have the hope that God will not abandon us to the slavery of these aggressive [people]. Again, will the kings of Europe and the English government rule against me, stating that the Abyssinian government does not really have a port on the seacoast, and did not have one in ancient times? If I am not truly making an effort to introduce light and teach crafts in my country, the solution (lit. instrument) to this whole matter, my brother, is for you to let a person whom you choose come here and live with me, and let him write daily about my activities. But a Christian man like me, who fulfils the wishes of the European kings, who maintains their people properly, who tries his best to stop the slave trade, and who tries to promote European institutions in general in his country, [for him] to live like a man sentenced to life [imprisonment], placed under the banishment of the Egyptians, prevented from importing firearms, cannon, and workers into his country, not introducing [even] one craft into my country, I shall die of anger—and I am about to die!

If a man, who would like to get rid of such a terrible problem, does not get weapons superior to [those] of the pagans, [when it comes to] a spear against a spear, a horse against a horse, are we not all men? Otherwise, it would have been proper to say, "We have sent you so many cannon and so many rifles—destroy the race that sells slaves!" How can I be prevented from [using] the port which was [ours] from the time of my grandfather and great-grandfather, when I say that I shall buy all the weapons with my money and that I shall give all the European workers that come to me double salary (lit. one to two) and place the country (the country) of the pagans under my control and that I shall destroy all evil-doers? I did not say I want to occupy the land of Egypt. I did not say I will wage war on Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). I only said, "Let me protect myself, develop my country and abolish slavery." And now, O my brother, today we will know and discover that by bringing justice to us, you are indeed a helper of the Christians who are treated unjustly. May God give you health.

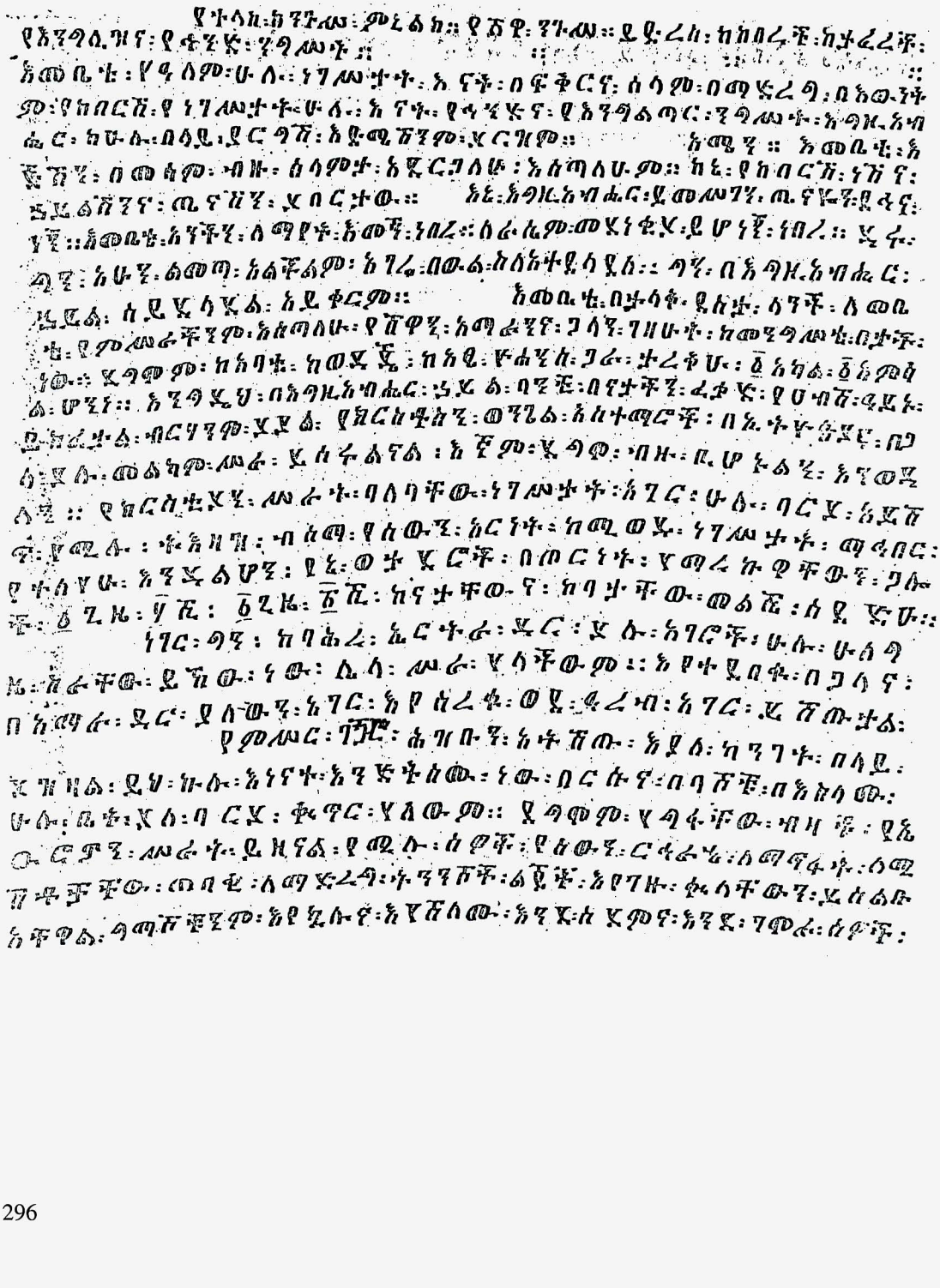
Written in the year of grace 1871 on the 28th of the month of Hidar in the town of Lichē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

ASMAI, 36/1–6, fols 930–931, Amharic original; fols 932–933, French translation, also sealed. The date 28 Hidar is indicated as 28 November, and the letter is published with this date in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 58. Of three almost identical letters written 6 December to European monarchs this was probably the first. See nos 209 and 210.

Document no. 209

Minīlik to Victoria, 6 Dec. 1878



ማ ሽ ኑ ፡ ኣ ሂ ር ገ ቀ ቸ ወ ፡ ጂ ና ራ ሉ ። ። ም ነ ው ፡ ኣ መ ቢ ፡ ከ ፡ ሀ ሳ ር ሳ ኦ ፡ ሥ ላ ሴ ፡ የ ኑ ሬ ወ ኒ ፡ ሰ ዋ ቸ ፡ የ ኤ ው ሮ ፓ ኒ ፡ ህ ር ሃ ኒ ፡ ለ ማ ላ ን ኑ ፡ ሃ ም ኒ ዋ ሪ ው ኒ ፡ ሽ ዋ ቸ ፡ ኣ ገ ኤ ህ ፡ ላ ለ ። የ ላ ቁ ፡ ሠ ራ ኑ ። ፡ ለ ሚ ሰ ራ ፡ ሕ ዝ ብ ፡ ባ ር ያ ፡ ሁ ኑ ። ፡ ዝ ሰ ኝ ሽ ፡ ኑ ኑ ኗ ና ለ ሽ ኒ ፡ ኣ ሥ ዉ ለ ሰ ኒ ም ። ። ዒ ላ ማ ፡ ቀ ራ ኒ ፡ ፬ ጫ ሽ ኑ ። ፡ ጫ ላ ባ ኑ ። ሀ ላ ል ፡ ነ ው ። ፡ በ ህ ር ፡ ሃ ኑ ፣ ዘ ወ ኒ ። ፡ ላ ዒ ። ፭ ፻፻ ቢ ሆ ን ፡ ላ ኗ ። ፡ የ ሰ ም ፡ ኡ ኒ ሄ ል ፡ ኣ ታ ው ቂ ም ፣ ። ኣ ኗ ኦ ሃ ፡ ሃ ፫ ጫ ኖ ኑ ። ፡ የ ኣ ኒ ለ ሳ ፡ ሃ ኗ ጫ ና ኑ ፡ ኦ ኒ ኗ ። ፡ ያ ሽ ው ። ፡ ከ ፡ ኗ ኗ ሰ ም ። ። ዒ ላ ጫ ፡ ቅ ኖ ኗ ። ፡ ጫ ላ ባ ኑ ። ሀ ላ ል ፡ ነ ው ። ፡ በ ህ ር ፡ ሃ ኑ ፣ ኣ ሠ ራ ፡ ኣ ለ ሰ ኒ

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ነ በ ረ ው ፃ ፡ በ ር ፡ ኣ ፃ ሂ ሂ ጠ ፃ ት ፡ ኦ ክ ለ ለ ጠ ሁ ። ፡ ም ሂ ረ ፡ ሳ ነ ዕ ፃ ፡ ፊ ሂ ሻ ፡ ኣ ሳ ፊ ኩ ፡
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ው ነ ት ፡ ሂ ሉ ጠ ቹ ፡ ክ ር ስ ቲ ሂ ፃ ፡ ኦ ረ ሂ ሉ ፡ መ ሠ ፃ ሽ ፃ ፡ ዘ ሬ ፡ ሳ ኾ ፡ ፍ ር ሂ ፡ በ ጣ
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በ ፲ ፳ ፱ ፭ ዒ መ ኑ ፡ የ መ ሳ ረ ጵ ፡ ለ ወ ር ሄ ፡ ፋ ሂ ር ፡ ኣ መ ፡ ፲ ወ ፲ በ ፊ ቹ ፡ ከ ፡ ሳ ፡ ኑ ሳ ሬ ። ።

May [this letter] sent by King Minīlik, king of Shewa, reach the honoured, respected queen of England (Inglīz) and India (Hind).

My lady, mother of all the kings of the world, and truly honoured for creating friendship and peace, mother of all kings, queen of India and England (Ingilṭar), may God place you above all and may He lengthen your life. Amen.

My lady! Kissing your hand, I extend and present many greetings. Since you are more honoured than I, may He strengthen your power and health. Thank God, my health is good. I have been longing to see you, my lady. It would have been wonderful for me. I cannot come now, however, because my country is not properly consolidated. But by the power of God it will not remain unconsolidated.

My lady! With great joy I convey good news to you, my lady. I have subjugated the Amhara and the Galla of Shewa. They are under my sovereignty. Also, I am reconciled with my father [and] friend *Aṣē Y*ohannis. We have become one body and one soul (lit. image). Now, by the power of God and by your will, our mother, the eyes of the Abyssinians will be opened and they will see light. The teachers of the Gospel of Christ who are in Ethiopia and Galla are doing good deeds to us. And we would have preferred them to be many. When I heard that there is a regulation in countries which have Christian laws that slaves are not to be sold, I sent back to their mothers and fathers, at one time 50,000 and at another time 20,000 Galla, whom my soldiers had captured in wars, so that I should not be excluded from the fellowship of kings who love human freedom.

But for the countries that are on the coast of the Red Sea, [slavery] is their daily business. They do not have anything else. In secret they steal the people that live on the frontiers of the Amhara and the Galla, and sell them to the land of Arabia.

The ruler of Egypt insincerely instructs people, saying, "Do not sell people." This is all [just] so that you should hear it. The slaves that are with him and with the *pashas*, and in the houses of all Muslims, are innumerable. Moreover, [such is] the extent of their wickedness that these people, who claim that they have introduced European procedure, to eliminate human compassion, buy young boys and cut off their genitals to make them guards of their wives. [With] some of them, they put kohl on their eyelids and decorate them, making them wives like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

O, my lady! We who are people created in the image of the Trinity, we who are people doing our best to see the light of Europe, would you leave us to these people who do injustice, telling us to be their slaves? We do not think so. Again, do you not know that the Quran says that marrying four wives is permitted? But those who are bought with money do not matter, be they 1,000,000! A religion like that is but a religion of animals and not of men. Again you send warships, saying, "Watch out, so that no slaves are sold in any (lit. all the) countries that border on the Red Sea." The features of the Galla, the Amhara and the Somali are alike, all of them are black. Unless he shouts, saying, "I am a Galla," how can he be identified? When a ship appears, the first thing [they do] is to hide all the slaves inside the houses.

But the people of Abyssinia know the slaves and the Somali by the way they talk. Two years ago I sent my servants to Zeyla for other purposes, and also to observe this whole matter of many slaves being sold. Among them they found a kidnapped Christian [woman], related to an important person. They bought her back for a lot of money and paid the money in front of the *pasha* of Zeyla and had the the maid returned. All this was because they could not recover [her] by force. The deputy resident (lit. second official) of Aden knows this matter. And my servants also wrote to me about the following grave atrocity. I am very sad about it.

When they heard that the people of Tajura were coming by way of Awsa bringing slaves, they went to Tajura to see. When the people of Tajura heard that such spies had come, they rose against them. One they killed; one escaped. When he was pierced by the spear, the boy who died said, "My blood was shed at Tajura, and so tell [them] to capture Tajura as a ransom for my blood." When I heard the news that he died two hours later I was extremely sad. I have left to you, my mother, the

judgment [for] this. Even if it is impossible for me to occupy Tajura from the sea, it is possible for me to occupy it through its gate. However, I hope to get it by the justice of the European kings without waging war.

It is two years [now] since the *pasha* of Egypt, setting out from Massawa, occupied Berbera and Harergē. What [manner of] act is this? Is it to replace our crown, which has the cross, with his turban, which has the symbol of the moon and the star? But if indeed our crown has the cross, we have the hope that God will not abandon us to the slavery of these heartless [people].

Again, will the kings of Europe and the English government rule against me, stating that the Abyssinian government does not really have a port on the seacoast, and did not have one in ancient times? If I do not call [someone] to truly introduce light and teach crafts in my country, the solution (lit. instrument) to this whole matter, my lady, is for you to let a person whom you choose come here and live with me, and let him write daily about my activities. But a Christian man like me, who fulfils the wishes of the European kings, who maintains their people properly, who tries his best to stop the slave trade, and who tries to promote European institutions in general in his country, [for him] to live like a man sentenced to life [imprisonment], placed under the banishment of the Egyptians, prevented from importing firearms, cannon, and workers into his country, not introducing [even] one craft into my country, I shall die of anger.

If a man who would like to get rid of such a terrible problem, does not get weapons superior to [those] of the pagans, [when it comes to] a spear against a spear, a horse against a horse, are we not all men? Otherwise, it would have been proper to say, "We have sent you so many cannon and so many rifles—destroy the race that sells slaves!" How can I be prevented from [using] the port which was [ours] from the time of my grandfather and great-grandfather, when I say that I shall buy all the weapons with my money, and that I shall give all the European workers that come to me twice the salary (lit. one to two) and place the country of the pagans under my control, and that I shall destroy all evil-doers? I did not say I want to occupy the land of Egypt. I did not say I will wage war on Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). I only said, "Let me protect myself, develop my country and abolish slavery." And now, o my lady, today we will know and discover that by bringing justice to us you are indeed a helper of the Christians who are treated unjustly. May God give you health.

Written in the year of grace 1871 on the 28th of the month of Hidar in the town of Lichē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

FO 95/737, no. 176, Amharic original and English translation.

