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## Cover Illustration:

Papyrus boats drying under a thorn tree on the east side of Tadecha island, Lake Zway.

Photo: Paul B. Henze

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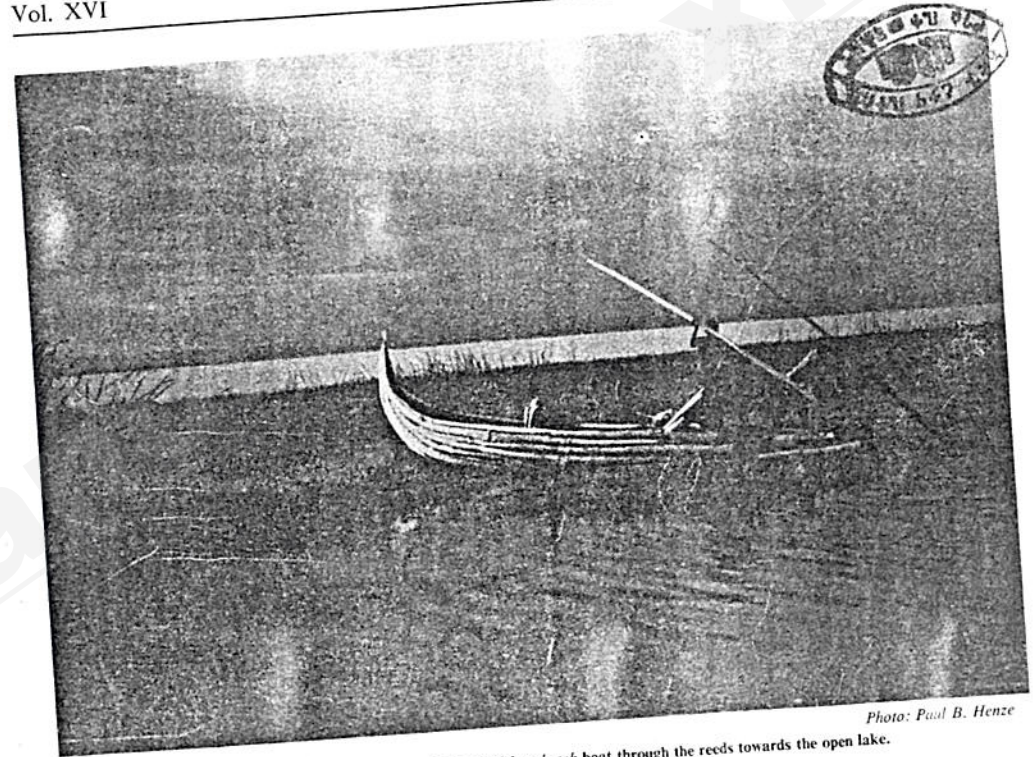


Photo: Paul B. Henze  
Lake Abbaya. Gidicho men pole their graceful ambatch boat through the reeds towards the open lake.

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# Schedule of International Agreements Relating to the Boundaries of Ethiopia

by David Hamilton

Ethiopia's boundaries with her neighbours are determined by agreements of 1897 with France, Britain and Italy, agreements of 1902 and 1907 with Britain, and in agreement of 1908 with Italy. The 1897 Treaty with France determining Ethiopia's boundary with the territory of the Afars and Issas was delimited and demarcated in 1954. The 1897 Treaty with Britain concerning the northern boundary with Somalia was demarcated in 1934, whilst the 1908 Treaty with Italy terminating the southern part of Ethiopia's boundary with Somalia was partially demarcated in 1911. The 1907 Treaty respecting the Kenya boundary was delimited in 1968 and demarcated in 1970. The 1902 Treaty with Sudan was delimited last year and is to be demarcated shortly.

The process of delimitation involves a detailed decision as to where precisely in theory and on the map the line will lie: that of demarcation being the marking of this line on the ground with suitable beacons and markers. When the whole process is completed, the line on the ground becomes the legal, definitive, boundary between the two states. When this final stage has been reached, doubt and argument as to whose territory is in issue can no longer exist, and both governments find it much easier to initiate and maintain joint development and welfare projects across the frontier - as has been most successfully demonstrated in the situation now prevailing across the Kenya boundary following its demarcation in 1970.

The schedule given here is a "spin off," as it were, of

this study. The author prepared it originally entirely for his own information but feels now that it may be of interest and perhaps some assistance to others concerned with, or undertaking research into, several aspects of recent Ethiopian history. Inevitably a number of people have contributed to its compilation by giving generously of their time, trouble and knowledge: the author acknowledges most gratefully not only their assistance but also the encouragement that their interest and assistance has given him. He wishes to stress, however, that all errors and omissions that remain are his sole responsibility!

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 FO. Foreign Office document or file in the Public Records Office, London  
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Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes	
27	BRITISH TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP & COMMERCE with Sultan of Berbera: by which the Somali tribe who looted the <i>Marianne</i> agreed to pay compensation and to permit British ships to trade "without impediment or molestation"	Pankhurst: 42 Aitchison: 154	Similar treaties were concluded in 1855 and 1866 (Aitchison:178-184)
-8-1840	TREATY OF PEACE & COMMERCE between Sultan of Tadjoura and the British East India Company: by which the Sultan acknowledged the Company's Protection	Aitchison: 177 Hamilton: 15	on the same day Captain Robert Moresby IN bought the island of MUSSA
-11-1841	BRITISH TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP & COMMERCE with King Sahle Selassie, King of Shoa, Efat and the Galla (and Captain W. Cornwallis Harris)	Hertslet: 421	Hertslet comments, "No boundaries were defined in this Treaty and it is no longer in force"
-1843	FRENCH TREATY OF AMITY & COMMERCE with King Sahle Selassie (and M. Rochet d'Hericourt)	FO 403/255 p 204-5 Gingold Duprey: 392-3	Gingold Duprey comments that "for reasons unknown" this treaty was never ratified by King Louis-Phillipe
-1843	TREATY OF PEACE & COMMERCE between Sultan of Zeila and the British East India Company: similar to Captain Moresby's earlier treaty, with the Sultan of Tadjoura of 19-8-1840	Hamilton: 16	

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes	
2-11-1849	BRITISH TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP & COMMERCE with Ras Ali (and Consul Plowden): by which both governments undertook (Art XIII) "to secure the avenues of approach between the sea-coast and Abyssinia"	Hertslet: 422	Hertslet comments, "The boundaries were not defined, and the Treaty was terminated by the war between Britain and Abyssinia in 1868 which resulted in the death of King Theodore"
10-5-1859	COMMERCIAL TREATY between the King of Sardinia and Dedj. Negussie, "King of Ethiopia," quoting no boundary references and to last for 10 years	Hertslet: 446 Italian Green Book 1890: 10	the Treaty's main significance lies in the readiness of Italy/Sardinia to intrigue against Theodore (and Britain) to the extent of concluding a treaty with the rebel Dedj. Negussie Agau (whose men were to kill Plowden in February 1860 and who was himself to be caught and cruelly killed by Theodore in 1861)
2-10-1859	Dedj. Negussie offers Napoleon III land at Zulla or at Ras Dumeira. Captain Roussel negotiates a DRAFT TREATY in which Negussie agrees to offer "as a free gift all my country situated at the foot of Mount Gadam... as far as and including the islands of Ooda and Dissee"	Douin III 1: 248-249 Pankhurst: 60	Pankhurst comments, "Though the French Govt for a time contemplated accepting Negussie's offer, fear of offending the British in the end prevented the authorities in Paris from ratifying the agreement. (Dissee, with Adulis and Dahlac, was occupied by the Turks on 14-12-1861)
11-3-1862	FRANCO-DANAKIL CONVENTION: by which France bought Obokh and the territory from Ras Dumeira to Ras Ali for 10,000 thalers	Hertslet: 628-9 Pankhurst: 63	British Vice-Consul Walker reported to London, "The Chief of the village after receiving the money disappeared, and his successor did not countenance the claim or right of the French to purchase this site nor of the Chief to dispose of it." And indeed the French made very little use of this treaty for 20 years, as the NOTICE of 25-12-1880 makes clear.
25-12-1880	FRENCH NOTICE respecting limit of French Possessions at Obokh: no sovereignty has yet been exercised	Hertslet: 629 Hamilton: 23	
27-5-1866 8-6-1873	TURKISH FIRMANS granting the Government of Egypt and its Dependencies, including Massawa, to Ismail Pasha and his heirs	Hertslet: 614-9	An Egyptian Note to the Italian Consul-General at Cairo in July 1881 claimed the coast to the Straits of Babel Mandeb.
15-11-1869 11-3-1870	CONVENTIONS: by which Sultan of Assab sold the territory between Mount Ganga and Ras Lumah, and nearby, to Joseph Sapeto	Hertslet: 446-7 Coll of Treaties Relating to Africa, Rome (1906)	
30-12-1879 15-3-1880 20-9-1880	CONVENTIONS: by which Sultan of Raheita ceded to the Rubattino Company the islands in the Bay of Assab between Ras Lumah and Ras Sintyar "with a trace of land on the coast", and Protection	ditto	
15-5-1880	CONVENTION and DECLARATION: by which the Danakil Chiefs ceded the islands between Ras Lumah and Ras Darmab, and territory of Bahr Assoli and at Nehtah to Rubattino Company	ditto	
10-3-1882	CONVENTION between Italian Govt and Rubattino Company: by which the Company's rights in the above Conventions were transferred to the Italian Government	ditto	
15-3-1883 (22-5-1883)	ITALIAN TREATY with Sultan of Assab: by which the Sultan ceded "the territory of Abilis on that part of the territory of Aussa suitable for cultivation" for the establishment of an Italian Commercial Station	Hertslet: 447-8 Italian Green Book 1890: 127	Italy now moves inland: but Antonelli has the treaty ratified by Menelik in Shoa on 22-5-1883
21-5-1883	ITALIAN TREATY OF PEACE, AMITY & COMMERCE with Menelik, King of Shoa (with Antonelli): for the promotion of trade between "the States of HM the King of Shoa and the Colony of Assab"	Hertslet: 448-450 Italian Green Book 1890: 128	Article XIII kindly arranged that Menelik might use Italian Govt channels to forward letters or communications that he might wish to send to other Govts in Europe...
3-6-1884	ANGLO-EGYPTIAN-ETHIOPIAN TREATY: signed at Adowa by Hewett and Mason with Yohannes IV, who agreed "to facilitate the withdrawal of the troops of HH the Khedive from Kassala, Amedib, and Sanheit through Ethiopia to Massawa" (art. III) in exchange for the free transit through Massawa for all goods, including arms and ammunition, under British protection. The treaty was to be "everlasting"	Hertslet: 422-3 Wyld: 472-3 Pankhurst: 75-6, 79-80	Yohannes, complying, sent his forces under Ras Alula to relieve the beleaguered garrisons at Amedib, Algeden, Keren, Ghirra, Gallabat and Kassala. While Yohannes' forces were thus engaged, Britain arranged for Italy to replace Egypt at Massawa (see Proclamation below) (NB, Sanheit=Keren)

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
		and binding upon all parties, their heirs and successors. (Ratified by Britain on 4-7-1884, and Egypt on 25-9-1884)
3-2-1885	ITALIAN PROCLAMATION to the People of Massawa: announcing their occupation in accordance with, it claimed, English, Egyptian "an no doubt also Abyssinian" wishes (Proclaimed in Italy in King's name, 10-2-1885)	Hertslet: 450
9-4-1884 2-1-1885	FRENCH TREATY with Sultan of Gobad (and Lagarda): by which the Sultan was first protected and then agreed that he and his successors "don de son pays au Gouvernement de la Republique" (art 1)	Hertslet: 630-3 and 1086 The Sultan of Gobad also apparently concluded a Treaty accepting Italian Protection in November 1884, but, presumably in view of the earlier French Treaty, Italy did not press
21-9-1884 18-10-1884	FRENCH TREATY and ACT with Sultan of Tajourah (and Lagarde): whereby Sultan Hamed-ben-Mohamet gives his country (Ras Ali to Gubbed-Khareb) to France in order that she may protect it (The two agreements were approved and sanctioned by French Decree of 22-8-1885)	Hertslet: 630-2 Despite the British Treaty of 19-8-1840 <sup>o</sup> concluded by Captain Moresby with Sultan Hamed's father, and the purchase of Mussa Island, Britain made no protest at the French Treaty of 21-9-1884.
14-12-1884	FRENCH TREATY with Sultans of Tajourah and Gobad (and Lagarde): by which France acquired the coast on the south side of the Gulf of Tajourah from Adaeli (Gubbed-Khareb) to Khor Ambado	Hertslet: 632 see also Treaty of 2-1-1885 above with the Sultan of Gobad
26-2-1885	GENERAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BERLIN relative to the Development of Trade and Civilisation in Africa . . . the Suppression of the Slave Trade . . . the Occupation of Territory on the African Coast, etc.: by which the Signatory Powers agreed to notify each other of any territory they might occupy so as to prevent possible clashes of claims	Hertslet: 468-487 the basic act whereby the European Powers regulated their relations during the "Scramble for Africa"
25-3-1885	French "Treaty of March 25, 1885:" between M. Henri, Consular Agent at Harar, and Ughaz Nur Robley and Gadabursi Chiefs at Zeila who sought French Protection	FO 401/16: 12-15 It post-dates Britain's Treaty with the Gadabursi of 11-12-1884, and Britain questioned the validity of some of the signatories. The text was communicated to HMG on 2-2-1887; yet M. Waddington recognised on 13-4-1887 British protection of the Gadabursi.
26-3-1885	FRENCH TREATY with Chiefs of the Issa (and Lagarde): by which "Les chefs Issas donnent leur pays a la France pour qu'elle le protege contre tout etranger"	Hertslet: 633
1884-86	BRITISH TREATIES with Northern Somali Tribes: 1-5-1884 with the Mijjertain 14-7-1884 " " Habr-Awal 11-12-1884 " " Gadabursi 26-12-1884 " " Habr-Toljaala 31-12-1884 " " Eesa-Somal 13-1-1885 " " Habr-Gerhajis 27-1-1885 " " Warsangali 1-2-1886 " " Habr-Toljaala 1-2-1886 " " Habr-Gerhajis 15-3-1886 " " Habr-Awal	Pankhurst: 78 Somali Govt: 99-100 In these treaties the Somali tribes concerned were placed under British Protection. They were the basis not only for the trans-frontier grazing clauses annexed to the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 14-5-1897, but also for the many claims that the Gadabursi and other tribes were under British Protection even when resident in Ethiopia, and for the post-1941 claims to grazing rights in the Haud
24/31-5-1887	ANGLO-ITALIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES: by which Britain recognised Italian occupation of the coast from Massawa to Ras Kasar	Hertslet: 946-7
20-7-1887	BRITISH NOTIFICATION issued to the powers under the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 26-2-1885, that the Somali Coast from Ras Jibuti to Bunder Ziadeh had been placed under British Protection	Hertslet: 618
2/9-2-1888	ANGLO-FRENCH EXCHANGE OF LETTERS concerning their Spheres of Influence on the Somali Coast, between M. Waddington and Lord Salisbury	Gingold Duprey: 397-8
17-8-1888	BRITISH DECLARATION recognising Italian occupation of Massawa and adjacent territories, and abolishing British Consular jurisdiction there	Hertslet: 947

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
2/20-3-1889	ITALIAN NOTIFICATIONS that the Sultanate of Oppia and the Mijjertain and Warsheik coastline is under Italian Protection	Hertslet: 1123-4
7-4-1889	ITALIAN TREATY with the Sultans of Mijjertain and Oppia: by which they placed all their possessions under Italian Protection	Hertslet: 1119-1120 But by his Declarations of 16-11-1894 and 7-4-1895 Sultan Osman Mahmud of the Mijjertain declared his adhesion to the Brussels Act of 1890, and refused to recognise his dependence on the Italian Govt. By a Convention of 10-4-1901 Italy invested custody of the Mijjertain coast upon the Sultan of Oppia. On 18-8-1901 Sultan Osman capitulated, however, and placed himself and his territory under the Italians.
2-5-1889	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF WICHALE between Menilik and Antonelli: by which Italy recognised Menelik as Emperor in exchange for his recognition of their occupation of Massawa and Hamasein but by which Italy subsequently claimed, on the basis of the Italian translation, to be Ethiopia's Protecting Power (Ratified by Italy on 29-9-1889)	Hertslet: 454-5 Britain, France and Germany accepted the Italian claim: Russia did not. Accepting the claim, British signed Protocols with Italy in 1891 and 1894 separating into Spheres of Influence the whole of the Horn. Italy and Britain denied Menelik the right to renounce or even renegotiate the offending Article (XVII)
3-8-1889	ITALIAN AGREEMENT with the British East Africa Company signed in London delimiting their Spheres of Influence: by which the Company's sphere extended to 8° North (Consented to by Sultan of Zanzibar: 5-3-1890)	Hertslet: 1088-9 FO 403/130: 1-11 This Agreement was superseded by the Anglo-Italian Protocol of 24-3-1891. Its main interest lies in the fact that the 8° line was the Italian proposal arrived at after long negotiations (in which the inclusion of Kaffa was discussed) conducted after the signing of the Treaty of Wichale
1-10-1889	ADDITIONAL CONVENTION TO TREATY OF WICHALE: by which a rectification of the boundary on the basis of actual occupation (i.e. in Italy's favour) was accepted: Ethiopia is to receive a loan of 4,000,000 lira signed between Crispi and Ras Makonnen in Naples (Ratified by Menelik on 25-2-1890)	Hertslet: 456-7 Libro Verde, 1890, 2nd series: 19 The loan was effected by a Convention between the Italian and Ethiopian Govts and the National Bank of Italy dated 26-10-1889. This loan was later to be an additional cause of friction between Ethiopia and Italy.
12-10-1889	ITALIAN NOTIFICATION that under Article XVII of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 2-5-1889 Ethiopian Foreign Affairs would henceforth be conducted by Italy	Hertslet: 457 The Amharic version of the Treaty did not, of course, accord Italy such rights
19-11-1889	ITALIAN NOTIFICATION: by which the Benadir Coast from Kismayu to the Sultanate of Oppia was placed under Italian Protection	Hertslet: 1125 The Notification states that the southern extremity of the Sultanate of Oppia lies at 20°30' North: it meant 2°30'. The extremely inefficient way in which this Notification and those of 2/20-3-1889 were presented is remarkable
6-12-1889	ITALIAN NOTIFICATION: by which the Sultanate of Aussa and its Danakil Dependencies were placed under Italian Protection	Hertslet: 458
9-4-1890	BRITISH TREATY with the Gadabursi: by which Ughaz Nur Robley definitely accepted British Protection	FO 403/438: 27 Despite the British Treaty of 11-12-1884, Ughaz Nur Robley signed the so-called French "Treaty of March 25, 1885" to put himself under French Protection. Possible claims under this treaty were, however, abandoned by the French Government in 1887
2-7-1890	GENERAL ACT OF THE BRUSSELS CONFERENCE relative to the African Slave Trade, etc.: by which Signatory Powers agreed to prohibit the importation of all arms and ammunition to the interior of Africa between 20°N and 22°S excepting for their own use, etc.	Hertslet: 488-518 Despite the bilateral treaties by which Italy, France and Britain each guaranteed the free transit of arms for the Ethiopian Govt, and despite the fact that Ethiopia acceded to the Brussels Act on 26-9-1890, this Act was often used as the basis for denying arms to Ethiopia
26-9-1890 9-9-1890	Ethiopia accedes to THE BRUSSELS ACT SALT CONCESSION: by which M. Chefnaux was authorised to take salt from Lake Assal	FO 403/346: 29 The Concession makes it quite clear that the sovereignty of Lake Assal lies and remains with Ethiopia
24-3-1891	ANGLO-ITALIAN PROTOCOL delimiting their respective Spheres of Influence from the Juba River to the Blue Nile	Hertslet: 948 Ethiopia replacing the Agreement with the British East Africa Company of 3-8-1889 which, upon appreciating the importance of their own interpretation of Art XVII of the Treaty of Wichale, the Italian Govt wished to renounce
15-4-1891	ANGLO-ITALIAN PROTOTOL delimiting their respective Spheres of Influence from the Blue Nile northwards to Ras Kasar	Hertslet: 949

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
15-4-1891	SECRET ANGLO-ITALIAN PROTOCOL signed by M. di Rudini and Lord Dufferin at the same time as the above Protocol, providing for the eventual re-occupation by Egypt of any territory from which Italy might withdraw between the actual frontiers of Ethiopia and the line indicated in Article I of the main Protocol FO 403/284: 49	
10-4-1891	MENELIK'S CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE POWERS: asserting the traditional extent of Ethiopian authority, and Ethiopia's present frontiers Somali Govt: 86-7 FO 403/155: 2	An important statement of Ethiopia's frontiers issued at this time to counter Italy's claims to "protect" Ethiopia by conducting Ethiopia's foreign policy - which Italy interpreted as negotiating Ethiopia's frontiers for her - and in direct response to the Anglo-Italian Protocol of 24-3-1891 which purported to do just that
12-2-1893	MENELIK'S DENUNCIATION OF THE TREATY OF WICHALE: in which he informed the King of Italy that as he had received no satisfactory response to his protest at the mis-translation of Article XVII of the Treaty of 2-5-1889 and in view of continued border infringements, he renounced absolutely that Treaty and all its annexes Gingold Duprey: 404	Italy replied that as the Treaty of Wichale did not provide for its termination, it could not be unilaterally renounced
9-3-1894	CONCESSION TO M. Ilg: by which the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company was authorised to construct and operate a Railway from Jibuti to Harar Hertslet: 461-3	The Concession carried monopoly rights, so that it excluded a projected British line from Berbera to Harar (see Law Officers' findings of 31-8-1900 at FO 403/299: 38-9)
5-5-1894	ANGLO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT defining their respective Spheres of Influence on the Somali Coast Hertslet: 951	
25-6-1895 7-7-1895	ITALO-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT for regulating the Dependence of the semi-nomadic tribes, and for defining their respective Frontiers, between the Baraka and the Red Sea: signed at Cairo on June 25, and Asmara on July 7, 1895 Hertslet: 1108-9	see also Agreements and modifications to the Eritrea-Sudan line made on 7-12-1898, 1-6-1899 and 12-7-1899, and 16-4-1901 below
26-10-1896	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF PEACE, signed at Addis Ababa between Emperor Menelik and Major Nerazzini: by which the State of War between Italy and Ethiopia is ended, the Treaty of Wichale (2-5-1889) and its Additional Convention of 1-10-1889 were annulled, and by which, until boundaries were fixed, both parties were to observe the <i>status quo ante</i> . Italy agreed that any territory that she might voluntarily abandon would automatically revert to Ethiopia (Art. V) (Ratified by Italy on 1-1-1897) Hertslet: 458-9 FO 403/255: 13-16 Gingold Duprey: 405-6	in the Peace Negotiations Italy had expressed herself willing to renounce the Protectorate claim but had initially sought a guarantee that no other Power would assume such a Protectorate. Menelik declined absolutely to discuss his sovereignty - and Menelik had at that time 2,000 Italian POWs in his care and the Italian garrison at Adigrat surrounded. In the subsequent discussions and the resultant Treaty, Ethiopia's sovereignty was not referred to or in any way limited
26-10-1896	CONVENTION for the liberation of Prisoners, signed at the same time FO 403/255: 13-16	
20-3-1897	FRANCO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY DETERMINING THE FRONTIER OF THE FRENCH COASTAL ZONE, signed in Addis Ababa by Emperor Menelik and M. Lagarde Hertslet: 421 Gingold Duprey: 408-9 (& 406-8)	The basis of the present frontier. Of interest is Menelik's letter to the French President of 26-1-1897 suggesting the need for a treaty and proposing a draft (which does not seem to have formed the basis for the treaty actually signed) quoted in Gingold Duprey: 406-8
14-5-1897 (4-6-1897)	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY DETERMINING THE FRONTIERS OF THE BRITISH PROTECTORATE ON THE SOMALI COAST, signed in Addis Ababa by Menelik and Rennell Rodd: together with the EXCHANGE OF LETTERS annexed whereby good treatment and trans-frontier grazing for the tribes "who have formerly accepted and enjoyed British protection" was guaranteed, the French translation which would be decisive in event of any legal doubt, and the EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITH RAS MAKONNEN of 4-6-1897 describing the frontier in greater detail (Ratified by Britain on 30-8-1897 and Ethiopia on 8-12-1897) Hertslet: 423-431	The basis of the present frontier (which was demarcated by a Joint Anglo-Ethiopian Boundary Commission in 1932-34)

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
24-6-1897	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT, signed in Addis Ababa by Menelik and Nerazzini	The Agreement makes no direct reference to boundaries but during its negotiation the Italian Somaliland boundary appears to have been discussed. Nerazzini took with him to Rome a map with Menelik's proposed line marked upon it. On 3-9-1897 the Italian Govt is said to have sent a telegram to inform Menelik that it "accepted his proposal." The proposal thus accepted has never been described officially and the map upon which it was based apparently "lost" in Rome. <i>Nevertheless this line, confirmed in the Treaty of 16-5-1908, forms the basis of the present frontier</i>
3-9-1897	ITALIAN TELEGRAM supposedly sent to inform Menelik of Italian acceptance of his proposed line . . . as marked on the map Nerazzini took to Rome and which has never been seen again	
3-9-1897 25-12-1897	ITALIAN TELEGRAM supposedly . . . ITALIAN ACT: by which Kassala was ceded to Egypt Hertslet: 1109 FO 403/313: 294 <i>et seq.</i>	At the same time Additional Conventions were signed to provide for Postal and Telegraph Services from Kassala to Massawa
7-12-1898	ITALO-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT determining the Eritrea-Sudan Frontier, signed at Asmara by Parsons Pasha and Governor Martini (Ratified by Anglo-Italian Exchange of Notes in Cairo, 6/7-3-1899) Hertslet: 1110-1	amending the Agreement of June 25 and July 7, 1895
7-12-1898	ITALO-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT regulating grazing taxes to be paid by tribesmen crossing the frontier agreed upon above (also ratified by the Exchange of Notes of 6/7-3-1899) Hertslet: 1111-2	This Agreement was abrogated by a Convention signed at Sabderat on 28-2-1901 which provided that each Govt reserved to itself the right to permit temporary immigration for grazing and to determine the conditions for such permission
19-1-1899	ANGLO-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT relative to the future Administration of the Sudan: by which the Sudan was governed jointly by Britain and Egypt Hertslet: 620-2	
1-6-1899	ITALO-SUDAN AGREEMENT relative to the Eritrea-Sudan Frontier, amending the section from the Ambacta-Baraka junction to Sabderat Hertslet: 1113-4	with which the Schedule describing the Frontier prepared by Captain Walter, dated 12-7-1899 is associated
24-1-1900	FRANCO-ITALIAN PROTOCOL relative to the Frontiers of their Red Sea Possessions Hertslet: 663 Gingold Duprey: 411-2	see also the Franco-Italian Protocol of 15-7-1901 below
10-7-1900	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY delimiting the Eritrea-Ethiopia Frontier Hertslet: 460 Gingold Duprey: 412-3	in fulfilment of Art IV of the Peace Treaty of 26-10-1896, the line delimited was modified at the Sudan end by Anglo-Italo-Ethiopian Agreement of 15-5-1902, and extended to the south-east through Dankalia by the Italo-Ethiopian Convention of 16-5-1908
28-2-1901	ITALO-SUDAN GRAZING CONVENTION, signed at Sabderat: by which tribesmen seeking to cross the Eritrea-Sudan frontier must obtain permission and they then become liable for the tax of the territory they have entered FO 403/313: 152-3	
16-4-1901	ITALO-SUDAN AGREEMENT delimiting the Frontier from Sabderat to Todluc, together with a Description of the Boundary Marks for this section Hertslet: 1115-6	
10-7-1901	FRANCO-ITALIAN PROTOCOL delimiting the Frontier between Eritrea and French Somaliland: confirming the Protocol of 24-1-1900 Hertslet: 664 Gingold Duprey: 412	
22-11-1901	ANGLO-ITALIAN DECLARATION respecting the Sudan-Eritrea Frontier: whereby both parties agreed to modify their frontiers with Ethiopia so as to achieve a rationalisation of the line from Sabderat to Gallabat Hertslet: 952 FO 403/313: 286-290	The Declaration, signed in Rome after discussions between Rodd, Gleichen and Harrington (from Britain) and Martini, Agnesa and Ciccodicola (Italy), was to be kept secret "until the consent of the Emperor Menelik has been obtained." This was achieved in the Anglo-Italo-Ethiopian Agreement of 15-5-1902 which embodied the Declaration's proposals

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
26-11-1901	SUDAN-ERITREA CUSTOMS, POSTAL and TELEGRAPHIC CONVENTIONS, signed in Rome by Gleichen and Martini	FO 403/313: 296-7, 301-3 replacing the Conventions signed at Kassala on 25-12-1897 by Parsons and Samminiatelli
18-3-1902	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, between Harrington and Ilg; by which Ethiopia agreed not to interfere with the waters of the Nile without the approval of the British and Sudan Governments	FO 403/313: 162
15-5-1902	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY TO DELIMIT THE SUDAN-ETHIOPIAN FRONTIER, signed by Menelik and Harrington in Addis Ababa; together with an ANGLO-ITALO-ETHIOPIAN ANNEX to the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 10-7-1900 and to the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 15-5-1902 settling their various frontiers from Seberdat to Gallabat	Hertslet: 431-3 The basis of the present Frontier  The Italian Govt subsequently, in a letter Prinetti to Rodd of 5-8-1902, agreed that the AbuGamel-Setit line be modified slightly by the demarcating officers (FO 403/323: 52-3)
29-1-1903 9-2-1903	ANGLO-ITALIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES relative to the Protocol of 24-3-1891 and current British negotiations to settle the Frontier between Ethiopia and Kenya; by which Britain undertook not to agree to a line differing from the 24-3-1891 line without obtaining Italian concurrence	Hertslet: 953-4 this Agreement was replaced by a Secret Declaration of 19-12-1903 (see below) not quoted in Hertslet
18-2-1903	ITALO-SUDAN DESCRIPTION of the line agreed upon between Abu Gamal and the River Setit	Hertslet: 1117-8 see also Hertslet Map No 37
19-12-1903	ANGLO-ITALIAN DECLARATION: by which both Govts confirmed their interest in maintaining the integrity of Ethiopia on the basis of the <i>status quo</i> according to the existing Agreements, but also recognised each other's territorial and economic interests in the event of Ethiopia's disintegration, together with a SECRET ANGLO-ITALIAN DECLARATION: by which Britain rejected Italian claims for further territory in the Juba Valley, but undertook not to place a British Post on the Juba River above Lugh	FO 403/334: 236-8 made in Rome, after a week of talks between Rodd and Harrington (Britain) and Agnesa (Italy)
27-12-1903	U.S.-ETHIOPIA TREATY: to promote commercial relations between Ethiopia and the United States	FO 403/334: 236-8, 240-1 replacing the Exchange of Notes of January 29 and February 9, 1903. The initial Italian claim was that the line should be so drawn that all routes from Boran country to the Juba River should be in Ethiopian territory.
16-1-1904		Gingold Duprey: 415 FO 403/346: 34-8 at Menelik's request and unknown to Mr. Skinner the draft was revised by the British and Italian Agents
19-1-1904	ITALO-SUDAN " PROCES-VERBAL " rectifying the frontier between Gabel Keli and Teflenait, modifying the Italo-Egyptian Agreement of 7-12-1898.	FO 403/346: 8 The Text of the PROPOSED AGREEMENT by which Britain offered £10,000 p.a. to Menelik if he would agree not to construct or permit any barrier to the flow of the Nile or Sobat Rivers and " so long as the present friendly relations continue." Menelik demurred, but whether he declined the offer was later much debated . . . the sector is 15-25 miles from Ras Kasar
13-1-1905	ANGLO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT whereby Italy bought " all the sovereign and other rights over the towns, ports and territory of the Benadir Coast " for £144,000 from the Sultan of Zanzibar and by which British Subjects and Protected Persons and Zanzibar Subjects are to be accorded " all the privileges and advantages with respect to commerce and shipping which are, or may be, accorded to the subjects of the most-favoured-nation "	Hertslet: 1118 In an Exchange of Letters of the same date the Italian Govt asks, and is allowed, to exclude coloured persons from the categories of British and Zanzibari subjects to be accorded most-favoured-nation treatment in the Sultan's former territories lest the Italian Govt " find itself bound to extend more favourable treatment to them than to their own subjects of the same category "
13-1-1905	ANGLO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT whereby Italy leased a small amount of land at Kismayu for a pier and bonded warehouse	Hertslet: 954-8
5-3-1905	AGREEMENT OF PEACE AND PROTECTION signed at Illig between the Italian Govt and Mullah Mohammed Abdullah: whereby the Mullah and his followers were to reside under Italian Protection at a fixed residence to be sited between Ras Garad and Ras Gabbe, with grazing rights extending into the British Protectorate	Hertslet: 958-960 Hertslet: 1120-2 A Provisional Agreement signed at Berbera on 24-3-1905 between the British Authorities and Mullah Mohammed Abdullah indicated British concurrence with the Illig Accord, agreement confirmed in letters of 28-3, 12-4, and 26-5-1905 and the Anglo-Italian Exchange of Notes of 19-3-1907 (see below)