Whether or not he had found out that his letters to European rulers the month before (nos 204–206) had been stopped by the Egyptians, Minīlik now made a new attempt to reach his European colleagues, in all probability, assisted by the members of the Società Geografica Italiana. Obviously a letter to the Italian monarch (no. 208), who had not been included the previous month, was a priority. A new appeal to Great Britain could also be expected, but the attempt to enlist King Leopold II (no. 210) as a supporter against Egypt was a new measure.

While the writer may well have intended the first numbers in the letters, the 50 thousand (፶ *shī*) and 20 thousand (፳ *shī*) liberated Galla slaves, to be understood literally, this is not the case with the exaggerated figures used to impress the Europeans with the numbers of slave concubines in Muslim harems. Today *ilf* means 10,000. ፼ *ilf* in the preceding letter to Umberto has therefore been translated 'one million', and so has ፼ ፼ in the above letter. *Ilf* has been used also for 'thousand'. In fact the connotation of *ilf* is 'countless, innumerable', a number that goes beyond or exceeds what can be counted.

The substance of the three letters is practically the same, but it is interesting to note the more courteous style used by Minīlik to his 'mother', than to his 'brother' Umberto. Here and there a brief explanation has also been added.

Document no. 210

Minīlik to Leopold II, 6 Dec. 1878

የ ተሳከ፡ከሂን ለ፡ምኒ ሊክ፡ ፪ኛ፡ ፈ፡ ስ፡ ከበ ሌሻ፡ሂን-ለ፡፪ ሓ ሚፂ፡
ሌ.ዎ ፖ ል፡ኔ ፃዲ ሳ፡ነ ህ ፡ኔ ፣ኔ ሓዚ ኔ ሣነ ሐ ሪ ፡፪ ሙ ስ ፡ ሂ ሳና፡
ነ ሺ፡ሠ ፈ ፡ቱ ቲ ም ፡ ሁ ሉ ፡ ፪ ሂ ኖ ፡ ነ ጠ ፡፡

፪ ለ ም ፡ ሁ ፡ ሉ ፡ ነ ን ሥ ሠ ፡ት ፡ ፡ ፪ ከ በ ራ ኻ ፡ ኦ ን ፡ ት ፡ ን
ኦ ሳ ፡ ቲ ፡ ሂ ፡ በ ማ ኽ በ ር ፡ ብ ዘ ፡ ፡ ሰ ለ ም ች ፡ ኤ ሰ ፣ ነ ለ ሀ ፡ ኤ ን ፡ ት ፡ ሂ ፡ ለ
ማ ሃ ፡ ኽ ለ መ ች ፡ ነ በ ር ፡ ለ ራ ፡ ሴ ም ፡ መ ፪ ነ ቂ ፪ ፡ ፪ ሠ ነ ች ፡ ነ በ ር ፡
፪ ፈ ፡ ን ሂ ፡ ኦ ሀ ፡ ዚ ፡ ል መ ጣ ፡ ኤ ል ች ፡ ል ም ፡ ኦ ን ራ ፡ በ ጠ ፡ ል ፡ ኦ ለ ል ተ ፪ ለ
፪ ኦ ፡ በ ኤ ን ዚ ኦ ብ ሐ ፡ ር ፡ ፣ ፪ ል ፡ ሰ ፪ ፪ ለ ል ፡ ኤ ፪ ሳ ፡ ፪ ሳ ፡ ፪ ሳ ፡

ራቱው።ይኸው።ነው።ሌላ።ሥራ።የላቸዉም።እየተደበቁ።በነብሳት።በአማራ።
ዬር።ያለው።ጊ።አንድ።እየሰረቁ።መጀ።አረብ።አገር።ይሸጡታል።የምስር።ንጹ።ሰ
ዝበ።ሳ።ትሸጠ።እያለ።ሻጊንት።በለይ።ያዝዛል።ይህ።ሁሉ።ከጥላ።እሄድ።ትሰመ።
ነው።በርሱ።በባሽቹ።በእስላሙ።ሁሉ።ቤት።ያለ።ባርያ።ቁጥር፣የለዉም።ይ
ላሞም።የላቀ።ቸው።ብዛት።የእዉ።ሮጆ።ሥራት።ይዘናል።የሚሉ።ሰዎች።
የሰው።ር።ራሂ።ለማ።ጥሬት።ለምኽ።ዱቸ።ቸው።ጊ።ጠባቂ።ለማድረ።ት።ሄሄሽ
ች።ልጀች።እየገዙ።ቁለቸው።ጊ።ይሰልቡዋቸው።ላመገሸቹ።ጊም።እየኳሉና።
እ።የሸ።ለሙ።እሚይሰይምና።እሚይገሞራ።ሰዎች።ምኽት።እድር።ንዋቸው።ይና
ራሉ።ምነዉ።አባቴ።በአርአያ።ሥላሴ።የኑሬ።ጠርሩ።ነዉ።ጊ።ሰዎች።የኡውሮ
ፓ።በርሃ።ጊ።ለማሳገኑ።የያመ።ሂ።ሪውጊ።ሰዎች።እጊይህ።ይሰለ።የላፍ።ሠ
ራ።ት።ለሚ።ሠሩ።ሕዝ።ብ።በርያ።ሁኑ።በለዉ።ይተው።ዮ።አይመሰለኒም።ደ
ላሞ።ቁራ።ጊ።ዘ።ምሽ።ት።ማላባት።ሀላል።ነዉ።በ።በር።የተገዛዉ።ሂ።ላሄ።ፒ።ሂ።ቢሆ
ኑ።ላ።ሄ።የለም።አጊ።ሌ።አደዉቁም።ሂ።እ።ጄ።ህ።ደለ።ሃ።ይማኖት።የአጊ።ስ።ሃ።ደ
ማ።ት።ነዉ።እጊ።ደ።ሰው።አይደለም።ዴላመሸ።ም።በባሕ።ሩ።አ።ር።ት።ረ።ት።ደ።ሱ።አገር
ች።ባርያ።እሃ።ደ።ዘ።ጡ።ጠ።በቁ።በለዉ።የጠ።ር።መርከ።ች።ጊ።ደ።ሰ።ሄ።ሉ።የጋላ።
የእማ።ራ።የሹ።ም።ህ።ሌ።መልኩ።፩።ነዉ።ሁሉም።ጥቁር።ነው።።እኔ።ባ።ነ።በሱ።
ካልራሁ።በ።ም።ጊ።ይ።ታወቁል።እ።ስላ።ዴሞ።መርከቡ።ሲ።ዘ።ል።ት።ባር።ያው።ሂ።ሁ።
ወደ።ቤ።ት።ይ።ደ።ብቁ።ት።ል።የ።ሀ።በ።ሻ።ሰ።ው።ላ።ሄ።ባር።ያው።ሂ።ና።ሶ።ም።ህ።ሉ።ሂ።ያ።ው።ቀ
ዋ።ል።በ።እ።ነ።ንሥ።። የ።ዛ።ሬ።፪።ዓ።መ።ት።።እ።ነ።ከ።ር።ቹ።ጊ።ወ።ደ።ዘ።ይ።ለ።ቱ።ሰ።ዱ።ጀ።።ነ።በ።ር።ሰ።ለ
ሌ።ላ።።ሥ።ራ።ተ።ክ።ለ።ዚ።ሄ።ነ።ገ።ር።።ሁ።ሉ።ጊ።ሌ።ያ።ይ።።እ።ዬ።።ብ።ዙ።።ባ።ር።ያ።።ሴ።ሽ።ኛ።።።ነ።ዘ።የ።
ማ።ኸ።ል።እ።ኒ።ሂ።ዱ።ት።ነ።ር።ከ።ቲ።ያ።ጊ።።።ሦ።ት።ላ።ቱ።።ሰ።ጠ።።ወ።ገ።ዓ።።ት።ሠ።ር።ቱ።።እ።ን።ጃ።ኛ።ተ።ው።።
በ።ብ።ዙ።።በ።ር።ን።ገ።ዙ።ተ።ው።።ብ።ሬ።ጊ።ሞ።ር።በ።ዘ።ይ።ለ።ሸ።ሬ።ት።።ሰ።ጥ።ተ።ው።።እ።ሽ።ከ።ሩ።ቀ።ዓ።እ።ከ።መ
ለ።ሱ።።ይ።ህ።ሁ።ሉ።በ።ነ።ይ።ል።ማ።ከ።መ።ለ።እ።ን።ይ።ሠ።ሂ።ላ።ቸ።ወ።።።ነ።ው።።ይ።ህ።ም።።ነ።ገ።ር።።የ።እ።ይ።ኔ
።፪።ተ።ኛ።።ሹ።ም።ያ።ው።ቀ።ል።ይ።ጣ።ኸ።ም።።እ።ሽ።ከ።ር።ቹ።።እ።ዓ።ዬ።ህ።።ያ።ለ።።በ።ር።ቱ።።ጣ።ፍ።ን።ፈ።ል።ኝ።በ።ዘ
ህ።ም።።እ።ጅ።ጓ።።እ።ዝ።ኖ።እ።ለ።ሀ።።።የ።ተ።ን።ሪ።።ሰ።ዎ።ች።።ባ።።ር።ያ።።ይ።ዘ።ዉ።ዐ።ለ።ዉ።ሳ።።በ።ኩ።ል።።መ።ኮ።
ተ።ዋ።ል።ቢ።ሰ።ል።።ሌ።ያ።ዩ።።ው።።ደ።።ተ።ን።ሪ።።ሂ።ያ።።ኤ።ዓ።ደ።ህ።።ያ።ሱ።።ሰ።ለ።ዮ።ች።።መ።ኖ።ኮ።ዋ።ል።።ቤ።ሉ።።
በ።ሰ።።።ጊ።ዘ።።የ።ተ።ን።ሪ።።ሰ።ዎ።ች።።ኑ።ኑ።ሳ።ባ።ች።ዉ።።።፭።ን።ያ።ሉ።ት።።ሰ።ዓ።ዬ።።ኤ።መ።ለ።ሰ።ጠ።።።የ።ሞ።ተ።ዉ።።
ል።ጅ።በ።ጦ።ር።በ።ተ።ወ።ን።ጊ።ዘ።።ያ።ሚ።።ተ።ን።ሪ።።።።ፈ።ስ።ለ።ች።ና።ስ።ለ።።ደ።ሚ።ከ።ሳ።።ተ።ን።ሪ።።ዓ።።ያ።ዘ።ት።።ነ።

ለቻሁ፡ለጌታ፡ዬ።ዓንሬ።ሎ።ብሎ።ከዚሀ፡በኌሰ፡በ፪ሰዓ ፡ሞቶ።ብለ ለዉ።ቢ ነ ግ/ኍ፡
ኄጅ ፣አዛኛ ለሁ።ይህን፡ፍርዎ።ባንዙ።በወ ዲ ጫ።ለ ይ።ጥዬቀለሁ።ተጉሪ ን።በባ፡
ር ።በኩ ል።መ ደዝ።ቢ ሰነኝ።በበር።መ ደዝ።ይሆ ዓልኛ ል።ነንር።ግ ን።ሠር ነ ቱ።ለ ለይር
ን ።የ ኤው ርጵ ዓ።ነን ሠ ሃ ት።ጥ ር ዬ።ኤ ንጥቀ ለ ሁ።ብ ዬ ።ሠ ከ።ኤ ለ ኛ።
የም ከ ራ።ን ጉ ሥ ።ብሽ።ከ ም ጥቂ።በ ርበራ። ይ ግ ሙ።ህ ረ ር ጌ ዓ።ነ ይ ዘ።ይ ዓ መ ት።ነ ው።
ዩ ዘ ሃ።ሠ ራ።ም ዓይ ር ።ሩ ው።መ ስ ቀ ል።ይ ለ በ ቱ ን ዘ ው። ዴ ች ዓ።የ ሬ ኤ ረ ቷ ና ።ዩ ኮ ካ ብ።
ም ል ክ ት።ባ ለ በ ት።መ ጠ ም ጠ ሚ ያ ው።ለ መ ሰ ቀ ጥ።ነ ው።ነ ን ር።ግ ን።በ ው ነ ት።ዝ ው ደ
ች ዓ ።በ ለ መ ሰ ቀ ል።ከ ሆ ነ ።ከ ነ ዚ ሀ።ግ ራ ቸ ች።ባ ር ነ ት።በ ቷ ች ።ኬ ግ ዜ ኤ ።ብ ዘ ።ር ።ኤ ግ ሂ ዩ
ጥ ለ ነ ።ት ክ ራ ኤ ለ ሃ።። ።። ደ ግ ሞ ም ።ዩ ኤ ው ር ጵ ።ነ ን ሠ ።ት ።ት ና ።ዩ ኤ ግ ሳ ሌ ዝ ።መ ሃ ግ
ለ ሠ ት ።በ ው ነ ት ።ከ ባ ሕ ር ።ዲ ር ።ዩ ሀ ።በ ሽ ።መ ዓ ግ ለ ሠ ት ።በ ር ።የ ለ ው ም ።ጥ ሃ ት ም ።ኩ ል
ነ በ ረ ው ም ።ሩ ሉ ።ይ ሬ ር ዩ ።ሮ ሉ ።ለ ዚ ሀ ።ነ ሆ ሉ ።ነ ን ር ።ማ ሠ ሪ ይ ።ጠ ዓ ዩ ማ ።በ ዉ ነ ት
ባ ንሬ ።ዘ ር ሃ ዓ ነ ።ለ ማ ግ ባ ት ።ጥ ን ።በ ዓ ።ለ ማ ስ ተ ማ ር ።ኤ ሬ ሳ ጥ ር ።እ ዓ ይ ሆ ነ ።፩ ሰ ው ።ሩ
ዓ ተ ።የ መ ረ ጥ ነ ው ።ይ ዓ ጣ ና ።ነ ኤ ።ህ ራ ።ይ ቀ መ ጥ ።ለ ሠ ራ ።ዩ ጂ ም ።ሁ ሉ ።የ ለ ት ።ሁ
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በ ግ ብ ሃ ው ።ያ ዓ ።ግ ዘ ት ።ግ ብ ጭ ።ና ጭ ጥ ም ።መ ድ ፍ ም ።ሠ ራ ት ኖ ።ም ።መ ኗ ።እ ንሬ ።እ ዓ
ዬ ይ ዉ ጣ ።ት ክ ል ክ ሉ ።ባ ንሬ ።፩ ።በ ል ሃ ት ።ሰ ለ ግ ባ ።ስ ለ ቀ ረ ሁ ።በ ዓ ይ ።ት ።እ ሙ ታ ለ ሁ ።
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የ ጫ በ ል ሞ ።መ ሳ ር ያ ።ከ ለ ን ኛ ጫ ።ፈ ረ ስ ።ስ ፈ ረ ስ ።ሥ ር ።ለ ሠ ር ጫ ።ሁ ሳ ት ን ጊ ከ ።ስ ቆ
ች ።ኑ ፪ ዱ ለ ያ ል ።። ቢ ሆ ን ።ይ ዘ ን ።ያ ዘ ለ ።መ ጽ ቁ ና ።ነ ቁ ጥ ።ሰ ጅ ጹ ን ።ለ ዘ ለ ።ባ ር ያ ።የ ሚ
ሸ ጠ ው ን ።ዘ ር ።ኑ ጥ ፋ ።ማ ለ ት ።ነ በ ረ ።። በ ግ ን ዘ ቤ ።። በ ግ ን ዘ ቤ ።መ ሳ ር ያ ው ን ።ሁ ሉ ።ገ ዝ
ዝ ።። ወ ጺ ኤ ።የ ሚ ።መ ጣ ው ን ።ም ።ሠ ራ ት ሮ ።ሁ ሉ ።ያ ።መ ወ ዙ ን ።በ ፭ ፫ ።ከ የ ሰ ጠ ሁ ።የ ኦ
ረ ።መ ኬ ው ን ።ኦ ን ር ።ኦ ቀ ና ለ ሁ ።ክ ሮ ኝ ን ።ያ ።ሰ ዎ ች ።ሁ ሉ ።ኦ ጠ ቀ ለ ሁ ።ስ ል ።ጊ ዜ ።
በ ኦ ያ ቱ ።በ ላ ።ያ ።መ ።ኦ ያ ቱ ።የ ነ በ ረ ው ን ።በ ር ።ኦ ን ጂ ያ ።ን ።ክ ለ ክ ሳ ለ ሁ ።ያ ዐ ር ።
ግ ።ብ ፅ ን ።ፊ ያ ዝ ።ኦ ላ ፈ ሁ ።ከ ኤ ስ ማ ኤ ል ።ባ ሻ ያ ።ን ራ ።ሮ ር ነ ት ።ላ ዐ ር ግ ።ኦ ላ ፈ ሁ ።
ራ ሴ ን ።ፊ ጠ ።በ ቅ ።ኦ ግ ሬ ን ።ላ ላ ና ።ባ ር ነ ት ን ።ላ ጥ ፋ ።ን በ ኤ ።ኦ ነ በ ረ ።ኦ ካ ጂ ።ኦ ሁ ግ ያ ።
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ርዩ፡ በማ ሙጣትኽ፡ኸናውቀዋለኻ፡ኸና ገኘዋለኻ፡ኸግዜ፡ኽብሔር፡ጤ ና፡ይ ሰ
ጥ ህ። ኸጪ፡ ቹ ወቹ ኸወርኃ፡ ሳደር፡ በ ፲ ዮ ሮ ፩ በሐት፡ ኸ፡ወ፡ ተጻፈ።



May [this letter] sent by King Minīlik reach the king of Belgium, Leopold II (*Dagmay* Līwopol).

How are you? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well.

I present, with respect, many greetings to you, my father, whom all the kings of the world have honoured. I have been longing to see you. It would have been wonderful for me. I cannot come now, however, because my country is not properly consolidated. By the power of God it will not remain unconsolidated.

O my brother! With great joy I tell you good news, my brother. I have subjugated the Amhara and the Galla of Shewa. They are under my sovereignty. Also, I am reconciled with my father [and] friend *Aṣē* Yohannis. We have become one body and one soul (lit. image). Now, by the will of God—and yours, my brother—the eyes of the Abyssinian people will be opened and they will see light. The teachers of the Gospel of Christ who are in Ethiopia and [the land of the] Galla are doing good deeds to us. And we would have preferred them to be many. When I heard that there is a regulation in countries which have Christian laws that slaves are not to be sold, I sent back to their mothers and fathers, at one time 50,000 and at another time 20,000 Galla, whom my soldiers had captured in wars, in order that I not be excluded from the fellowship of kings who love human freedom. But for the countries that are on the coast of the Red Sea, this is their daily business. They do not have anything else. In secret they take the people that live on the frontiers of Galla and Amhara, and sell them to the land of Arabia.

The ruler of Egypt insincerely instructs people, saying, "Do not sell people." This is all [just] so that you should hear it. The slaves that are with him and with the *pashas*, and in the houses of all Muslims, are innumerable. Moreover, [such is] the extent of their wickedness that these people, who claim that they have introduced European procedure, to eliminate human compassion, buy young boys and cut off their genitals to make them guards of their wives. [With] some of them, they put kohl on their eyelids and decorate them, making them wives like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

O my father! We who are people created in the image of the Trinity, we who are people doing our best to see the light of Europe, would you leave us to these people who do injustice, telling us to be their slaves? We do not think so. Again, do you not know that the Quran says that marrying four wives is permitted? But those who are bought with money do not matter, be they 30,000! A religion like that is but a religion of animals and not of men. Again you send warships, saying, "Watch out, so that no slaves are sold in any (lit. all the) countries that border on the Red Sea." The features of the Galla, the Amhara and the Somali are alike, all of them are black. Unless he shouts, saying, "I am a Galla," how can he be identified? When a ship appears, the first thing [they do] is to hide all the slaves inside the houses.

But the people of Abyssinia know the slaves and the Somali by the way they talk. Two years ago I sent my servants to Zeyla for other purposes, and [also] to observe this whole matter. They saw many slaves being sold. Among them they found a kidnapped Christian [woman], related to an important person. They bought her back for a lot of money and paid the money in front of the *pasha* of Zeyla and had the the maid returned. All this was because it was impossible for them to recover [her] by force. The deputy resident (lit. second official) of Aden knows this matter. And my servants also wrote to me about the following grave atrocity. I am very sad about it.

When they heard that the people of Tajura were coming by way of Awsa bringing slaves, they went to Tajura to see. When the people of Tajura heard that such spies had come, they rose against them. One they killed; one escaped. When he was pierced by the spear, the boy who died said, "My blood was shed at Tajura, and so tell my master to capture Tajura as a ransom for my blood." When they told me that he died two hours later I was extremely sad. I have left to you, my brother, the judgment [in] this [matter]. Even if it is impossible for me to occupy Tajura from the sea, it is possible for me to occupy it through its gate. However, I hope to get it by the justice of the European kings, without waging war.

It is two years [now] since the king of Egypt, [the] *pasha,* setting out from Massawa, occupied Berbera and Harergē. What [manner of] act is this? Is it to replace our crown, which has the cross, with his turban, which has the symbol of the moon and the star? But if indeed our crown has the cross, we have the hope that God will not abandon us to the slavery of these heartless [people].

Again, will the kings of Europe and the English government rule against me, stating that the Abyssinian government does not really have a port on the seacoast, and did not have one in ancient times? If I do not call [someone] to truly introduce light and teach crafts in my country, the solution (lit. instrument) to this whole matter, my brother, is for you to let a person whom you choose come here and live with me, and let him write daily about my activities. But a Christian man like me, who fulfils the wishes of the European kings, who maintains their people properly, who tries his best to stop the slave trade, and who tries to promote European institutions in general in his country, [for him] to live like a man sentenced to life [imprisonment], placed under the banishment of the Egyptians, prevented from importing firearms, cannon, and workers into his country, not introducing [even] one craft into my country, I shall die of anger—and I am about to die!

If a man who would like to get rid of such a terrible problem, does not get weapons superior to [those] of the pagans, [when it comes to] a horse against a horse, a spear against a spear, are we not all men? Otherwise, it would have been proper to say, "We have sent you so many cannon and rifles—destroy the race that sells slaves!" How can I be prevented from [using] the port which was [ours] from the time of my grandfather and great-grandfather, when I say that I shall buy all the weapons with my money (with my money), and that I shall give all the workers that come to me twice the salary (lit. one to two) and place the country of the pagans under my control, and that I shall destroy all evil-doers? I did not say I want to occupy the land of Egypt, and I did not say I will wage war on Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*). I only said, "Let me protect myself, develop my country and abolish slavery." And now, O my father, today we will know and discover that by bringing justice to us you are indeed a helper of the Christians who are treated unjustly. May God give you health.

Written on the 28th of the month of Hidar in 1871 in the town of Lichē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

AE (Brussels), A 3a, Amharic original and French translation.

This is essentially a copy of the letter of the same date to Victoria (no. 209). The variations are mainly due to the fact that one letter is to a female, the other to a male. For Muslim wives bought with money, see note there. The number of Muslim concubines is here given as ፫ ፼, 3 10,000s, but this is probably due to a slip of the pen.

Document no. 211

Minīlik to Umberto I, 7 Dec 1878



May [this letter] sent by King Minīlik reach king Umberto (Omber), the son of the king of Italy.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. And all my army is well.

I am very sad to hear of the death of your father, my friend King Victor Emmanuel (Bīktor Amanu'ēl), for he was the spokesman for me and my kingdom, and he was like my father to me, showing concern for me in everything. And now may God comfort you. [So] it is—one passes away, the other remains. No man lives for ever (lit. remains standing). May God enable you take over your father's throne and his seat.

Written on the 29th of Hidar 1871 in the town of Lichē.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

ASMAI, 36/1–6, fol. 927, Amharic original; fol. 926, French version (sealed with the same seal as above).

The reason why Minīlik's condolences on the death of Umberto's father were not included in the long letter written the previous day is impossible to know. Perhaps it was simply due to oversight, perhaps a separate letter was regarded as more fitting.

The French version begins with a brief "Sire" and then goes straight on to the expressions of sorrow. *Baldereba* (translated "spokesman" above) is rendered *tuteur*.

Document no. 212

Minīlik to Cesare Correnti, 9 Dec. 1878

Letter of the Elect of God, Minīlik II, king of Shewa, to the most illustrious president of the Geographical Society of Italy.

How are you in health? I am well, thank God.

First of all I feel the need to thank Your Excellency and all the counsellors of the Society for having honoured me by sending the diploma of honorary member of the Geographical Society. I shall never forget such an honour for it is written in my heart.

Because of extraordinary circumstances of the war I was not able to send off Captain Cecchi with his companion Engineer Chiarini at the beginning of last May. Now, however, I am able to assure you that the aforementioned departed in the said month, supplied by me with a number of mules with necessary provisions for their journey. One of my generals with his troops is accompanying them as far as Awash. From there on they will be consigned to Yimar *Pasha*, another very influential chief, my subject, who can bring them safely as far as beyond Guragē and even recommend them further on. Up to now no news to the contrary has arrived, and we hope that they are approaching Kefa where they will depend upon the king there. May God protect them further on, and meanwhile if I happen to have further news I shall not fail to send it on to you.

Written in our royal town of Lichē 1 December 1871 (corresponding to the 8th of December 1878 in the Latin calendar).

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

ASSGI, busta 21, fasc. 6, fol. 13, Italian text sealed with Minīlik's seal. 1 December obviously stands for 1 Tahsas which, however, corresponds to 9 December in the Gregorian calendar. The letter is published in the *BSGI*, vol. XVI (1880).

Document no. 213

Minīlik to Charles Gordon [Dec.] 1878



May [this letter] sent by King Minīlik reach the honoured Gordon *Pasha* (Qurdun *Basha*), governor of the Sudan (*yeṭiqur midir*), Sahel (Sewahil), Darfur, and the Red Sea.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well. We have received a letter from the king, the *khedive* (*kēdēwi*), from Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*), annulling the previous proclamation which prohibited [the import of] arms (lit. instruments of war). And now I have sent you a copy of the letter so that you may see it. We hope that you will not prohibit [the passage] of the weapons of war we have purchased [on the basis of] the proclamation (lit. order) of the *khedive* and we hope that the people we have sent will come back satisfied. And as permission has been issued by Ismā'īl *Pasha*, arrange so that it will not be prohibited for us in the future.

Written at the town of Lichē, in 1871.

Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

BL, Or. 12913 (F), Amharic original. Except for the year 1871 (1878/79), this letter was sent undated. Most probably it was written in December 1878. Minīlik refers to it in his letter to Sebastiano Martini dated 15 December (no. 214). Gordon was governor general of the Sudan, the Red Sea coast and Harer since February 1877, and had visited Harer in April 1878 (Hill, pp. 203, 310–313).

Document no. 214

Minīlik to Sebastiano Martini, 15 Dec. 1878

Sent by King Minīlik. Addressed to Count Martini.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God, and my army is well. The letters which you have dispatched have arrived, but I do not know what they contain because I have not received any letter of yours addressed to me; if you had written to me in your own hand I would have been pleased with it.

I hope that you are now at Aden.

The reason why my camels have been delayed so much? [It is] because there is an epidemic which has caused the death of many people and particularily on the side of the lowlands; and it is on account of this that the departure of the travellers and the caravan has been delayed in order to save them from the illness.

Now I have sent you camels and camel drivers, and since my subjects (lit. the people of my country) at Zeyla do not understand their duty I ask you not to offend them, to have patience, to travel with them, and to be quite content knowing that you are doing what I require of you.

Moreover, as I know that you were just and kind with all my [people] on the outgoing journey, I reckon that you will be the same on returning, and until I may see them I also beg you to give my greetings to those who travel together with you to reach Shewa.

Ismā'īl *Pasha* has written to me that he has arranged so that the passage of the arms which are to come to me will not be prevented and has advised me to make this known to Gordon *Pasha*, and I have written about it to Gordon *Pasha* in accordance with the words of Ismā'īl *Pasha.* And therefore I believe that they will not obstruct the passage for you, and I hope to see you arrive satisfied and in good condition.

Written 15 December 1878. Dated Lichē.

Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Juda has prevailed.

BSGI, vol. XVI (1880), p. 355, Italian translation, in all probability by Massaja who was deeply involved in the activities of Antinori and S. Martini at the time.

Document no. 215

Minīlik to Loch, 21 Dec. 1878

To His Excellency, B. General Loch, Her British Majesty's Resident, Aden.

Your Excellency,

May this letter from King Minīlik of Shewa reach Her British Majesty's Resident, General Loch at Aden.

How are you? I am, thank God, in [the] best [of] health.

I received your letter in the month of September to my great delight. I am very glad to hear that you have taken notice about my entering into friendly relations with the European powers, but I am very sorry to inform you that the viceroy of Egypt has closed the road from the coast to my country.

Knowing the British government, whose representative at Aden has been for a long time on friendly terms with me, I beg to ask why your government has not taken steps to prevent this.

I have no quarrel with the viceroy of Egypt and have never had any intention to enter into a war with him. Why has he closed the road from the coast, which never happened in my forefathers' time if they brought ammunition, other articles and workmen into the country? I cannot understand that this is done with the consent of the European powers.

Will Your Excellency be good enough to forward this letter to Her Majesty the Queen, and I would feel much obliged by being honoured with an early reply.

Hoping that Her Majesty will be a benevolent judge in the matter to her distant son.

Written at Lichē the 13th [of] Tahsas 1871 = 21st December 1878.

Translated by order by the Evangelical missionaries.

(Signed) Johannes Meyer of Würtemberg
Johann Jacob Greiner of Baden.