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
7-3-1905	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH GERMANY	Gingold Duprey: 416-7 according most-favoured-nation treatment
21-3-1905	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH AUSTRIA-HUNGARY	Gingold Duprey: 418 according most-favoured-nation treatment
21-7-1906	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF COMMERCE & FRIENDSHIP signed in Addis by Menelik with Ciccodicola; by which Italy obtained the right to place Commercial Residents at Makalle and elsewhere, and most-favoured-nation treatment, for three years (Ratified by Italy on 8-10-1906)	FO 401/9: 122-4 Gingold Duprey: 419 Although signed by the Italian Agent in Addis, the Treaty was negotiated and concluded during the visit there of Governor Martini of Eritrea
6-9-1906 13-12-1906	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH BELGIUM TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT: by which Italy, France and Britain mutually established their interests and claims in the event of Ethiopia's disintegration, and agree to co-ordinate their policies in and towards Ethiopia.	Gingold Duprey: 420 Hertslet: 421-4 Gingold Duprey: 421-4 according most-favoured-nation treatment Menelik notes the Agreement, but he does not accept that it limits his sovereignty in any way
19-3-1907	ANGLO-ITALIAN EXCHANGE OF MEMORANDA respecting the Italian Agreement (the " Illig Accord ") of 1905 with Mullah Mohammed Abdullah: by which the Italian " Illig Accord " with the Mullah is confirmed and amplified, in particular the line of pasturage up to which the Mullah's followers may graze is " extended into the Italian territory so as to reach the pools of Kurmis "	Hertslet: 961-3 Later the Italians are to claim that the line of pasturage established for the Mullah's followers represents a new delimitation of British and Italian spheres and, more strongly, that the odd wording quoted implies British recognition that the " Pools of Kurmis " are in Italian territory: they are clearly in Ethiopian, (see Caroselli <i>Fuoco in Somalia</i> , Rome, 1931, for good explanatory map)
6-12-1907	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENT relative to the Frontiers between British East Africa, Uganda and Ethiopia: by which the Treaty Line (more of less the " Maud " Line) was established from the junction of the Dawa and Ganale Rivers to the 35°E/6'N terminal point of the 15-5-1902 Treaty. Both Govts were to send Commissioners " who shall, in concert, delimit the exact line of the frontier. " They were to settle that part of the frontier which " follows the tribal limits between the Gurra and the Borana . . . in concert with the heads of those tribes and in accordance with their customs "	Hertslet: 445-6 See Hertslet Maps 3 and 4. This was the basis of the boundary until the 1970 Ethio-Kenya Agreement. The Agreement did not provide for ratification and was not, therefore, ratified. (The British Charge d'Affaires who signed the Agreement for Britain protested strongly at what he considered to be its " unusual form "). Although both Govts sent Commissioners they did not delimit in concert, and Ethiopia never accepted Gwynn's delimitation
18/19-12-1907	ITALO-SUDAN " PROCES-VERBAUX " of the Commissioners for the Demarcation of the Sudan-Eritrea Frontier from Ras Kasar to Jebel Injaha: concerning the size and number of beacons placed on the frontier in order to make its location clear to the local inhabitants as they graze in its vicinity	Hertslet: 1213-4
10-1-1908	FRANCO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP & COMMERCE, signed in Addis by Menelik and Klobukowski: by which France secured most-favoured-nation treatment and some protection for her trade through Jibuti (the duty on wine being reduced from 10 per cent to 8 per cent), and by which she acquired Consular Jurisdiction over French nationals in Ethiopia	FO 401/11: 140-3 Gingold Duprey: 426 The most significant feature of the " Klobukowski Treaty " was the provision of Consular Jurisdiction which Klobukowski argued for and obtained despite the advice and wishes of Britain and Italy. His refusal to co-operate with the British and Italian Ministers weakened the Tripartite Agreement
5-4-1908	ITALIAN DECREE respecting the Organisation of Italian Possessions in Somaliland: by which the various districts subject to the sovereignty of Italy were joined " under a sole Administration with the name of Italian Somaliland "	Hertslet: 1214
16-5-1908	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CONVENTION DELIMITING THE FRONTIER BETWEEN ITALIAN SOMALILAND AND ETHIOPIA: by which a new line from Dolo to the Webi Shebelli was agreed, the frontier thence to the British Protectorate " following the line accepted by the Italian Government in 1897 " (Ratified by Italy on 17-7-1908)	FO 401/11: 135-7 Hertslet: 1223-5 Gingold Duprey: 428-432 By this Convention Italy acquired the important trading centre of Lugh on the Juba River and some fertile agricultural land between the two rivers whereon Italy planned to grow food for the expanding urban population of Mogadishu. On the same day Italy and Ethiopia signed another Convention by which the Eritrea-Ethiopia frontier from the line agreed on 10-7-1900 to the French border was agreed as running parallel to the coast and 60 kms from it. By an " Additional Act " also concluded that day, Italy paid 3,000,000 lira " indemnity " to Ethiopia

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
22/25-6-1908	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES regulating commerce across the frontier with Italian Somaliland: by which Italian traders were assured of most-favoured-nation treatment, and by which customs and other facilities would be arranged as on the other frontiers Gingold Duprey: 432	
21-4-1914	BRITISH ORDER DELIMITING UGANDA, amending the Uganda Order in Council of 1902 FO 371/22019: 102	defining Uganda's frontiers: by which Uganda ceded some territory to the west of Lake Rudolf to Sudan
27-6-1914	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH THE UNITED STATES Gingold Duprey: 433-4	similar to the U.S. Treaty of 27-12-1903
26-4-1915	TREATY BETWEEN ITALY AND THE ALLIES: by which Italy was to receive territorial concessions in Africa if Britain and France augment their colonial Empires at the expense of Germany after the war	The relevant Article 13 specifies that the territory Italy could expect to receive would be by way of the adjustment in her favour of the frontiers of her colonies of Eritrea, Somaliland and Lybia. By an Anglo-Italian Treaty of 15-7-1924, Italy received Jubaland from Britain.
18-2-1922	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH GREECE Gingold Duprey: 443	according most-favoured-nation treatment
12-8-1923	ETHIOPIA'S APPLICATION TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS A.55. 1923. VI of League Documents FO 371.8410	The application stresses that "since the year 1500 after Solomon Ethiopia has been contending with the heathen - by whom she is surrounded - for the true faith and the laws of God, and to maintain the independence of the country . . ." and it asserts that Ethiopia wishes to bring her laws into agreement with those of the Members of the League. Ethiopia was admitted on 3-10-1923 after signing declarations to suppress slavery and limit the arms traffic
15-7-1924	ANGLO-ITALIAN TREATY concerning their boundaries in East Africa HMSO/Cmd 2194 of 1928	Italy acquired Jubaland: see 26-4-1915 above
14-12-1925 20-12-1925	ANGLO-ITALIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES: by which Britain obtained Italian support for the British project to erect a barrage on Lake Tana in exchange for British support for Italy's projected railway from Italian Somaliland to Eritrea and for Britain's recognition of "an exclusive Italian economic influence" in Western Ethiopia Gingold Duprey: 444-9 (450-461 for the subsequent correspondence)	The British and Italian Ministers informed the Ethiopian Govt of this Exchange of Notes on 9-6-1926, preparatory to registering them with the League of Nations. Tafari Makonnen immediately responded by protesting both to Britain and Italy and to the League that the negotiations that the Notes represented implied an attempt by two Members of the League to combine in order to apply coercive pressures on a third Member. Italy and Britain, on 7/13-8-1926 assure the League that these were ideas "which they have never entertained" . . . and nothing came of the Lake Tana project, the railway or Italy's exclusive economic sphere . . .
30-9-1926	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH HOLLAND Gingold Duprey: 461-2	according most-favoured-nation treatment
3-3-1928	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN GAMBELA CUSTOMS AGREEMENT, regulating the rates of duty, etc., to be levied FO 371/13101: 41-4	a problem subsequently arose when the right of Minister Bentinck to sign on behalf of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was queried. But the Agreement was adhered to
2-8-1928	ITALO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION, reasserting peace and friendship and providing for disputes to be settled through mutual conciliation and arbitration: together with a CONVENTION of the same date whereby each country was to build its part of a Dessie-Assab roadway, and Ethiopia was to have a "free zone" with import and export facilities at or near Assab (Ratifications exchanged on 3-8-1929) Gingold Duprey: 462-3	British report from Addis gives the date of signature as being 4-8-1928
27-8-1928	BRIAND-KELLOGG PACT: by which Signatories renounced war as a means of settling disputes or conflicts between nations Gingold Duprey: 464	Italy was one of the original 15 signatories: Ethiopia adhered soon after
4-3-1930	Anglo-Ethiopian EXCHANGE OF NOTES concerning Lake Tana FO 371/14591: 81-II, 185-II	Since they placed no obligation on either party vis-a-vis the other, they were not deemed to constitute an "International Instrument," and so not registered with the League of Nations

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
21-8-1930	ARMS CONTROL TREATY BETWEEN ETHIOPIA, BRITAIN, FRANCE AND ITALY: by which complex regulations were established in order to limit the importation of arms to those certified as being for the use of the Ethiopian Government, and by which the European signatories were bound to permit such arms to be imported, signed in Paris (Ratifications exchanged in Addis on 19-2-1932) Gingold Duprey: 465-477 FO 371/16097: 42-f	resulting from the Four-Power Arms Conference in Paris from November 12 to December 14, 1929
4-12-1930 29-12-1930	ETHIO-EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL TREATY, in the form of an Exchange of Notes: by which Egyptian trade would be accorded, on a mutual basis, the same privileges and opportunities as that with Sudan and other limitrophe States with most-favoured-nation treatment Gingold Duprey: 478-9 FO 371/15389: 165-8	
23-3-1931	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH GREECE Gingold Duprey: 480-1	confirming and extending the Treaty of 18-2-1922)
1-6-1931	ANGLO-ITALIAN AGREEMENT recording the Joint Boundary Commission's Findings delimiting the British Protectorate-Italian Somaliland Frontier, signed by Cerulli and Stafford	principally significant for its decision on the Trijunction Point. On the basis of the "Grey-Bosdari" Agreement of 19-3-1907 Italy sought to extend demarcation to the west of 47° E/8' N; this the British section refused to do, Stafford having been ordered to demarcate to 48° 7' 8" and authorised to demarcate a line from there to 47° 8' to determine British territory but without commitment as to sovereignty south of it. Also of interest in that it revealed Italian approach to frontier affairs - aggressive and unscrupulous negotiation to be followed, soon after the frontier was demarcated, by the closing of the border and denial of all trans-frontier grazing facilities to "British" tribesmen
16-7-1931	THE ETHIOPIAN CONSTITUTION)	
24-5-1933	COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH SWITZERLAND Gingold Duprey: 483-4	according most-favoured-nation treatment
18-4-1934	AGREEMENT TO FIX THE ANGLO-FRANCO-ETHIOPIAN TRIJUNCTION POINT FO 371/20211: 23-35	concluded after intense bargaining with France for over a year, the point finally determined being some 350 metres east of the Anglo-French line of 1888. The final decision involved delimiting a new line for the Franco-Ethiopian Frontier from the Trijunction Point to Rahale-Higle by which Ethiopia lost approx. 3 sq. kms. which France undertakes to replace when the eventual Franco-Ethiopian demarcation takes place
23-7-1934	AGREEMENT BETWEEN BRITISH AND ETHIOPIAN TRIBESMEN SIGNED AT LAKE RUDOLF in the presence of and attested to by Ras Getachew and R. C. Walley: by which the Turkana (British) and Merile-Gellaba and Donyiro/Bume or Nyangatom (Ethiopian) tribes made peace and established "Lokiko" to settle such differences as might in the future arise. A Board of Ethiopian and British officials, with the British Consul, Maji, as Mediator, would settle such issues as the "Lokiko" might fail to decide FO 371/24638: 80	The Italian Govt were, in 1940, to claim that this Agreement justified their occupying territory to the west of the Kibish River laid claim to by the Gellaba
7-1-1935	FRANCO-ITALIAN TREATY TO REGULATE THEIR INTERESTS IN AFRICA: whereby France ceded to Italy the Isle of Dumeira and a strip of land approx. 10 miles wide along the frontier with Eritrea, and renounced in Italy's favour all French interests and claims in Ethiopia with the exception of a wide "Railway Zone" to Addis Ababa. In addition France made over to Italy a substantial share in the railway itself. It was signed in Rome between Laval and Mussolini, as part of a general Franco-Italian settlement by which France agreed to give Italy a "free hand" in Ethiopia in exchange for Italy's support for France should Germany attack her Gingold Duprey: 484-8	By an additional and secret Protocol the territory ceded to Italy was to be and remain demilitarised. Nevertheless these were astonishing concessions . . . The Rome Accords were apparently ratified by the French Chamber of Deputies on March 22, 1935, and by the French Senate on March 26, 1935 (Baer: 117) and then promulgated by the King of Italy on July 16, 1935. Shirer in <i>The Collapse of the Third Republic</i> , p 248 says Mussolini denounced the Rome Accords on 28-12-1935, but the Laval-Mussolini correspondence of December 1935-February 1936 in Laurens, pp 404-412 does not appear to bear this out

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
27-1-1937	CO 879/136: 1-16	The Agreement was published, after some discussion, in June 1938
16-4-1938	FO 371/22016	Although the frontier negotiations did not begin until February 1939, and were abortive, this Agreement gave the British recognition that Italy wanted
13-2-1939	CO 879/138: 29	
26-8-1939	CO 879/138: 41	On 24-4-1940 Italy declines to renew the Agreements "as the Agreements in question need to be revised" but says that Italy would be willing to start new negotiations. But Italy did not in fact close the frontier prior to British evacuation in August 1940
4-2-1941	FO 371/27516: 81 Hansard	in a Parliamentary Statement by Mr. Eden
31-1-42	FO 371/35603: 63-71 HMSO/1942/Cmd 6334	
9-8-1943	Gingold Duprey: 489	
19-12-1944	FO 371/46052: 136 HMSO/Cmd 7722 in Treaty Series No. 38 (1949)	Art. VII reads, "In order as an Ally to contribute to the effective prosecution of the war, and without prejudice to their underlying sovereignty, the Imperial Ethiopian Government hereby agreed that, for the duration of this Agreement, the territories designated as the Reserved Area and the Ogaden, as set forth in the attached schedule, shall be under British Military Administration"
5-9-1945		The French Administration in Jibuti had been loyal to the "Vichy" regime for most of the war. When diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and France were restored this protocol, by which France agreed to Ethiopia's demand for a joint delimitation and demarcation of the boundary (the need for which had been exposed by the "Afarbo Incident)," and another protocol, by which Ethiopia agreed to the restoration of French direction of the railway, were concluded
29-9-1947	HMSO/Cmd 7374 in Treaty Series No. 18 (1948)	
24-7-1948		the line ran from Gallidi in S.E. Haud "via Balli Abdi Ali, Balli God, Ribadleh, El Abred and Ulassan to Mustahil" (Drysdale, p 71)

Date	References/ Location of Texts	Notes
21-11-1949		to effect this order Britain demarcated the Provisional Administrative Line from Dolo to 48°E/8°N between Ethiopia and the Trust Territory of Somalia: a line which left Walwal about 100 miles inside Ethiopia: inevitably Italy protested
3-7-1950 29-12-1950 2-1-1951	HMSO/Cmd 8173 in Treaty Series No 18 (1951)	ANGLO-ETHIOPIA EXCHANGE OF NOTES for the appointment of a Mixed Commission to demarcate the boundary between Kenya and Ethiopia
16-1-1954	HMSO/Cmd 9087 in Treaty Series No 18 (1954)	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES extending the period of the operation of the Mixed Commission to demarcate the boundary between Kenya and Ethiopia
5-11-1954		As the "Afarbo Incident" had revealed, the original unilateral French demarcation of the 1897 frontier had allocated to France an estimated 2,000 sq kms beyond the line specified. The new line, representing a joint demarcation of the 1897 line, was thus a disappointment to many Frenchmen
2-11-1954		ADDITIONAL FRANCO-ETHIOPIAN PROTOCOL to the above Protocol of Delimitation: agreeing a small section of the frontier that had been undemarcated on 16-1-1954
29-11-1954	U.N. Treaty Series, Vol. 207 (1955), 1, No 2811	ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY: by which, from 28-2-1955, the British Military Administration was withdrawn from the Reserved Area and Ogaden and "the full and exclusive sovereignty of Ethiopia" provided for in the 1897 Treaty over these areas reaffirmed, as were the trans-frontier grazing rights of the local tribesmen. Signed in London between Ato Aklilou Habte-Wold and Mr Eden
1-1-1956		SUDAN BECOMES INDEPENDENT
1-7-1960		REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA, comprising the former British Protectorate which achieved independence four days earlier, on 26-6-1960, and the UN Trust Territory of Somalia, becomes independent
15-11-1963		ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES constituting an Agreement concerning the 1947 Exchange of Notes regarding the Ethiopia-Kenya boundary
15-11-1963		ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES entitled "Kenya-Ethiopia Boundary Commission - 1963"
12-12-1963		KENYA BECOMES INDEPENDENT
10-3-1964		ETHIO-KENYAN EXCHANGE OF NOTES entitled "Kenya-Ethiopia Boundary Commission - 1963/64"
15-7-1966		ETHIO-KENYAN AGREEMENT for the abolition of visas for citizens of either country travelling to the other
9-6-1970		ETHIO-KENYA BOUNDARY DECLARATION ETHIO-KENYA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
29-7-1972		ETHIO-KENYA BOUNDARY AGREEMENT, signed in Mombasa between H.I.M. the Emperor and President Kenyatta
		ETHIO-SUDANESE COMMUNIQUE following an important meeting of the Joint Consultative Ministerial Committee: announcing agreement on the settlement of the Sudanese boundary. The principles and methods of demarcation are agreed, as are plans for closer frontier liaison and co-operation by the administrative officers on each side



# Seven Days on the Roof of Africa

by Henri Baldet

Africa does not have great ranges of mountains which can be compared to the Himalayas, the Andes or the Rockies. However, the relief map of the continent shows that some regions experienced an uplifting of the land mass above the level of the rest of Africa. Indeed, there are many massifs above 3,000 metres in altitude in Africa, North and South Africa.

In East Africa, the highlands of Ethiopia form the most extensive upland region of the entire African continent. Most of the main massifs of this country are made of plateau basalts which reach a thickness of several hundred metres in some places. At the end of the Cretaceous era<sup>1</sup> a dome of vastly elevated land was formed, and during the Tertiary period the uplift was strong enough to cause breaks in the land mass. Fluid basaltic lavas poured out from these breaks in immense quantities. Thus, the elevation of the Ethiopian highlands, in general, owes much to the Tertiary lava flows. The massifs of Ethiopia are frequently called plateaux; they convey an erroneous impression of the present topographic situation because their surfaces are rarely flat. Mountains, hills, peaks, cliffs and canyons are common features of those massifs. One of them is the Semyen massif, which is situated in the northern part of the country. This massif, by its extent and altitude, merits the name of "Roof of Africa."<sup>2</sup>

In the centre of this massif stands the highest mountain in Ethiopia and the fourth highest in Africa, Ras Dejen, 4,543 metres above sea level.<sup>3</sup>

Many people in Ethiopia have probably heard of the Semyen Mountains, but few actually have been there. They appreciate the greatness of this massif one has to visit it on foot or on horseback. The journey is not as easy as it would seem to be. It can be done by anyone, but only if the person is prepared to undergo some little discomfort. During Christmas vacation of 1972 I went with a group of teachers to the Semyen and together we explored the highest mountain of the Empire of Ethiopia. (We were Dan Lavalle, Meta Kelly, Cynthia Stone, Regina Power, M. D. Mallaya, all teachers at the Ari Mekonnen school. Kevin O'Mahoney, from the Grati, George Avakian and myself, from General Gebre Selassie school, in Addis Abeba.) None of us were expert horse or mule riders, but we lived an unforgettable experience in a wonderful environment.

In the morning of January 7, 1972, was rather chilly in Mr. Payer, from Tafari Mekonnen school, drove us to the bus station in Addis Abeba. Except for Kevin

O'Mahoney, who joined us two days later, everybody was present at the station. It took us two days to reach the Semyen from Addis Abeba. The bus drive was tiresome and long because the bus was very crowded. To kill some time we slept, sang, and tried to enjoy the monotonous landscape. The Abbay gorge was the scenic high point of our first day on the bus. Ato Mengasha, the bus driver, tried to please everybody by playing a tape recording of some kind of music. Conversation and singing were then out of the question; one just hoped for a bump to stop the tape, but this never happened. The first evening we stopped at Dangla, a small village beyond Debre Marcos. We were lucky enough to find an S.I.M. mission station where a wonderful person, Sister Margaret, received us. Some of us had a memorable night in the chapel of the mission sleeping among the flowers left over from Christmas celebration.<sup>4</sup>

The second day in the bus was as boring as the first except for the view of Lake Tana. In the afternoon we arrived in the foothills of the Semyen. The scenery was wonderful; it was a foretaste of the trip through the mountains. Finally, that evening, we reached Debarek.

## 1. Debarek

Debarek is the road-head for the travellers to the Semyen. The town is situated on the main road from Gondar to Asmara and is a sprawling village of mud and corrugated iron roofs. The game warden of the Semyen National Park was kind enough to let us spend the night in his office, which was a palace compared to the noisy local hostelry.

The first problem next day was to find pack and riding animals for our expedition to Ras Dejen. Early in the morning we negotiated with caravan leaders. After long discussions, Ato Seneshaw Mesfen agreed to organise a caravan with four assistants, eight mules, five horses, and himself as caravan leader. The daily cost amounted to Eth.\$2 for the caravan leader; Eth.\$1.50 per animal, and Eth.\$1.50 for each man. This price, which was rather high by local standards, included all saddles, straps, and the food for the men. At first sight the animals did not inspire confidence. When the horses and mules were paraded outside the game warden's office they looked scrawny and ill-kept. But, we came to love them after hours of marching across the Semyen. Meanwhile Kevin O'Mahoney had arrived and our caravan was complete; we were eight adventurers, a caravan leader, four assistants, eight riding animals and four pack animals. By 9 a.m. on January 9, 1972, we were on our way to the high Semyen, leaving the trappings of modern civilisation, which were not very obvious anyway in Debarek.

We set out on a well-worn track across the market through the last eucalyptus grove which surrounded the



Photo: Henri Baldet

Traditional dress of the mountaineers of Ethiopia's high Semyen.

village. All of us were used to riding European or western saddles and found the Ethiopian high-backed saddle somewhat peculiar. The girls were especially proud in showing us their skills as we passed through the golden-green countryside. (The Semyeni are keen riders and admire the quality in others.) For none of us was it difficult to adopt to this new way of locomotion and it seemed that everyone had great fun. The non-equestrian, like me, were advised to ride a mule rather than a horse. Fortunately, the mules proved themselves safer and more sure-footed, especially in the steep tracks. The landscape was marvellous. It was harvest season and the valleys and plateaux were golden with ripe barley and wheat. Around 5 p.m. we arrived at Sanka Ber, which is the gateway to Semyen proper.

## 2. Sanka Ber

Sanka Ber means "plank door." The meaning of the term suggested once upon a time the area was covered with forests. Today there is not much left of them. However, the view from there is extraordinary. Sanka Ber seems to be the edge of the world. Fantastic cliffs several hundred metres deep show a universe of canyons and table mountains which change colour in the setting sun. This world is not as wild as it seems to be, because occasional huts clustered at the tops of hills remind one of human presence. Led by a guide from the camp site

we looked for wild life, but in vain. The Walia Ibex was not there that day.

Sanka Ber is the boundary of the Semyen National Park. In 1965, Doctor Leslie Brown, UNESCO wildlife consultant to Ethiopia, put forward a project to make the Semyen a national park. The plan was accepted by H. E. Ato Berhanu Tessema, director of the Wildlife Conservation Department in Ethiopia. The project envisaged the strict conservation of the whole habitat of the Walia Ibex and the greater part of the habitat of the Semyen Fox and Gelada Baboon. This project was implemented by Imperial Proclamation on October 31, 1969. Compared to other parks in Africa the area is rather small, because it covers only 170 sq. kms. It includes the greater part of Geech and Ambaras and the height of the escarpment around these regions. The park is unique, both in wild life and scenery and cannot be matched by any of the African parks and two or three areas elsewhere in the world. Realising the beauty and the potential profit of the area the Ethiopian Government, in co-operation with world organisations interested in wild life, declared this area the country's second national park.

Sanka Ber is at an altitude of 2,390 metres. As soon as the sun sets the area gets very cold. That evening, we were obliged to light a fire and we appreciated very much a good bottle of Canadian Club brought along by Dan

<sup>1</sup> The geologic time scale is divided into four eras: the Pre-Cambrian, the Paleozoic, the Mesozoic, and the Cenozoic. The most recent one, the Cenozoic, has two periods, the Tertiary and the Quaternary. The Tertiary period started 60,000,000 years ago. It is characterised by relatively young orogenic features.

<sup>2</sup> The expression is from John Crook. See bibliography. It has been so far believed that Ras Dejen was the highest peak in Ethiopia. The Nile Geodetic Survey shows that the group of peaks called Ras Dejen have elevations ranging between 4,304 metres and 4,543 metres. The highest peaks are presumably to the northeast and east of Ras Dejen and the exact elevation are not yet known.  
<sup>3</sup> Mesfen Wolde Mariam, *An Introductory Geography of Ethiopia*, Addis Abeba, 1972, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> In Ethiopia Christmas is celebrated on January 7.





A spectacular glimpse of the high Semyen.

Photo: Henri Baldet

Lavalle as we sat at fireside savouring the memory of the spectacular view of the Semyen we had seen that day. But the cold and the sores from our first day of mule riding sent us rapidly to our tents. The night was still young. No sounds could be heard but the deep breathing of eight inexperienced mountaineers.

Early in the morning as the sun rose we packed our equipment and by 9 a.m. we were ready for our second day in the Semyen. Our goal for the day was Chenik. After climbing a steep escarpment we came to a vast plateau called Ambaras. It was swept by a strong wind and the vegetation was reduced to grass. The air was thin and cool, but the sun was hot, nothing could be seen for kilometres. As we started the descent on the other side of the plateau we noticed that the slopes of the mountains were cultivated in barley. The harvest season was over and the fields were full of Gelada Baboons gleaning the remaining barley.

Gelada Baboons (*Theropithecus Galada*) are common mammals in the Semyen. Discovered by Rüppell during the last century they are among the most interesting large primates. The male is a large beast weighing about 20 kgs. He is capped by an enormous mane of dark brown hair. His chest covered with grey fur has a heart-shaped patch of bare skin, scarlet in colour. For this reason the animals have sometimes been called "bleeding heart" baboons. The female is smaller, lacking the mane, but has the bare patch of skin on her chest. The Semyen Gelada may be seen in great numbers (300-400). However, their social units consist of small parties containing one male, several females, juveniles, and babies. Gelada are restricted to areas where there are great cliffs which form their sleeping places and are a refuge from enemies. Their main foe is man, because a herd of Geladas may destroy in a few hours the crop of a whole village. The Geladas dominate the mountain with their cries, and their complex social life makes them an interesting study.

### 3. Chenik

Chenik is a delightful little valley threaded by a crystal stream. It was an ideal camp site. The valley is dominated by lobelias standing like sentinels. The lobelia (the typical genus of the family *Lobeliaceae*) was named after Mathias Lobel, a native of Lille (France). He was a botanist and physician to James I. It numbers about 250 species. These plants are perennial herbs. The lobelia of the Semyen has a remarkable arborescent form. It is the tree-lobelia or giant lobelia, which is found at high altitudes in the mountains of tropical Africa. It may reach 7 to 8 metres in height, but most of them lack the giant flowering stalk and look like peculiar palm trees. Every seven years the plant produces flowers then dies.

The wind rustling in the dead leaves of the lobelias give the place a mysterious atmosphere. The icy water of the stream was invigorating after two days in the Semyen. But a great surprise was awaiting us. Ato Seneshaw, our caravan leader, showed me a fracture in the cliff on the western side of the valley. This break was like a small window at the top of a very high steeple. I peered in awestruck wonder down into nothingness, a sheer cliff of several hundred meters was at my feet. There, in the depth of the precipice, a small village could be distinguished. The green, the yellow, the brown of the

fields formed a mosaic. I called the rest of the group and for an hour we stayed there contemplating the spectacle.

The night was cold; the wind was blowing; the sky was dark. Nothing but the sound of a few campers could be heard. Sitting around the fire we started to talk with our mule drivers. It was a fascinating conversation. For them the world remained quite flat, the stars were fixed, God was in heaven and everything happened according to his will. One man asked how could men go to the moon. The question had puzzled him since he had heard over the radio in Deberek that men had gone to the moon. It was difficult for his mind to find an explanation. After two days through the Semyen we had become very friendly with them. We listened also to tales of the highwaymen (*shiftas*). Chenik was supposed to be a famous place where *shiftas* pass at night. Our caravan leader assured us that the days of the *shiftas* were gone. Late at night we went to sleep, dreaming of giant Semyeni attacking our caravan in this remote place. The night had been very cold. In the morning, when I checked the thermometer, the minimum temperature was 2° centigrade below zero. We had to wait for the sun because the tents were frozen stiff and we could not pack them.