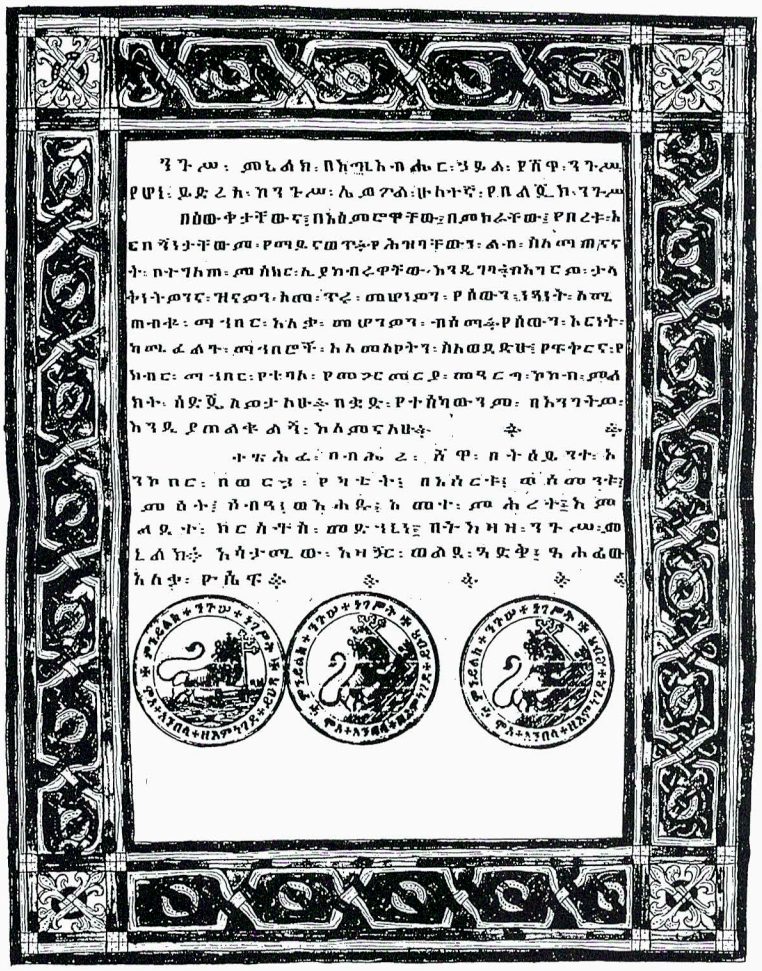
IOR, L/P&S/9154, pp. 887–892, English translation in two versions.

The above, which appears first in the preserved document, is probably a translation of a German text made at Minīlik's court by the two missionaries. Here the spelling of names has been standardized and some other minor linguistic corrections made. A shorter version which has apparently passed an Arabic-speaker—note the month of *Ramadān*—runs as follows (in this case without linguistic corrections except that the sentence "The powers of Europe, we do not trust, approve of such acts" has been corrected to the obvious "The powers of Europe, we trust, do not approve of such acts"):

> . . . We are, by the Grace of God, quite well. We received your letter in the month of Ramadhan and were much pleased by it. We like and seek for the friendship of the European Powers as you know. The Pasha of Egypt has stopped against us the route by sea, and we are annoyed at this. There is friendship between us and the British Government since many years and are near us and how do you approve of the dishonor done to us? We have done nothing bad for the Pasha of Egypt nor did we commit plunder on him, nor did we make war against him and why he closes the road against us? Our grandfathers did not do anything in our country but we send for arms, materials and workmen at our own expenses and they (Egyptians) stop these from coming to us. The powers of Europe, we trust, do not approve of such acts. Please send to Her Majesty the Queen the letter addressed to her, and let the answer come to us speedily. We hope you will be kind and friendly to us and we expect a pleasing answer from you. We are your children, excuse us as we are far from you. Attend to our case according to justice so that we may be pleased.
>
> Written at Leke on the 13th day of Tahas-has 1871.

Document no. 216

Minīlik to Leopold II, Feb.–March 1879



May [this letter from] King Minīlik, who by the power of God has become king of Shewa, reach Leopold (Lēwopol) II, the king of Belgium.

When I heard that you enjoy immense fame due to your greatness, [and] that you are the president of the society which protects human liberties, as it is proper that those who excel in their knowledge, understanding and counsel, [and are] unshakable in their patriotism, who inspire the hearts of their people, should be honoured with explicit testimonies, [and] as I do not wish to remain outside the societies which promote the freedom of man, I have sent you the insignia of the first rank of the Star of Friendship and Honour.

I beg you to wear it for my sake, hanging in a ribbon around your neck,

Written in the land of Shewa, in the town of Ankober, in the month of Yekkatīt, in the year of grace 1871 after the birth of Christ, our Saviour, by order of King Minīlik. Sealed by *Azzazh* Welde Ṣadiq, written by *Aleqa* Yosēf.

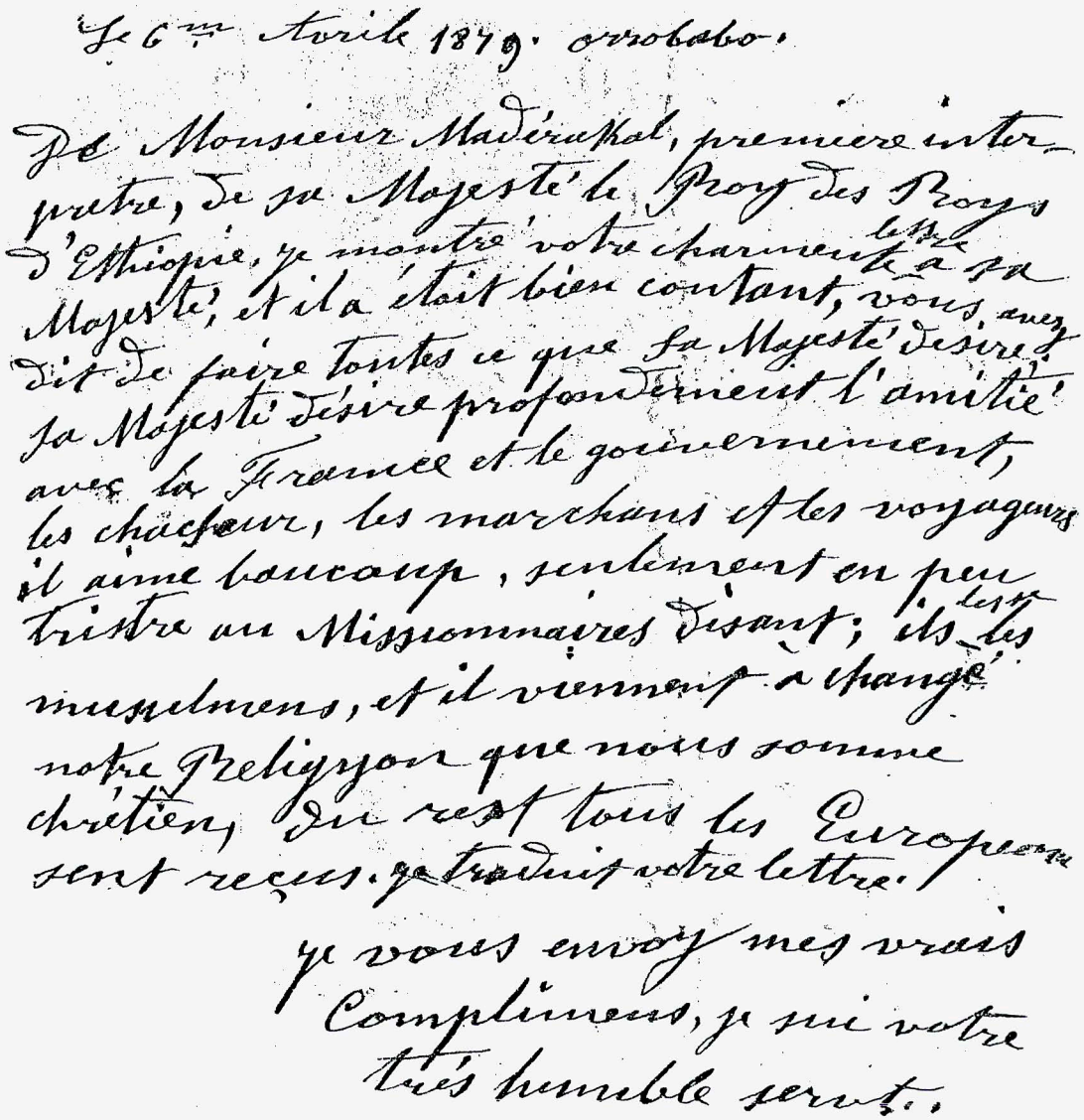
Seal: Minīlik, king of kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Archives des Palais Royaux, Bruxelles, Cab. Leopold II, III A 3, Amharic original.

This letter, as well as Minīlik's December letter to Leopold (no. 210), indicates that Minīlik had been made aware that the Belgian monarch was involved in African affairs.

Document no. 217

Mahdere Qal Tewelde Medhin to Achille Raffray(?), 6 April 1879



Le 6me Avril 1879. orrobabo.

De Monsieur Madérakal, premiere interpretre, de sa Majesté le Roy des Roys d'Ethiopie, je montré votre charmante lettre à sa Majesté, et il a étoit bien contant, vous avez dit de faire toutes ce que sa Majesté désire. sa Majesté désire profondement l'amitié avec la France et le gouvernement, les chacheur, les marchans et les voyageurs il aime beaucoup, seulement en peu tristre au Missionnaires disant; ils les musulmens, et il viennent à changé notre Religyon que nous somme chrétien, du rest tous les Europeens sent reçus. je traduit votre lettre.

je vous envoy mes vrais Complimens, je sui votre très humble servt.

Werrebabo, the 6th of April 1879.

From Mr. Mahdere Qal, first secretary of His Majesty the King of Kings of Ethiopia.

I showed your charming letter to His Majesty, and he was very pleased. You have said that you will do all that His Majesty desires. His Majesty deeply desires friendship with France and [its] government.

He likes hunters, merchants and travellers very much, only saying somewhat sadly of the missionaries: They lose interest in the Muslims, and they come to change our religion although we are Christian. For that matter, all Europeans are accepted. I have translated your letter.

I send you my sincere compliments. I am your very humble servant.

CADN, Le Caire 94, Abyssinie 1876–1881, fol. 165, French original in Mahdere Qal's handwriting. See ACTA, II, no.1, and no. 229 below.

Mahdere Qal does not mention the addressee by name, but the choice of language indicates that he was a Frenchman, and the cordial tone that Mahdere Qal did not regard him as very superior in rank. Therefore it is more likely that Mahdere Qal's correspondent was the French vice consul at Massawa rather than his superior in Egypt. See letter to the French consul general in Egypt later the same year (no. 229).

Mahdere Qal, or MadéraKal, as he wrote himself, above as well as 25 years earlier, was one of the first foreign-educated Ethiopians of the century. He went to France in 1843, proceeding from there to Malta three years later to be educated at the CMS college for nine years before returning to Ethiopia. He returned to Ethiopia with J.L. Krapf (ACTA I, nos 184 and 187; II, 1 and 57).

Though so many years had passed Mahdere Qal's knowledge of French, and his handwriting and spelling, were remarkably good. The format of his letter is clearly European, closing with compliments to the addressee—but oddly without the writer's signature.

Werrebabo, spelled "Orrobabo" by the writer, is a small district in Wello. Apparently Yohannis, or at least his secretary, was still in Wello in early April 1879.

Document no. 218

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V, 28 April 1879

The elect of God, king of Zion in Abyssinia and its territories.

The obedient son,
the attentive king,
prostrates at the feet of the father,
the master of all,
His Beatitude, His Profound Holiness,
who has received from the hands of the apostles the staff of the Christian flock,
the chosen father,
unrestrained by the burden of sin,
the obliterator of misdeeds and distress,
the sun of the Orthodox Church
and the pride of the Abyssinian kingdom,
the pure herald of the gospel in the land of Egypt,
the crown of the Jacobite creed,
the successor of the threehundred and eighteen
apostolic fathers of the city of Nicea,
he who sits on the chair of St. Mark
—the apostle and martyr, the pioneer (lit. virgin) of our fathers—
and watches over the salvation of our souls,
he about whom it is said through the mouth of our Lord:
"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep."
the venerable, crowned by the grace of the Holy Spirit,
the expounder of theology,
who makes the grace gush forth that quenches the thirst of all creatures,
the refined preacher to his people, who raises them up from their fall,
our father, the patriarch, *Anbā* Kīrillus,
the patriarch of the great city of Alexandria, of Egypt,
and of the kingdom which stretches out its hands to God,
Abyssinia, and Nubia and the towns of the West,
may God sustain his life for us. Amen.

Now, having presented greetings with a request for blessings, and prostration in front of the chair to which are due tribute and respect, I, your son King (*Sulṭān*) Yohannis, have sent a letter to Your Fatherliness about what came out of the council which dealt with those who profess, "We worship Christ and His mother", and who to support this refer to three births or even four (?).

Now at the most blessed moment and honoured hour, the letter (*ṭūmār*) of Your Pure Fatherliness dated 14 Ṭūbā 1595 has reached us.

When we opened it we became engulfed, soul and body, by the light of the sun of the leadership of Your Fatherliness shining upon us, and it became spiritual food for us.

We understood what you wrote to us about the absolution of the repentant from amongst those who were so mistaken about the mother of the Saviour that, in their abundant love for her, they even made her share with her Son in the divine nature. Thus your absolution for their previous errors was delivered to your faithful children.

I, your son King Yohannis, by the power of my God Jesus Christ uncontested possessor of the everlasting throne in the land of Abyssinia, beseech God, the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one in essence, the ruler of all, to grant us and you many days and a long period of peace, and to preserve for us the support of Your Fatherliness. Amen.

As for what is mentioned in the letter of Your Fatherliness about the Muslims, who reside in the kingdom of the *nigus* and its subordinate districts, and your admonition to us to treat them gently, to deal with them in kindness, to facilitate for them the practice of the rites of their religion, I bring to your noble knowledge that we did not proclaim anything that might disturb their mind. Far be it from us to wrong any creature of God. They farm, eat, trade, make profit, and prosper in every district in which they settle. We do not claim poll tax (*jizya*) from them, command them to go to war or force them to become Christians, since the pure gospel does not order us [to engage in] any such coercive actions but to give the people freedom. We request Your Fatherliness always to pray for us at the holy hours, particularly at the time of the pure Eucharist, and to absolve and bless us by the mouth of Your Fatherliness. I do not offer you counsel, because I am your son and your obedient servant.

May God sustain your leadership over us for many days and a long period of peace.

21 Baramūda 1871 (1879).

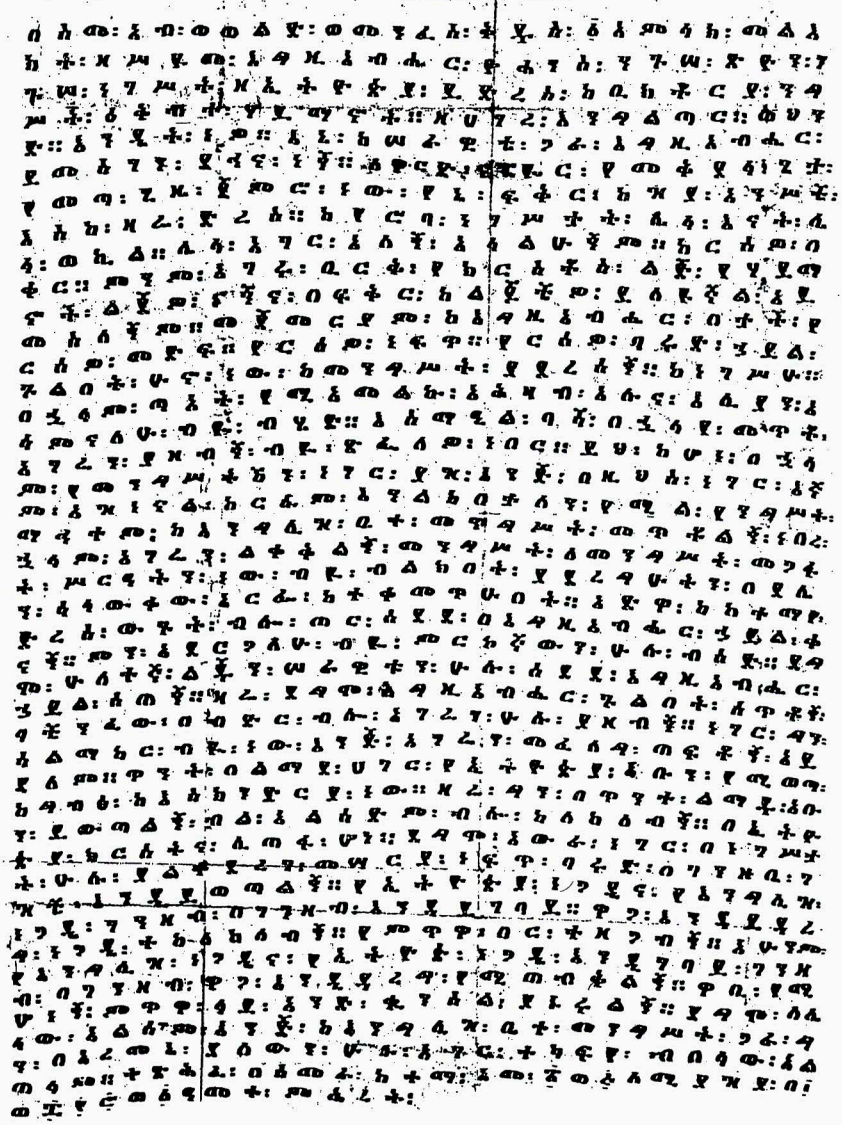
Suryal, pp. 117–129, copy of Arabic text made by Anṭūn Suryāl 'Abd al-Sayyid. See no. 177 above.

The above letter is a primary source for what took place at the council of Boru Mēda, in March 1878, with regard to the establishing of doctrinal unity. Unfortunately, the copy of the text at our disposal is barely comprehensible in some places. The sentence: "and who to support this refer to three births or even four" is an attempt to reconstruct what might have been the original wording.

Document no. 219

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 2 May 1879





Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'ēl. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach Queen Victoria, protector of the faith (lit. protected by the faith), of the land of England (Ingilṭar) and India (Hind).

How are you? I and my army are well, thank God. My friendship goes back to (lit. starts from) the time when Lord Napier of Magdala (Leward Napīyēr, *yemeqdela gēta*) came, from that time up to now. I do not say that I have any other mother, any other representative, [or] any other country among European kings except you [and yours]. Even though [my] country is distant, as I am Christ's son and your son by faith, I do not believe you will treat me differently from your children [in matters] of friendship. Next to (lit. under) God, it was your cannon, your guns, your powder, together with your power and might, which initially enabled me to reach the throne (lit. kingdom).

I wrote to you then that, as there were infidels who worshipped idols and as I went away [soon] after my coronation with the intention of converting them, Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) attacked me from behind (lit. came behind me) and occupied my country. After this had happened, I received from the English court a [letter with the] seal of the queen saying, "Just look after the affairs of your government. We, too, grieve because of this matter, and will write to him." Then I wrote to him to withdraw from my country, asking him if it was proper for one government to trespass [upon the territory of] another government. Without my knowing what (lit. the) offence I had committed, while I was living in peace, he then sent an army to Adwa, my city, ordering them to attack me. By the power of God, I prevailed. Saying to myself, "what else can I do?" I sent back the prisoners of war. And for the second time he sent his son [and] all his army, and God gave me strength. When I defeated him this time, too, because God gave me strength, he occupied all my country by way of revenge. It is not, however, that I am unable to recover my country, but that [I do not want to act] without consultation.

According to the ancient traditon of the country, the bishop of Ethiopia comes from Egypt, from Alexandria. But now, when I asked for a bishop to be sent to me according to the ancient tradition, he refused to send me one. Christianity is about to disappear in Ethiopia.

What is more important, what is not common among kings, is that in my case merchants have been prohibited [from coming], so that weapons, guns [and] powder which I bought with my money are not brought up to me. In order that Ethiopian merchants and English merchants should not trade with each other, goods for goods, merchants are prevented from meeting. The port of Massawa is closed to me. Therefore, appoint (lit. place) a consul at Massawa who on my behalf will see to it that exchange rates between currencies are fixed so that English and Ethiopian merchants can trade with each other, [a person] who will look after my interests.

Moreover, although I will not offer [this] to others, I do not mind exploiting the land which is in the hands of the infidels by sharing it with the English government.

Written in the town of Semera, on 25 Mīyazya, in the year of grace 1871.

FO 95/738, no. 297, Amharic original and English translation. The translation, also with the king's seal, is in Mahdere Qal's handwriting.

Document no. 220

Yohannis IV to Alexander II, 19 June 1879

From Yohannis, by the grace of God king of kings of Abyssinia, greetings to His Majesty Alexander, most powerful by the grace of God, king of kings, and the enemy of the sons of Isma'ēl.

By the power of God and the patronage of Your Majesty, I and my army are well and have peace. Eight years ago I sent Your Majesty a letter and a cross, but I do not know if they arrived. Then I have sent another letter to Your Majesty as well, which the Muslims who control the port have torn up and thrown into the sea, killing its bearer, and [they] have, moreover, cut every route of communication. I submit to Your Majesty that I am the only one among the kings (lit. kingdoms) of the entire world who is deprived of routes of communication, and of the arms which merchants otherwise supply to my country.

All those who love Muslims and are on good terms with them show prejudice against my kingdom, Ethiopia. Since three hundred and fifty years the borderlands of Abyssinia and some parts of it are inhabited by a savage people, but now, by the grace of God, even though I am deprived of arms, and therefore unable to carry out my projects, I do what is possible for me to civilize and subject this people. I have already had churches for Christian worship (lit. the worship of Christians) built in the parts inhabited by the tribes, and I beg Your Majesty to arrange for the equality and freedom of my kingdom in the manner of other countries, so that my kingdom may have a port useful for its commerce and its interests, because they no longer permit even pilgrims who visit the tomb of our Saviour in Jerusalem to make their pilgrimage.

Moreover, the Turks have forbidden the bishop whom the patriarch of Alexandria designated for Ethiopia to come and take up his post. They have also usurped all our church property (*waqfs*) in Jerusalem.

When the Turkish forces made war on me, by the grace of God, I achieved (lit. had) the victory twice and I defeated them. But now the Turks, who no longer have the strength to oppose me, have pawned land over which I have rights, in order to guarantee the payment of their debt to the French and the English.

I am sure that Your Majesty is a (lit. the) son of Jesus Christ. I have confidence in your spiritual zeal and in your well-founded faith. That is why I have the honour to write to Your Majesty the present letter from Gonder, the 13th of Bauna 1871.

AVPRI, Politarkhiv, d. 2000, fols 39–40, French translation made at the Russian embassy in Cairo. The original was apparently not forwarded to St. Petersburg. A translation into Russian appears in A.B. Chrenkov, *Rassijiska–éfiopskie Atnasheniya v XIX–Natjale XX v,* Moscow, 1998, pp. 74–75.

The first letter referred to, written eight years earlier, was almost certainly a letter written in 1871 which was either lost on the way or later in the archives. See document no. 91. The other letter from Yohannis, referred to above, was written in 1876, and also accompanied by a golden cross. It was forwarded through Jerusalem. Notes in archival lists indicate that it reached its destination, but in spite of generous assistance from Russian colleagues, Mr. Denis Nosnitsyn in St. Petersburg and Professor G. Tsypkin in Moscow, it has been impossible to locate it in the Russian archives.

Document no. 221

Yohannis IV to Umberto I, 20 June 1879



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, king of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'ēl. Yūḥannā, king of kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings, king of Zion of Ethiopia, reach King Umberto I of Italy.

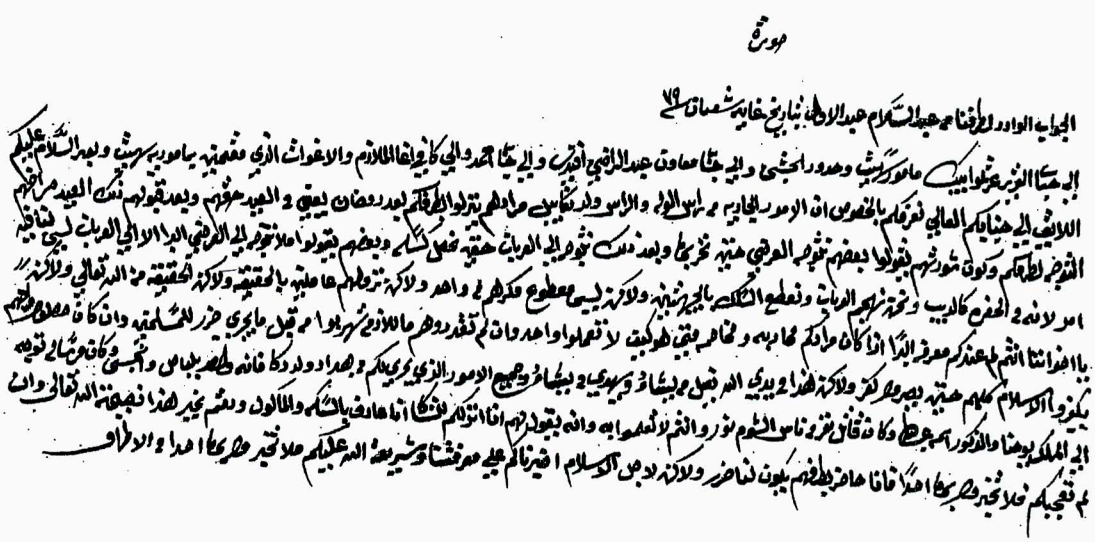
How are you? I am well, thank God. The reason why I have not written to you earlier is because the road is closed to (lit. against) me by (the hand of) the Muslims. Even now, I am [able] to write this letter to you because of the merchants who have come from Italy. I am not writing to you about other matters because I believe I must first get your friendship. And now, I have sent two lion cubs, one male and one female, so that this may serve as a token of friendship, .

Written in the city of Gonder, on the 14th of Senē, in the year of grace 1871.

AS.MAI 36/1-8, Amharic original. An Italian translation of this document, dated "11 giugno 1871 (anno abissino)", is found at the Istituto Italiana per l'Africa, Misc., fasc. 4, where the original was also displayed as a museum piece (no. 9931) before it was returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Document no. 222

‘Abd al-Salām ‘Abd al-Awwal to Franz Hassen *et al.*, 18 Aug. 1879



To His Excellency, the honoured and esteemed *bey*, the governor of Senhit and the borderlands of Abyssinia, and His Excellency, the deputy governor ʿAbd al-Rāḍī *effendi* and His Excellency Lieutenant Aḥmad Wālī Kāfī *Agha*, and the non-commissioned officers (*aghawāt*) who live in the governorate of Senhit.

After greetings befitting Your Esteemed Excellency, we inform you in particular about the current affairs of *Ras* Alula and *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl, that is that they want to attack you after Ramaḍān, which means at [the time of] their own feast. After gathering for this feast they want to march against you. Their deliberations went like this: Some of them said, "Let us attack the garrison in order to destroy it. Then we will turn on the Bedouins all the way to Kassala." But some of them said: "We should not attack the garrison at all. But as for the Bedouins we have no problem [attacking] them, since they are like wolves in the den. We should attack the Bedouins and cut off the roads on both sides."

But nobody knows their cunning. Even if it seems as if they follow the truth, truth is from God Almighty. O our brothers, you have no experience at all. If you want a fight or quarrel, [the question is] when and how? Do not start one.

If you fail to defeat them you must flee so that nothing evil happens to the Muslims. If they achieve their end all would renounce Islam and become infidels. But this is in the hands of God, who leads astray whoever he wants and guides whoever he wants.

All the matters which trouble you originate from Hadād Walad Dakkā, a swindler and liar. When my representative went to King Yohannis—his name was ʿAbdallāh—[Hadād] killed some of *Shum* Nūr's people. You do not know him! He used to tell people: "I will guide you to Taka; I know the road and [where] the food [is]."

May you live in peace. This is the advice of God Almighty. If you do not accept it, do not tell anybody. I am coming to you. It is for the sake of Islam that we inform you about what we know. According to the law of God you should not tell anybody from there.

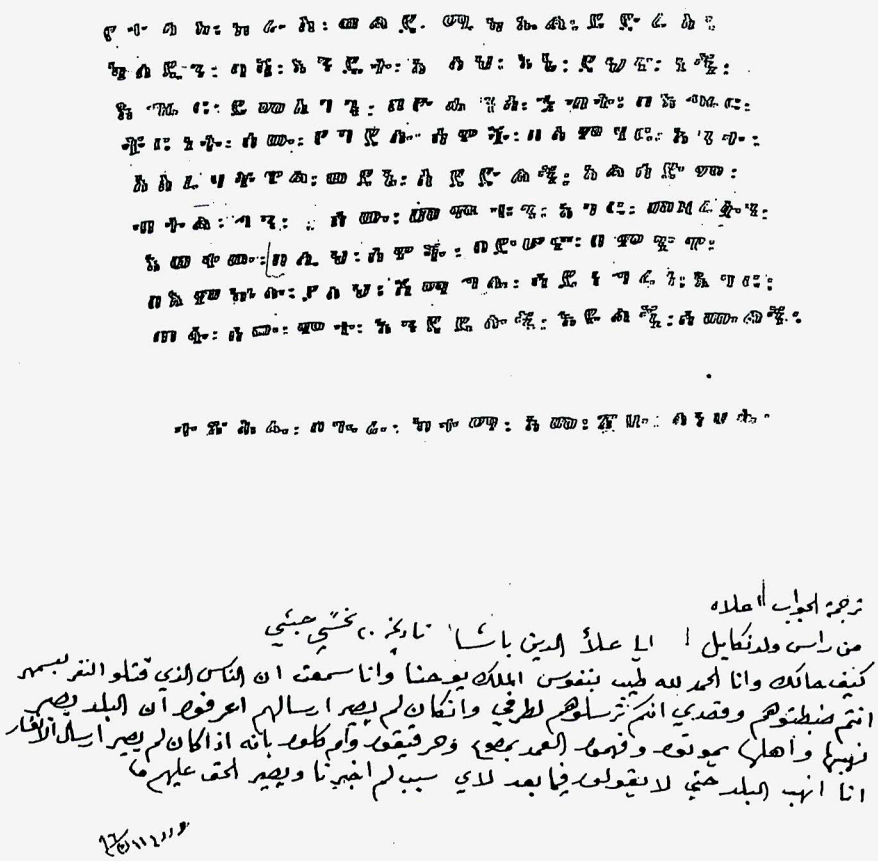
ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 29, copy of Arabic original. The copy is introduced "The letter which we received from ʿAbd al-Awwal dated the last day of Shaʿbān 79", *i.e.* 18 Aug. 1879. In a covering letter dated 3 Ramaḍān 1296 and 21 Aug. 1879 Franz Hassen, governor of Bogos (or Senhit), introduces the writer as the secretary of Welde Mīka'ēl, and informs us that the original of ʿAbd al-Salām's letter was stamped with Welde Mīka'ēl's seal.