The third day of our journey started with an hour of steep climbing through a forest of lobelias. We had to reach Buahit Pass (4,510 metres). The mountain was shimmering in the sunlight and when we reached the pass we realised that the whole range of Buahit was covered with hail. From Buahit we had our first view of Ras Dejen range. There the highest summit of Ethiopia was waiting for us. It seemed very near to us, maybe a five to six hours' walk. In reality we needed one day and a half to reach it. The other side of Buahit is a fantastic slope leading to the foot of Ras Dejen. The descent was hard, it took us four hours, and the animals were to be admired. We crossed many barley fields which had just been harvested. The number of field-mice was unbelievable. These rodents are a pest for this region, and nobody knows the amount of grain they eat every year. In the afternoon we reached the foot of Ras Dejen watered by the River Maishala. We climbed until we reached a village called Mizma, where we set our camp in the middle of a barley field.

### 4. Mizma-Ras Dejen

Mizma is the last settlement on the way to Ras Dejen. Situated at 3,800 metres above sea level, the village is surrounded with eucalyptus trees. The people in that village, like most of the inhabitants of the Semyen, keep some animals and cultivate barley. They are very poor because they are tenant farmers who work for some landlords living in Debarek or in Gondar.

Wednesday, January 12, was our fourth day in the Semyen; it was also the day which had to lead us to the goal of our journey - Ras Dejen. By 8 a.m. in the cool morning we started climbing. The slope was steep and the way was difficult because it was muddy. After two hours of hard climbing we had the first close view of the summit of the mountain, which was shining white in the morning sun. The top of Ras Dejen is like a cake tilting towards the south. To reach it we had to use our hands and help each other. The top is rather even and swept by strong winds. The hollow parts of the flat summit were filled with snow. In fact the northern side of the



Gelada baboons in the high Semyen.

Photo: Henri Baldet

mountain was covered with a layer of snow as deep as 7 centimetres. Our first reaction there was to make snowballs and start a fight. There, at the top of the highest mountain in Ethiopia, we were eight teachers fighting like school children. The summit of the mountain supports some grass and mosses but the frost and the lack of soil prevent any abundant vegetation. After two hours at the top of Ras Dejen we started the descent. It was not as easy as we thought because the soil was very slippery and very often we dropped 5 metres at a time.

Back in Mizma we congratulated each other on our performance. Kevin O'Mahoney and myself are now among the few people who have been to the highest point of Ethiopia and to the lowest point of the empire: Ras Dejen, 4,620 metres, and Dallol, 106 metres. Both trips are feasible for an ordinary fit person who has two weeks' vacation at Christmas-time.<sup>5</sup>

The next day we returned to Chenik. That day was the most difficult of the whole trip, not only because it was our fifth day in the Semyen and we were tired, but also because we had a very long climb from the River Maishala (3,200 metres) to Buahit (4,510 metres). From Chenik, instead of returning to Sanka Ber, we decided to

to Geech. The detour is worth doing because Geech is the pearl of the Semyen Mountains.

#### 5. Geech

Geech is the heart of the Semyen National Park. The Wildlife Conservation Department has a camp under the charge of an assistant warden. Situated at 3,500 metres, it is a convenient centre for excursions to magnificent points on the escarpment. It offers fantastic views and the chance to see the Walia Ibex.

As soon as we arrived in Geech the assistant warden put at our disposal two of the stone huts which can be used by visitors. It was the only night in the Semyen that we did not pitch tents. This was a great advantage because we had more time to enjoy the beauties of Geech. Our first desire in Geech was to see some Walia Ibex. Led by a guide, we reached a majestic escarpment towering around 1,000 to 1,500 metres in sheer walls of pinkish rock. Quietly in the evening breeze we waited for the rare Walia. All of a sudden we saw three of them jumping in front of us on the grassy ledges of the escarpment. There was a male with splendid scimitar-shaped horns and two small females. The male may have measured 3 metres in length and stood about 1 metre at the shoulder. The forelegs seemed somewhat shorter than the hind limbs.

The Walia Ibex (*Capra Walia*) is one of the rarest animals in the world. Though the Ibex, a member of the goat family, exist elsewhere in the world, this particular species is unique to Ethiopia. Doctor Leslie Brown has recently studied the animal and considers that there are only 150-200 animals left. Fortunately they live in one of the most inaccessible places in the world, and this has helped to conserve them. The protection of this vanishing species was one of the reasons for the creation of the Semyen National Park. Indeed the Walia Ibex were in danger from poaching by the brave Semyeni and their habitat was being destroyed by farming and deforestation.

We were able to observe the three Walia Ibex for a long time because they kept staring at us from a distance. On our return to camp the guide told us about another rare mammal of the Semyen: the Semyen Fox (*Simenia Semensis*). It has the appearance of a true fox. Long-legged with red hair and black brush, it is not as rare as the Walia Ibex because it occurs elsewhere in Ethiopia, but not outside the empire. The guide told us that in the evenings one may come across a family of two adults with cubs. They follow trails, dropping dung at intervals, and these may act as signals determining the extent of their territories. That evening we visited two young volunteers who were busy building stone huts for future visitors to the park.

#### 6. The Return

We spent some time on the morning of the seventh day in the Semyen exploring the magnificent woodland near the camp. There is a small forest of Giant St. John's Wort and Giant Heather. Unfortunately, most of this beautiful flora has fallen victim to wanton felling. Occasional Juniper in poor condition can be seen. We were fascinated by the great dimensions of these plants, which are mere shrubs only a few metres high in Europe. Outside Geech and Sanka Ber intensive farming has removed almost all trace of the Juniper and Podocarpus forest.

When our caravan was ready we started out on the last day of our journey in the Semyen Mountains. Our aim for the day was to reach Debarek. A few kilometres from the camp site we came across Geech village. It is a Moslem settlement in the middle of a Christian area. Puzzled by the situation, I was told that the majority of the people of the Semyen are Christians. However, as a result of the Moslem conquests of Ahmed Gragn (16th

century) the area fell under Islam for a period and several Moslem villages remain today in the region. Moslems are weavers, merchants and farmers, while the Christians are only concerned with farming. The Moslem village of Geech was the most prosperous settlement we came across. Usually, the villages look very poor and the land around them has been exploited by very inefficient methods of farming. Erosion is a great problem in the Semyen because of these poor methods of farming.

The way from Geech to Sanka Ber is a wonderful walk along an escarpment. We were well placed to observe the glide of great vultures and eagles. Augur Buzzards and Verreaux's Eagle flew high over the gorge. The most impressive was the Lammergeyer (*Gypaetus Barbatus*) "the bone breaker" of the Semyen. This massive scavenger with enormous wings, pale saffron underbelly, black back and long tail moves up and down cliffs in search of bones. On finding one it carries the bone with his claws and drops it onto some rock. If the bone is broken by the fall the bird descends and greedily consumes the marrow.

Two hours' walk took us to Sanka Ber, where we did not stop because we wanted to reach Debarek before sunset. The trip from Debarek to Ras Dejen and back had taken seven days. Now two more lay ahead of us for the return trip to Addis Abeba.

#### CONCLUSION

As I mentioned before the trip to Ras Dejen can be undertaken by any fit person. However, one must be completely self-contained with tent, food, cooking utensils, stove and adequate warm clothing as well as a good sleeping-bag, because the nights on the Semyen are very cold. Christmas vacation in Ethiopia seems a good season to visit the Semyen. We did not have a drop of rain. The valleys were golden with harvest at that time. Going through the Semyen is a very excellent experience for anyone who likes wildlife, wild places, and who wants to enjoy and see some of the most spectacular mountain landscape in the world.

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<sup>5</sup> At that time the Dallol Depression is not too hot and the Semyen Mountains are quite dry.

# Lake Zway and its Islands

An Ethiopian Lake where a unique Christian Culture has survived since Medieval Times

by Paul B. Henze



Photo: Paul B. Henze

View over the north bay of Tullu Guddo island, Lake Zway, with the northernmost promontory of the island pointing towards the delta of the Katar river.

the whole southern part of the lake-shore, but seems to have had very little effect in the Maqi and Katar deltas. The presence of papyrus in practically unlimited quantities was as important in the evolution of the Zway island culture as the abundance of fish.

How long has the Zway area been inhabited? Discoveries at Melka Kontoure, 40 miles to the north-west in the Awash valley, provide evidence of intense habitation there by primitive man at least 500,000 years ago and very ancient sites are currently being examined in the area immediately north of the lake. This is a separate field of investigation bound to produce interesting revelations in years to come. A much more recent complex of historical developments is basic to understanding the Zway island culture which developed during the Middle Ages. In many respects, however, this more recent period is almost as obscure as the most ancient beginnings of early man in the region.

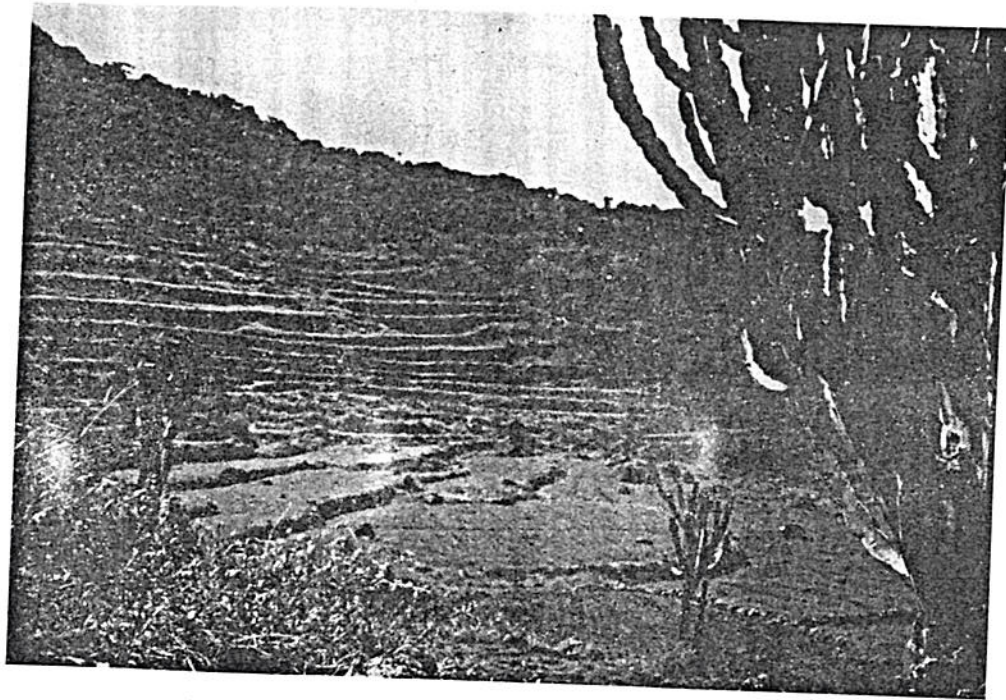
The north Ethiopian Axumite Empire officially adopted Christianity in the fourth century after Christ. For hundreds of years Axum had had close relations with the Arabian peninsula and links to the more northerly regions of the Near Eastern cultural area. Jewish ties, symbolised by the Solomon and Sheba legend, were close

and persistent. When Christianity became the state religion at Axum, it did not represent a break with previous patterns but a natural culmination of what had been developing over a long time. The southern boundaries of the Axumite Empire were always vague, but Axumite influence spread southward more than in any other direction. The written record is incomplete and the archaeological record is only now beginning to be uncovered. The details are mostly missing, but there can be little doubt about the general picture. Traders, military adventurers and priests moved down through the central highlands to the south and permanent emigrants followed. The language of Harar and the cluster of interrelated Gurage dialects which are still spoken by the people of the south-central plateau region – including the people on the Zway islands – are basically Semitic and show close kinship to the main Semitic languages of the north, Amharic and Tigrinya. Local traditions and customs throughout most of southern Ethiopia reveal survivals of early political and religious influences from the north. By the year 1000 the area was well on its way to becoming completely incorporated into the northern Christian cultural and political orbit. But a serious threat to northern Christian hegemony had

fish are an important component of the diet of the islanders and their kinsmen who now inhabit the meadows along the shore.

There are five islands in Lake Zway. They are identical in geological structure – all are volcanic upthrusts – but very different in size and shape. The two smallest islands in the south-western corner of the lake, not far from the Bulbula outflow, are called Debra Sina and Galila – “Mount Sinai” and “Galilee.” Ethiopians have always liked to give names of famous sites in the Holy Land to towns, rivers and other natural features. There is a Jordan river at Lalibela, a Mount Tabor east of Lake Tana, and a Bethlehem in the heart of the northern Amhara country. The largest of the Zway islands was called Debra Tseyon, “Mount Zion,” until recent times, though its Galla name, Tullu Guddo, which means “Big Mountain,” is now more commonly used. Tullu Guddo is a striking island, lying midway along the eastern shore, visible from all parts of the lake. It consists of 2,000 ft. peaks linked by a broad saddle. Long promontories extend into the lake both toward the north and the south. Large bays on the northern and south-western shores are edged with fertile meadows and the eastern shore is also backed by extensive cultivable slopes. There are numerous hot springs along Tullu Guddo's steep western shore. North of Tullu Guddo and close in along the Arussi shore lies the small island of Funduro. Its northern half is a cluster of gentle hills; its southern half is an ambatch swamp. Ambatch is a water-loving member of the acacia family. Its extremely light wood, like balsa, is used for floats for fishnets by the islanders. Occasionally, when they find a large ambatch trunk, they carve it into a boat. There are large stands of ambatch at many places along Zway's shores and it occurs on all the islands. North of Funduro, across a channel where hippos often browse lies the large island of Tadecha. About 1½ miles long, Tadecha consists of three rounded hills separated by broad expanses of gentle slope. There are extensive shore meadows on the southern and eastern sides. Tadecha is the most naturally hospitable of the five Zway islands.

Zway has no beaches. Its shores are flat with great reed and papyrus beds. The first level of solid ground behind the edge of the lake is dominated by giant sycamore fig trees and a rich variety of tropical bushes and vines. This vegetation zone is seldom more than 3-400 ft. wide. Behind it begins the open acacia forest characteristic of the whole Rift Valley region. Zway's two sustaining rivers have pushed large deltas far out into the lake. They are covered with huge expanses of papyrus and impenetrable thickets of ambatch. Papyrus was formerly much more widespread than it is now. Continual cutting has limited its growth along the islands and along



Terraces sprouting new grain on the southwestern side of Tullu Guddo island, Lake Zway. Photo: Paul B. Henze



Men of Funduro island, Lake Zway, displaying a new net which they have just completed. Photo: Paul B. Henze

arisen on the eastern horizon: the rapidly spreading tide of Islam. Pushed on by pressures from Arabia, Islamic invaders rapidly gained control of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean coasts of the Horn of Africa and converted the local inhabitants who, in turn, became energetic champions of the Moslem advance into the highlands and interior valleys. Harar, probably originally a Christian city, fell to Islam some time in the ninth or tenth century and became a bastion of Islamic influence. Southern Ethiopia was for several centuries a battleground between Islam and Christianity with Christianity gradually losing ground until the late 19th century. As a result the area, already a patchwork of peoples, became even more ethnically and culturally fragmented. Established Christian groups with strong ties to northern Ethiopian civilisation sought refuge in inaccessible places. Islands such as those in Lake Zway became attractive.

The ancestors of the people who still inhabit the Zway lands probably first settled there in the 11th or 12th centuries. They call themselves Zay, though their Galla name, Laqi, is now more widely used. Laqi means "paddler," i.e. rowers of boats. To the Galla, unfamiliar with water and boats, this was the most distinctive feature of the Zay. The Zay brought to the islands an already well developed culture: good techniques of house-building, a

knowledge of agriculture and weaving, their Semitic language, traditions of old ties to northern Ethiopia and, above all, their devotion to Christianity. Settlement was probably a gradual process, taking place over a period of decades and generations. As pressure from invaders and hostile neighbours increased, more and more people moved to the islands. But ties with kinsmen on the mainland must have been maintained for a long time. Related peoples maintained their identity in nearby areas of the Rift Valley though others, closely akin to the Zway islanders, took refuge on islands in other lakes and in isolated highland areas.

In Zway churches were built on each of the islands, each supplied with its sacred tablet, the *tabot*, brought according to tradition from the north. These churches have been maintained to this day. That on Galila is dedicated to the Ethiopian national saint, Tekla-Haymanot, who lived in the 13th century. The church on Debra Sina honours the Virgin Mary. Tadecha's church belongs to Abraham, Funduro's to the Four Creatures, a favourite north Ethiopian theme, while the senior church on the highest peak of Tullu Guddo honours St. Mary of Zion like the holy mother of all Ethiopian churches, St. Mary of Zion at Axum. St. Mary of Zion on Tullu Guddo early attained the rank of a

monastery and became a centre of teaching and learning. Religious manuscripts were produced and copied and ancient Ethiopian traditions of religious song and poetry were maintained. By the time Portuguese travellers reached central and southern Ethiopia in the 16th century, many legends had grown up about the holy books and other treasures of the Zway island churches. A sizable collection of manuscripts still exists in the Tullu Guddo church, the most valuable of which is a beautifully illustrated *Sinkesar* (a book of lives of early saints) dating from the 14th century. It is one of the finest early manuscripts that has come to light in Ethiopia. Its 19 brilliantly coloured portraits are fresh as when they were painted six centuries ago. Scholars have not yet been able to determine whether this manuscript was actually written on Tullu Guddo or brought there from another location.

The Zway region experienced its most severe period of stress during the Galla invasions of the 16th and 17th centuries. For the islands this was nevertheless a period of maximum development. The Galla, a Cushitic semi-nomadic cattle-raising people from the south-east, were not prepared to try to capture the Zway islands. Predominantly pagan at the beginning of their period of expansion, most Galla gravitated toward Islam as they moved north and west. Cut off completely by the Galla

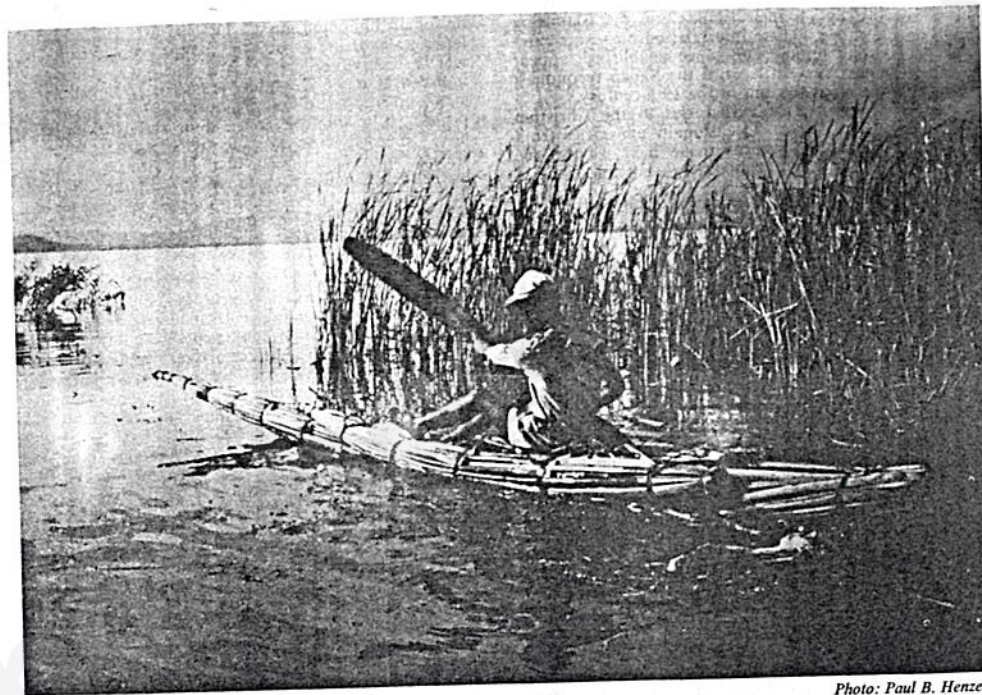
and Islam, which had been adopted by several indigenous shore tribes as well, the Zway islanders had to rely on their own resources to maintain themselves. Fortunately, with the pattern of life which had evolved by this time, they were well equipped to do so.

Fish are not popular to Ethiopian Semitic peoples but the Zay are a great exception. As the population of the islands grew, fish became an increasingly important component of their diet. One- and two-man boats made of papyrus bundles, probably originally copied from the most primitive inhabitants of the lake-shore, became an essential item of equipment for every able-bodied male. Nets, made of cotton grown on the islands and edged with small volcanic pebbles, became the standard method of catching fish. The islands had rich volcanic soil but the meadows and gentle slopes were soon all under cultivation. Terracing was the only solution. Elaborate systems of stone-walled terraces were built and eventually the entire surface of the islands, except cliffs and bare rock faces, was covered with terraces. Principal crops grown on the terraces were grains and cotton. The principal grains were, and are, barley, wheat and finger millet, *eleusine tocussa*. The latter, called *dagusa* in Amharic and also in the Zay language, is used for bread, porridge and beer. The pungent, golden brew made from its black grains is still famous in the lake



A fisherman in the Arussi channel counts payment for a supper's worth of fish.

Photo: Paul B. Henze



A boy of Tullu Guddo island, Lake Zway, puts out into the open lake in his papyrus boat.

Photo: Paul B. Henze

region. Domestic animals probably came to the islands with the first Zay settlers, but, as the population grew, competition between cattle and agriculture became acute. Of necessity, the islanders had to develop a rational approach to cattle-keeping quite uncharacteristic of this part of Africa. Immense herds could not be maintained for prestige. With grazing space at a premium, only the most productive animals could be kept. Grazing on open land soon became impossible. Grass grew well near the shore, so the best way to get more grazing was to extend the lakeside meadows. Plentiful volcanic boulders were piled in shallows and sturdy sea walls built. Behind them the land was levelled and filled in to make smooth pastures a foot or two above the low-water level of the lake. The lake fluctuates about a foot in the course of a normal year and wave action, intense during the first part of the dry season when the lake is at its highest, splashes water through the sea walls and on to the meadows, naturally irrigating them. It was an ingenious solution to the grazing problem.

The islanders wove to satisfy their own needs for they could not raise enough cattle or sheep to supply skins for clothing and other requirements. The Galla invasions eventually provided the impetus for a great expansion of the weaving industry. As the Galla adjusted to a more settled way of life, they acquired new tastes and needs.

Among these was a desire for cotton cloth. In order to buy their cloth, the Galla permitted the Zay to come to their mainland markets on certain days when they were guaranteed safe passage back to their islands. The arrangement was appealing to the islanders because in return for their cloth they could buy salt, butter, hides and imported trade goods to which they otherwise had no access. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the demand for cloth grew steadily and the reputation of the product of the Zay weavers spread throughout southern Ethiopia. On the islands themselves this meant that more and more land had to be allocated to cultivation of cotton. The population grew but the food supply that could be produced on the islands was no longer adequate. The pressure on the land became intense. Every corner with soil was cultivated. Terraces were extended to the topmost points of the islands. More than 200 levels of terracing can still be counted on the western side of Tullu Guddo! Practically all the original vegetation was cut for fuel, though euphorbia and acacia persisted in isolated rocky places and gaint sycamore figs remained along the shore. Since the usual Ethiopian alternative to firewood - dung - was not available in any quantity on the islands, considerable quantities of firewood had to be cut on the mainland, with Galla tolerance. Thus a degree of mutually beneficial symbiosis grew up between

the Christian Zay on their islands and the Islamising Galla on the shore. These interrelationships were carefully defined and limited and, once established, appear to have changed very little until the Shoan reconquest of the Rift Valley at the end of the 19th century.

Memories persisted of earlier ties to the Christian north: Shoa and Tigre. Occasionally emissaries from northern bishops and princes made their way to the islands. The islanders to this day recount traditions of early ties with Axum and later immigration of an Amhara ruling caste from Manz, the northernmost section of Shoa. Manz is the original home of the ruling Ethiopian dynasty which produced the Emperors Menelik II and Haile Selassie I. The hereditary chiefs of the Zay maintain that they too are descendants of the noble classes of Manz. But in most respects the islanders lived in complete isolation, secure within a cultural and economic system that functioned smoothly. Very little social differentiation seems to have occurred. Of necessity life had many communal aspects. Land ownership was basically private but a great deal of co-operation was necessary to keep up the elaborate terraces and men joined together for many tasks such as house-building, maintenance of sea walls, cutting of reeds and papyrus for boats and roofs. Cultivating cotton fields was a male responsibility. Picking, cleaning and spinning the cotton were women's tasks. Weaving, as in most of East Africa, was and remains a male occupation. Fishing was entirely a job for men and to this day all boys learn early how to build papyrus boats, how to row them with a double-bladed paddle, how to make and mend nets and how to throw them so that they land flat on the water and sink gently down over the shallow reedbeds to capture the largest possible number of fish. Women tend vegetable patches, men grainfields. Cutting grain is men's work. Men and children tramp out the dried grain on round earthen threshing floors. Pottery, readily available everywhere else in Ethiopia, could not be made on the islands because of lack of clay, so ingenious substitutes were found: light, sturdy vessels of a mixture of cow-dung and chaff, as well as tightly-woven baskets. The dung-and-chaff vessels are used for grain and flour and other dry substances such as peppers. Huge grain storage baskets covered with the same dung-and-chaff mixture are a prominent feature of the interior of every Zay house. They sometimes occupy half the wall-space.

The Zay house is a solid, well-built structure. It shows many affinities with house-building styles of the entire Gurage culture area but is closest in details to the houses of the region around Harar, far to the east. Houses are round with walls of stone laid in mud mortar. The walls are plastered both inside and out with a mixture of fine earth and dung. Unlike most Ethiopian houses, those of the Zay (like those of Harar) have small windows at intervals around the upper part of the walls. They have two well-made doors, front and rear. The roof is conical and thatched with grass, reeds or papyrus, sometimes a combination of both the latter. The centre pole of the house has a special semi-sacred significance and is capped by a large round "wheel" of wood into which the supporting beams fit. A throne-like seat, built up of earth and dung and elaborately decorated with cowrie shells, is set at the base of the centre pole. It is a privileged seat, reserved for the man of the house

or for an honoured guest. Designs are painted on the inner walls of houses and on the back of the high wall which shields the hearth, off to one side. The overall impression of the Zay house is one of airiness, neatness and well-being. In most houses a loom occupies a prominent position beside the door and from wall pegs hang the distinctive large cowried baskets used for storing cotton and thread. The importance of weaving in the life of the islanders is readily apparent. In sunny weather weaving is also done outside. Large amounts of red-black-and-white cloth are still produced and brought to markets in towns such as Maqi and Alemtena.

It is easy in describing the life of the Zway islanders to slip from the past into the present tense because on the largest islands, the three eastern ones, life still continues in essentially the same pattern which evolved during the centuries after original settlement. The two western islands have declined and most of their people have moved to the mainland, where they have settled on land along the Bulbula river granted to them by Emperor Menelik II when he occupied the Rift Valley lake region in 1886. Menelik's occupation marked the end of the isolation of the Zay. The Christian Emperor from the north, bent upon reuniting all traditional Ethiopian lands into a



Photo: Paul B. Henze  
Papyrus still grows to a height of 12 to 15 feet along the western shore of Galila island, Lake Zway.



Photo: Paul B. Henze  
A weaver of Funduro island, Lake Zway, displays his cloth.

modern empire, felt a special concern for the isolated Christians on the Zway islands. He confirmed them as an independent tribal element under the leadership of their traditional chief whom he gave the Amharic title of Balambaras. He gave them ownership of large amounts of fertile shoreland and guaranteed their safety from molestation by the Galla. From the turn of the century onward, large numbers of Zay moved from the western islands to the flat plains along the Bulbula. On Galila and Debra Sina cultivation of marginal terrace lands declined though lakeside meadows continued to be used for grazing and settlements around the churches on the highest parts of the islands maintained themselves. The Zay on the shore continued to feel a strong tie to their ancestral islands and journeyed to them in papyrus boats in large numbers to attend church services on religious holidays. The church on Galila was renovated and given a new metal roof in the late 1960s, though the resident population of the island had by that time declined to only a few dozen. In 1972 the last permanent residents left Galila and moved to the shore, though cattle continued to be grazed on the island. A few families remain on Debra Sina but the attractions of life on the shore will no doubt cause this island to be

abandoned as well during the next few years.

Change has come much more gradually to the eastern islands. Here much larger populations have retained a high degree of organised community life in accord with old traditions. The terraces on the steeper and higher parts of Tullu Guddo have been gradually abandoned. Abandonment has apparently, and quite logically, been the exact reverse of the original process of terrace expansion: the highest, driest and least accessible land which was the last to be terraced and brought under cultivation during the period of maximum population pressure in the 18th and 19th centuries was the first to be neglected. The lower terraces and meadowlands of Tullu Guddo still produce good crops of millet and cotton and many cattle are pastured on the shore meadows as well as on abandoned terraces. On Funduro and Tadecha little, if any, land has gone out of cultivation. While the present population of Tullu Guddo, about 1,000 people, is probably no more than a third of the maximum of a century or two ago, the two other eastern islands may still be close to the level reached during the earlier period of isolation. Excess people from the eastern islands flow off to the Arussi (eastern) shore as well as to settlements at the northern end of the lake.

The only planned and organised large-scale movement of population from the eastern islands occurred in 1970-72 when the entire population of the village of Gumarge, second-largest on Tullu Guddo, located high on the western side of the island, was moved to rich flatlands along the north-eastern end of the lake. Here they have rebuilt their houses in traditional Zay style in an area called Guna, sparsely inhabited by Watta. The Watta are a people of uncertain origin who may be survivors of the earliest inhabitants of the lake region. Hippopotamus hunters until recent times and practitioners of low-status crafts such as pottery-making, wood-working and tanning, they are a despised people in the eyes of the Zay as well as the Galla. The Watta have now become farmers and cattle-raisers, like the neighbouring Galla, and Zay settlement among them appears to have gone off smoothly. When the villagers left Gumarge, they took all movable parts of their houses with them - roof beams, centre poles, doors. Only the round masonry walls remain in the abandoned village, along with the huge grain-storage baskets, giant beer jars, grinding stones and stone hitching posts in the yards. Carefully built terrace walls, in places 15 to 20 ft. in height, separated one row of house compounds from another. These, along with the circular house walls, now make a striking ruin, an archaeological site which still seems half alive, since it was abandoned only yesterday. Richer terraces below Gumarge are still cultivated, but those that lead to the very peak of the mountain above the village are returning to nature.

The north and south bay areas of Tullu Guddo and much of the eastern side of the island provide a good livelihood for the Zay who remain. There are several village complexes but by far the largest is probably also the oldest - the village which extends downward from the site of the church just under the summit of Debre Tseyon (Mount Zion). Facing east, the church and village have a superb view of the mile-wide channel which separates Tullu Guddo from the Arussi shore. Behind the shore a jumbled landscape of recent volcanic forms rises to Mount Chilalo, a huge dead volcano that



Photo: Paul B. Henze

Abba Gebre Selassie, a Gondari priest who has retired to the life of a hermit and lives in a cave on the west side of Tullu Guddo Island, Lake Zway.

them. Cotton fields are cleared. Cotton grows as a perennial on the islands and large shrubs produce bolls year after year, though new plants are also set among them. Grain matures quickly as the rains end in September and is harvested in October and November. Hippopotamus from the lake find ripening grainfields irresistible for night grazing. During September and October "hippo guards" keep fires burning throughout the night at points along the shore where the great beasts are known to emerge. When they hear hippos coming up to feast off the grain on the terraces, they pursue them back to the lake with torches. The islanders' busiest time is November through to March when threshing is done and all the men's spare time is spent fishing and repairing boats. Women cut fish and hang them on strings or on thorn bushes to dry. The weather is now sunny, dry and cool. In November and December the lake is still in the morning but during the afternoon strong winds come up from the north. Papyrus has now reached its maximum growth and flotillas of papyrus boats set out from the islands at sunrise to cut papyrus in the Katar and Maqi deltas during the morning and then take advantage of brisk tailwinds as they return in the evening with their bundles of papyrus stalks, to be used for new boats and house thatch. Cotton is picked in March and April.