Hassen reports that in order to protect the writer he did not send the message by telegraph, which is understandable in view of the writer's relationship to Welde Mīka'ēl. The Ethiopian feast referred to could be either the Ethiopian New Year or Mesqel; thus the attack should be expected in September.

The identity of Hadād Walad Dakkā (transliterated from Arabic) has been impossible to ascertain. From the text he (whether a Muslim or a Christian) seems to have been regarded as a supporter of the Ethiopian side in the conflict with Egypt.

Document no. 223

Welde Mīka'ēl Selomon to 'Alā' ad-Dīn, 25 Aug. [1879]



May [this letter] sent by *Ras* Welde Mīka'ēl reach 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Pasha*.

How are you? I am well, thank God. By Yohannis's [good] fortune and God's goodness, you have imprisoned the people who killed people in Semhar. Send [them] to me. But if you say that you will not send them, know that people will die and the land be pillaged.

Look out, and listen on my behalf, you elders, who are at Dihono, at Massawa [and] at Imkullu, so that it will not be said of me, "Because of these people the land has been destroyed and the people killed without his warning (lit. telling) us."

Written at the camp of Gura on the 20th of Nehasē.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 27, Amharic original and Arabic translation. The Arabic translation renders the last difficult passage as follows: "The village chiefs at Massawa, Ḥarqīqū and Imkullu have understood that if these people are not sent I shall destroy the land, so that they will not say for whatever reason that we did not inform [them], and correctly [so]."

The note "received 11 Ramaḍān 1296" (28 August 1879) makes it possible to establish the year as 1879. Welde Mīka'ēl had decided to submit to Yohannis by the end of 1878 (Hill, p. 328; Erlich, pp. 24–25), and it is obvious that he is here acting as the representative of Ethiopia.

Document no. 224

Yohannis IV to Īyasu Dagmawī, 20 Sept. 1879

May [the letter] reach *Nibure'id* Īyasu Dagmawī.

How are you? I, thanks be to God, am well, together with my soldiers. I have sent 500 thalers for crosses to be made for Ṣiyon. Let half of the crosses be made at 100 thalers [each] and half at 80.

Semera, 10 Meskerem 1872.

AMṢC, English translation of Amharic document. We are indebted to *Ato* Gebre Medhin Kīdane, former history student at the Haile Sellassie I University and author of the pioneering essay "Yohanis IV: Religious Aspects of His Internal Policy", for this text, unfortunately only in his English translation. 'Dagmawī' was reportedly added to *Nibure'id* Īyasu's name in recognition of his sharing out the lands around Aksum to the clergy of Maryam Ṣiyon, as Joshua of the Old Testament had once distributed the promised land to the tribes of Israel, thus 'the second Joshua'—a less-known parallell to 'the second Minīlik'.

Though very brief, the letter reveals a different aspect of Yohannis's commitment to his church, in addition to the major concerns of doctrinal unity among his Christian subjects and the position of Muslims in the society.

Document no. 225

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to G. Rohlf Bienenfeld, 8 Oct. 1879

To [my] very dear friend Mr. Rohlf, consul general of Italy at Aden.

(After usual compliments) I beg to bring to your illustrious knowledge that I have gone to Hanbus, and that I have stopped here seven days to prepare the things necessary for the journey of Captain Martini and his companions. I have brought forty-four camels for the use of Mr. Martini, taken from those which belong to us [and] without it being necessary for the aforementioned captain to spend even the smallest amount, and this in order to show the respect and the esteem which we entertain for the government of Italy, the friend of our government, as well as our affection for you. As soon as the caravan is ready, it will depart this very day. Count Martini and Muḥammad Abū Bakr are with the caravan, and all are well. When they have left, we shall return to Zeyla this same day. We hope that with the help of God they will arrive in good health. We have thought it necessary to keep you informed of all this. I enclose letters from Count Martini for Your Excellency which I beg you to take charge of from *Shaykh* Fadhal. . . .

8 October 1879.

ASMAI 36/1-4, Italian translation, apparently incomplete.

Document no. 226

Yohannis IV to Alula Ingida Qubī, 15 Oct. [1879]



In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to Him.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured *Ras* Alula who is Turk *Pasha* (Tirku *Bashay*), a faithful man after my heart. Peace be to you, and may the peace of God be with you. By the power of the Lord of Hosts (God the Sabaoth) and by the power of the help of our lady Mary, the mother of God, who is the holy Zion, I and my army are well and in peace.

Behold, your letter, which was written and sealed on the 20th of Meskerem, reached us on the 3rd of Ṭiqimt, on the special day which is a Monday. When we opened your great and honoured report (lit. letter of message) and read it we found in it good news (lit. words), pleasing to the heart, about the destruction and dispersal of those infidels who had strayed from what the rules and law of Jesus Christ teach. Then our mouth was filled with joy and our tongue rejoiced.

May God compensate all those who have died because of the battle with good rewards, which the eye has not seen and the ear has not (lit.never) heard, which no man has ever imagined and which God has prepared for those who love Him and those who died and struggled with those unbelievers. May God pour His mercy over them, and may he give them the reward for their blood, as Our Lord says in his word, "Blessed are those who contend with renegades."

And for their sake I shall fight with the devil. The notables and the troops were surprised and amazed by this matter, and they said, "God has shown marvels to people who are Christians." For there is no falsehood in those words of His which run, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you shall uproot a sycamore and move a mountain."

Written in the town of Semera, on the fifth of Ṭiqimt.

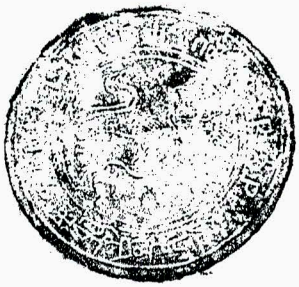
This letter was photocopied in the 1960's from a late but certified copy belonging to *Fītawrarī* Aṣbiha Abraha, a grandson of *Ras* Alula, by Gebre Medhin Kīdane.

Though the year is missing in the date there can be no doubt that it was written during Yohannis's stay at Semera during the period from September to November 1879, when a number of other preserved letters were also written. The good news referred to in the letter from *Ras* Alula, to which the above is a reply, dealt with a tribute-collecting campaign in Bogos in August 1879 (Erlich, pp. 24–25). The letter, addressed by Yohannis to his most famous general, illustrates better than most the spiritual and biblical framework within which the Ethiopian ruler visualized important events. In the quote about faith the size of a mustard seed the writer has combined Matthew 17, 20 and Luke 17, 6.

The title *turk basha* was in Ethiopia connected with the acquisition and use of firearms. It was probably the increasing importance of artillery in the British and Egyptian campaigns in the 60s and 70s that raised the prestige of the title so that it added to the destinction already given to Alula by his *ras*-title (Erlich, p. 19).

Fītawrarī Aṣbiha, or whoever copied the original for him, used a number of very odd spellings, which were not used in any other preserved documents from this period, and can hardly have existed in the original, writing for instance **ዮወ·ሐንስ** for **ዮሐንስ** and **ጽዮዎን** for **ጽዮን**.

Yohannis IV to Īyasu Dagmawī, 17 Oct. 1879



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach *Nibure'id* Īyasu Dagmawī, who knows the laws and the traditions of our mother Zion, a great city, which is above all other churches.

How have you been? I and all my army are well, thank God. We are baptizing all the Muslims, telling them to convert to Christianity. Now, let no *debtera* who does not take communion with his wife serve [or] enter a church. Ban him. Even if he is a *debtera*, should he not be steadfast in faith, taking communion with his wife, upholding the law of God? Is it right for him to ask to be allowed to enter [a church] just because he has fulfilled the seven days [imposed] for his fornicating everywhere? And now, anyone who does not take communion with his wife [and] is not steadfast in [the observance of] his obligations should be banned. Let him not serve in the church. When he says, "I shall serve and sing hymns," do not let him into my church. For it is so that out of Zion shall go forth the law.

While all the Muslims of Wello, Werre Hīmeno [and] Azebo are becoming Christians we should not allow Muslims [near] the *tabot* of Zion. So now tell them to become Christians [and] be baptized. What is the benefit of telling them to stay segregated in a separate place? After they have been baptized, however, it does not matter if they stay wherever they may happen to be. [But] if they refuse to become Christians and to be baptized, let them leave my country.

After they have become Christians, however, you must not prevent them from intermarrying with earlier (lit. old) Christians on the grounds (lit. saying) that they were Muslims [before]. Let them intermarry. Let them also have their share of *rist*. But tell [anyone] who says,"I have the Book," to bring his book and throw it into the fire.

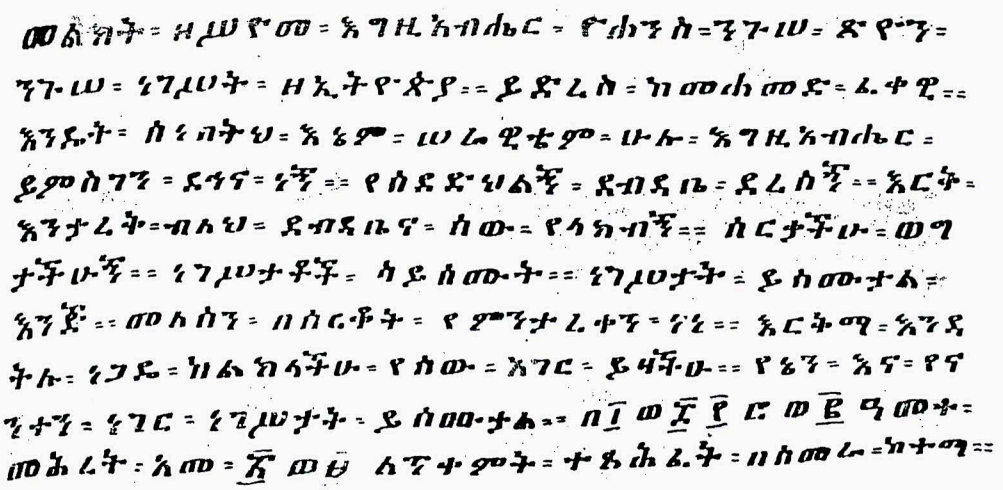
Written in the town of Semera, on the 7th of Ṭiqimt, in the year of grace 1872.

AMṢC, Amharic original. We are indebted to *Ato* Gebre Medhin Kīdane for this very important and interesting document, as well as for the explanation of the use of *dagmawī* with Īyasu's name (see no. 224).

In the same way as Jerusalem and Zion signifiy both the city and the temple in Israel, so Ṣiyon signifies both the *hage*r of Aksum and the *debr* of Maryam Ṣiyon. This explains the awkward reference to "a great *city*, which is above all other *churches*". In fact *hager* or *ager* is more than a 'city', and is normally translated 'country'.

Document no. 228

Yohannis IV to Muḥammad Tawfīq, 7 Nov. 1879



May the letter of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach Muḥammad Tawfīq (Feqewī).

How have you been? I and all my armies are well, thank God. The letter which you sent me has reached me. You send me a letter and somebody (lit. a person) [just] to say,"Let us be reconciled." You have attacked me like a thief, without [other] kings being informed about it (lit. hearing it). Are we [now] to be reconciled in secret, too? [No] the kings shall know (lit. hear).

Do not talk of peace, when you hinder the merchants and seize the land of [other] people. The kings shall hear about the case of you and me.

Written in the year of grace 1872, on the 29th of Ṭiqimt, in the town of Semera.

AECPC, Égypte, Massaouah 4, fol. 133, Amharic text and French translation. The handwriting of the translation is the same as that of General Gordon's report to the French vice consul at Massawa, dated 14 December 1879, to which Yohannis's letter was attached (*ibid.*, fols 131–132; see also 129–130 and 137).

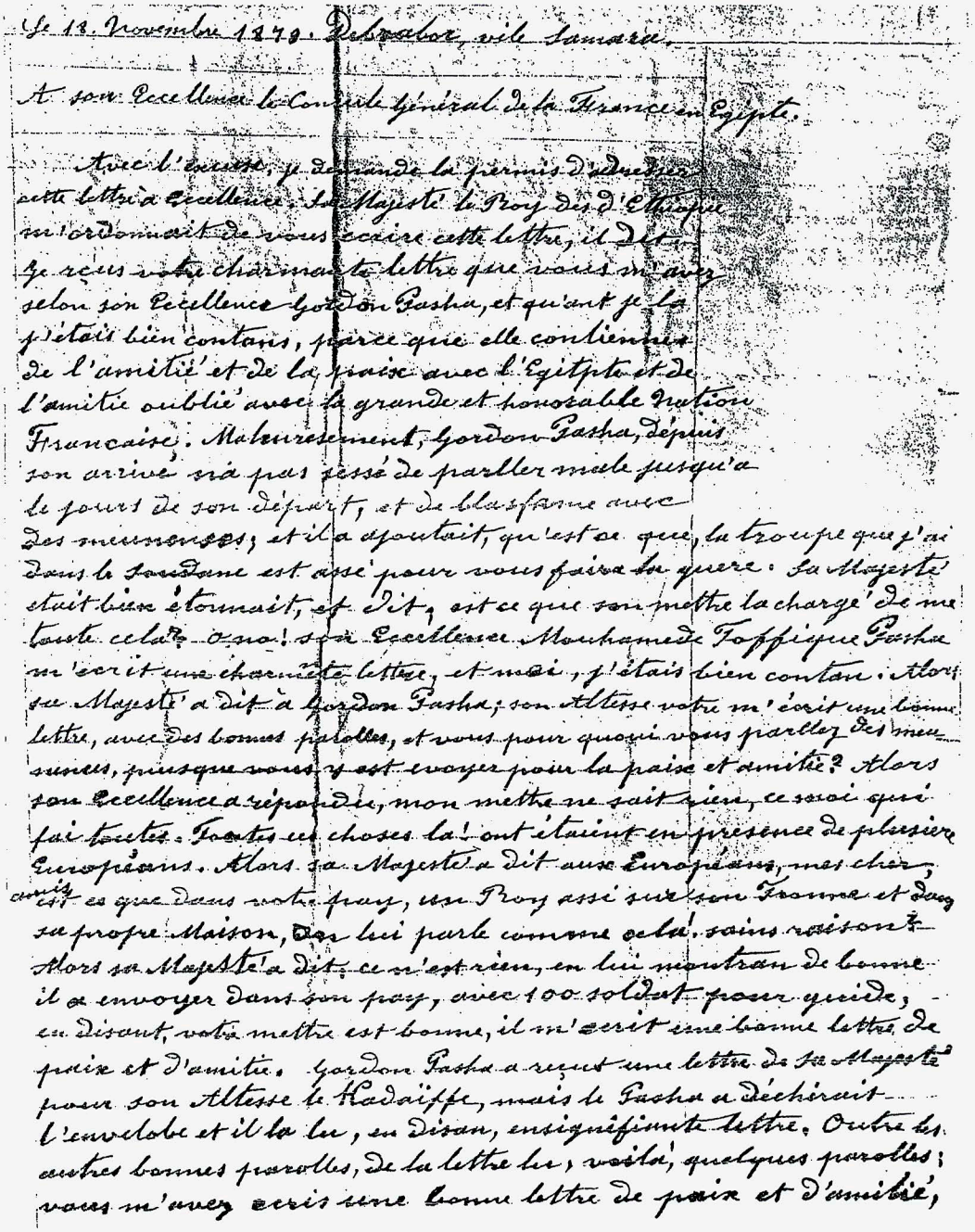
Gordon had gone to Ethiopia to negotiate peace on behalf of the *khedive*. Judging from the tone of the above letter, and from Gordon's own account, the meeting had been far from cordial. Gordon had insisted on getting the king's conditions in writing, and it is therefore highly unlikely that he would have left the king's letter behind. He had opened it, and so could make as many copies as he liked.