Photo: Paul B. Henze

Balambaras Biru, Chief of the Zay.

reaches 13,000 ft. at its summit 25 miles away. There is still a sizable population of priests, monks and nuns on Tullu Guddo. Their life and that of most of the inhabitants still centres around the church and its cycle of festivals. Balambaras Biru, present chief of the Zay, has his large house not far from the church near the separate church meeting house (*senbet*). After Sunday morning mass, the Balambaras and the Zay elders gather in the meeting house for coffee, beer and ceremonial whole-wheat bread. On special occasions, such as christenings, fish *wat*, a bouillabaisse-like stew made of fresh *tilapia* cooked with peppers, onions and spices, is served with *injera*, the common Ethiopian flat bread, and *katikala*, a strong clear, gin-like drink is served.

The yearly cycle of life on the eastern islands has changed little during the last several hundred years. The rainy season sets in in earnest in late June or early July. Fields are ploughed and planted by early August and new grain turns the terraced slopes emerald green. Little fishing is done during this period. Garden plants, such as peppers, sown in beds near the shore and carefully watered with water brought from the lake in gourds until the rains begin, are transplanted to choice terraces or plots near houses where the women can look after

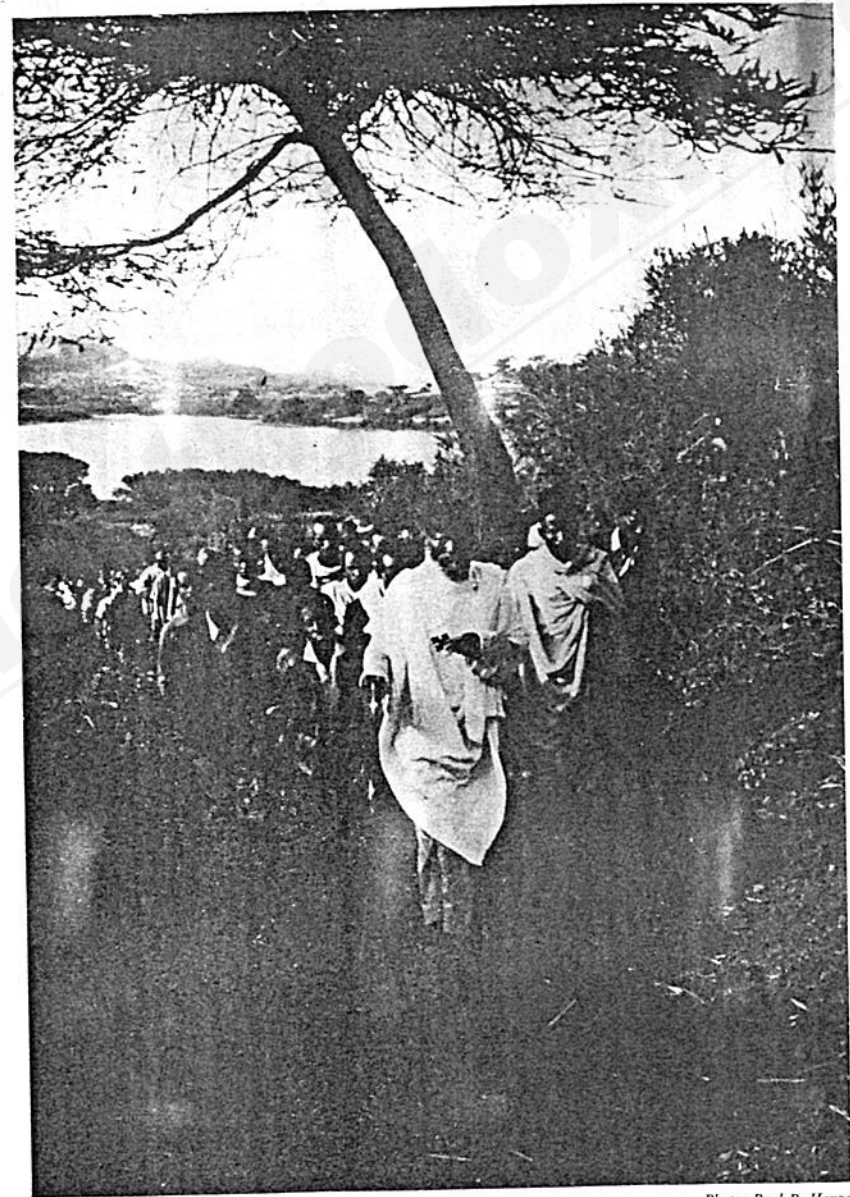


Photo: Paul B. Henze

Archbishop of Lucas of Arussi, followed by a sizeable proportion of the male population of Tadecha island, Lake Zway, as he comes to visit the Church of Abraham in September 1971.



The Tullu Guddo Sinkesar from Lake Zway: Saints Maximos and Demetros.

Photo: Paul B. Henze



The Tullu Guddo Sinkesar from Lake Zway: St. Mark.

Photo: Paul B. Henze

Nets are mended and new ones made. Women spin and men do more fishing, in between repairing boats and houses in anticipation of the next rainy season, heralded by the "little rains" which usually occur intermittently in March and April. As the yearly cycle draws to a close, men have more time to weave. A good period of weaving results in an accumulation of cloth which, in turn, provides good justification for a several-day journey to mainland markets. Women often join their husbands for trips to the mainland, both travelling on a single papyrus boat.

Like other Ethiopians, the Zay have not been slow to realise the advantages of education and for many years some Zay children have been leaving the islands to live with relatives in shore towns where they have access to government schools. Elders, concerned to keep their society intact, have been agitating at both church and civil authorities to set up schools on the islands. A church school has functioned on Tullu Guddo for many years, teaching elementary literacy and traditional religious subjects. Early in 1972 a modern six-year school was built on Tullu Guddo as a result of the Ethio-Swedish school-building programme. Opening in the fall on 1972 and serving the children of all three eastern islands (those from Tadecha and Funduro come by

papyrus boat!), it is bound to change the life of the Zay profoundly. There will be less incentive for people to leave the islands now to find education for their children, but the process of assimilation of the culture of the Zay into the larger Ethiopian/Amharic cultural stream which began in the late 19th century is bound to be greatly accelerated.

The Zay still use their own language among themselves. It has never been studied systematically. Preserved within it must be many clues to a better understanding of the history of the movement of peoples in central and southern Ethiopia during the past thousand years. After the next generation has passed through the new school on Tullu Guddo, Amharic will be well on its way to replacing Zay. The Zay still retain much traditional oral history, but already this knowledge is confined primarily to older men and is not being absorbed by the upcoming generation, who entertain themselves with transistor radios and, when they visit shore towns, watch television from Addis Ababa in the local bars. Material culture remains largely intact, but plastic containers and aluminium pots will soon replace fine watertight baskets, chaff-and-dung grain measures and wooden bowls. Traditional weaving is still flourishing but its future would also seem to be problematic.



Physically the Zay may be worth careful study before they become too intermixed with surrounding peoples. They are relatively light-skinned, with long faces, large eyes and relatively thin lips predominant. There is an evident relationship with north Ethiopian types. Even more interesting, perhaps, is the question whether some degree of genetic selection has taken place over several hundred years in favour of individuals naturally resistant to malaria and bilharzia. Malaria has ceased to be a problem during the past decade as a result of anti-mosquito spraying programmes, but it is vivid in the collective memory and legends of the Zay. All settlements on the islands were built on high places to take advantage of the winds and be as far away as possible from mosquitos. Bilharzia, which is said to be present in Zway, seems to occur only infrequently among the islanders.

Modern commercial fishing is likely to develop on Lake Zway with an expanding market only three hours away in Addis Ababa. Modern Ethiopians are overcoming traditional dislike of fish and now often eat fish on their frequent fast days. Little is known of the life cycle and reproductive habits of the *tilapia*. Zay fishermen, using their age-old methods, now sell a sizable catch to buyers who come with trucks to the lake-shore on both the eastern and western sides of the lake. So far there has been no apparent diminution of fish supply, so if fishing continues to be profitable, more efficient methods are bound to be introduced. The graceful papyrus boat, which glides over smooth and rough water with amazing speed, will become a museum piece. The modernising state, even one as economically underdeveloped as Ethiopia, has an irreversibly destructive influence on small peoples and unique cultures.

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## Patterns of Cultural Survival on Islands in Ethiopian Highland Lakes

by Paul B. Henze

Ethiopia is not only a country of great mountains, high plateaus and deep gorges; it is also a land of many lakes. The largest concentration of lakes occurs in the central and southern Rift Valley where seven major bodies of water, extending from Zway in the north to Chamo in the south, display distinctive physical features as well as varied combinations of animal, bird and human life. There are major lakes outside the Rift Valley system, notably Tana, the huge inland sea which is the source of the Blue Nile. Ethiopia also has many small and medium-size highland lakes, some occupying old volcanic craters, others of more complex genesis. Most have no islands. Only those with islands became culturally important. A previous article has already dealt with the history and culture of the islands of Lake Zway where an unusual medieval Christian culture has maintained itself into modern times. None of the other lakes with islands, with the exception of Tana, forms such a compact cultural and historical entity as Zway but all are worthy of attention for the light they shed on dim periods of Ethiopian history and for what they reveal about processes of adaptation of isolated peoples to difficult circumstances.

Thirty miles south of Lake Zway is Lake Langano. The two lakes are separated by a sizable mountain mass, the Gara Alutu. Langano is somewhat smaller but deeper than Zway and is scenically more spectacular. Along much of its shore the land rises steeply and there are several stretches of high cliffs. With the Gara Alutu to the north and a higher group of mountains to the east, the Kakka complex in Arussi, it gives the impression of an alpine lake in an African savannah setting. Its water is more mineralised than that of Zway and does not support such teeming fish life, though there are *tilapia*. There are also hippopotamus and a good quantity of birds. If Langano had had more islands, it would have a richer cultural history. Unfortunately it has only one island. The present name of this island, Tullo Laqi, as well as the old terrace walls, house foundations and tombs on it all attest to its habitation by people who appear to have been closely related to those who still inhabit the Zway islands. These people call themselves Zay but were called Laqi - "paddlers," "rowers" - by the advancing Galla and this name has come to be more commonly used, even by Amhara, than the original one. Tullo Laqi means in Gallinya "Mountain of the Paddlers."

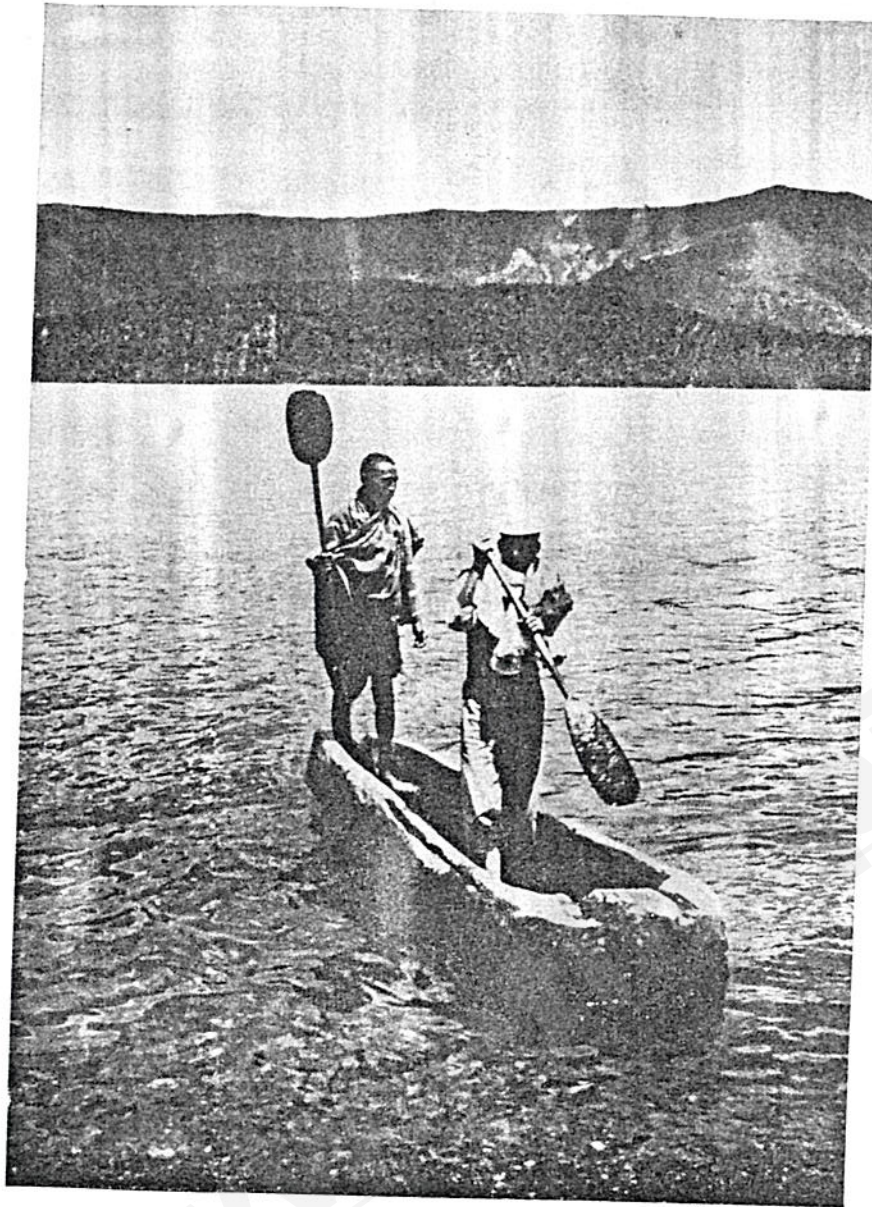
The island is an attractive place with vigorous hot springs, extensive reedbeds along its eastern shore and gentle slopes which could be easily cultivated. But it is small, less than a mile at its greatest length, and can never have supported a large population. Nevertheless it appears to have been thickly settled and cultivated until early in the present century. A much larger population of

the same kind of people appears to have maintained itself on a long peninsula which extends out into Lake Langano from its north-western shore and perhaps also on a series of promontories which jut out from the north-eastern side of the lake. On the north-western peninsula many ruined terrace walls and village foundations can still be easily traced among the acacia and candelabra euphorbia trees where Arussi Galla now pasture cattle. The north-eastern promontories are not frequented by herdsmen and are covered with thick thornscrub with an undergrowth of vines and shrubs that completely obscure the surface of the ground. Some evidence of terracing can nevertheless be discerned from the water. A much more extensive investigation of these promontories than I was able to make in three brief visits in 1970-71 would be necessary to confirm evidence of complex terrace systems and village remains, but their existence seems possible.

No tradition of medieval Christian life on Langano has survived, but since evidence of early Christian penetration much farther south in Ethiopia has gradually come to light, it would not be surprising if archaeology or study of oral traditions were to provide indications of early Christian activity in the Langano area too. 19th and early 20th century travellers' accounts provide bits of information about Tullo Laqi when it was still inhabited. The people who lived there fished from boats made of reeds (Langano has no papyrus) and their style of life appears to have been much like that of the Zway islanders. They were less well situated to defend themselves, however, and began to be assimilated by the expanding Galla much earlier. The inhabitants of the island are said to have moved eventually to the eastern shore of the lake where they were completely absorbed into the Galla way of life.

Like Zway, Langano drains into Lake Abiata. Its outlet, the Horakallo River, with graceful old acacias overhanging its steep banks in which kingfishers and carmine bee-eaters nest, is one of the most picturesque small streams in Ethiopia. Abiata is a large, shallow, saline lake with no outlet whose level varies greatly as cycles of wet and dry weather succeed each other in the Rift Valley. Abiata has the richest bird life of any Ethiopian lake but it has no islands and there seems never to have been any significant permanent human settlement along its shores.

Lake Shala, directly south of Lake Abiata, occupies an immense volcanic crater complex. The lake extends 20 miles from east to west and averages about 10 miles wide. It is rectangular in shape and has steep sides and clusters of volcanic peaks along both its northern and southern shores. Shala is known to be extremely deep, more than 600 ft. in its central section. Though it has never been fully surveyed, it is calculated to contain more water than



Lake Wonchi. Two boatmen in a dugout boat made of cedar. The steep walls of the crater in which the lake is situated are visible in the background.

Lake Tana. It has no known outlet, but its level varies no more than a few inches from year to year. Its water is clear and dark, the colour of strong tea, and has a high soda content. There is nevertheless sufficient small marine life in it to attract a sizeable bird population. One of Shala's most inaccessible islands has one of the few pelican rookeries known in Africa. Since the lake has no large fish, the pelicans feed themselves and their nestlings by regular shuttle flights to Abiata over the mountain ridge that separates the basins of the two lakes. But none nest on Abiata; they prefer the greater safety Shala's islands afford.

Volcanic activity appears to have ceased around Shala only a few centuries ago. Crater walls along its shores are loosely consolidated and piles of varicoloured boulders, cinders and ash look as if they had been thrust from the bowels of the earth only yesterday. Large areas of steadily flowing hot springs along the eastern shore of the lake provide further evidence of recent volcanism. Six of Shala's seven islands are located in the western half of the lake and all are relatively close to shore. They all appear to be extremely young geologically. Two of the smaller ones are striking upthrusts of columnar basalt. The two largest, situated in the north-western corner of the lake, are agglomerations of several kinds of volcanic rock and ash. They support a thick growth of forest consisting of candelabra euphorbia, acacia and a few sycamore figs.

Scanty travellers' accounts refer to the larger Shala islands by the names of Lamina and Tullu Laqi but descriptions are inconsistent and seem to confuse the islands with a large neighbouring promontory of similar geological formation which extends out from the northern shore of the lake across a half-mile-wide channel from the largest island. A British army captain who travelled through the Rift Valley at the end of the 19th century gives a vivid description of an encounter with hostile islanders paddling reed boats who were said to be living on the Shala islands at that time.

I made a reconnaissance of the two north-western islands in March 1972 but found no evidence that they had ever been permanently inhabited: no terracing, no stone walls, no foundations, no abandoned grinding stones, no signs of old cultivated fields. The soil, what there is of it, is too light and loose to repay cultivation, very different from that on the Zway islands. The tall, coarse grass that covers flat areas near the lake-shore might provide sustenance for goats but would not be adequate pasturage for cattle or sheep. There appears to be no animal life whatsoever on the islands now, only birds. So, in spite of vague local traditions of settlement of these islands by the same Zay/Laqi as in Zway and Langano, it seems unlikely that the Shala islands ever provided anything but a very temporary refuge for south Ethiopian peoples retreating before Muslim invaders or expanding Galla tribes. There are no permanent settlements around Shala. Peoples who took refuge here must soon have moved on to more hospitable country to the west where the Gurage, a closely related group of peoples to whom the islanders of the northern Rift Valley belong, have flourished since medieval times. The Gurage have all maintained some north Ethiopian, Christian traditions as well as their rich Semitic dialects, though most of them share many cultural features with neighbouring south Ethiopian peoples such as their style

of house, their high-quality handicrafts and their dependence on cultivation of the false banana, *ensete edulis*, for food and many other household uses.

Though Shala's islands reveal no past or current evidence of significant human occupation, a much smaller, even more strikingly picturesque crater lake on the northern edge of the Gurage country provides a great deal. Lake Wonchi, 75 miles west of Addis Ababa, fills part of a huge crater, 10,000 ft. high, at the crest of a range of mountains between Ambo and Wolisso, bustling country towns located on maps under their official Ethiopian names, Hagera Hiwot and Ghion. The mountains around Wonchi are still thickly covered in many places with ancient stands of cedar and podocarpus, groves of wild olive and great expanses of heather which in high areas, where its growth has not been disturbed by cutting or burning, assumes tree form and reaches heights of 25 feet with trunks four to eight inches thick. This whole region is now inhabited by Galla but as you go up into the higher mountains on the way to Lake Wonchi you enter a zone about 7,500 ft. where the people, the style of building and the pattern of agriculture are all completely different from patterns that prevail among the true Galla of the surrounding area. Everything about these Wonchi highlanders is reminiscent of the classic Gurage culture area 100 miles farther south. The Wonchi people now insist that they, too, are Galla and they all speak Gallinya, but their neat houses, their fenced lawns, their intensively cultivated ensete gardens, their eating habits and their handicrafts all reveal Gurage survivals.

Lake Wonchi is very irregular in shape. It occupies about a third of its crater floor; the remainder consists of intensively cultivated fields. The crater walls retain a thick cover of many kinds of alpine and sub-alpine vegetation, including heather, St. John's Wort and giant lobelias. The lake's waters are deep, cold and crystal clear. There are no fish. Wonchi drains through a river which flows out its south-eastern end, through a deep break in the crater wall. Landslides block the river channel now and then, causing the level of the lake to fluctuate drastically over long periods. The lake is now high, but picturesque silhouettes of sturdy cedar trunks protruding from 12-15 ft. of water at many points offshore show that the lake level must have been at least 20 ft. lower a half century ago. Wonchi's two islands are the cultural centre of the whole area. The smaller one, Debir, has a large church dedicated to St. Quercus, a favourite north Ethiopian saint. Gergis, a large flat island, intensively cultivated and thickly populated, no longer has a church but its name, a corruption of Giyorgis - St. George - shows that it once did. Nearby on the western shore of the lake is another large church dedicated to St. Tekla Haymanot, the Ethiopian national saint who lived in the 13th century.

Wonchi has no reedbeds. The islanders make boats of large, hollowed-out cedar logs. These last for many years. Some sprout a rich growth of moss and grass around their edges. They are propelled by large wooden paddles and move rather slowly, especially when there is only one boatman who paddles three or four strokes on one side, and then three or four on the other, making a zigzag track across the water. Dugout boats are not common in Ethiopia except in the low country along the Sudan border. Cedars grow only in high country. The

only place I have come across boats identical to those of Wonchi is along the upper Webe Shabelle River in northern Bale province.

The people who live on the Wonchi islands and on the shores around the lake include an unusually large number of individuals with classic north Ethiopian Semitic physical features: long faces, brownish skin, thin lips, beak noses and often wavy, rather than kinky, hair. They keep few cattle and other domestic animals and concentrate on cultivating their ensete, corn and vegetable gardens. They keep large numbers of bees and are eager to offer the visitor prodigious quantities of the traditional Ethiopian highland honey drinks, both the fermented and unfermented kinds, *tej* and *birz*, respectively. The people are all familiar with the legendary history of Wonchi and they tell a complicated tale of the origin of the lake. In the period before Christianity arrived in the area, a brother and sister committed incest and insisted on marrying each other. The gods punished them by sending torrential rains which drowned out the flourishing settlements that had existed in the crater. Those who survived and re-established themselves on the islands welcomed Christianity and the area became a centre of Christian civilisation. Many tales are told of the manner in which the sacred relics from all the churches in this part of Ethiopia were brought to the island of Debir for safekeeping when Ahmed Gragn, the notorious Muslim invader from the east, ravaged the highlands in the 16th century. He is said never to have been able to penetrate to Wonchi. In modern times Wonchi was the centre of resistance to another invader – the Italians – who were never able to subdue the area either. It takes very little effort to persuade the elders of Gergis to recount their exploits during the Italian occupation and many display in their houses medals and certificates from the Emperor attesting to their patriotic deeds.

Until recently the people of Wonchi still spoke a Gurage dialect closely related to that of the Aymallal Gurage to the south-east. Until a generation or two ago these people still referred to themselves as "Galila," a name obviously derived, like the island of the same name in Lake Zway, from biblical Galilee. Perhaps the lake itself in earlier times bore this name. There are many precedents for this kind of imitative Christian naming of places in the Ethiopian highlands. But the name Galila, like the Gurage dialect of the area, has now practically disappeared though Christianity has remained very much alive. The basic pattern of life around Wonchi has proved to be persistent and appears likely to continue. In fact, the Galla of the surrounding region, who pushed the people of Wonchi back up into the high mountains where they now live, were originally nomadic cattle herders when they entered this region. They have gradually become completely settled agriculturalists and in the process they have undoubtedly learned a good deal from the earlier inhabitants. Most of the Galla now profess Christianity. Thus the original Semitic Christians who have come to regard themselves as Galla have lost their own ethnic consciousness but have had a substantial influence on the larger cultural entity into which they have merged.

Returning to the Rift Valley and proceeding from Shala southward, we pass Lake Awasa, the smallest of the seven Ethiopian Rift Valley lakes. It has no islands and,

though there are traditions of a separate fishing culture with reed boats, nothing significant has survived. On the two southernmost lakes it is a different story. Lake Abbaya, more commonly known by its European name, Margarita, is rich in islands and cultural survivals. It is the largest of the lakes in the Rift Valley and second only to Tana among all Ethiopian lakes. It has more than a dozen sizable islands and many smaller ones. More than 50 miles long, Lake Abbaya has a superb natural setting, with the high mountains of Gamu Gofa on its western side and the mountains of Sidamo to the east. Its relatively fresh waters are always a milky tan in colour. They are rich in fish, especially giant catfish and the gigantic Nile Perch which may reach six feet in length and a weight of 200 pounds. Like its smaller, equally scenic southern neighbour, Lake Chamo, Abbaya is also the home of large herds of hippopotamus and great concentrations of crocodiles. Crocodiles are absent from the more northerly Rift Valley lakes.

South-western Ethiopia is a living ethnographic museum. The province of Gamu Gofa has more separate and unique peoples in its mountains and valleys and around its lakes than any other part of East Africa. The islands of Lake Abbaya provide a home for two unusual tribes, the Gidicho and the Gatami. Most of the Gidicho live on the large island of the same name located in the north-eastern part of Lake Abbaya less than half a mile offshore. Gidicho Island is about six miles long and more than two miles wide at its centre. It now presents a rather barren appearance because of the large expanses of yellow-tan tufa denuded by overgrazing. This region has moderate-to-heavy rainfall most of the year and good crops of cotton and grain can be grown. Only the flatter land on Gidicho is now used for agriculture while cattle wander unhindered over the remainder of the island. Many old terrace walls can be traced, evidence of much thicker occupation and cultivation a few generations ago. Some Gidicho have moved to the mainland and many who still live on the island cultivate land and pasture cattle along the eastern shore of the lake. Thus a process similar to that which has occurred on the Zway island of Tullu Guddo appears to be taking place here too.

While comparisons with Zway are enlightening, they cannot be carried too far. The Gidicho are not Christian and never have been. Their language, curiously enough, appears to be more closely related to Somali than to that of any of the other peoples in the immediate area. There are a few survivals of medieval Christianity in this southernmost part of the Ethiopian plateau, notably the old church of Birbir Maryam in the mountains north of Chencha to the west of Lake Abbaya, but the islands of Abbaya and Chamo show no evidence of early Christian influence. The Gidicho are still essentially pagan, as are their neighbours the Gatami.

The Gatami have a village on Gidicho Island but their home base is the island of Gatami farther down the eastern shore. Many have now settled on the mainland. In earlier times they may have occupied other Abbaya islands which are now uninhabited and overgrown. The Gatami are fishermen and hippopotamus hunters. Like the Wayto on Lake Tana, the Watta of Lake Zway and their neighbours the Ganjule of Lake Chamo, the Gatami are despised by the peoples who surround them because they are not only hippopotamus hunters but also practice unclean crafts such as tanning and pottery-making. They

are reputed to have supernatural powers as well. The Gidicho acknowledge having learned weaving, fishing and boat-building from the Gatami but the two peoples have not intermingled.

The huge boats now used by both the Gidicho and Gatami are the glory of Lake Abbaya and probably the most handsome still in use anywhere in Africa. They resemble boats depicted in ancient Egyptian tomb murals. Often more than 20 feet in length with graceful prows rising five feet above the water, they are made of logs of ambatch, the balsam-like acacia that grows along the edge of the lake. They are propelled by two or three standing boatmen who punt them with long poles tipped with chunks of the thick lower trunk of the ambatch. Passengers and goods rest upon piles of brush that cover the bottom, for the boats are not watertight, but float on the water like rafts and the waves slosh through the logs which are lashed together with bark. Once a week a sizable proportion of the population of the island of Gidicho – several hundred people – comes to the market on the eastern shore of the lake opposite the island and boats ply back and forth continually for several hours, with as many as 24 at a time tied up at shore. A single boat, if not too heavily laden with goods, may carry as many as 12 passengers.

As striking as the boats is the hairstyle of the Gidicho women, one of the most elaborate and attractive hair fashions to be found in Ethiopia. As among most Ethiopian peoples, the women retain distinctive cultural features – hair styles, tattooing, costume, jewelry – much longer than the men. Gidicho men now wear the short-cropped hair and standard modern shirt-trouser combinations characteristic of men in most parts of Ethiopia.

Lake Chamo is only half the size of Lake Abbaya. Its water is much less brown and it has fewer islands. In recent decades it has risen sharply, for there are great expanses of submerged, rotting acacia forest at all shallower points along its shore. These make boating treacherous. Only one of the Chamo islands is still inhabited, though it appears that two other medium-size islands may have been inhabited until recent times. Both of these are now thickly overgrown with acacia and related savannah vegetation of the same type that dominates the Chamo shores. The inhabited island, called Ganjule, like the people who live on it, is situated in the northern part of the lake. A recent volcanic upthrust consisting mostly of red tufa, it rises sharply out of the water and has shores too steep for landing except at its north-eastern extremity, where there is a small stretch of red sand beach. On parts of its upper slopes there has been extensive terracing. Only a small portion of the terraced area had been recently cultivated when I visited the island in June 1972 and only 50-60 people remained on the island. They lived in a compact village located on the slopes above the beach on the north-east side. Most of the Ganjule have moved to shore lands along the northern end of the lake but the island remains the centre of their culture and their chief still resides there. He entertained us in his huge house, built like a towering haystack, well thatched from peak to ground. Inside these houses are supported by a tall centre pole and spokes which radiate from it. They are divided into two rooms. The main occupations of the Ganjule are weaving, fishing and hippopotamus hunting. Cotton cloth woven by their men is the finest I found anywhere

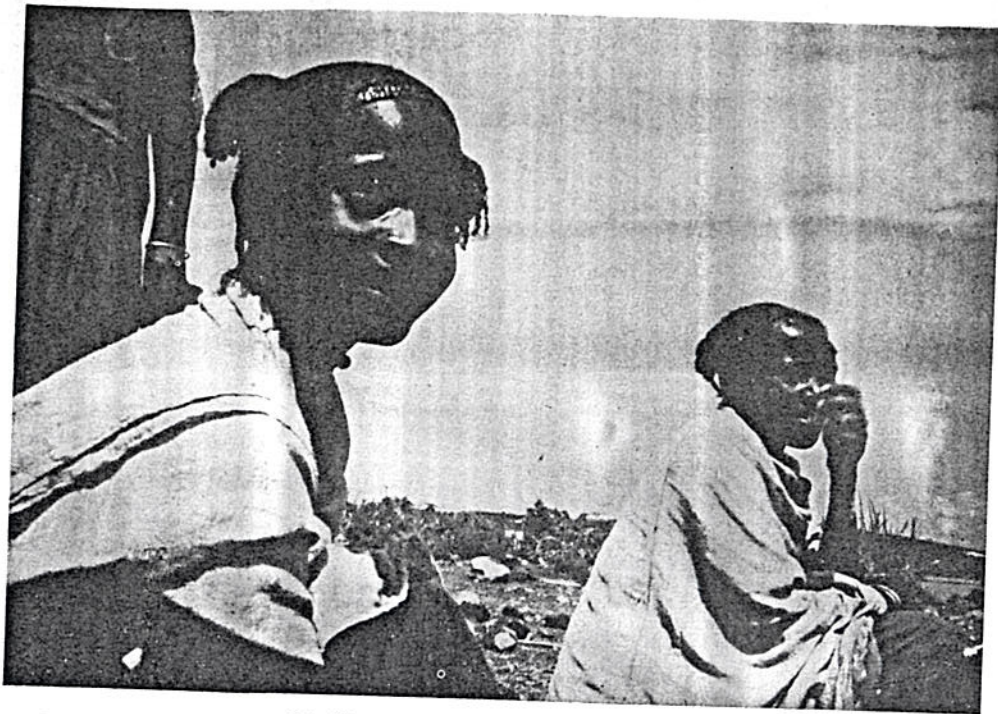
in Ethiopia. They eat fish, hippopotamus and corn. They also distill a potent clear liquor from fermented corn mash. When I asked the chief of the Ganjule about his people's religion, he said they belonged to Islam, but there were no signs of adherence to Islam and Muslim names are not used. In actuality, these people still seem to be pagan.

The Ganjule use high-prowed ambatch boats identical to those of Lake Abbaya. The boats, the tradition of hippopotamus hunting, the appearance of the people their similar language – all these things lead to the conclusion that the Ganjule of Lake Chamo and the Gatami of Lake Abbaya are the same people. There are three or four other peoples, all belonging to what has been called the Omoto group, who live in mountainous parts of Gamu Gofa. It seems possible that at some time in the past some of these peoples, under pressure from invaders, took refuge on islands while others retreated into remote mountain areas.

Like the islanders of Lake Zway, the people who live on the islands of Lake Abbaya and Lake Chamo are losing their cultural uniqueness and being assimilated into shore life. They have never been systematically studied. They represent an interesting opportunity for the anthropologist or ethnographer who wishes to record a unique cultural heritage before it disappears.

Primitive cultures on the islands of Ethiopia's more northerly lakes, whatever they once may have been, have entirely disappeared. The islands of Lake Tana and Lake Haik are repositories of Semitic Christian traditions from the time of the Middle Ages. Lake Haik is located in the province of Wollo about 25 miles north of the provincial capital, Dessie. It nestles among low mountains and is roughly oval in shape with a circumference of perhaps 15 miles. The landscape was undoubtedly heavily forested in ancient times, but like most of northern Ethiopia it has long since been cut over and cultivated. Except for small patches of brush and acacia forest, all the land around the lake is in fields and pastures and the dominant trees of the lakeshore are acacias, candelabra euphorbia and occasional sycamore fig. The waters of the lake are fresh and clear and rich in giant black catfish. The famous 16th century Portuguese traveller, Father Alvarez, described this fish as having "the ugliest head that could be described and formed like a large toad and the skin . . . looks like the skin of a dogfish. It is the most savory fish that could be found in the world." He also reported that the lake then had hippopotamus. They have long since disappeared. The shore is fringed with reedbeds but there is no papyrus. The boats used on Lake Haik are the crudest of any in use on Ethiopian lakes – mere bunches of reeds which are propelled with long poles.

Depending on the quantity of reeds used, they may accommodate three or four people but there is usually only enough buoyancy to support two, the boatman and his passenger, both of whom stand. These boats are used only close to shore or in the sheltered channel that leads to the lake's only island, Istifanos – the Island of St. Stephen – which lies close in along the northern shore of the lake. The island is the site of one of Ethiopia's oldest and most distinguished monasteries which was probably founded in the 12th century. One of the earliest and best preserved illustrated manuscripts of the Gospels, dating from the early 14th century, came to light here in the



Lake Abbaya. Gidicho girls at the weekly lakeside market.

Photo: Paul B. Henze

1950s and is now kept in the National Museum in Addis Ababa.

The Monastery of St. Stephen has always been forbidden to women. The only way to reach it is by the ago-old method – you stand on one of the reed-bundle boats and are poled along the 500-foot channel between the high reeds. My two long-haired teenage sons were carefully scrutinised by the boatman to be sure they were males before they were taken across when we visited the island in August 1972. The present church is new and its *egabet* – “treasure house” – where a good collection of manuscripts and paintings is kept, is also new. The island which is simply a low rounded hump of fertile volcanic soil, extends about one-third of a mile at its greatest length and is oval in shape. It is dotted with small round thatched monks’ houses clustered in groups of three to six with lush gardens in between. Graceful palms grow near the island’s shore and there are citrus trees among the gardens. Istifanos is a remarkably peaceful and pleasant place but history has now completely passed it by.

Haik is a jewel out of the past. Tana, a 100 times larger, is both past and present. A huge heart-shaped inland sea with dozens of islands, its immense expanses and rather low shores make it difficult to realise that it lies at 6,000 ft.

The level fluctuates two to four ft. in the course of the year as its waters accumulate and flow out over the natural lava dike at its south-eastern corner which marks the beginning of the great Blue Nile. Tana’s shores are lined with broad reed and papyrus beds. The lake has several kinds of fish and used to be rich in hippopotamus. These have been hunted almost to extinction in recent times by the Wayto, the lower-caste people who still live in several small villages along the lake-shore. The Wayto are the remnant of earlier inhabitants who were already in the region when the Agau and Amhara who have dominated the area in historical times arrived. There are no traces of their earlier occupation of the islands, which nevertheless seems probable. In their way of life the Wayto resemble the Watta of Lake Zway and the Gatami and Ganjule of the southern lakes. No one has ever studied the languages and cultural traditions of all of these peoples to determine whether they all derive ultimately from the same stock.

As on Zway, papyrus is used on Tana for boats. The Tana papyrus boat is different in certain details of construction from that of Zway. Like the Zway boats, the Tana boats have been made in exactly the same way as long as anyone can remember. Unlike the Zway boats which are propelled with a paddle, those of Tana are propelled with long poles. Even on the open lake, these

supply surprisingly effective propulsion but most boatmen avoid the open lake, because of the strong winds that come up during the afternoon most of the year, and stay in shallows close to the shore where their long poles can be pushed against the bottom. Lake Tana is comparatively shallow everywhere with no depth greater than 40 feet being recorded.

Like all Ethiopian lakes, Tana is volcanic in origin but vulcanism is much less recent here than it is in the Rift Valley. The islands and shores show the effects of weathering of rock, formation of deep soil and growth and decay of vegetation over long periods of time. The Tana islands are of several different types. Some are flat, such as Debra Maryam near the outflow of the Blue Nile at the south-eastern corner of the lake. Along the eastern shore there are many small rocky islands. Daga, located almost in the centre of the lake, is the highest of the Tana islands. It projects majestically from the lake like a small mountain. To the west of it is the largest of all the islands, a huge flat expanse of meadows and fields interspersed with clusters of houses and giant sycamore figs; it is called Dek.

Little is known about the earliest Christian penetration into this region. Large old churches in the mountains east of the lake, such as Bethlehem Maryam and Sendaba Yesus, were founded in the 13th or 14th centuries. The churches on the islands of Birgida, near the northern shore of the lake, and Kebran, in the southern bay, are reputed to have been built by the Ethiopian Emperor Amda Tseyon who ruled from 1314-44. The mummified body of an even earlier Ethiopian emperor, Yekuno Amlak (1270-1285) is kept, along with the bodies of several other emperors who ruled between the 14th and 17th centuries, in a building next to the church of St. Stephen atop the island of Daga. It is clear that the islands of this lake have had a special place in Ethiopian religious and political life for a long time. During the Muslim invasions of the 16th century, the Tana islands became a place of refuge for religious and lay leaders and many church treasures were brought to the islands for safekeeping. The practice continued during the Galla invasions of the next two centuries.

Most of the Tana islands came to be regarded as sacred ground, forbidden to women, as they still are. The monks and priests who served the churches came from many parts of Ethiopia. For long periods of time there was little connection between the religious life of the islands and the life on the shore, for monastic communities were largely self-sufficient. The Zeghie Peninsula, on the south-western shore of the lake, was an exception. Here large monastic communities existed among Amhara agricultural settlements whose main occupation was coffee-growing. Trade on the lake was dominated by Wayto who transported coffee, skins, grain and salt in their papyrus boats. This trade has never died and large numbers of papyrus boats still ply the lake. One of their main cargoes today is firewood for the inhabitants of Bahr Dar which is unloaded every afternoon on the rocky landing site below the church of Bahr Dar Giyorgis while a large colony of crested cranes looks down from their nests in tall trees in the churchyard.

Of the islands only Dek maintained a natural agricultural population. It is still thickly inhabited and cultivated. These people now regard themselves as Amhara but they may well include descendants of pre-

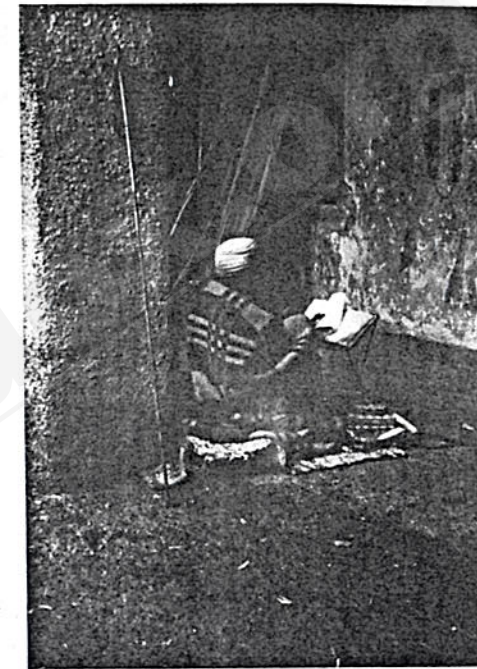


Photo: Paul B. Henze

Lake Tana. A monk reads scripture on the porch of the church of Gabriel on the island of Kebran. Note papyrus boat leaning against the wall behind him.

Amhara inhabitants. At least four churches still exist on Dek.

Early European visitors to Ethiopia seldom visited any of the Tana islands. It is astonishing to realise that the shores and islands of this lake were thoroughly explored only in the early 1930s by the intrepid British traveller, Major Cheesman. No anthropological research of consequence has yet been done on Lake Tana. In recent years attention has been concentrated on the old churches with their manuscripts, paintings and colourful, if often fanciful, traditions. King Menelik I, son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, is reputed to have brought the Ark of the Covenant to the island of Tana Cherqos on the eastern shore. The priests there show visitors where they claim to be several early Jewish relics and Frumentius, who brought Christianity to Ethiopia in the fourth century, is also supposed to have visited there. There is nothing mythical about the well preserved, illustrated manuscripts of the Gospels kept in the churches on the islands of Kebran and Debra Maryam. They are among the oldest in Ethiopia. Many of the churches have beautiful wall paintings and icons. The delicately painted Zara Yakob Madonna in the unusual

rectangular church on Daga dates from the mid-15th century. The small island of Narga, west of Dek, has one of the lake's newer churches in a setting of unusual charm. Two square towers, in neo-Portuguese style, guard the approaches to this church which is dedicated to the Trinity. It was built by the Empress Mentuab who lived in Gondar in the 18th century and was a great patron of the arts as well as a skilful political figure in her own right.

More than any other Ethiopian lake, Tana occupies a special position in the country's history, religious life and sentiment. As the source of the Blue Nile, it is a vast natural reservoir which ensures a minimal flow in the great river at all times of the year. The region around Lake Tana has immense agricultural and industrial potential which has only begun to be developed with the building of a modern power station at the Falls of the Blue Nile a few miles downstream from its outflow from the lake. A plan has also been developed for expansion of Bahr Dar as a model city with livelihood for two to 300,000 people by the end of the century. Meanwhile life on most of the Tana islands continues, unchanged from the pattern of earlier centuries except for the increasingly frequent visits of tourist boats which can be hired in Bahr Dar and Gorgora. As Ethiopia changes around them, the islands of Lake Tana are changing very little. It is just as well. They are a living museum of Ethiopian Christian culture.

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## Ethiopia in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: The Report of Ambassador Mikael and the Imaginary Description of John Campbell

by Richard Pankhurst



With the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1632-3 Ethiopia had become relatively isolated from the West, which was thus deprived of up-to-date information about the far-off African "Kingdom of Prester John".

The arrival of an Ethiopian envoy in Cairo in 1658 was therefore an event of considerable interest and importance. The ambassador, as was frequently the case with Ethiopian envoys in those days of difficult communication, was not a man of the country but a foreigner, usually a well-nigh professional traveller who happened to be moving around in the area for purposes of trade. The ambassador in question, who was on his way to the Ottoman Empire bringing presents from Emperor Fasiladas, including a zebra, an animal much prized, in those days, was called Mikael, and is said to have been a Roman Catholic Arab from Tripoli, in Syria. Fortunately for posterity he came in contact while in Egypt with the famous French traveller, Jean de Thévenot (1633-1667) who left an account of the Arab's visit and has something to tell us of the latter's report on the country in whose service he had come.

Thévenot's records first appeared in his great work the *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant*, which was published in Paris between 1664 and 1684, an English translation entitled *The Travels of Monsieur de Thévenot into the Levant* appearing a little later in 1687. Chapter LXVIII of Part I, a very brief chapter, gives us a useful account of Mikael, his embassy and the aforesaid zebra. Writing of the year 1658 our author (English edition, Part I, page 237) declares:

"The arrival of an Ambassador of Ethiopia at Caire, With the Presents he brought for the Grand Signior.

IN the month of October an Ambassador of Ethiopia came to Caire, with several Presents for the Grand Signior, and among others an Ass that had a most delicate Skin, if it was Natural, for I will not vouch for that, since I did not examine it.

This Ass had a black List down the Back, and the rest of its Body was all begirt with White and Tawny streaks, a finger broad a piece; the Head of it was extraordinarily long, striped and partly coloured as the rest of the Body: its Ears like a Bussles, were very wide at the end, and black, yellow and white; its Legs streaked just like the Body, not long ways, but round the Leg in fashion of a Garter down to the Foot, and all in so good proportion and Symmetry, that no Lynx could be more exactly

spotted, nor any Skin of a Tygre so pretty. The Ambassador had two more such Asses, which died by the way, but he brought their Skins with him, to be presented to the Grand Signior, with the live one. He had also several little black Slaves of Nubia, and other Countreys, confining on Ethiopia, Civet, and other costly things for his Present. These little Blacks, (as I said before) serve to look after the Women in the *Serraglio*, after that they are Gelded. The Ambassador was an Old Man, and had the end of his Nose, part of the upper and under Lip cut off, but was otherwise a shapely Man, and of a very good Presence: He was Cloathed after the Cophtish fashion, wearing a Turban like them, and spoke very good Italian, which gave me the opportunity of conversing with him: He told me his name was Michael, that he was a Native of Triply, in Syria, and that he had made three or four Voyages into Christendom; he even confessed to me, that he was a Roman Catholic, but that he durst not make profession of it in Ethiopia, but only of the Abyssin, that is to say, the Religion of the Cophtes. That eighteen months before, he had parted from Gontar, the Capital City of Ethiopia, and was so long retarded by the way, because of the contrary Winds he met with on the Red Sea, by which he came, That of an hundred Persons whom he had brought with him, of his own Servants and the Slaves, he was to present to the Grand Signior, thirty or forty were Dead. If he had come by Land, he had not been so long by the way; for from Gontar to Schouaquen, it is about six weeks Journey, and from Schouaquen to Caire forty or fifty days by Camels; but he could not take that way because of his Train. He told me many things relating to the Kingdom of Ethiopia, which I shall here give the Reader an account of."

In the following chapter, Chapter LXIX, Thévenot provides us with a succinct account of what Mikael had told him about Ethiopia and its history of the previous century or so. He also touched on the religion of the people and on the countries which paid taxes to the Emperor before entering on a relatively lengthy discussion on the manner in which the Ethiopians obtained musk from the civet cat. Reference is also made in this chapter to such varied questions as the status of women in Ethiopia, the detention for political reasons of the Ethiopian royal children on the mountain of Wahni, the various provinces of the realm and their divers climates, a royal library which the envoy claimed to



Monsieur de Thévenot.

Monsieur de Thévenot from an engraving in his seventeenth century Travels.

... years ago, *Greyu Mahomet*, King of *Zeila*, of which the Inhabitants are all *Moors*, invaded *Ethiopia* and forced the King to save himself on a Mountain, from whence he sent to demand assistance of the King of *Portugal*, who immediately sent it him; but hardly was he who commanded these Auxiliaries entered the Country, when he resolved to return back again, finding that they ate raw Flesh there: However his brother *Don Christopher* had more Courage, and would not return without doing some Exploit; he marched up into the Country with about three hundred Musqueteers, Fought, Vanquished, and killed the Moorish King, and then Re-established the lawful King of *Ethiopia*. For reward of which Service, the king of *Ethiopia*, gave Lands and Estates to all the *Portuguese* that stayed within his Dominions, and their Offspring are still in that Country. The Father of this present King was a good *Catholic*, but he dying some thirty odd years ago, the Queen his Wife, who was a great Enemy to the *Jesuits*, and no *Catholic*, and who suffered impatiently that they should govern (as they pleased) the late King her Husband, wrought upon her Son that succeeded him, to Persecute all the *Roman Catholics*, in such a manner that the *Jesuits* were obliged to make their Escape, and he put to Death all the *Capucins* whom he found. Since that time, three *Capucins* more were put to Death at *Schouaken*; for the King of *Ethiopia* knowing that they had a mind to come into his Kingdom, sent to the Governour of *Schouaken*, praying him to put to death those three Religious Franks. The Governour of *Schouaken* caused their Heads to be immediately struck off, and sent them to the King of *Ethiopia*, who as a reward, made him a Present of three Bags of Gold-Dust, promising him as many Bags of Gold-Dust, as he should send him Heads of Franks; and fifteen or sixteen years since, two others have been put to Death, in the Province of *Oinadaga*, whose names were *Fioravanti*, and *Father Francesco*. In short, this King is a declared Enemy of all Franks whom he accuses of being Hereticks, and of having conspired to put the Crown upon the Head of one of his Enemies; so that a Frank who would go into that Country must pass for an *Armenian* or *Cophte*; for the King and all his People are of the *Cophtish* Religion. They believe but one Nature in *Jesus Christ*: At the end of eight days they Circumcise, as the *Jews* do, and Baptise a Fortnight after. Before the *Jesuits* went thither, they Baptised none before they were thirty or forty years of Age. They say Mass as the *Cophtes* do, but their Church-Books are in the *Ethiopic* Language. Their Patriarch depends on the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, and when the Patriarch of the *Abyssins* dies, they send Deputies to *Alexandria*, to entreat the Patriarch to send them another; and he Convocating his Clergy, chuses out the fittest among them, whom he sends, but is never any more heard of in *Egypt*, till he be Dead. After all, the Ambassadors told us that most of the People of the Country are *Catholics* in their Heart.

There are four Kings that pay Tribute to the King of *Ethiopia*, to wite. The King of *Sennar*, who pays his Tribute in Horses. *Sennar* is a very hot Country. The King of *Naria*, who pays his Tribute in Gold. The King of *Bugia*, and King of *Dangala*. *Naria* is a good Country; and in that Country are the Mines out of which, they have the Gold that passes on the Coasts of

*Soffala* and *Guiney*. These Mines are not deep, as in many other Countries. From that Country also comes the *Civet*. I think it will not be amiss, here to say somewhat of *Civets*, which are so rare in our Country, as that they deserve to be taken notice of where one can find them. They are called *Civet-Cats*, come from *Naria*, (as I just now said) and are taken in Snares. The *Jews* in *Caire* keep many of them in their Houses, where for buying a few drachms of *Civet*, one may see them. It is a Beast almost as big as a good Dog; it hath a sharp Snout, small Eyes, little Ears, and mustachios like a Cat; the Skin of it is all spotted black and white, with some yellowish specks, and hath a long bushy Tail, almost like a Fox. It is a very wild Creature; and I believe the bite of it would put a body to no small pain. The *Jews* keep them in great square wooden Cages, where they feed them with raw Mutton and Beef, cut into small Pieces. When they would get from them that which is called *Civet*, (and is the Sweat of this Beast, that smells so sweet) they make him go back with a stick which they thrust in betwixt the Bars of the Cage and catch hold of his Tail; where they have that fast, they take hold also of his two hind Legs, pulling him half out of the Cage by the Door, which falls down upon his Back, and keeps him fast there, then another opens a certain Cod of Flesh that these Beasts have, which is shaped like a split Gyserne, and with an Iron-Spatula scrapes all the Sweat off of it within. The Males have that piece of Flesh betwixt their Stones and Yard, which is like a Cats. The Females have it betwixt their Fundament and Privities; and it is emptied of the Sweat but twice a Week, each Beast yielding about a drachm at a time, by what I could discern. When that Sweat or Excrement is taken out, it is of a whitish grey, but by little and little in some short space it turns to a very brown colour. It smells very sweet at a distance, but near hand it stinks and causes a Head-ach. There are as many kinds of *Civet-Sweat*, as there are of *Civet-Cats*, for it is more whitish, greyish, or yellowish, and dryer in some than in others, and yet they mingle all together. After all, it is in vain to think to have pure *Civet*, for the *Jews* falsifie it; and if a Man imagine it to be pure because he has seen it taken from the Beast, he is mistaken, for before People come to their Houses, they rub the inside of that piece of Flesh, with a little Oyl or some such stuff, that so the Sweat and it together may make more weight, but when no body is present, they take it out pure, and mingle it afterwards. To find out the truth of this, I went one day to the House of a Jew that kept *Civet Cats*, without giving him notice before, (for because I had bought a little of him, and promised to come again another time, he asked me as often as he saw me, what day I would come) and having desired him to get me some fresh *Civet*, he told me that it was not the day he used to take it out; and having returned without acquainting him before, upon one of the days when he said he was accustomed to gather it, he refused them also to do it, pretending business, which confirmed all that had been told me of that matter. In the mean time they hold these Beasts very dear for having asked that Jew and others also, how much they would have of me, for a *Civet Cat*, they all told me, an hundred *Chequins*. *Dangala*, is the Capital City of *Nubia*, the King of *Dangala*, is King of the *Barberins*, who are a kind of Blacks, of the Musulman Religion, that came in crouds

to *Caire* to get Services; they are somewhat silly, but very faithful, and serve for a small matter; for two *Maidins* a day, or a *Maidin* and their Diet; you may make them do whatsoever you please. They wear a blew-Shirt, plat all their Hair in Tresses, and then rub it over with a certain Oyl, to keep their Head from being Lousie. At *Caire* when they have any falling out, they go before the *Scheiks* of their own Nation, who make them Friends, and if they think it convenient, adjudge them to pay a Fne, with which they Feast and make merry together. They are great lovers of Crocodiles Flesh; and when any Frank has got one for the Skin, they come and beg the Flesh, which they dress with a pretty good Sawce. When these blades have scraped together ten or twelve *Piastres*, they return home again wealthy to their own Country, provided they escape being Robbed by the *Arabs* upon the way, who many times serve them so, therefore they commonly return in companies, as they came. The King of *Dangala* pays his Tribute to the King of *Ethiopia*, in Cloth. The Provinces of *Ethiopia*, are *Gouyan*, (where the King keeps a Vice-Roy,) *Beghandir*, *Dambia*, *Amara*, (which is a great Province full of Mountains and good Castles) *Diamond Tegré*, and *Barnegas*. Besides, there are several Provinces Governed by Princes, who are Vassals to the King of *Ethiopia*. In short, the Kingdom of *Ethiopia*, comprehends twenty four *Tambours* or Vice Roys. The Capital City is called *Gonthar*, and is in the Province of *Dambia*. *Ethiopia*, (as the Ambassadour told me) is as cold as *Aleppo* or *Damascus*, only the Countries near the *Red-Sea*, and the Country of *Sennar* are hot. The King of *Ethiopia* has above an hundred Wives, and keeps no Eunuchs to look after them, because they look upon it as a Sin to Geld a Man; so that the Women have the same liberty there as in Christendom. He is a King of very easie access, and the poorest have the freedom to come and speak to him when they please. He keeps all his Children on a Mountain, called *Ouohhni*, in the Province of *Oinadaga*, which is a Mountain two days Journey distant from *Gonthar*; there is a place like a Cistern on the top of the Mountain, into which they are let down every night, and taken up again in the day-time, and suffered to play and walk about. When the King dies, they chuse out one of the wittiest of them, and make him King, without any regard to Birth-right; and when he comes to have Children, he sends his Brothers Prisoners to some other place, and places his Children at *Ouohhni*. The place where the Kings are Buried, is called *Ayesus*, and is a kind of Grott; where the Aged are laid in one side, and the young in the other. Heretofore there was a Church there of the same name, in time of the *Jesuits*; and in the same place, there is an excellent Library, where are all sorts of Books in all kinds of Languages in great plenty, and may be seen by those who have the Curiosity. The Ambassadour assured me, that he had been in that Library, and I fancy it is the old Library of the Ancient *Ethiopians*. *Ethiopia* is a good and fertile Country, producing Wheat, Barley, &c. The greatest Deserts of it, are not above three or four days Journey over; and nevertheless, when the King makes any progress, he always lodges in Tents. The Houses of the great Lords, are like those of *Caire*, that is to say, very mean in respect of the Houses of Europe, and the rest are only of Mud. The Country affords men of all Trades,

have seen, and the diffusion of fire-arms. Mention is also made of the housing, food and dress of the 17th century Ethiopians and of the wide variety of languages they spoke. We read also of the Gallas, who were then advancing northwards, and of the Falashas or Ethiopian Jews before coming to the inevitable discussion on the sources of the Nile, a subject which had long exercised a deep fascination on the outside world. Thévenot's English edition (Part I, pages 238-41) serves:

*Ethiopia* or the Country of the *Abyssins*, called in Arabic *Abesch*, from whence comes the word *Abyssin*, a great Empire, being above seven months travel distant; on the East-side it is bordered by the *Red-Sea*, *Zanguebar*, on the South, with *Zeila*, *Avousa*, *Nubia*, and on the West by the Country of the *Negros*, and on the North with the Country of *ia* and *Bugia*; and because to come from *Ethiopia* into *pt*, one must cross *Nubia* down the *Nile*. About an

except Watch-makers. They have no Camels there, but Mules, Asses, Oxen and Horses. All the people of this Country eat raw Flesh, except the King, who has it dress'd, and drinks Wine of Grapes; the rest drink only Wine made of Millet or Sarasin wheat, but as strong as ours, and Brandy made of the same Grain. They are Cloathed after the fashion of the Franks, and wear Cloath, Velvet and other Stuffs imported to them by the Red-Sea. They have Harquebusses from the Turks, and of those People, there are not about three or four hundred, who serve in the Wars with Harquebusses. In Trading they make no use of Coined Money, as the Europeans do, but their money are pieces of fifteen or twenty *Pics* of Cloath, Gold, which they give by weight, and a kind of Salt, which they reduce into little square pieces like pieces of Soap, and these pass for Money. They cut out that Salt upon the side of the Red-Sea, five or six days Journey from *Dangala*, as you go from *Caire*, and the places where they make it, are called *Arho*. Among them is the Nation of the *Gaules*, whom in *Ethiopic* they call *Chava*, and are a Vagabond people in *Ethiopia*, as the *Arabs* are in *Egypt*; these *Gaules* are rich in Cattel, and are always at Wars with the *Ethiopiens*. They have no Harquebusses, nor other Fire-Arms but make use of Lances and Targets. After all, they speak so many different Languages in *Ethiopia*, that the Ambassador said to me, *If God hath made seventy two Languages, they are all spoken in Ethiopia*. I asked his Excellency if he knew any thing of the Source of the *Nile*, and this he told me concerning it. The head of *Nile* is a Well that springs out of the Ground in a large Plain, where many Trees grow; this Fountain is called, *Ouembromma*, and is in a Province called *Ago*. It makes that a very delightful place, casting up Water very High in several places: And this Ambassador of *Ethiopia* assured me, that he had been above twelve times with the King of *Ethiopia* to spend several days about that Fountain, which is twelve days, Journey from *Gonthar*, the Capital City of *Ethiopia*. This Spring sends its Water Northwards through a long tract of Land, which having passed seven Cataracts or Falls, hat are very high places, from which it falls plumb down, making a roaring noise at every one of these Cascades, and having run through all *Egypt*, it discharges itself into the Mediterranean Sea, by the two mouths of *Rossetto* and *Damiette*. Now the cause why *Nile* overflows so regularly in the Summer-time, is only because when they have Summer in *Egypt*, it is Winter in *Ethiopia*, where for three months time, the rain that continually falls running by Torrents into the main River, makes it to swell extraordinarily, and nevertheless, there are no Mountains near to that Spring head: for the Mountains that are nearest to it, are the *ws* Mountains, whereof I shall make some mention hereafter, and these are three Weeks Journey from it. is a Vulgar error then, that th's River has its Source from an unknown place; as also that those who live at the Cataracts of *Nile*, are deaf; and a greater still at some say, that the *Grand Signior* pays Tribute to the King of *Ethiopia* to let the *Nile* run in its usual Channel; it is not in his power to divert it. The Mountains of *E* Jews are but two in number, of which the one is called *Semain*; and the other, *Sallent*. They were heretofore Inhabited by Jews, who became powerful under the command of one called *Ghidhon*, which the King of

*Ethiopia* perceiving, marched out against them, reduced them to duty; and at length that they might attempt no Innovation for the future, he dispossessed them of the Mountains, and brought them down into a Plain Inhabited by Christians, whom he sent into their Mountains; on which there always lyes a great deal of Snow."

Thévenot's work made a notable impact in 17th century Europe where it ran into several editions which were published in Paris, London and Amsterdam. Excerpts or condensations of the book also found their way into other works. Mikael's report on Ethiopia was thus reproduced, without any acknowledgement to Thévenot, in John Ray's *A Collection of Curious Travels & Voyages* which appeared in London in 1693 (pages 175-82).

This latter work appended to Mikael's account a summary of what was then known about Ethiopia in Europe on the basis of the 16th century Portuguese traveller, Alvarez, the 17th century Jesuit, Tellez, and others. Ray's text (Chapter III, pages 183-6) reads as follows:

"More Observations of Ethiopia, by Father Lobo, Father Alvarez, Father Tellez, and others; extracted from their Portuguese Voyages.

"The Rains begin to fall in June, and continue July, August, and part of September, which make the Nile swell and overflow in those Months. Father Tellez says, the Mountains of *Habessinia* are much higher than our Alps and Pyrenean Hills; these render the Country more temperate and healthful, and make that torrid Climate tolerable to the European Bodies: There is plenty of good Spring and Herbage. In the midst of the Plains there rise up many steep Rocks of wonderful Figures and Shapes, on the tops whereof are Woods, Meadows, Fountains, Fish-ponds, and other conveniences of Life: The Natives get up to them by Ropes, and crane up their Cattel: These are like so many Fortresses, which defend the Natives against the sudden Incursions of barbarous Nations on all sides.