Yohannis was apparently very upset that Gordon had nothing to offer, and by the British general's way of conducting the negotiations. Verbally Gordon was told exactly what Yohannis wanted, but the above was all the king had to say to *Khedive* Ismā'īl's successor. Whether the original was sealed we do not know, as we have been unable to locate it in the Egyptian archives. The main insult directed towards Gordon personally was of course that he was referred to as a *sew* a 'somebody' without his name being mentioned.

For Gordon's full account of his mission, see his diary in Hill, pp. 398–427, where he provides a correct translation into French and a slightly abridged version in English. In the latter "eight kings" appear: "You fought me before like a robber. Eight Kings knew not of this affair. To want to make peace like robbers is not good . . . What you say and what I say eight Kings must have cognizance of." (p. 420).

Document no. 229

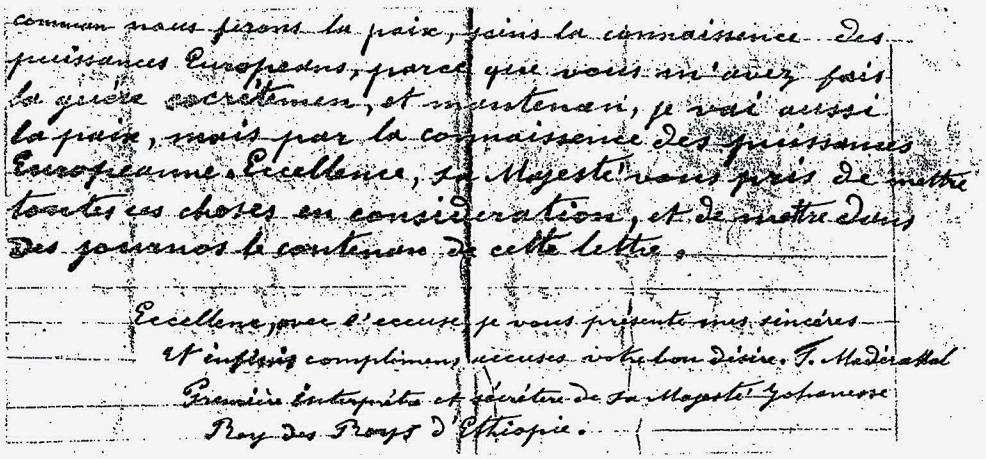
Mahdere Qal Tewelde Medhin to the consul general of France in Egypt, 18 Nov. 1879



Le 18. Novembre 1879. Debrabor, vile Samara.

A son Eccellence le Consule Général de la France en Egipte.

Avec l'excuse, je demande la permis d'adresser cette lettre à Eccellence. Sa Majesté le Roy des d'Ethiopie m'ordonnait de vous ecrire cette lettre, il dit. Je reçus votre charmante lettre que vous m'avez selon son Eccellence Gordon Pasha, et qu'ant je la j'étais bien contans, parce que elle contiennes de l'amitié et de la paix avec l'Egitpte et de l'amitie oublié avec la grande et honorable Nation Francaise. Malheureusement, Gordon Pasha, depuis son arrivé n'a pas cessé de parller male jusqu'a le jours de son départ, et de blasfame avec des meunenses; et il a ajoutait, qu'est ce que, la troupe que j'ai dans le Soudane est assé pour vous faire la guere. Sa Majesté était bien étonnait, et dit, est ce que son mettre la chargé de me toute cela? O no! son Eccellence Mouhamede Toffique Pasha m'ecrit une charmante lettre, et moi, j'étais bien contan. Alors sa Majesté a dit à Gordon Pasha; son Altesse votre m'écrit une bonne lettre, avec des bonnes parolles, et vous pour quoi vous parllez des meunenses, puisque vous y est evoyer pour la paix et amitie? Alors son Eccellence a répondu, mon mettre ne sait rien, ce moi qui fai toutes. Toutes ces choses la! ont étaient en presence de plusiere Européans. Alors sa Majesté a dit aux Européans, mes cher amis est ce que dans votre pay, un Roy assi sur son Fronne et dans sa propre Maison, on lui parle comme cela. sains raison? Alors sa Majesté a dit: ce n'est rien, en lui montran de bonne il a envoyer dans son pay, avec 100 soldat pour guide, en disant, votre mettre est bonne, il m'ecrit une bonne lettre de paix et d'amitie. Gordon Pasha a reçut une lettre de sa Majesté pour son Altesse le Kadaïffe, mais le Pasha a déchirait l'envelobe et il la lu, en disan, ensignifiante lettre. Outre les autres bonnes parolles, de la lettre lu, voilà, quelques parolles; vous m'avez ecris une bonne lettre de paix et d'amitié,



Debre Tabor, the town of Semera, 18 November 1879

To His Excellency, the consul general of France in Egypt.

With apologies I request permission to address this letter to [Your] Excellency. His Majesty the king of [kings] of Ethiopia instructed me to write you this letter. He says: "I received your delightful letter which you had [sent] me regarding His Excellency Gordon *Pasha*, and when I read [it] I was very pleased because it contains friendship and peace with Egypt and [previously] forgotten friendship with the great and honoured French nation." Unfortunately, from his arrival until the day of his departure Gordon *Pasha* did not cease to speak evil and to blaspheme with threats; and he added, "What is [the matter]? The troops which I have in the Sudan are sufficient to make war on you." His Majesty was greatly astonished and said, "Is it so that his master has ordered (*chargé*) him to [tell] me all this. O, no! His Excellency Muḥammad Tawfīq *Pasha* wrote me a delightful letter, and as for me I was very pleased." Then His Majesty said to Gordon *Pasha*, "His Highness, your [master] writes me a nice letter, with nice words, and you, why do you speak threats, considering that you were sent here for peace and friendship?" His Excellency then replied, "My master knows nothing; I am the one who does everything."

All this (lit. these things) took place in the presence of many Europeans. Then His Majesty said to the Europeans, "My dear friends, is it so in your country that you speak like that without reason to a king, also in front of (*sur)* his wife and in his own house?" Then His Majesty said, "It does not matter." Ṣhowing him kindness, he sent him to his country with 100 soldiers as guides, saying, "Your master is good. He wrote me a nice letter of peace and friendship." Gordon *Pasha* received a letter from His Majesty for His Highness the *khedive*, but the *pasha* tore open the envelope and read it, saying, "An unimportant letter." Besides other nice words, the letter read, *voilà*, some words: "You have written me a nice letter of peace and friendship. How do we make peace without the awareness of the European powers when (lit. because) you made war against me in secret? And now I, too, want peace, but through the awareness of the European powers. Excellency, His Majesty begs you to take all these things into consideration, and to put the content of this letter in the newspapers."

Excellency, with my apologies I present to you my sincere and endless compliments. Show your good will (*accuses votre bon désire*).

T. Mahdere Qal
First interpreter and secretary of His Majesty Yohannis, king of kings of Ethiopia.

CADN, Le Caire 94, Abyssinie 1876–1881, fols 84–85, French original. This letter is in Mahdere Qal's own handwriting. Apparently his knowledge of French remained quite good.

Document no. 230

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 20 Nov. 1879



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach Queen Victoria, the honoured [and] the respected, of the land of England and Ireland.

How have you been, really, since I [last] wrote to you? I am well, thank God. I had also sent you a letter earlier, in the month of Ginbot. I do not know whether it has reached [you] or not. Before that, too, I had written and sent many letters to you. The Turks would seize and kill the men on the road, tear up the letters and throw them into the sea. Why is my [position] of being a son and yours of being a mother forgotten? Has Ethiopia, which was not distant to you in war, become distant to you in friendship?

Tawfīq *Pasha* (Ṭofīt *Basha*), the ruler of Egypt (Misir) wrote me a letter asking me to make peace. [One] called Gordon *Pasha* (Gwerdim *Basha*), acting as an emissary, came bringing me the letter. I received him with honours. The messenger spoke very unbecoming words to me, aggressive things, evil things. I kept my peace, saying, "I shall not cross the sea and attack you. Am I going to watch, doing nothing, when you come and attack me?" The reason why I kept quiet when I heard all this [is] that I said to myself that I had to know your will. I am waiting.

Besides, unless I obtain a town on the sea coast, while the whole world looks on I with my army am prevented from trading (lit. merchants); a point of access is denied (lit. closed) to me; a market as big as Massawa, in my own country, is closed to me. What is so terrible about me (lit. terrible is found in me) that the Turks can make me suffer like this? Let not the Turks mock me in my very own country. Make them open a port for me. I would like to build a town on the sea coast. Moreover, when they asked me to make peace with them secretly, as they had secretly attacked me, I told them it could not be done without the knowledge (lit. consent) of the kings [of Europe]. Furthermore, I have written to you about all the injustices of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) these [last] eight years.

Moreover, while I was campaigning in Shewa, we Christians debated among ourselves about the faith. We prevailed and brought [the others] into the Alexandrian faith. All the Muslims, having seen and heard of this, said to themselves, "Ah, so we have no authoritative (lit. father) book!" They begged me to baptize and christen them. I said to them, "All right, if you so wish and want, convert to Christianity." All the Muslims of Ethiopia willingly [and] voluntarily became Christian. Thus I did not do a single thing by force; they converted willingly [and] voluntarily. For when the Lord wrote the Gospel (lit. in the Gospel), he did not tell and command [us] to use force. Nothing was done by force.

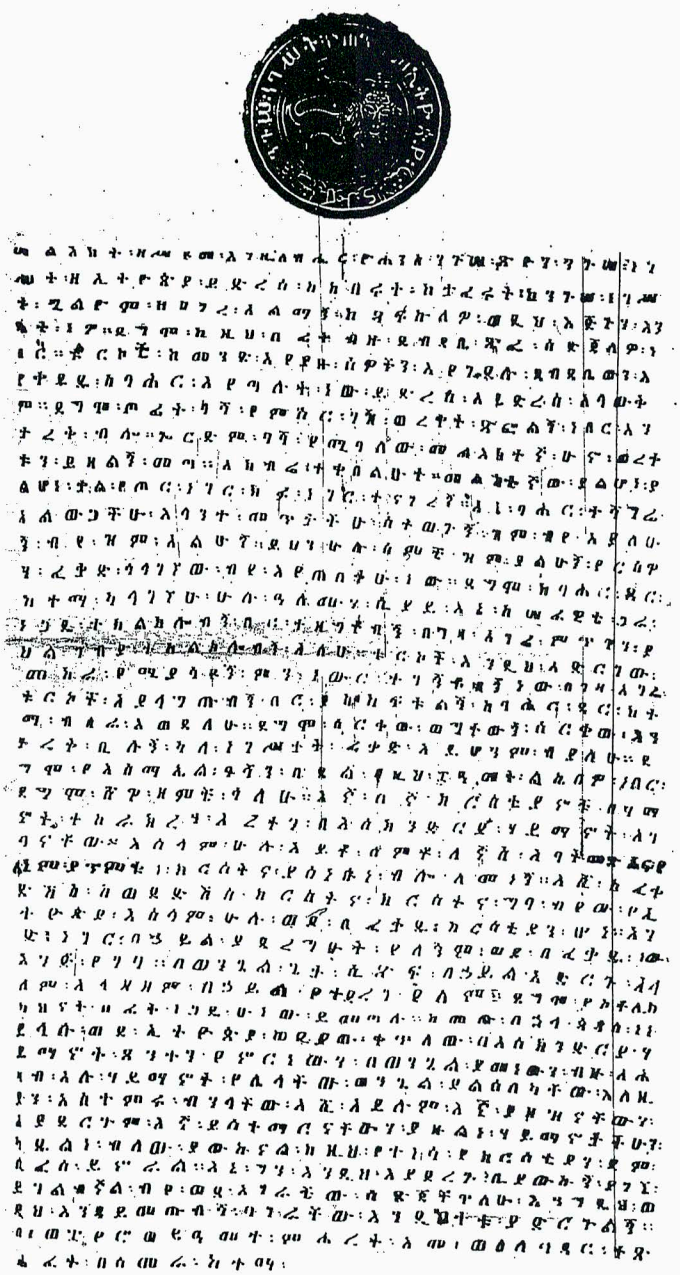
Written in the town of Semera, on the 11th of Hidar, in the year of grace 1872.

FO 95/738, no. 297, Amharic original and English translation.

Though actually dated 25 Mīyazya the Ginbot letter referred to is no doubt no. 219 above. As so many of Yohannis's letters to his European counterparts it had gone unanswered. He was apparently prepared to assume that the Egyptians had stopped it. Now he felt he needed to defend himself once more against what Gordon might report in his disfavour. He wanted to know why Victoria, who had once addressed him as her son in recognition of the stand he had taken at the time the Meqdela expedition, ignored the Egyptian aggression against Ethiopia, in fact seemed to support Egypt's claims to keep the areas occupied in the war.

Document no. 231

Yohannis IV to Wilhelm I, 20 Nov. 1879



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured and respected King of Kings Wilhelm (Wilyom) of the land of Germany (Almañ).

How have you been, really, since I [last] wrote to you? Earlier also, I had written and sent you many letters. The Turks would seize and kill the men on the road, tear up the letters and throw them into the sea. I do not know whether they have reached [you or] not.