"This Kingdom abounds with Metals, but they neglect to work them, lest Turkish or other Invasions should follow, if such Baits were discover'd. Their Winter is from May to September, the Sun then passing and repassing perpendicular over their Heads. During this season, once every day it rains Torrents, and thunders most violently, which are accompanied sometimes with sudden and furious Hurricanes.

"The Jesuits residing in the Province of *Zambea* observ'd both the Poles, the Antarctick higher with his cross Stars: In this tract of Heaven there is as it were a Cloud or Blot full of little Stars, as our *Via Lactea*.

"The Animals of this vast Kingdom are, the *Hippopotamus*, or River-Horse, which makes great devastation in their Plantations, *Crocodiles*, *Rhinoceros*, *Elephants*, *Lyons*, *Tygers*, *Panthers*, *Camelopardalus*, *Gazels*, *Zembra's*, *Civet-Cats*; great varieties of *Monkeys*, *Apes*, and *Baboons*; *Ostriches*, *Cassowars*, *Turtles*, *Locusts* in prodigious numbers. The ordinary Trees are, the *Date*, *Coco*, *Tamarind*, *Cassia*, *Oranges*, *Musa*, or *Plantane*, *Cotton-Trees* with many others peculiar to the Climate and Region.

"In one year they will have three several crops of Rice, Millet, Tef-Seed, (their common Food ten times less than Mustard-Seed) of Wheat, and other European Grains, yet the Locusts often devour all, and bring on Famines.

"They make a Drink of Honey, burnt Rice, Water, and a Wood call'd *Sardo*. They have no Mills, but grind all their Grain with the Hand.

"Great Caravans pass up and down the Country, to and from the Sea-Ports, with Merchandise. In many places the Towns and Villages are extremely thick, and very populous.

"Snow sometimes lies on the high Mountains of *Ethiopia*, especially those called *Semain* and *Sallent*, or the Jews Hills. This part of *Africk* called *Habessinia*, is much the highest of the Quarter of the World, the great Rivers running East, North, and West, as *Hawas*, *Hanazo*, the *Nile*, *Niger*, or *Gambia*, the *Zaire*, &c. taking their rise in it.

"*Ludolfus* in his late learned Commentaries on his *Ethiopic* History, figures several Animals proper to these African Regions: as, 1. *Tigris eribculus minutis variegata*. 2. *Tigris maculis virgatis*. 3. *Pardus maculis seu seutulis varius*.

"The *Habesine* Ports towards the Red-Sea are very ill guarded, therefore the Turks are in possession of *Arkiko* and *Matzua*. The *Habessines* are not addicted to Navigation, they Trade only with the *Arabians*, and carry their Goods to *Suaquena*, *Arkiko*, and *Matzua*: The *Armenians* often get entrance into the Country, where they are very well received.

"The *Arabians* come in their Barks cross the Red-Sea, from *Mocha*, *Aden*, *Ziden*, *Cameron*, and other Ports: Few of the *Habessines* pass over into *Arabia*, and when they do, they dissembles their Religion, and disguise themselves in the Habits of Musulmans. This comes from *Hubert Klock*, in his Letters to the Dutch East-India-Company, Anno 1685.

"Father *Hieronimo Lobo* observ'd the Red-Sea to be navigable only in the middle, in which are some small Islands and Rocks above Water, of little danger in clear weather: The two Shoars of *Arabia* and *Ethiopia* are of very bad passage, full of Shoals, Rocks, and Corals. The entrance of this Sea is the clearest and deepest on the side of *Arabia*, and is the ordinary passage for Ships of burthen, the other part of the mouth towards *Ethiopia* is full of Flats and Shoals, so that none ventures through but little Vessels: The Pearl-fishing is near the Island of *Deleca*. On several parts of this Sea we observ'd abundance of reddish Spots made by a Weed resembling *Cargaco* (or *Sargasso*) rooted in the bottom, and floating in some places. Upon strict examination it proved to be that which we found the *Ethiopiens* call *Sufo*, us'd up and down for dyeing their Stuffs and Cloths of a red colour, (perhaps this may be one of the *Roccella's* in *Imperati*, a *fucus* or *Alga tinctoria*.)"

Europe's knowledge of Ethiopia, as illustrated by the above passage, had by now been greatly enhanced by the careful researches of the German scholar, Hiob Ludolf (1624-1704). The Latin text of the latter's great history, the *Historia Aethiopia*, had been published in Frankfurt in 1681, and English and French versions, *A New History of Ethiopia* and *Nouvelle Histoire d'Abbyssinie, ou d'Ethiopia* in London and Paris in 1682 and 1684 respectively.

The German's lengthy study, which was soon complemented by a series of appendices, largely superseded the Ethiopian interest of Thévenot's work, which it nevertheless cited in referring to "Michael, the Habessinian,

Embassadour to the Emperour of the Turks" (English edition, page 396).

European interest in Ethiopia received a new impetus in the early 18th century with the publication of the memoirs of the French physician, Charles Jacques Poncet (died 1706), an English account of whose travels to Gondar, *A Voyage to Aethiopia*, appeared in London in 1709.

A generation or so later the British poet and author Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) while still a young man translated Le Grand's French version of the Jesuit Jeronymo Lobo's travels into English, with the title *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (London, 1735).

Narratives of such travels to distant lands were at this time read in Britain with great avidity, with the result that one of Johnson's friends and contemporaries, a young lawyer called John Campbell (1708-1775), decided to try his hand at a purely imaginary travel book which was to carry his readers to visit the East in their mind's eye. Campbell himself was no traveller, for as A. Kippis observes in his *Biographia Britannica* (London, 1784, Volume III, page 214):

"So wholly did he dedicate his time to books, that he seldom went abroad: but to relieve himself, as much as possible, from the inconveniences incident to a sedentary life, it was his custom when the weather would admit, to walk in his garden; or otherwise, in some room of his house by way of exercise."

Though he never himself visited Ethiopia Campbell seems to have familiarised himself with the principal 17th century accounts of the country as well as other parts of the East and therefore presents a by no means improbable account of conditions in those parts of the world.

Modelling himself on real travellers such as Thévenot, and adopting the guise of a certain Edward Brown, he produced a book entitled *The Travels and Adventures of Edward Brown, Esq.; . . . Containing his observations on France and Italy; his voyage to the Levant; his account of the Isle of Malta; his remarks in his journey thro' the lower and upper Egypt; together with a brief description of the Abyssinian empire*. The first edition of this work issued from the printers in London in 1739, and a second edition, in two volumes, in 1753.

Campbell's imaginary *Travels and Adventures* takes us in due course to Suez where, we are told, the son of a certain Isouf Aga was ill, or as "Edward Brown" is made to say, the boy's "Head was much out of Order at the full and Change of the Moon." The good traveller promptly cures the young man - by administering him a dose of snuff. Campbell, who was doubtless aware of the visit to Ethiopia of the French physician, Charles Poncet, claims that his hero was rewarded with the gift of some manuscripts written by a French surgeon long resident in that country. Brown (1739 edition, page 259) is thus made to report:

"In return the *Aga* made me a Present of several Curiosities, and of a quantity of Papers which had belonged to a *Frank* who had died at his House. He could not tell of what Nation he was, tho' by his Papers it should seem he was a *Frenchman*, by Profession he was a *Surgeon*, and had lived in Ethiopia upwards of 25 Years, from whence with some Difficulty he escaped to Suez in the hopes without question, that from thence he

might find a Way of returning to Europe."

Brown, we are assured, was deeply interested in the Frenchman's documents, for as he says (page 265):

"To divert the Time as well as I could I began to look over the Papers of the French Surgeon, which had been given me by *Isouf Aga*. Amongst them I found an exact and concise Description of the Empire of Abyssinia, concerning which I had assiduously enquired at *Cairo*, but was able to learn no more News concerning it than if I had been at *Geneva* or *London*, except that the Riches of this extensive Empire were brought into *Egypt* by the *Nubian Caravans*. In reading this Discourse, I collected a small Paper of Queries, upon which I interrogated *Melec*, the *Abyssine* Slave who attended me; his Answers served as a kind of Annotations to the Account afore-mention'd, and set me perfectly at rest as to many Points which 'till then I had thought utterly unintelligible, *European* Authors being extremely confused in all they deliver concerning this Empire and its Inhabitants."

"Brown" then proceeds to cite the supposed Frenchman's report on Ethiopia, which is fairly extensive, and reads as follows (pages 283-305):

"A Relation of the Present State of ETHIOPIA. By a French Surgeon.

"It was not Choice, flowing from an avaricious Desire of possessing Part of those immense Riches which the *Portuguese* every where give out to abound in *Ethiopia*, that drew me thither. I had the Misfortune to be taken by a Crew of Pirates in the *West-Indies*, Part of whom, after having for seven Years committed incredible Ravages in those Parts, sailed for the *Red-Sea*, at the Persuasion of a Person who had been Servant to the Governor of *Barbadoes*, and had heard it frequently said at his Master's Table, that Privateers in those Seas might easily possess themselves of immense Wealth, an Argument of all others most prevalent with this kind of People.

"They were very lucky on their first coming on the Coasts of *Arabia*, but they had not taken many Prizes before they were alarmed with a Story of an *Arabian* King's fitting out a great Fleet, on purpose to take them. This induced the Captain of our Ship, for there were three in all, to stand over to the *Ethiopian* Shore, where he put into the Port of *Arkiko*, and sent me, with three Men in the Boat, to desire Leave of the Governor to trade with the People.

"We were no sooner on shore than we were sent to Prison, and the Captain, the next Day, fairly sailed away without us, a Thing I did not at that Time much gret, being heartily weary of living among such a ticked Race of People. I regretted it the less, because was immediately set at Liberty, and left to do with myself what I thought fit. The three Men who came on shore with me engaged themselves in the *Turkish* Service Mariners, and I suffered myself to be persuaded by a *Jewish* Merchants to go with them into *Ethiopia*, a Promise that they would carry me the next Year into *Ypt*, with a Caravan; in which they deceived me, and contented therewith, treated me very harshly, forcing to exercise my Profession as a Surgeon, and taking themselves whatever Presents the People sent.

After this Manner they dragg'd me quite cross the pire of *Ethiopia*, from the *Red-Sea* to the Sea of *neba*, which is no other than a very great Lake,

through which the *Nile* passes, and lies in the West Part of *Ethiopia*. Here I got released, and was kindly entertained by many of the People who had been formerly converted by the *Portuguese* Fathers, and do still retain a great Veneration for them, and on their Account for Catholics. I then traversed this great Lake, and turning next to the South, entered the Kingdom of *Gojam*, where in two Days Journey I passed from the River *Nile*, where it was large and rapid, and had run at least three hundred Miles, to its Source, the River forming the Figure of an *Italic O*, the Top of which is open, and represents the near Approach of the winding Body of the River to its Fountains after so long a Course, whereby the Kingdom of *Gojam* is made a perfect Peninsula, the Isthmus contained between the two Branches of the *Nile* being not above 20 Miles broad.

"I resided near 20 Years at *Azazo*, the Capital of this Kingdom, 'till being seized with a strong Passion of returning into *Europe*, I travelled first due East, to the famous Fortress of *Ambasel*, and then directly North to *Axuma*, which is generally esteemed the Capital of *Ethiopia*, from whence, after three Years Stay, I found Means to get to *Suez*, where I wrote this Account, having traversed the greatest Part of that Country, which makes such a Noise in *Europe*, and which is really the most different in the World, from what it hath been represented.

"This Country is by some call'd the *Higher Ethiopia*, but I think more commonly *Abyssinia*, which Word is derived from the Name given to their own Country in their own Language, by the Inhabitants of this Empire, viz. *Habesh*; but whence that is derived, or what it signifies, I know not; and perhaps some who affect to deal in Etymologies, know as little as I. As to the Extent of this Empire, it was formerly much greater than it now is, and at present its Bounds are not easily settled; however, I think that in length, from South to North, it may be near five hundred Miles in Extent; and from the *Red-Sea* to the *Nile*, it may be about two hundred. As it lies from 8 to 17 Degrees of North Latitude, it is plainly in the Torrid Zone, which to me is a Demonstration that the Moderns are not much more exact than the Antients in their Sentiments as to the Effects of the Nearness or Distance of the Sun, since it is certain that *Ethiopia* is not so hot as *Spain*, but of such a Temperature as in the warmest Provinces of the Kingdom I mention the People feel in Spring; on the Coast, indeed, it is excessive hot in the Summer Months, which are the same as with us in *Europe*; but in the inland Parts Summer and Winter are reversed, that is to say, the Winter commences in the Middle of *June*, and lasts to the Middle of *September*; and the Summer commences in *December* and ends in *March*. I am well informed, that on the other Side of the *Red-Sea*, the Tables are turned again, the Winter on the Coast lasts from *June* to *September*; and in the inland Parts of *Arabia*, from *November* to *February*.

"The rainy Seasons are indeed equally terrible and troublesome; for every Day, to a Stranger, appears the last in which this World is to subsist, and yet from three o'Clock in the Afternoon, to Seven, includes the whole of this amazing Scene; by that Time all is over, and the next Morning breaks with a Serenity the most pleasing that can be imagined; about Noon the Clouds gather, and at Three Thunder, Lighting, and Rain, spread a

Terror and Confusion not to be described. I have often thought from this, and from a hundred other Circumstances, that *Abyssinia* might be stiled the Land of Contraditions. At first Sight this Expression will appear only a Flight of Thought, but it is in Truth a very weighty Observation, since it reconciles at once the opposite Accounts we have from different Authors.

"As to the Fertility of this Country, who would not be led to admire it when he is told that there are always two, and sometimes three Harvests, and yet there is no Place on the Globe the Inhabitants of which are so often plagued with Famine. This arises from various Causes. First, there are but here and there Spots of arable Land, and these are not very fertile. Secondly, the Locusts often come and destroy every green Thing with a Fury scarce to be conceived. Thirdly, the Emperor's Soldiers live every where as free Quarters, and those who are spread Want and Penury wherever they come. Fourthly, the Lightnings frequently destroy their Stores; and lastly, the *Gallas*, and other barbarous People, harrass the Frontier Provinces continually.

"The Fruits of this Country are very excellent, and might be had in great Plenty if their Constitution encouraged the People to cultivate them; which it is so far from doing, that one can scarce conceive how they are able at all to subsist themselves and their Families. As to all Sorts of Herbs and Flowers that are to be found in the *Indies*, they are found here; and besides, there are also some Vulneraries which I believe are peculiar to this Soil. It would require much Time, and more Knowledge than I am Master of, to describe all the Curiosities in this Country; which I am the less capable of doing, because I had not any Conveniency of making *Memo-randums* on the Spot; so that I write entirely from Memory, with this Caution, however, that I insert nothing but what I certainly remember. In the Number of these Things I reckon these three. First, the Grain call'd *Teff*, the great Bread Corn of this Country, very nutritive and pleasant, and yet ten Grains of it are not larger, taken together, than a Grain of Millet. The *Hansut* Tree, somewhat like a *Palmetto*, its Rind smooth, its Leaves beautifully green, and very thick. This Tree produces nothing, and yet is the most useful and desirable in the Country. Its Leaves, when dry, rub into a pleasant wholesome Meal; the Tree itself, cut down, sliced into convenient Pieces, and boiled in Milk, tastes exactly like a Millet Pudding; and from its Root there starts out numberless young Sprigs, which quickly grow to a considerable Size. The third Curiosity is the Herb *Azazo*, the most noble Alexipharmic in the Universe; the very Smell of it is said to benumm the most dangerous Sort of Vipers. A little of the Powder taken inwardly, never fails to cure their Bites; and it is certain that those who have lately taken it pass boldly through Places infested by Serpents, without Fear of being bitten, the Effluvia from their Bodies making those Creatures sick. Oranges, Lemons, Figs and Sugar-Canes, are found in various Provinces of *Abyssinia*.

"Gold, I believe there is none in the whole Empire, notwithstanding what so many have boldly asserted; what they have comes to them from the West; but as for Iron and Lead, they have both in Plenty. On the Coasts of the *Red-Sea* they have a Sort of *Sal gemma*, or Rock Salt, which they cut out into Pieces like Bricks, and these are the current Money, or rather Measure of

Exchange throughout the Empire, but with great Variation in their Value, for on the Sea Coast sixty of them are equal to a Sequin, whereas in other Parts a Sequin will fetch but five, nay, but three. Mountains are very frequent, and in some Places there are Rocks shoot up like Pillars, which serve for Fortresses, and are impregnable in their Nature; these are stiled *Amba's*. There are also Chains of Mountains running this Way and that, affording very narrow Passages from one Province to another, and lying in some Places so as to oblige the Travellers to pass over them, which cannot be performed but with great Trouble and Danger. Besides the *Nile*, of which I shall speak afterwards, there are many very considerable Rivers in *Abyssinia*, some of which as the *Maleg* fall into the *Nile*. Others, as the *Lebea*, after a long Course, roll into the Sea. And a third Sort again, as the *Hahohax*, little inferior to the *Nile*, after watering for many hundred Miles a barren Country, roll at last into more barren Sands, and are there drunk up and lost.

"The Animals in *Ethiopia* are of all Sorts, as well such as are found in *Europe* as in *Asia* and *Africk*, but they have especially Plenty of three Kinds. First of excellent Horses. Secondly, of beautiful and serviceable Mules. Thirdly, a prodigious Quantity of Black Cattle, in which the chief Riches of the People consist. As to wild Beasts, there are too many of them; for I think there is scarce any Species of which this Country hath not its Share. Elephants there are in vast Numbers, so that one sometimes meets a hundred of them in a Herd on the Road; yet have they no Notion of taming them or of making any other Use of them than that of selling their Teeth. They have likewise Lions of various Kinds, some very strong and high mettled, not less than nine, though some say twelve, Feet in Length: They are very terrible to the Sight; nor is it to be conceived with what Fright all Animals fly at the first hearing of their Roar. There is likewise in this Country the *Giraff*, an Animal capable of striking with Wonder the most incurious Spectator. It most of all resembles a Camel in its Form, but vastly exceeds it in Size, since it is bigger than an Elephant, but its Limbs are very slender, and it makes a very odd Figure.

"The Birds of *Ethiopia* are very numerous; and besides those common to *Europe*, and the *Indies*, there are many peculiar to this Country, which I think needless to describe; I shall therefore content myself with observing, that their Ducks are larger, fatter, and better tasted than those in *Europe*; their Partridges as high tasted as ours, and of the Size of Capons. River Fish they have, but not in very great abundance; neither have I seen any that merit a particular Description. I come now to speak of the People.

"The Inhabitants of *Abyssinia* are composed of Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans; of these I think the two last make a Third. The *Abyssines* themselves are Christians; the Men and Women are generally well made, middle-siz'd People, of a beautiful Tawney, with long curled Hair, of which they are very careful. They are without all question, in their own Natures, the most harmless, docile People in the World, pious to Excess, and charitable to a Fault, whatever our Missionaries may think fit to say. As to their Religion, it is indeed a very odd Mixture, the *Jews*, *Pagans*, *Mohammedans*, *Christians*, all circumsise, either from a Principle of Religion,



or to avoid Reproach. It is certain, that before the *Abyssines* were converted to Christianity, they were *Jews*; and it is as certain that they still retain a Mixture of *Judiasm* in their Religious Customs. As to their heretical Notions, they are chiefly such as flow from the *Eutychnian* Heresy. Our Missionaries magnify them excessively, and yet they are more solicitous to introduce Submission to the *Papal See*, than to set them right in any other Point; and yet a Man of any ordinary Understanding cannot fail, on a short Acquaintance with these People, to discover that this is the last Point to be touched upon, as Experience hath shewn; that continually insisting upon it, hitherto hath kept the Catholick Religion out of *Ethiopia*, and has even made it odious there, insomuch that the Bulk of the People would rather embrace *Mohammedism*.

"The *Abyssines* worship God with great Devotion; and there are amongst them such a Multitude of Churches, that one is always within Sight of another; and there are frequently several within Sight of each other. The Clergy are meek innocent People; and all the Monks labour with their Hands for their Subsistence. They fast very rigorously, tasting neither Meat nor Drink 'till Evening; and they give to those that ask them whatever they ask; and therefore it is no Wonder that *Ethiopia* is overburden'd with Beggars. In Marriage only their Morals are irregular, inasmuch as they retain the *Jewish* Custom of divorcing upon the slightest Occasions, the Man and Woman marrying again where they please. On this Head it is very remarkable that a Husband frequently pardons Adultery, but if his Wife scolds he divorces her without Mercy. The Missionaries, while they were in this Country, took a great deal of Pains to rectify this Abuse; and it must be acknowledg'd, to the Honour of the *Portuguese* Fathers, that as many of them died Martyrs, and as all of them lived Confessors, so they maintain'd an Apostolick Purity in their Conduct, and have, since their Deaths, been revered as Saints, notwithstanding the Aversion the People have for the Catholick Religion, founded solely on the Apprehensions they have of the Pope's Supremacy, which they call a bare-faced Usurpation, inconsistent with their ecclesiastical and civil Rights.

"As to the Government of *Ethiopia*, it is as every Thing in this Country is, full of Contradictions. The Emperor stiles himself *King of Kings*, boasts sometimes of numberless Provinces under his Subjection, asserts his sole Property in the Soil of *Abyssinia*, which is acknowledged by his Subjects, who are all Tenants at Will, and are frequently dispossessed. As there is no Money in his Dominions, he takes his Revenue in Kind, the tenth Cow every third Year, the tenth Piece of Cloth from every Weaver, and so in other Things. Yet this Monarch is very far from being absolute, for the great Men frequently prescribe Laws to him, and the Loyalty of his Subjects hangs very loose about them; so that tho' they acknowledge their Emperor for a despotic Prince, yet it is with this Salvo, that when he does not please them, he shall be no longer their Emperor. After this Account, I need scarce add that the People are very poor and miserable, since it is plain a Civil War makes all People so; and ten Years is a long Truce in *Ethiopia*, where in Time of Peace the Nation are most abject Slaves. When the Emperor bestows a Government, a Herald proclaims at the Door of the Tent; *His Imperial Majesty hath*

*been pleased to make such a one his Slave, Ruler over such a Province.* And he does the same Thing when he takes a Lady to his Wife. The Phrase then is; *His Majesty hath made such a one his Slave Empress.* In the *Abyssinian* Language a King is call'd *Negus*. Their Monarch they stile *Negus Negasta*, which is as much as to say, *King of Kings*. Formerly the *Abyssinian* Monarchs made use of two Ministers to transact all publick Affairs, being themselves scarce ever seen by their Subjects. These Ministers were stiled *Betudets*, and were in fact *Mayors* of the *Palace*, or in other Words, *Kings*, while the Emperor, with all his Titles, was but a Cypher; but within these hundred Years the Emperors have condescended to be Men, and, in consequence thereof, have resumed their Authority. The Prime Minister, when there is one, is stiled *Raz*, and his Office is much the same with that of the *Vizir Azem* at the *Porte*. I have read in some *Portuguese* Voyages, that the *Ethiopian* Monarchs live very meanly. This I can disprove, tho' I never saw the Emperor, because his chief Lords are very richly dressed in Velvet Jackets, and Surtouts of Brocade: But I shall readily agree that they are the only well-cloath'd People in the Empire. The Governor of a Province is stiled *Xumo*, or rather *Chumo*, for so they pronounce it. And they have abundance of other Officers in the Nature of Intendants and Lieutenants for the King.

"There are abundance of Princes dependent on the *Abyssinian* Empire, who, as far as outward Marks of Respect will go, confess this Dependence, and perhaps send considerable Presents; but as for Obedience, that's not to be expected, unless some *Abyssinian* Monarch should arise on an enterprizing, and at the same time of a regular Genius, who after new modelling his own Empire, should turn his Arms upon his Neighbours; for in this Case he would undoubtedly restore the ancient Glory of the *Abyssinian* Name, since these People are naturally good Soldiers, brave, obedient, patient of Fatigue, and very capable of Discipline, if they had Officers who knew how to instruct them; their Horse are naturally very good, and might be managed so as to become the very best in the World, as they have the Speed of the *Arabian* Coursers, and the Strenth and Fierceness of our Horses in *Europe*. As it is the first Shock determines a Battle, and tho' personally the *Abyssines* have as much Valour as any People in the World, yet in pitched Battles they are easily defeated; for if their General be kill'd, if Artillery be brought to play upon them, if they are attack'd in Flank, a Pannick presently takes them, and they run all away; nor is it possible to bring them together again by Promises or Threats. The Emperor moves about with a flying Army, under the Name of Guards, and seldom, if ever, resides any where but in a Camp, which is the Reason that there are no great Towns, much less Cities, in *Ethiopia*, but Villages are thick; in some Places they almost touch each other; so that the whole Country is a straggling Hamlet.

"Their Houses are no better than Cabbins, and their Furniture a low Table, a few Mats, and a Hide to sleep on. As for Plates and Dishes, none but Persons of Distinction have any, and they are a kind of black earthen Ware. The ordinary People make a Sort of broad thin Cakes, which they bake in such a Manner as to leave them very tough; these they lay upon the Table, clap their Meat upon them, also use them to wipe their

Fingers, after which their Slaves, or their Women, eat them; and in every other Respect they are alike nice, that is, not at all so. The grand Dainty in *Abyssinia* is raw Beef, of which they lay a whole Quarter upon the Table hot, as it is cut from the Creature, with a Bladder or earthen Cup full of the Gall; this they mix with Pepper and Salt, and dipping the Flesh into it, eat it with all the Greediness of *Tartars*. They likewise make a kind of Mustard by mixing with Salt and Pepper the Chile which they find in the Stomach of the Beast when it is kill'd; and this they properly enough stile a Rarity, because a Quantity of Paper, sufficient to make it, is seldom to be had. Though it may be concluded from this Account, that the *Abyssines* live but indifferently, yet it must not be imagined that Strangers are in Danger of wanting amongst them; on the contrary, they are better provided for here than perhaps in any other Country in the World, as well in Right of the Laws, as from the charitable Disposition of the People. As soon as a Traveller comes to any Village, he looks about for the best and most convenient Hut or House therein, into which he instantly enters, and is there as much at his Ease as if it were his Brother's. The Master presently sends to his Neighbours to inform them that he has a Guest, whereupon they bring him whatever may contribute to the Stranger's Refreshment, and are sure to satisfy all his Demands, because, if he should complain, the Governor of the Province would mulct them in twice as much: However, there is rarely any Instance of Complaints of this Sort, the *Abyssines* having a natural Generosity, especially towards Passengers.

"I have said that this is a Country of Contradictions, and so it is in the Character of its Inhabitants. They are naturally honest, beneficent, and inclined to live peaceably, yet are they involved in continual Wars, either against their Neighbours, or amongst themselves; Treason and Rebellion being as natural to that Country as Rain or Sun-shine, and almost as frequent. For this, two Reasons may be assigned. First, the Corruption of their Grandees, which is as excessive as in *Europe*; all the Grandees being quite another Race of People, void of that Probity, Humanity, and peaceable Disposition visible in the rest of the Nation. To be sure it is not the Air of the Court, or their seeing the Emperor daily, that so strangely changes these People. I believe rather it is the Nature of the Life they lead; for being as they are called from all Attention to their private Affairs, in order to take Care of those of the Publick, they set no Bounds either to their Desires, or to their Expences, at the same Time that they expect the Publick should pay for all. Their Hopes and Fears also being much stronger, and more powerful than those of meaner Men. They engage in Frauds, Conspiracies, or Rebellions, to gratify these, or to secure themselves from those. Hence the Corruption of the Great is here as well as elsewhere, the prime Cause of Disorder in the State. But Secondly, these Grandees, by the Constitution of the *Abyssinian* Monarchy are possessed of too great an Authority, and also of too great an Influence over those they govern. Hence it comes to pass, that a discontented Governor hath it frequently in his Power to engage the People in Support of his private Interests, by specious Pretences of Zeal for the *Publick Service*. The Clergy also, who are about the Court, loose that Sanctity of Heart, and Purity of Manners, which is the Ornament of their Order, and

acquiring in their stead a spiritual Pride, and a boundless Lust of Power. They use their Characters, because sacred, to cover those Crimes which are too black for publick View; whence it happens, that the *Abuna* or Patriarch of *Ethiopia* is often at the Head of a Conspiracy, and has sometimes drawn together 50 or 60,000 *Monks* to abet his personal Quarrel, under Colour of supporting the *Abyssinian* Religion. Thus between the Priests, who name every Scuffle for their private Views a Contention *pro Aris*, and the Governors, who when they are in Danger of being removed, fright the People into a Rebellion *pro Focis*, the honestest Folks in the World yearly cut one anothers Throats for the Gratification of those who deserve to have their own cut according to Law.

"I have been led to these Observations from the Remembrance of one and twenty Rebellions in fifteen Years, not one of which was occasioned by any ill Conduct of their Princes, but merely through the Villainy of the Grandees, and the Ignorance of the common People. This Account explains a Maxim in the *Abyssinian* Polity, which can be explained no other Way, I mean that scupulous Obstinacy with which they persist in shutting all Strangers out of the Empire. The Grandees know from Reason, and from Experience of former Times, when the *Portuguese* had footing in this Country, that the *Abyssinian* Emperors would emancipate themselves from that Bondage in which they hold them, if they could have the Assistance of any Foreign Prince, only so far as to secure their Persons, which by Reason of the Artifices of their great Officers and their Clergy, are never in Safety while guarded by their own Subjects. This Maxim, either by false colouring, the great ones deceive their Sovereigns into a good Opinion of, or else they adhere to it in spite of his Commands, which is easily done in a Country where they have made it the first Article of their political Creed with the People, in Virtue of that inveterate Desire which the Missionaries professed, of subjecting the *Abyssines* to the *Pope*, a Thing they feared the more, the less they understood it. They might if they pleased at present, spare a great part of this Trouble, since I am persuaded, that no *European* who enters *Abyssinia* will be very desirous of staying there, or of sending his Countrymen thither, since it is a Place where there is very little to be got. The richest Emperors seldom possess half a Million of Livres, and notwithstanding all that is positively affirmed by our Authors, I am very confident there is no Gold in *Abyssinia*; all that the Emperor receives coming from Regions lying to the South or South West, farther into the Heart of *Africa*. I know that the *Abyssines* themselves do sometimes pretend, that there are very rich Mines of Gold in their Country, but that they conceal them for fear of the *Turks*; yet I am persuaded this is false; for if there were Gold Mines in their Hills, there would be Gold Dust in their Rivers, their tempestuous Autumns especially considered, and yet there is not; Iron and Lead indeed they have, but not in the Plenty that some have reported. Again, if there had been Gold Mines in *Ethiopia*, their ancient Emperors would have been rich; and as the *Abyssines* are naturally vain, they would surely have left us some Marks of the Magnificence; whereas there is neither City nor Palace in all *Abyssinia*. I do indeed believe, that a Thousand Years ago there might have been Cities and Palaces both; but then the Emperors had not

only those Countries I spoke of under their Dominion, but a great Part of *Arabia* also, of which they were dispossessed a little before the Birth of *Mohammed*, as their Historians say. This therefore proves nothing as to the Gold of *Abyssinia*, and as to the *Asiatic Ethiopia*, or of the *interior Ethiopia in Africk*, I believe that it abounds in both Countries, and to them therefore the *Europeans* must go who would fetch it, and not into *Abyssinia*.

"As our Writers generally deceive us, in respect to the Riches of this Country, so they deceive us not less in what they say of the Poverty of its Inhabitants taking that Word in a moral Sense; for the *Abyssines* are so far from being stupid or indocile, that they are in Truth a very quick witted and tractable People, excepting only in some Points which concern their Civil and Religious Rites, where in they conceive it to be the Interest of all Strangers to mislead them. As to Learning, without question there is not much of it in *Abyssinia*, yet are its Inhabitants not absolutely deficient in this Point. They have a good Version of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their own Tongue; a large Collection of the Works of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, in which it is said there are none of the Errors of the *Eutychians*, or *Nestorians*; a Modern Body of Divinity, which is full of them; several Volumes of the Lives of the Saints; many Treaties on Monastic Life; several Histories of *Ethiopia*, of which I saw two, one that might have made ten Volumes in Folio, the other about half as big. The *Psalter of David* is the Book most common amongst them, and many of their *Monks* can repeat forty, fifty, nay a hundred *Psalms*. Their Books of History are written in a flowery figurative Style, which however is far from being inelegant or unentertaining. On the contrary, *David Gomez*, who was a kind of Engineer in the Kingdom of *Dambee*, shewed me the beginning of a History which he had translated into *Portuguez*, which would have been read with great Applause in *Europe*; where if the *Ethiopian* Writings are disliked and disesteemed, it is because they are not properly translated; for the figurative Language of one Country ought not to be rendered into the literal, but into the figurative Language of another Country and read with a proper Allowance for the Genius of the People from whose Tongue the Version is made. It is very true, that the *Monks* for the Generality are very unlearned; but it is also true, that they live very inoffensively, and I am likewise certain, that some of them are well acquainted with all the Learning they have. However it must be acknowledged, that the *Grandees*, the great Officers at Court, and *Governors of Provinces*, are Men that best versed in History, a Study in which most of them very much delight, and on this Account they have always about them some who addict themselves to this kind of Literature, and compose *Memoirs* of what passes in their own Times, which they dedicate to their Patrons.

"In common Conversation the People are very complacent and communicative, nay, what is still more extraordinary, the Inhabitants of the Kingdom of *Nareea*, which lies the farthest from the *Red-Sea*, and consequently from all Correspondence with our part of the World, are by far the most polite People in *Abyssinia*; nay the very Respect paid by their King to the Emperor, is the pure Effect of Politeness, since the *Abyssinian* Monarch is in no Condition of exacting such Marks of

Homage, if the King of *Nareea* should refuse them. *Abyssinia* is not only vexed by very potent and cruel Neighbours, differing from its Inhabitants in Religion, but there are also on its Bowels many Colonies of these their Adversaries, who give them not a Grain the less Trouble for their being their near Neighbours. Of these I shall speak in their Order. First then, the *Moors* or *Mohammedans* are possessed of almost all the East Coast of *Abyssinia*, for the King of *Dancali*, and the King of *Adel*, with all their Subjects, are *Mohammedans*; and on the West Side, the King of *Sennar*, and the People on the other Side of the River *Melec*, are most of them *Mohammedans* also. Formerly the *Moors* from *Adel* came in like a Torrent, and conquered a great part of *Abyssinia*; but they were quickly driven out again, as indeed most of its Conquerors have been; for as soon as the *Abyssines* perceive that they are not able to meet their Enemies in the Field, they retire to their *Ambas*, or inaccessible Mountains, and leave the Conquerors to turn and plunder as they think fit. Then as soon as it is perceived that their Martial Ardour is abated, that they are excessively fatigued and over laden with Prey, the *Abyssines* begin to assemble, and falling upon them from all Quarters, oblige them at least to quit their Country, if not to leave their Booty behind them.

"Such of the *Moors* as are settled in *Abyssinia*, are an industrious harmless People, and seem better disposed to cultivate the Earth, and to improve the Places where they dwell than the *Abyssines*. As for the *Jews* I am at a Loss what to say of them; for if we consider the several sorts of them who live in and round *Abyssinia*, and the Custom of the *Abyssines* themselves, to observe the Sabbath strictly, to circumcise on the eighth Day, to use the Levitical Purifications, to abstain from forbidden Meats, to send away their Wives on every slight Occasion with a Bill of Divorce, and to boast as they do, that their Monarch is the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*; I say when one considers all this, one might be tempted to say they are all *Jews*. But to avoid giving Offence, after separating the *Abyssines*, who are a kind of Christian *Jews*, the remainder may be divided into *Jews*, properly so called, and into those who are *Jews* only by Descent. Of the first there are great Numbers in the Kingdom of *Dambee*; these were formerly very troublesome, pretending to live in an independent manner, without yielding either Tribute or Submission to the *Abyssinian* Emperors. These Princes for a Time wink'd at this, till an Opportunity serv'd for reducing them, against which, tho' to no Purpose, the *Jews* made a vigorous Resistance. Since then, many of them are turned Christians, and incorporated with the *Abyssines*; but the remainder of them now very numerous, are the most industrious Mechanics and Traders in the *Abyssinian* Empire. On the very Borders of this Country, on the other Side of the *Nile*, and among the barbarious People, there are many independent Colonies of *Jews*, of whose Government and manner of living very little Account can be given, except that they have the Scriptures of the old Testament in *Hebrew*, speak themselves that Language corruptly, and most bitterly hate the Christians.

"As to those who are *Jews* only by Descent, they are the famous Nation of the *Gaus*, *Gallas* or *Challas*, which last I take to be their true Name, at least so themselves pronounce it. It signifies white Men, and yet these People are black. However that they were once white is

plain enough, for they have most of them *Roman* Noses, thin Lips, and comely Features. They are tall, robust, well limb'd Men, very brave, but withal very cruel, and most abominable Thieves. It is not above an hundred Years that they have vexed the *Abyssinian* Empire, or indeed that they were ever heard of there; but in all probability it will be at least another hundred Years before the *Abyssinians* get fairly rid of them, for they are now settled up and down all the West Borders of the Empire. They live like the ancient Patriarchs, on the Product of their Herds and Flocks, never cultivating any Land, or Building any Thing more than Cabbins to cover them from the Weather. They worship one GOD, circumcise, and vehemently abhor Idolatry; but as for any other religious Tenets, it does not appear what they hold. When their Children are young, their Fathers regard them no more than Dogs; but when they are grown big enough to hunt, and to fight, then they treat them with all imaginable Kindness and Affection. These People are most justly accounted the most dangerous Enemies in the World; in offensive Wars they are generally Victorious, and when they act on the defensive are always so. When they fight they either conquer or die; when they are attacked by a superior Force, they drive away their Cattel, and retire so quick, that their Pursuers are quickly involved in their inhospitable Country, where there is neither House, plow'd Field, or any Thing which can furnish Subsistence; so that there is a Necessity of retiring *Reinfecta*; and it is well if these People do not incommode their Retreat. Their Armies are composed of Horse and Foot, the former are the more numerous, but the latter are the better Troops. They are divided into several Tribes, some say seven, others nine; but I believe that Point to be uncertain; they are governed by a single Magistrate, whom they stile *Lifo*, he has the Authority of a limited Monarch, acting nothing by the Consent of his Council. In Point of Promises, Treaties, or Agreements, these People are the most punctual in the World; when they make any it is with a great deal of Pomp and Ceremony, and they are never known to break them, or to deceive those who trust them. Such of their Children as have been left in *Abyssinia* in their sudden Retreats, and have been bred up there, prove strong, industrious, and beautiful Persons, and when thoroughly instructed in the Christian Reli-

gion, are wonderfully pious, and much more constant than the *Abyssines*, readily braving Death, rather than abjure their Faith. About the Year 1648, these People broke at once in six or seven Places into *Abyssinia*, ravaging from South to North, and from West to East, killing and destroying without Mercy all that came in their Way, presuming so far, as to invest the *Turkish* Fortress over-against the Isle of *Suakem*; but some Pieces of Cannon being discharged upon them, they retired from thence, and in about nine Months Space withdrew into their old Quarters. Since then they have made two other great Irruptions, and are continually making small Incursions; but in these they are content to plunder without doing any Body any Hurt, unless they find them with Arms in their Hands. While I wandered about in this Country, my Profession made me every where welcome; and if the Inhabitants had been rich, I should doubtless have brought something considerable from thence. As it was, I collected in *Abyssinia*, chiefly in the South West Parts, eleven Ounces of Gold in Grains, three Topazes, one Emerald, and five greenish colour'd Stones transparent, hard, and beautiful; but what they are call'd I know not. Here ends this Relation, excepting what the Author says of the River of *Nile*, which I have inserted in another Place, for the Sake of uniting my own Observations with his that the History of that noble River might not be broken or interrupted."

Campbell, the author of the above account, was it should be reiterated, a good friend of Samuel Johnson who, according to the latter's biographer, James Boswell, declared (*The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, Everyman's Library, London, Volume I, page 259) that he "used to go pretty often to Cambells on a Sunday evening," and added (Volume II, 456): "He is a very inquisitive and a very able man."

One of the results of the contact between the two early 18th century British authors was in all probability Johnson's continued preoccupation with Ethiopia which caused the dictionary-maker to follow up his translation of Lobo by the composition of one of his best-known works, *The Prince of Abyssinia. A Tale*, which was first published in London in 1759, and subsequently re-issued with its more famous title, *The History of Rasselas*, in 1787.

# The Medical History of Ethiopia During the Italian Fascist Invasion and Occupation (1935-1941)

by Richard Pankhurst



Though foreign doctors had long been in Ethiopia, and had increased in numbers in the late nineteenth century, the foundation of the country's modern health services were only laid in the two generations prior to the Italian fascist invasion of 1936. The first hospital in Addis Ababa was established by the Russian Red Cross in 1897 after which several foreign legations entered the medical field. Emperor Menelik founded the first Government hospital, which bore his name, in 1909, his cousin Ras Makonnen having a little previously built a similar institution in Harar. A generation or so later in 1924 Emperor Haile Sellassie established the modern and well-equipped Bét Saida hospital in Addis Ababa, and at about the same time encouraged several missionary groups to set up hospitals. Those in the capital comprised the United Presbyterian Church of North America's Tafari Makonnen Hospital, often called after its director, Dr. Lambie, the Seventh Day Adventist's Empress Zawditu Memorial Hospital, and the Italian Catholic Mission's Haile Sellassie Hospital, popularly called the Italian hospital, besides the Haile Sellassie Leprosarium at Akaki which was run by the Sudan Interior Mission. Provincial hospitals were also operated by the Government at Harar and Debra Tabor, by the Franco-Ethiopian railway company at Dire Dawa, by missionaries at Harar, Lakamti, Sayo and Dessie, and by the Italian Government at Gondar, while Ethiopian Government or mission clinics existed at Goré, Jigjiga, Asba Tafari, Aira, and Soddu. The result of these developments was that epidemics, particularly of smallpox and cholera, which had previously been responsible for untold deaths, were greatly reduced in magnitude.

Medical education also began shortly before the war. The first three Ethiopians had been despatched to Russia for medical training during Menelik's reign, while the first fully qualified Ethiopian Government-educated doctor, Melaku Bayen, returned home shortly before Mussolini's invasion, and the training of the first 20 medical orderlies started at the Menelik hospital in 1935. Plans were also made, according to the British physician, John Melly, for a 300-bed teaching hospital in Addis Ababa and for a medical school at Harar to accommodate 50 students.<sup>1</sup>

Eritrea, prior to Mussolini's decision to invade Ethiopia, had scarcely better medical facilities, for, as De Bono, the fascist commissioner for the colony, noted, in 1934 "there were only two hospitals," the "good" Regina Elena hospital at Asmara, and the Umberto I hospital, a "very modest establishment" at Massawa, which lacked "the systematic equipment proper to a hospital in a tropical country." Together they had,

according to the Italian author Battaglini, no more than 300 beds. "In this matter of hospitals, as in every other department," De Bono exclaimed, "lack of available funds . . . had made it impossible to do things that could usefully have been done."<sup>2</sup>

Italian plans for the invasion of Ethiopia caused De Bono, to turn his attention, as he tells us, to the "essential question" of military hospitals, for it was provisionally estimated that 10,000 hospital beds would be required.<sup>3</sup> Steps were accordingly taken to enlarge the Asmara hospital, to improve that at Massawa, and to set up a number of temporary hospitals elsewhere, in part by the construction of huts and barracks, including temporary Docker houses, which were erected by German workers, and in part by the requisitioning of existing buildings. New hospitals for military use were thus built at Nefasit, Decamare, May Edaga and May Habar, while the Principe di Piemonte school at Asmara and the munitions depot at Ghinda were both converted for hospital use. In the provinces of Eritrea, De Bono notes, "all the local school premises were soon being transformed into hospitals." By the outbreak of hostilities, the colony was thus provided, according to Battaglini, with no less than 10,000 military and 5,000 civilian hospital beds.<sup>4</sup> Provision was also made for the more sanitary operation of brothels, detailed regulations for the conduct of European brothels being decreed by De Bono on June 21.<sup>5</sup> The Italian administration nevertheless faced many difficulties, and the Italian workers on the roads were often acutely short of both doctors and medicines, including such elementary supplies as quinine, bismuth and anti-tetanus serum. Such shortages, Battaglini says, were one of De Bono's "major preoccupations," and the cause of strong complaint by General A. Caffo and others.<sup>6</sup>

The threatened invasion meanwhile led in Ethiopia to the founding in 1935 of the Ethiopian branch of the Red Cross and the Association de Bienfaisance des Femmes Ethiopiennes, A.B.F.E., later better known as the Ethiopian Women's Work Association, a voluntary women's society established to supply bandages and medical comforts to the troops. For the most part, however, the Ethiopian soldiers had to go into battle, as in former times, with only the most rudimentary medical facilities, for, as Colonel Argyropoulos, a Greek physician in the Ethiopian army, later observed, the Emperor's army medical service did not "exist at all . . . The troops of His Majesty have gone to the front without any doctors, without any nurses and without even bandages."<sup>7</sup>

## The Invasion

After the outbreak of fighting Red Cross missions arrived from Sweden, Britain, Egypt, Holland, Norway and Finland, and, as Marcel Junod, a Red Cross official, records, were "all first-class units and well equipped."<sup>8</sup> The Sudan Interior Mission also decided to devote itself to caring for the Ethiopian troops. These missions from various lands were, however, soon deliberately bombed by the Italians, apparently in an attempt to bring all Ethiopian and foreign Red Cross activity in Ethiopia to an end. Contemporary reports state that the Red Cross hospital at Adowa was bombed on October 3, 1935, the American Red Cross hospital at Dessie on December 6, an Ethiopian Red Cross ambulance at Negelli on December 15, a Swedish Red Cross ambulance at Malka Didaka on December 22 and again on December 30, and an Egyptian Red Cross ambulance at Bulalé on December 30 and 31. Attacks continued in the following year with the bombing of an Ethiopian Red Cross ambulance at Dagabur on January 4, Ethiopian and British Red Cross units at Waldia on January 15, an Ethiopian Red Cross ambulance at Maqalé on January 18, an Ethiopian Red Cross aeroplane at Dessie on February 9, an Egyptian Red Cross ambulance at Bulalé on February 11 and 12, a British Red Cross ambulance at Qoram on March 4 and 5, an Ethiopian Red Cross plane at Qoram on March 17, a Swedish Red Cross ambulance at Ilyan Serar on March 17, a British Red Cross ambulance at Chelga on March 20, the Finnish Red Cross unit at Jigjiga on March 22, the Egyptian Red Cross unit, also, at Jigjiga, on March 23 and 25, and the same unit's hospital at Harar on March 29.<sup>9</sup>

Hubbard, describing the bombing of Desie, observed: "There could be no doubt but that the attack on the hospital was deliberate. The evidence was irrefutable,"<sup>10</sup> while Melly, commandant of the British Ambulance Service, reporting on the attack on that unit, declared that Italian aeroplanes dropped about 40 bombs, as a result of which "the sterilisation and operating tent were wrecked . . . Five other tents were totally destroyed and a quantity of medical stores and equipment. One lorry was totally smashed, another rendered useless . . . The 46 ft. square Red Cross flag had a direct hit. There can be no possible question of doubt," he adds, "as to the absolute deliberation of the attack. Practically all the tents and lorries are also clearly marked with Red Crosses."<sup>11</sup> Faced with this onslaught, in which Dr. Hylander of the Swedish Red Cross was wounded, the International Red Cross Society in Geneva almost inevitably decided that it was impossible to continue with ambulance work. The foreign medical missions were accordingly withdrawn.<sup>12</sup>

On reaching Addis Ababa the British Red Cross ambulance unit, which had retreated from the northern front, received Emperor Haile Sellassie's permission to take over the Empress Manan Girls' school as a temporary hospital. With the help of Lady Barton, wife of the British Minister, the necessary conversion was effected in a day, and the hospital, cared for by nine Englishmen and an Austrian, remained in operation until the Italian entry into the city.<sup>13</sup>

The Italians meanwhile had been devoting considerable attention to the medical needs of their army. Aldo

Castellani, a fascist practitioner in Harley Street, London,<sup>14</sup> who became director of medical services for the invading armies, seems at first to have faced considerable difficulties and was obliged to appeal personally to Mussolini's wife Rachele who notes in her diary that the doctor, "finding himself unable to secure the despatch of certain men he considered indispensable through the normal bureaucratic channels, came to enlist my help. I put him in touch with Mussolini, and the necessary action was taken forthwith."<sup>15</sup> Castellani subsequently drew an enthusiastic account of the medical operations under his direction. He states that this was the first time that such a large mass of white troops had been "transported to a tropical zone," and that "the thought of 500,000 young white soldiers fighting in a tropical zone - a large part of it with a torrid climate - caused serious misgivings to many experts, as for many years it had been recognised and had become almost an axiom that to prevent heavy losses from sickness in colonial wars, the bulk of the troops employed should be native troops." The Duke, Castellani continues, had not been deterred by such arguments, but, "realised immediately the enormous importance of medical preparation and organisations in a colonial war, and paid the same attention to it as to purely military preparations." As a result "requests regarding medical personnel and hospitals were immediately acceded to and often doubled . . . Enormous supplies of quinine and other essential drugs, disinfectants, sera, vaccines were dispatched to Africa, as well as hospital, X-ray and laboratory equipment of every kind, and mountains of cotton, wool, gauze and bandages." "I can testify," he continues, "that on more than one occasion the dispatch of medical and sanitary material took precedence over the dispatch of munitions and war material."<sup>16</sup>

The Italian army in East Africa was equipped with 135 base and field hospitals, each base hospital being provided with a bacterial laboratory and X-ray department, 55 small portable hospitals which could be transported on mules, 13 surgical units, 15 motorised X-ray laboratories, 11 dental motor ambulances, four institutes for chemical and bacteriological research, 12 disinfecting and six disinfection stations, 139 large water sterilisers and four medical depots, while the Italian navy had 20 hospitals and infirmaries and eight hospital ships, and the air-force 22 infirmaries. All in all the Italian forces had 2,484 doctors, 188 pharmacy officers, 384 nurses, one of whom was the Crown Princess of Italy, 200 nurses, and 16,139 hospital attendants and male nurses.<sup>17</sup>

Steps were also taken to protect Italian health in other ways. The troops, according to the fascist writer Pisani, were inspected weekly for venereal disease, received "large distributions" of anti-venereal medicine, and were subjected to propaganda on the dangers of sexual infection,<sup>17</sup> while each soldier, Castellani says, received three tablets a day of quinine sulphate or bihydrochloride as a prophylactic against malaria. Prominent fascist officers, among them Graziani and Starace, set the example by swallowing a tablet at every meal, while the soldiers were frequently paraded and one in 10 or 20 made to pass urine which was then tested to ascertain whether the quinine had in fact been taken. To minimise risks of dysentery efforts were also made to ensure a supply of pure water. "Practically all the officers", Castellani says, "drank mineral waters - such as S. Pellegrino and

Fiuggi - bottled in Italy - and shipped to Africa in enormous amounts; "the water for the troops, on the other hand, was "obtained from rivers and wells," but was "always purified by boiling or by some method of chlorination." The men were likewise recommended to wash their hands with a 2 per cent solution of lysol or lysoform after visiting the latrine, and before eating their meals; they were provided with flannel belts to prevent abdominal chills and resultant dysentery, and received a lemon a day against scurvy. There was also extensive vaccination against typhoid and cholera, as well as propaganda, the official Italian publication *Gli Annali dell'Africa Italiana* says, on the dangers of snakes, poisonous insects, polluted water, and various diseases.<sup>27</sup>

As a result of such precautions disease among the Italian forces of invasion was low. Between October 3, 1935, and May 10, 1936, i.e. the period from the beginning of the fighting to Mussolini's proclamation of the Italian empire, according to official fascist figures there were but 1,241 cases of primary malaria admitted to hospital, 1,093 admissions for relapses and 23 deaths, 453 hospital cases of dysentery, with only one death, 458 cases of typhoid and paratyphoid leading to 161 deaths, 30 cases of heat-stroke with four deaths, 17 cases of relapsing fever, five of tetanus with four deaths, two cases of tapeworm infestation and one of smallpox, none of them fatal, and no reports of typhus, cholera or scurvy. The total number of white troops dying from disease was only 599.<sup>28</sup> Castellani, who acquired for his services the title of Count of Kismayu and was later given the honour of treating the Duce,<sup>21</sup> claims that "mortality and morbidity" in the Italian army in Africa was in fact "somewhat less" than among units in Italy at the same time, while "the number of deaths from disease" was "much lower than the number killed in battle."<sup>22</sup>

#### The Occupation: Addis Ababa

After the occupation of Addis Ababa the advent in the Ethiopian capital of large numbers of Italians led to the taking over of existing hospitals, which in accordance with normal fascist practice were promptly rechristened, while other buildings were converted for medical use. Most hospitals, both old and new, were reserved for the exclusive treatment of the white population, for medicine under fascism was essentially a sphere of racial segregation.

The well equipped Bèt Sayda hospital, founded by Emperor Haile Sellassie, was thus expanded to become the 300 or 400-bed Vittorio Emanuele military hospital for Europeans.<sup>23</sup>

The Haile Sellassie hospital, built by the Italian Government shortly before the war, was given the new name of Principessa di Piemonte, Italcia Gens, and also somewhat expanded as a European hospital with 350 beds.<sup>24</sup>

The Zawditu hospital, established by the Seventh Day Adventists, was now called the American hospital, and likewise reserved for Europeans.<sup>25</sup>

The old Menelik hospital, by now somewhat out of date, was expanded, renamed the Duca degli Abruzzi hospital, and converted into a segregated institution: the German Nazi woman, Louise Diel, states that there were "separate sections for nationals," i.e. Italians, and "natives," and claims that the former section had a

capacity of 700 and the latter of 500 beds, but this appears to have been an exaggeration, for the Italian municipal report for 1938 says the "native" section had only 150 beds.<sup>26</sup>

Two new hospitals, entirely for Europeans, also came into being at about the same time by the conversion of existing premises. The Empress Manan School for girls, no longer required for educational purposes, was turned into the 300-bed Regina Elena Military hospital,<sup>27</sup> while the house of Ras Mulugeta, the former Ethiopian Minister of War, was equipped with 250 to 350 beds, to become the Luigi Razza hospital for Italian workers.<sup>28</sup> The premises of the old Italian Consolata mission, renamed in honour of Graziani's mother Adelfia Clementi Graziani, as an orphanage, were likewise partially allocated for use as a paediatric centre for Italian children.<sup>29</sup>

The result of these developments was that the "native" population of Addis Ababa, which before the war had the use of four hospitals, was left with only a share in one, i.e. the very inferior Menelik hospital, or, as it was then called, the Duca degli Abruzzi hospital. Part of the Consolata mission, renamed after Adelfia Clementi Graziani, was, however, converted into a "native" trachoma hospital,<sup>30</sup> while the leprosarium formerly run by the Sudan Interior Mission continued to function for "natives," under the auspices of the Consolata mission, which is said to have been responsible for 240 lepers.<sup>31</sup>

Later in the occupation, around 1938, this imbalance between the races was slightly corrected when two small additional hospitals were also made available for "natives." The old Presbyterian hospital at Gulalé, formerly run by Dr. Lambie (the building occupied after the liberation by the Pasteur Institute), was reopened with 60 to 80 beds as the Ospedale per Capi e Notabile Indigeni, i.e. hospital for native chiefs and notables; and in the autumn of 1938, a new "native hospital," the Hemanuel, or Emanuel, Ospedale per indigeni di Tecla Haimanot was established with four pavilions and 80 to 120 beds.<sup>32</sup> Both institutions were situated to the west of the city, that being the area reserved for "native" life.

Medical research in the capital was effected at a Bacteriological and Micrography Institute, a centre for the study of malaria, another research institute, the Istituto Sieroterapico Milanese, and a typhus research institute founded on November 25, 1939, after the outbreak of the European war.<sup>33</sup>

The Italians throughout this time were greatly worried, as the fascist author, Dario Liscini and *Gli Annali dell'Africa Italiana* both emphasise, by the risks of infection confronting their own personnel in Ethiopia.<sup>34</sup> The fascist viewpoint, as Diel expresses it, was that "only healthy white men" could "undertake successfully the giant task of colonising Italian East Africa,"<sup>35</sup> and it followed that Italian policy in the field of preventive medicine was largely directed towards preventing the white population from being contaminated by the "natives," and such medical facilities as were created were primarily for the benefit of Italians who were then establishing themselves all over the country.<sup>36</sup> The prevailing attitude is apparent from a popular Italian primer of this period, L. Carella's *Igiene del lavoro nei climi caldi dell'Africa Orientale*, written for Italian

workers going out to East Africa, which urged the importance of cleanliness, elementary sanitation and pure drinking water, and dealt with such varied matters as how to make simple latrines, and the reasons why it was advisable to avoid pork and alcohol. The author declared that though he did "not recommend complete sexual abstinence" the worker was recommended "constantly to take the maximum prophylactic precautions," for "sexual diseases represented one of the gravest dangers in Africa."<sup>37</sup>

The need for widespread preventive medicine, primarily in the interests of the European population, was also affirmed in a fascist report on the "First Year of the Empire" which emphasised the necessity "to protect the health of nationals" from infection by "natives,"<sup>38</sup> while a subsequent Italian municipal report for Addis Ababa noted that the Italians in the city "quickly understood" "latent danger" to them of infectious diseases, and "consequent need for" effective preventive action.<sup>39</sup>

Dr. Giovenco, an Italian medical writer of the time, likewise urged that for "the integrity, purity and dignity of the race" it was essential that "contact with the native element be avoided," and that the "native population" in the vicinity of Italian workers' camps be kept under sanitary control,<sup>40</sup> while another Italian physician, Dr. Mariani, contended that it was necessary to fight against typhus "not only because of the danger which it represented for the natives and nationals of Italian East Africa, but above all because of the danger of importing the virus into the Mother Country."<sup>41</sup>

Preoccupation with preventive medicine caused the invaders immediately after their seizure of Addis Ababa to set up "a service of general disinfection," as *Gli Annali dell'Africa Italiana* notes, with squads of disinfectors,<sup>42</sup> and much use was made, according to a later municipal report, of lime, creoline and creosote.<sup>43</sup> Steps were similarly taken to institute mass propaganda for basic hygiene, a subject which received considerable attention in the otherwise very meagre educational textbooks for "natives." Fairly detailed medical information was also given out, one somewhat patronising Amharic text declaring:

"1. The most dangerous enemy of man is the louse because it transmits two serious diseases, typhus and relapsing fever.

"2. The man who does not have lice on his body, in his clothes or in his house, can be sure of not being contaminated by these two diseases, even if he is in contact with persons affected.

"3. Syphilis ruins the victim and his descendants because it is transmitted to children. It is not cured by exorcisms or herbal decoctions, but by injections which only white doctors know how to give.

"4. One must not believe one is cured of syphilis because the external manifestations of the disease have disappeared. The spirochaeta remains alive in the liver, the brain, the bones, the blood, and is killed only if the cure continues for two or three years; otherwise sooner or later new external or internal manifestations will appear.

"5. One does not develop gonorrhoea or venereal ulcers if one has contact only with clean women and washes oneself well with soap and water after intercourse.

"The disease which has had the largest number of

victims is smallpox. Only vaccination, effected with vaccine distributed by the Government, can prevent this infection.

"7. The cure of diseases is not obtained through the advice of natives because they are incompetent, not having been to the schools and special hospitals which exist only in the parts of the world inhabited by whites.

"8. To call the white doctor when one is ill means almost always to be cured and to prevent the disease spreading among persons inhabiting the same house.

"9. Soap and water for the body and for the clothes are the cheapest means of defence against almost all diseases.