Moreover, Tawfīq *Pasha* (Ṭofīt *Basha*), the ruler of Egypt (Misir), wrote me a letter asking me to make peace. [One] called Gordon *Pasha* (Gwerdim *Basha*), acting as an emissary, came bringing me the letter. I received him with honours. The messenger spoke very unbecoming words to me, aggressive things, evil things. I kept my peace, saying, "I shall not cross the sea and attack you. Am I going to watch, doing nothing, when you come and attack me?" The reason why I kept quiet when I heard all this [is] that I said to myself that I had to know your will. I am waiting.

Besides, unless I obtain a town on the sea coast, while the whole world looks on I with my army am prevented from trading (lit. merchants); a point of access is denied (lit. closed) to me; a market as big as Massawa, in my own country, is closed to me. What is so disgraceful about me (lit. disgraceful is found in me) that the Turks can make me suffer like this? Let not the Turks mock me in my very own country. Make them open a port for me. I would like to build a town on the sea coast. Moreover, when they asked me to make peace with them secretly, as they had secretly attacked me [before], I told them it could not be done without the knowledge (lit. consent) of the kings [of Europe]. Furthermore, I have written to you about all the injustices of Ismā'īl *Pasha* (Isma'ēl *Basha*) these [last] eight years.

Moreover, while I was campaigning in Shewa, we Christians debated among ourselves about the faith. We prevailed and brought [the others] into the Alexandrian faith. All the Muslims, having seen and heard of this, said to themselves, "So we have no authoritative (lit. father) book!" They begged me to baptize and christen them. I said to them, "All right, if you so wish and want, convert to Christianity." All the Muslims of Ethiopia willingly [and] voluntarily became Christian. Thus I did not do a single thing by force; they converted willingly [and] voluntarily. For when the Lord wrote the Gospel (lit. in the Gospel), he did not tell and command [us] to use force. Nothing was done by force.

Again, the Catholic priests come, first as merchants. After they have come they say they are bishops for Ethiopia. Right away [they want to convert] us who have stayed firm in the Alexandrian faith [and] who believe in the Gospel. When we tell them that there are many heathen who do not have [any] religion, to whom the Gospel has not been preached, [and ask them] to teach those, they refuse. They do not do as we tell them. They disturb us by telling us, "Accept what we teach you. Deny your faith in our favour." As a a result of this, the blood of Christians continues to be shed. When they disturbed me by behaving in this manner, I sent them to their country, afraid that anyone who saw them would kill them. [Please] act on my behalf so that they do not come here, [but] stay in their country.

Written in the town of Semera, on the 11th of Hidar, in the year of grace 1872.

AAPA, Abth A, I.B.9, Africa 2, Amharic original and German translation..

All but the last paragraph of this letter seem to be copied from the letter to Queen Victoria of the same date (no. 230). The small differences—for instance *gud* (terrible) in the letter to Victoria but *newir* (disgraceful) in the letter to Wilhelm—may be completely unintentional.

The addition of the attack on the Catholic missionaries, however, is significant. It may well imply that Yohannis believed that the Germans were unaware of the issue or that they would be more understanding than the British.

Document no. 232

Yohannis IV to Jules Grévy, 20 Nov. 1879

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach Jules Grévy (Djul Grabi), president of the French Republic. Many times, how are you? I am well, thank God. I was very happy [to learn] that your countrymen, the French, have by their choice elected you to know them, command them, and judge them. During these [last] eight years I have written letters to you. I do not know if they have reached [you] or not. Moreover, when I write the Turks tear up the letter I have written and throw it into the sea. They kill the messenger.

Tawfīq *Pasha* , the sovereign of Egypt, wrote me a letter in order to make peace, and the emissary, called Gordon (Gwardim) *Pasha* came with the letter, and I received him with honours. He did not, however, act as an emissary, and spoke bad words and carried on about war. But [as for] me, I did not speak a bad word. [I said,] "I did not attack you after you had crossed [my country] on the sea. When you came to attack me I, on the contrary, kept silent." I kept silent, saying to myself, "Why should I speak evil like him?" As I listened to all this I kept silent until I would know your wishes, so (lit. because) I waited. Besides, I said, "What does all [this] matter to me if I do not find myself a town on the seacoast, in the sight of the world, if I with my army [and] my merchants meet with barriers, if I am barred from passing, if people prevent me from having a market which would be as good as Massawa?" What is my crime that the Turks cause me such suffering, what is my offence that the Turks deride me? Make the passage open to me. I would like to create a town on the seacoast. This is not all. Before, they attacked me in secret (lit. like thieves); even now they want to make peace in secret. I say that this shall not be done without the consent of the powers.

Moreover, while I was conducting a military expedition to Shewa concerning the affairs of the Muslims who live in Ethiopia, we had discussions among the Christians about the faith. We prevailed over the schismatics and made them adopt the faith of Alexandria. Then, seeing and hearing this, [a Muslim] sent and implored us, saying, "We do not have a book of religion. Baptize us, make us Christians, teach us religion." I told him, "Good, be baptized whenever you like, whenever you want, become Christian." Without compulsion, in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, wanting it and desiring it, all the Muslims of Ethiopia have been baptized in the name of the Trinity and have become Christians. In addition, the Catholic priests first came as merchants. After their arrival in Ethiopia, however, they said that they were bishops. Besides, we are a large people who have remained firm in the faith of Alexandria and who believe in the Gospel. When we told them to teach those who have no faith, and to whom the Gospel has not been preached, they refused to do so. They do not do what we have ordered them. They annoy us by saying, "You have denied your faith which we have taught you." For this reason Christian blood continues to be shed. Since they continue to irritate us by behaving like this and thinking that they will kill whoever they find, I have sent them to their land. From now on, make sure for my sake that they do not come, [but] return to their land.

Written in the town of Semera, on the 11th of Hidar, in the year of grace 1872 (21 November 1879).

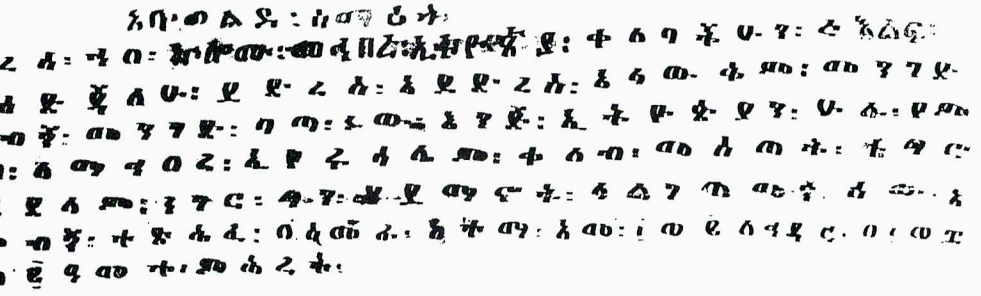
AED, C 41, French translation by Antoine d'Abbadie. We have failed to locate the original of this letter. Clearly it was worded in all essentials as the letters to Victoria and Wilhelm.

The translator failed to understand the word *abat* in the phrase *leka lenyas abat meṣihaf yellenim* as an adjective defining the *meṣihaf* as 'authoritative'. Instead he inserted *père* after the phrase "seeing and hearing this" (line three of the third paragraph). The phrase "thinking that they will kill whoever they find" is a mistranslation of "afraid that anyone would kill them" (cf. no. 231). The date is wrongly calculated, 11 Hidar being 20 November.

Document no. 233

Yohannis IV to Welde Sema'it, 21 Nov. 1879





Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

Abba Welde Sema'it.

May [this letter] reach all the Ethiopian community. I have sent your provisions, five thousand thalers. I do not know whether it has reached you or not (reached you), because they closed the road to me, and so I found no [open] route. Otherwise it would not have been difficult for me, who feeds all Ethiopia, to feed the community of Jerusalem. But do not give to someone who does not agree with me [in] the faith.

Written in the town of Semera on 12 Hidar, in the year of grace 1872.

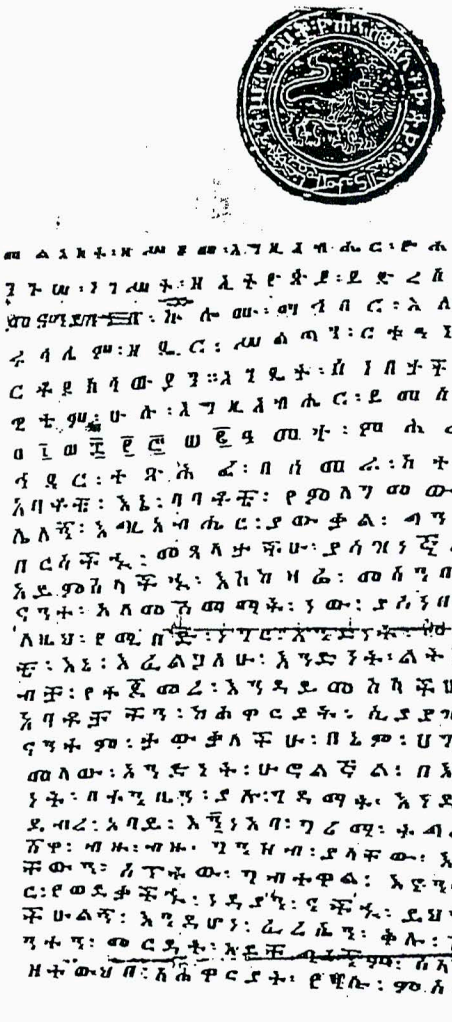
DS, no. 5, Amharic original.

Since a contribution of 50,000 thalers is highly unlikely, and *ilf* is sometimes used instead of *shī* for 'one thousand' (see the note on document no. 209), we have translated "thousand" in this case. The contribution of 5,000 thalers to the monastery would seem to refer to a gift sent recently, but it is also possible that the writer is referring to an unacknowledged contribution of 5,000 sent as long ago as 1873 with a letter to the then abbot, Birhane Mesqel (no. 112). At any rate Yohannis was apparently still worried that money might not reach Jerusalem because of problems of communication.

In the Yohannis chronicle published by Bairu Tafla (pp. 166–167), the writer has increased the amount transferred to 10,000 thalers, and dated the letter from Asmera instead of Semera.

Document no. 234

Yohannis IV to the Ethiopian monks at Jerusalem, 21 Nov. 1879



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, king of kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God, Yohannis, king of Zion, king of kings of Ethiopia, reach all the congregation of saints and hermits who live in Jerusalem, at Dayr al-Sulṭān, the upright in the Orthodox faith.

How have you been? I and my army are well, thank God.

Written in the town of Semera on 12 Hidar, in the year of grace 1872.

Nevertheless, my fathers, God knows that there is nothing in which I have been slothful and negligent. But I am sad that you quarrel with each other. Do not believe that it is because I lack money that I have delayed until now; (but) it is your discord that has delayed it. And now the solution to this is that you become reconciled. My fathers, I want you to become reconciled for my sake. Do not believe that this began only with you. It has come down from the apostles.

And now you know that by the grace of God all has become peaceful in my country, in Ethiopia. The monasteries of Tembēn [and] such as Debre Damo, Debre Abbay, Abba Gerīma, [and] all the way (lit. starting) from Tigray to Shewa, all who have much wealth have delivered their tribute and submitted. You are poor people, who are left alone in a foreign land. If, however, you agree (lit. do this) I would not mind (lit. it would not be difficult for me) to sell even my horse to help you.

May the peace of God that was bestowed upon the apostles be with you. Amen.

DS, no. 11, Amharic original. Note the odd position of the date in the middle of the letter.

In the chronicle of Yohannis published by Bairu Tafla (pp. 168–169) this document is dated "Asmera" which is obviously an error committed by the chronicler. Yohannis and his court were at Semera in November 1879 as the above correspondence proves.

Document no. 235

Declaration of Burhān Dīnī, 30 Dec. 1879

Rahīta, 30 December 1879

Glory be to God.

On the sixteenth day of the month of Muḥarram, in the year 1296 according to the Muslim era, on the thirtieth of the month of December 1879 according to the common era, I, Burhān Dīnī, *sulṭān* of Rahīta, referring to the agreement stipulated on 16 March 1870 between myself and the representatives of Messrs. Rubattino and Co., (I) formulate the following declarations:

1st. I declare that I have received from Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto, representative of Messrs. Rubattino & Co., the sum of one thousand thalers as settlement for the past ten years for the lease of the islands of Umm al-Barhar, Ras al-Raml and the Darmackē cluster;

2nd. I declare that I have received from Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto the price of two thousand rupees for the definitive acquisition of the said islands and locality;

3rd. I declare that, following upon the payment now quoted, I renounce as of this moment, in my [own] name as well as in that of my successors, every claim of ownership and sovereignty to the above-mentioned islands of Umm al-Barhar, Ras al-Raml and the Darmackē cluster, in complete favour of Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto, representative as above, who because of the very fact of such a renouncement, enters as of now into full and complete possession of them, to use them in the manner which pleases him most and with the ensuing right of raising the Italian flag there;

4th. I declare that I have sold, as I am [indeed] selling, the said places of my own accord and by virtue of an incontestable right of mine, determined in [my] desire to respect the sale in question and to cause it to be respected at any time and place, [and] with every possible means.

Finally I declare that the present act cannot in any way invalidate the agreements which, before the preceding declarations, might have been concluded between Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto and Messrs. Rubattino & Co., and other rightful parties or associates.

In faith of which I sign, in the presence of the witnesses mentioned below, swearing on the Quran that I have in good faith sold, as I [do] sell and cede what is declared above.

I accept all the above, dictated to me by Giuseppe, [and] written in Arabic.

Sulṭān Burhān.

Witnesses: 'Uthmān - 'Abdallāh Burhān - Giacomo Doria, son of Giorgio - Odoardo Beccari.

Trattati, III, 1943, pp. 420–422, printed Italian text. All attempts to find the Arabic original, or even a contemporary Italian text, have unfortunately failed.

In the *Trattati* series quoted above the document is inserted under the year 1870, and carries the heading "Sultano di Raheita–Italia. 16 marzo 1870. Convenzione fra il Sultano di Raheita ed il Signor Rubatino e C. per la cessione delle isole Omm-el-Barhar Ras-er-Raml e del gruppo Darmackiè." The opening lines of the document establish the date of the actual document as 30 December 1879, and the text is in fact a unilateral declaration by Burhān Dīnī. The explanation is that both the date and the description of the document as a "convention'" actually refer to the convention, or rather contract, of March 1870. See no. 43 above. When the document was published in the series *Trattati, Convenzioni, Accordi, Protocolli Ed Altri Documenti Relativi All'Africa 1825–1906*, Rome 1906, I, pp. 39–41, it was entered under the correct date as a "convenzione", the concluding parties being presented as "Berehan Dini Sultano di Raheita" and "prof. Sapeto rappresentante dei signori Rubattino e C.". It is from that edition we have taken "aventi causa", translated "rightful parties", "*e*venti causa" in the 1943 edition being an obvious misprint.

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