"10. Women if they do not want to have trouble when they are pregnant and wish their children to be born alive and healthy, must be treated by the white doctor. If the pregnancy is not normal he will give them advice and medicine."<sup>44</sup>

Also in the field of preventive medicine orders were given for the compulsory reporting of infectious diseases,<sup>45</sup> stray lepers, were rounded up, and extensive smallpox vaccination effected. Italian medical action for the local population was, however, seriously handicapped by the fears and tensions engendered by the fascist reign of terror, as was tacitly admitted by the Italian municipal report for 1938 which states that "despite intense propaganda . . . the native population for the first few months, showed itself mistrustful and did not want to know of our medical cures nor of preventive vaccines against contagious diseases."<sup>46</sup>

By the end of 1936, four free clinics,<sup>47</sup> a V.D. dispensary and a polyclinic attached to the old Menelik hospital were nevertheless in operation,<sup>48</sup> while in the following year it was found necessary to carry out some 200,000 smallpox vaccinations. By May 1937 a "regular ophthalmic service" had been established, according to Dr. Guerra, and the evidence it collected demonstrated that medical facilities in this field were "truly necessary not only for the assistance of the patients, but also to give an idea of the grave dangers to which our compatriots were exposed" by the widespread diffusion of trachoma, "one of the most serious and contagious" of eye-diseases. It was thus necessary, he adds, to take action with "the greatest possible speed" to remove Italians from "this great threat."<sup>49</sup>

Seven eye clinics were soon also in existence, namely the Istituto Gulalé, the Missione Cannosiane with two sections, the Vicenzo and Consolata missions, a section at the Duca degli Abruzzi hospital, the St. George clinic and the mendicants' clinic.<sup>50</sup> Provision was made, according to Diel, for the free treatment of trachoma and other eye-diseases every Tuesday, while no fewer than 64 loudspeaker-vans are said to have made medical announcements in "thickly-populated areas."<sup>51</sup> The German woman, who is quite frank as to the racist motive of such innovations, states that the "natives" had to undertake "medical treatment" as "a preventive measure for the protection of Italian garrisons, workmen and the ever-growing Italian population,"<sup>52</sup> while the municipal report for 1938 claims that Italian medicine gradually gained popularity, and that by then an average of 5,900 "natives" were attending Italian clinics each month.<sup>53</sup>

Italian concern with questions of public hygiene also led to the establishment of a public slaughter-house and

the provision of covered vehicles for the transportation of meat within the city,<sup>54</sup> while fear of typhus reinforced racist theories as a motive for the rigid segregation of Europeans and "natives." An Addis Ababa order of September 21, 1938, prohibited Italians or foreigners from entering the Takla Haymanot or New Market area reserved for "natives."<sup>55</sup> In the following year Dr. Mariani urged the need (1) to place the dwellings of "native servants" far from those of their "white" masters; (2) to separate "the white element" from that of the "native" in offices, shops, schools, places of work and prisons; (3) to prevent the "promiscuous" transport of "whites" and "natives" on both public and private vehicles, and to create exclusive transport services for "natives;" (4) systematically to disinfect and vaccinate "whites" obliged by their work to have frequent contacts with "natives;" and (5) to remove "natives" from the large urban centres to the countryside, as well as to construct more hygienic "native" housing.<sup>56</sup>

Concern about rabies meanwhile resulted in the killing-off of many of the capital's hitherto extensive population of dogs, which the Italian nurse, Maria Landi, estimated in 1936 at over 15,000. Some 1,500 animals, she says, were eliminated in the first few months of the occupation,<sup>57</sup> while the municipal report for 1938 tells of the destruction of "over 2,000 stray dogs."<sup>58</sup> Diel claims that after an outbreak that summer in which 10 cases of rabies were reported, "between four and 5,000 dogs were destroyed with strychnine," and "the same number a few months later."<sup>59</sup> The latter figure is probably exaggerated, for D'Ignazio, a more reliable observer, states that a total of 6,000 dogs perished by strychnine.<sup>60</sup> The Swedish observer, Svensson, notes that in 1938 he saw but two dogs in Addis Ababa, and they were accompanied by their owners.<sup>61</sup>

Despite such modest efforts in the area of preventive medicine, Margery Perham, the well-known British expert on colonial practice, is correct in concluding that the Italian authorities were "not predominantly concerned with the interests of the Ethiopians," and that the subject people benefited only from "the marginal effects" of Italian medical activity.<sup>62</sup>

#### The Provinces

The situation in the provinces was also characterised by a great inequality of medical facilities available for Italians and "natives." Outside Addis Ababa, the greatest concentration of hospitals and other medical institutions was in Eritrea, where the situation by 1940 had developed considerably since the early 1930's.<sup>63</sup> Asmara, with its population of over 50,000 Italians, was endowed with the best facilities. Its principal hospital, the Regina Elena, which like almost all medical institutions of the fascist period was segregated, is said by then to have had 1,500 beds,<sup>64</sup> while the Eritrean capital could also boast a polyclinic,<sup>65</sup> an eye clinic for Eritreans which received patients from as far afield as Kassala and Aden,<sup>66</sup> a 50-bed V.D. clinic for Eritrean prostitutes (who played an important role in the fascist regime) which was attached to the Regina Elena hospital, some nine other clinics, some run by the municipality and others by the Fondo Nazionale Assistenza, and a medical and prophylactic

Massawa, the port of entry for Italian troops, had two hospitals, the Umberto I with 120 beds in its section for

"nationals" and 160 in that for "natives," the Royal Marine hospital, for Italian naval personnel, and a 150-bed clinic for "native" prostitutes which was attached to the Umberto hospital, as well as the nearby isolation hospital at Gurgussam on the mainland.<sup>68</sup>

Other provincial hospitals in Eritrea were to be found at Adi Caieh, Embatcalla, Agordat and Assab,<sup>69</sup> and V.D. or other clinics at Belesa, which also had a 200-bed isolation camp for "natives," Coazen, Edaga Berai, Decamere, Adi Ugri, Addi Quala, May Edaga, Ghinda, Saganeti, Senafé, Ad Teclesan, Agordat, Barentu, Uguro, Scumagalle, Nocra, Thio, Assab and Abroboraife.<sup>70</sup> There was also an Italian repatriation camp at May Habar, described by *Gli Annali dell' Africa Italiana* as "one of the most perfect and best organised prophylactic institutions in the Empire," a place where Italian workers and others were medically examined before being allowed to return home to Italy. In this way it was hoped to protect the wider Italian population from the diseases of Africa.<sup>71</sup> Military personnel had a similar camp at Nefasit, while Italians returning home individually had, according to Mariani, to be kept under close medical supervision for the 11 days preceding their departure or show proof of having been vaccinated for typhus within the previous year.<sup>72</sup>

Altogether, the subsequent Four Power Commission report says, the colony could boast of 1,200 beds for the relatively small European population as against only 800 for Eritreans who of course constituted the majority race. It was significant, as British officer Trevasik noted, at the time of the fascist collapse, that hospitals and dispensaries "mainly served European interests," as evident from the fact that such institutions were almost invariably "sited in the principal European centres; few if any facilities . . . existed in towns and districts without substantial European communities." Statistics for 1938 show that despite the much larger "native population" there were 6,179 Italian hospitalised patients as against only 5,467 "native," the corresponding figures for out-patients in hospitals and clinics being 23,600 Italians as against 160,930 "natives."<sup>73</sup>

Medical research in Eritrea was mainly concerned with malaria for which an institute was established at Keren and a second in preparation at Agordat,<sup>74</sup> but the only training for "natives" was a six-month course for male and female dressers which was attended by an average of 30 pupils between 1928 and 1935, and 50 thereafter.<sup>75</sup>

The main provincial towns of Italian occupied Ethiopia, Harar, Dire Dawa, Gondar, Dessie and Jimma, and, except for Jimma, all of them site of the principal pre-war provincial hospitals, were also relatively well provided with medical facilities, albeit primarily for Italians. Some such hospitals were based on the institutions of former times, while others were established by the fascists to meet the expanding needs of Italian colonisation. Harar had a 100-bed hospital formerly a mission hospital, where dressers were now taught, and a 200-bed hospital for "natives," a polyclinic, a V.D. clinic, a V.D. station for "native" prostitutes, a leprosarium, a medical laboratory and the old Catholic mission leprosarium now somewhat expanded.<sup>76</sup> Dire Dawa had a 150-bed hospital for "nationals," a hospital for "natives," a polyclinic, a V.D. clinic, and a V.D. station for "native" prostitutes;<sup>77</sup> Gondar, a 300-bed combined military and civilian hospital for "nationals," a polyclinic, a V.D.

station for "native" prostitutes, a workers' clinic with 20 beds, a 50-bed V.D. clinic, a gynaecological clinic, and a medical laboratory;<sup>78</sup> Dessie, a hospital for "nationals," a V.D. station for "native" prostitutes, capable of handling 100 women, an eye clinic, and a malaria laboratory;<sup>79</sup> Jimma, a 450-bed hospital for "nationals," opened in 1940, a hospital for "natives," two polyclinics, one for each race, two dispensaries for "natives," and a medical laboratory.<sup>80</sup>

The diffusion of Italian military and civilian personnel in innumerable centres throughout the land, and the dream of massive Italian settlement, was likewise followed by the creation of small clinics and simple dispensaries at a large number of provincial centres, such institutions being attached almost automatically to Italian commissariats. (See Appendix).<sup>81</sup>

Numerous small, often only temporary, clinics and dispensaries were also established to meet the needs of the vast army of Italian road-workers. In the Dessie area in 1937 there was for example a central clinic with 32 beds at Kombolcha, and 113 smaller roadside clinics each with 12 to 20 beds, besides 74 dispensaries.<sup>82</sup>

The medical advantages of such clinics, designed essentially for Italian personnel, were, however, at least partially counter-balanced by the elimination of the Protestant missionaries who had hitherto cared for the local population in many remote areas. Protestant missionaries, most of whom had formerly been engaged in medical work, were systematically driven from the country, one of the most famous, the Swede, Dr. Harold Nystrom, being formally expelled by a decree of September 3, 1937.<sup>83</sup> A British Foreign Office report of October 13, 1939, on the final expropriation of the American mission hospital in Addis Ababa significantly declares: "Although no reasons are given, it is thought that the Mission's close associations with the Ethiopians has for a long time rankled in the minds of the authorities who are suspicious of any contact between foreigners and Ethiopians."<sup>84</sup>

In the general area of medical research in the provinces a malaria research centre was set up at Kombolcha<sup>85</sup> and a much publicised 96-bed leprosarium for "natives," run by the Order of Malta, at Selacclaca, 35 kilometres from Aksum.<sup>86</sup>

#### Diseases

The principal illnesses with which the Italians were confronted in Ethiopia and Eritrea were venereal diseases, outstripped in the low-lands by malaria, and, to a lesser extent, typhus, typhoid and tuberculosis.<sup>87</sup>

Venereal diseases had long been prevalent in Ethiopia,<sup>88</sup> but gained increased circulation during the occupation as a result of the notable growth of prostitution in the main cities where many Italians were infected. From their first arrival in East Africa, as the American journalist, Herbert Matthews, explains, the Italian troops showed great interest "to get together with black women,"<sup>89</sup> while a subsequent Italian anti-fascist open letter to Mussolini told of the troops "tasting the delights of the soft black flesh" of gracious *sharmutas* or prostitutes.<sup>90</sup> Another journalist, M. Durand recalls that in Asmara, the first city to witness a large concentration of Italians, the "black" and "white" prostitutes were soon "coining money fast."<sup>91</sup> Despite the subsequent racial laws remarkably extensive use was made of local

prostitutes. Doody, a British traveller who visited Eritrea after the liberation, recalls that at the small Italian naval battery post of Umm Es Sahring there was a "casa of military *amore*," which was "still abundantly equipped with accessories; there were many thousands of packets of what the French call 'English letters,' forming a pile which reached half-way to the roof." He adds that "three females . . . were officially 'on strength' . . . one good lady was provided to satisfy the demands of the three officers; number two devoted herself exclusively to the five N.C.O.s; but the third was the one who could really claim to be doing her bit, for she shared her favours among the 60 other ranks."<sup>92</sup> Italian Eritrea, according to the Four Power Commission report, had 120 licensed prostitutes in 1939, but many more unlicensed, for in that year no less than 100 clandestine prostitutes were arrested.<sup>93</sup>

On crossing the Ethiopian frontier the Italian soldiers also made extensive use of local women, Durand quoting one Bersaglieri officer as declaring: "my men (are) young robust fellows. They must have their women."<sup>94</sup> The result was a considerable diffusion of venereal disease. *Gli Annali dell' Africa Italiana*, though essentially a fascist propagandist work, admits that the normal precautions proved "insufficient" to prevent "sad and sometimes tragic consequences," and that in the Haussen-Adowa-Shiré area two field hospitals had to be established for the compulsory treatment of all local women reported to be infected. All military dependents were likewise obliged to undergo medical inspection three times a week; healthy women were issued with certificates and obliged to reside in specified houses where they were frequently inspected, while medically controlled women from Adowa and Aksum were invited to make their way to the principal Italian military camps.<sup>95</sup>

In Addis Ababa, according to Ladislav Saska, a Hungarian physician in the capital, the first Italian brothel came into existence within two days of the city's capture, and before long "a whole street" was converted for this purpose.<sup>96</sup> Diel claims that efforts were made to keep prostitution as far as possible "under vigilant supervision," and that in the capital 1,500 "native" women were reserved exclusively for Italians, while 47 Italian girls were installed in a special brothel, while all street prostitutes had to be "in possession of an official permit" and were "medically examined three times a week."<sup>97</sup> Such medical precautions as further north were, however, by no means successful, and Saska, writing as a practising physician, relates that venereal disease soon "ravaged the Italian ranks, and that no medical assistance was sufficient to deal with it." Discussing the medical care available he adds: "In the Italian military hospital, the treatment was of the worst and lowest. Italian soldiers went to the private surgeries of doctors settled in the town before the occupation, but even they had no adequate means to deal with the number of cases of venereal disease . . . There were 11,000 cases in 15 months . . . I can affirm, although the reader will most likely think it incredible, that venereal disease destroyed more Italian soldiers than the Ethiopian army. I know of cases where Italian soldiers committed suicide when they heard the nature of the disease. I heard the desperate cries of two Italian boys, almost children, who wept bitterly when I told them what had happened to them."<sup>98</sup> *Gli Annali dell' Africa Italiana*, though designed of course

to place the occupation in the best possible light, also testifies to the extent of the disease, and states that, in view of the large number of Italians in the capital, anti-V.D. provisions were more extensive than elsewhere. A 300-bed V.D. clinic for "native" women and another for Italian prostitutes were thus attached to the Duca degli Abruzzi hospital, while the Luigi Razza hospital for Italian workers likewise had a special V.D. department.<sup>99</sup> The hospital's authorities recognised, as Milella puts it, that venereal disease constituted "a grave danger for the integrity of the race."<sup>100</sup> Diel admits that the Italian "campaign against venereal disease" made but "slow progress,"<sup>101</sup> and the need was so great that in 1939 Pisani reported plans to establish a new 500-bed V.D. clinic at Entoto.<sup>102</sup>

In Dessie Dr. Mari, the official in charge of the treatment of venereal diseases, reported that after the occupation of the town a "multitude" of "native" prostitutes arrived from all over the country, while the authorities established two brothels, manned, according to *Gli Annali*, by some 20 "native" and 10 "white" women respectively. There was, Mari records, "a sudden appearance of venereal diseases," a "frightening propagation . . . among the metropolitan as well as the native population." Gravely concerned, in particular by the extent of infection among Italians, he complains that, despite the fascist racial decrees, "one unfortunately notes an unlimited irresponsibility in the conduct of metropolitans living in Italian East Africa in what concerns sexual relations with native women." The incidence of disease made it "easy," he adds, "to deduce how frequent and dangerous are the occasions of infection, above all in the remoter areas, where workers are employed on road-building and soldiers in distant garrisons."<sup>103</sup>

In an effort to control the situation the authorities at Dessie set up a V.D. department in the local army hospital in September 1936 where an average of 80 military and civilian V.D. patients, a large proportion of them suffering from syphilis, were hospitalised. A women's V.D. dispensary was also established at about the same time, and received no less than 12,297 visits in the first six months of 1938. "Continuous propaganda," according to Mari, was also carried on to warn "metropolitans" and "natives" of the risks of venereal diseases. Prophylactics were widely used. The "white" brothel was thus installed with hot and cold running water and supplied with washing soap and protargol inspections three times a week. The "native" brothel, though a humbler institution, likewise had its "prophylactic room" with water, soap, towels and permanganate and protargol solutions, while its "native" manageress had instructions to recruit her staff only from prostitutes in possession of valid licences. As a result of all these measures Mari claims that by 1938 the incidence of disease was greatly reduced.<sup>104</sup>

Prostitution, and venereal disease, was also extensive in other centres.<sup>105</sup> At Mojo, Poggiali notes in his diary, General Mischi had laid down strict regulations whereby he soldiers had to apply for permission, and be medically examined, before each visit to the brothel, and that the institution was guarded by *carabinieri* whose duty was to verify the customer's documents.<sup>106</sup> At Harar, according to an official report for 1939, about 300

"native" prostitutes were in possession of Italian licences and subjected to twice-weekly inspections,<sup>107</sup> while in Dire Dawa a "white" brothel was in operation within the first year of the occupation.<sup>108</sup> Lakamti was described by Poggiali in his diary as "famous for its abundance of prostitutes."<sup>109</sup> He states that it had been proposed to establish mobile brothels, or Cars of Love as they were to be called, for the Italian workers' camps, but the plan had been vetoed by Davide Fossa, the fascist leader in charge of labour, and the Addis Ababa *fascio* on the grounds that in places where white families had not yet arrived it was unseemly that the Italian woman should be seen for the first time in the form of the prostitute.<sup>110</sup>

The increasing prevalence of venereal disease in the Italian East African empire is emphasised in an official report which states that from January to October 1936 2,323 cases of syphilis were treated in Amhara, 761 in Eritrea, 305 in Harar province, 150 in Galla and Sidama, and 30 in Addis Ababa.<sup>111</sup> The rate of infection is said to have reached its peak in 1937, when no less than 9.75 per cent, i.e. almost one in 10, of Italian soldiers, were affected, and the rate was still 5.05 per cent, i.e. one in 20, in the following year. The corresponding rates for Italian civilians and "native" troops in East Africa, though significantly lower, were still considerable, as indicated in the following table:<sup>112</sup>

	Venereal disease: % of infection					
	Italian troops		1937		1938	
Primary syphilis	0.94	0.40	0.182	0.168	0.70	0.27
Advanced syphilis	1.70	0.50	0.127	0.115	1.04	0.71
Blennorrhoea	4.06	2.05	0.664	0.418	1.06	0.70
Soft ulcers	3.05	2.10	0.375	0.265	0.90	0.31
Total V.D.	9.75	5.05	1.348	0.966	3.70	1.99

In an attempt to control the incidence of infection, V.D. stations for "native" prostitutes were established, as we have seen, at Asmara, Addis Ababa, Harar, Dire Dawa, Dessie and Gondar, while the latter town had in addition a 50-bed V.D. clinic.<sup>113</sup> Smaller V.D. clinics, often no more than huts, were set up elsewhere at Addi Ugri, Tessenet, Barentu and Assab in Eritrea, Adowa, Enticho, Aksum, Hauen, Abbi Addi, Enda Mehané Alam, Adigrat, May Chew, Qoram, and Alomata in Tigre, Walde, Lalibela, Dabra Tabor, Dabra Marqos, Lake Haik, Adi Arkay, Debarek, Matamma, Alefa, Danghila, Kombolcha, Bati, Gorgora, Chelga, Derasgé, Warra Illu and Mugia in Amhara, Jigjiga, Asba Littorio, and Afem in Harar province, Sciano, Dabra Berhan, Dabra Sina, Holeta, Addi Salem, Ambo, Bishoftu, Mojo and Fitcha in Shoa, and Jimma, Negelli, Lakamti, Argio, Moyalé, Arero, Yavello, Goré, Bonga, Alge, Agaro, Wolisso, Huba, Maji, Soddu and Gardulla in Galla and Sidamo.<sup>114</sup>

Malaria, which was traditionally common in the lowlands,<sup>115</sup> also led to considerable hospitalisation of Italian soldiers, and workers, particularly those operating in the lowlands, and caused the fascist authorities much concern. In the Bari d'Etiopia settlement scheme for Italian workers for example 23 settlers fell victim to malaria.<sup>116</sup> Though the altitude of Addis Ababa was well above the level in which the malaria mosquito could live the disease was also responsible for a large proportion of the admissions to the capital's hospitals. Thus the Luigi

Razza hospital for Italian workers reported that the largest single number of its patients, 445 by 1938, were suffering from this complaint, contracted mainly in the area of the Awash, Omo or Rift Valley lakes.<sup>117</sup> The study of malaria therefore received a high priority in the general field of Italian medical research.<sup>118</sup>

Several traditional epidemic diseases made their appearance during the occupation period, but failed to reach major proportions. An outbreak of typhus in the Adigrat prison in December 1936 spread, according to *Gli Annali dell' Africa Italiana*, to Asmara as a result of the transfer of prisoners there. The Governor of Eritrea issued a decree for the free compulsory inoculation of Italian officials, civil servants and soldiers in contact with the "native population," as well as all persons, "metropolitan" or "native," connected with hotels, restaurants, cafés, drinking houses, cinemas, brothels and public or private transport.<sup>119</sup> The majority of the Italians in the area were thereupon inoculated, in order, as *Gli Annali* avers, to prevent them from carrying the disease back with them to Italy on repatriation.<sup>120</sup> Such precautions appear to have been successful, and the infection soon died away.

A new outbreak, however, appeared in the autumn of 1937 when the disease was reported between Addis Ababa and Dabra Sina, as well as at Fitcha and around the Omo. There were fears that military operations and the movement of population would lead to the greater diffusion of the epidemic, but this was largely avoided.<sup>121</sup> The Governor General, operating, as was his custom in racist terms, ordered resolute action to prevent the disease from "endangering the physical integrity of nationals" and "as far as possible to reduce the illness among natives," and specified two goals: (1) "to preserve nationals from infection" and (2) "to prevent anyone, with the disease already in incubation, from escaping from sanitary control."<sup>122</sup> An Addis Ababa health commission likewise advised on "the utility of extending inoculation to all nationals present in the Empire and of also initiating inoculation among the native population, the source of the diffusion of infection," and recommended that the "white population" be given Weigl vaccine, which was "efficacious and not harmful," while the "natives" should receive "the easiest" vaccine to prepare.<sup>123</sup> Dr. Mariani, who also thought in essentially racist categories, urged the need, in 1939, for continued precautions, including research on the first cases among the "native population," particularly in crowded areas, work camps and among the troops, early diagnosis of "nationals" believed to be contaminated, and the inoculation of "all national citizens and foreigners" exposed to the dangers of infection.<sup>124</sup> Widespread inoculations were again ordered, and victims of the disease were isolated, for, as *Gli Annali* reiterates, the authorities sought above all "to preserve nationals from infection" and to prevent colonials returning to Italy from introducing the disease there.<sup>125</sup> Though less prevalent, D'Ignazio claims, than in former times, typhus nevertheless led to numerous cases of infection among the Italian population: 69 cases in 1937, 251 in 1938, 127 in 1939, 42 in 1940 and 217 in 1941.<sup>126</sup>

Smallpox, which had declined considerably in the early twentieth century Ethiopia but was still endemic, broke out in March 1937 among road-builders from the Sudan, and threatened Gondar and Eritrea. Dr. Del Vecchio states that the principal focus between April and July was at Asmara where 18 Italians and 76 Eritreans were registered as infected while smaller outbreaks were reported in other parts of Eritrea.<sup>127</sup> Mass vaccinations were effected at places of work, road-blocks and markets, with the result, *Gli Annali* claims, that "no European was infected."<sup>128</sup> The epidemic also appeared among the workers constructing the Addis Ababa airport, after which the area was isolated and extensive vaccinations carried out, and the disease quickly subsided,<sup>129</sup> though D'Ignazio says that several hundred "natives" and eight Italians were hospitalised, and that there was a mortality of around 50 per cent among "natives" who had not been vaccinated, or 40 per cent in the case of Italians.<sup>130</sup>

An epidemic of meningitis was also reported at this time in eastern Tigre and the Dessie area, but soon petered out, in part perhaps because of extensive injections.<sup>131</sup>

The occupation was characterised by a fairly considerable amount of vaccination. *Gli Annali* claims that from 1936 to 1938 there were 1,035,640 vaccinations in Eritrea, including Tigre, 200,000 vaccinations and 13,500 typhus injections in Shoa, 178,586 vaccinations in Harar province, 133,402 in Amhara, and 117,198 in Galla Sidama.<sup>132</sup> Local production of rabies serum also started in this period, but was limited, D'Ignazio says, to only 50 or 60 courses of treatment a year.<sup>133</sup> Stray dogs, and around Harar hyenas, were also killed off in relatively large numbers, as we have seen, in the hope of controlling rabies.<sup>134</sup>

Relatively little, on the other hand, was done during the occupation to improve sanitary conditions which were particularly poor in the larger towns. Trevasakis notes that in Eritrea for example municipal cleansing services "only operated in the European quarters" and that the "native quarters" had to be "cleansed by the communal efforts of their Eritrean inhabitants, or, more often, left in a condition of increasingly insanitary neglect,"<sup>135</sup> while Gandar Dower, another British officer arriving in the colony with the forces of liberation in 1941 exclaimed: "Everywhere . . . enteric fevers and dysentery were endemic . . . Flies were regarded as inevitable natural phenomena."<sup>136</sup>

#### APPENDIX

During the occupation rudimentary medical facilities or simple clinics were reported to have been set up, in Shoa, at Dabra Barhan, Debra Sina, Mojo, Kaciama, Ghedi, Nomo, Ankober, Mendiola, Molale, Fitcha, Noari and Sendafa; in Tigre, now annexed to Eritrea, at Adowa, where there was a 60-bed V.D. clinic, Aksum, Abbi Addi, Enda Selassie, Add Adro, Dembequina, Adi Quiba, Aragure, Enda Medhane Alem, May Chew, Debut, Qoram, Adigrat, province, at Jigjiga, Asba Littorio, Grova, Fich, Bedenno, Gaoami, Sultelli, Arba, Guana, Aubartre, Goggjar, Goeti, Deder, Bedessa, Ghelemso, Siré, Aselle, Robi, Gasjar, Identu, Asaoko, Golocia, Ligaba, Karri, Boccoqi, Dabra Mai, new and old Debarek, Dabra Tabor, Sokota, Dabat, Adi Remoz, Derasge, Add Arkay, Gorgora, Chelga, Ambaciara, Lake Haik, Worro Illu, Lalibela, Mugia, Debra Marqos, Danghila, Bure, Demtania, Motu, Baté and Walda; and in Galla-Sidama, at Agaro, Saka, Fofa, Dembi, Botor, Abalti, Wolitite, Mexca, Bedele, Bonga, Wata, Gheccia, Wacca, Amaia, Ghimbi, Ghidami, Asoa, Beccia, Gore, Jubdo, Gambela, Ghimbi, Borodda, Gofa, Soddu, where there were 50 beds, Cencia, Bola, Bazza,

Adola, Alge, Banco, Sole, Dalle, Dilla, Adami Tullo, Arbagona, Zilmamo, Sciacia, Buma, Negelli, Mega, Moyale, Arero, Endaber, Saka, Aghere, Mariam, Irgalem, Aghere Salama, Abaro, Limmu, Hosana, Arbagona and Jimma.

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27. "I servizi sanitari," p. 816; Poggiali, "La nuova Addis Ababa," p. 471.  
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29. C. Zoli, *La conquista dell'Impero* (Bologna, 1937), p. 342; Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., pp. 16, 68; Governo Generale A. O. I., *Cenni monografici sul territorio di scioa*, 107; A. Beretta, *Amedeo d'Austria. Il prigioniero del Kenya* (Milano, 1955), pp. 157-8.  
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35. L. Carella, *Il lavoro nei climi caldi dell'Africa orientale* (Bari, 1936), pp. 29, 37, 48, 62, 71, 95-8. See also L. De Castro, *Per star bene nelle Colonie* (Milano, 1938), *passim*.  
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37. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, *La capitale dell'Impero*, pp. 59-60.  
38. Governo Generale A. O. I., *Opere per l'organizzazione civile in Africa Orientale Italiana* (Addis Ababa, 1939), p. 64.  
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41. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., pp. 312-13.  
42. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 776-7.  
43. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., pp. 59-60.  
44. Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," pp. 67-8.  
45. D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 12; "I servizi sanitari," pp. 312-13.  
46. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., pp. 60-1.  
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48. Governo Generale A. O. I., *Cenni monografici sul territorio dello Scioa*, p. 108; "I servizi sanitari," p. 818.  
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51. *Historia of Ethiopia*, (typescript at the Hoover Institution), p. 353.  
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53. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., pp. 60-1.  
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55. *Corriere dell'Impero*, September 23, 1938; Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," p. 66.  
56. Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," pp. 59-60.  
57. Landi, op. cit., p. 151.  
58. Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., p. 62.  
59. Diel, op. cit., p. 92.  
60. D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 72.  
61. A. B. Svensson, *Abyssinien under italiernarna* (Stockholm, 1939), p. 39.  
62. Perham, op. cit., p. 241.  
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64. Diel, op. cit., p. 90; Landi, op. cit., p. 17; "I servizi sanitari," pp. 790-1.  
65. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 791, 805.  
66. *Ibid.*, p. 791.  
67. *Ibid.*, p. 752.  
68. *Ibid.*, p. 794; Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," p. 77.  
69. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 791, 794-5, 798, 804.  
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 770, 791-2, 794-5, 798; Pisani, op. cit., p. 78.  
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73. Four Power Commission of Investigation for the Former Italian Colonies, *Eritrea, A Colony in Transition* (London, 1960), p. 72. Appendix 81; G. K. N. Trevaschi, "I servizi sanitari," pp. 795, 804-5.  
74. Four Power Commission of Investigation for the Former Italian Colonies, op. cit., Appendix 80.  
75. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 819-21; Governo del Harar, *Tre anni di occupazione*, (Harar, 1939), pp. 22-3.  
76. "I servizi sanitari," p. 820; Governo del Harar, op. cit., pp. 22-3, 27-8; Pisani, op. cit., p. 78.  
77. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 822-4.  
78. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 823-6; Pisani, op. cit., p. 78.  
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 830, 835; D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 259.  
80. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 770-1, 796-8, 818-24, 830-2. See also Polson Newman, op. cit., p. 127; Poggiali, *Diario, A. O. I.*, p. 161.  
81. "I servizi sanitari," p. 827. See also Governo del Harar, op. cit., pp. 26-7.  
82. *Giornale Ufficiale del Governo Generale dell'Africa Orientale Italiana* (1937), II, 134.  
83. F.O., 371/23382/373.  
84. "I servizi sanitari," p. 823.  
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 798-803; *Etiopia* (1938), II, Nos. 11 & 12, pp. 32-3; D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 260; Berretta, op. cit., p. 158; Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, *Istituto per lo studio e la cura della lebbra nell'Africa Orientale Italiana* (Roma, 1937); Sovrano Militare Ordine di Malta, *Istituto Eritrea* (Roma, 1938).  
86. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 766-7. See also Mililla, op. cit., p. 57.  
87. D'Ignazio, op. cit., pp. 83-7. See also Poggiali, *Diario, A. O. I.*, p. 96.  
88. H. Matthews, *Eyewitness in Abyssinia* (London, 1937), p. 27.  
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91. J. Doody, *The Burning Coat* (London, 1955), pp. 54-5.  
92. Four Power Commission of Investigation for the Former Italian Colonies, op. cit., p. 74.  
93. Matthews, op. cit., p. 70.  
94. "I servizi sanitari," p. 770.  
95. L. Sava, "Ethiopia under Mussolini's Rule," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 27, 1940, January 22, 1941.  
96. Diel, op. cit., p. 91. See also Poggiali, *Diario, A. O. I.*, p. 96.  
97. L. Sava, "Ethiopia under Mussolini's Rule," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 27, 1940; January 22, 1941.  
98. "I servizi sanitari," p. 771. See also p. 818; Pisani, op. cit., pp. 78, 85.  
99. Mililla, op. cit., p. 57.  
100. Diel, op. cit., p. 91.  
101. Pisani, op. cit., p. 84.

103. A. Castellani, "Rapport sanitaire du 2e trimestre 1938 sur le service dermo-venerien du cercle de Dessie," *Bulletin Officiel International d'Hygiene Publique* (1939), I, 286-7; "I servizi sanitari," p. 825.  
104. Castellani, "Rapport sanitaire du 2e trimestre 1938 sur le service dermo-venerien du cercle de Dessie," pp. 286-70. See also Giovenco, op. cit., p. 42.  
105. Pisani, op. cit., p. 50.  
106. Poggiali, *Diario, A. O. I.*, p. 240-1.  
107. "I servizi sanitari," p. 820.  
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109. Poggiali, *Diario, A. O. I.*, p. 140.  
110. *Ibid.*, p. 241.  
111. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 776-7.  
112. *Ibid.*, p. 784. See also Pisani, op. cit., pp. 82-3; Giovenco, op. cit., pp. 27, 131-50.  
113. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 792, 820, 825.  
114. *Ibid.*, pp. 770-1, 795-7; Giovenco, op. cit., fig. 70.  
115. Governo del Harar, op. cit., pp. 24-5; Four Power Commission of Investigation for the Former Italian Colonies, op. cit., Appendix 74; Giovenco, op. cit., pp. 19-27, 36-40, 82, 130.  
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119. Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," p. 66.  
120. "I servizi sanitari," p. 765.  
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 774-5.  
122. Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," pp. 63-4.  
123. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-6.  
124. *Ibid.*, p. 63.  
125. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 774-5. See also Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., p. 61; Mariani, "La lotta contro le Ricchettsiosi umane nell'A. O. I.," pp. 55-68.  
126. D'Ignazio, op. cit., pp. 13, 15.  
127. P. Del Vecchio, "Il vaiolo in Eritrea. Rilevati storici, epidemiologici e profilattici," *Rivista Igiene e Sanita Pubblica* (1939), XV, 138.  
128. "I servizi sanitari," p. 765.  
129. *Ibid.*, p. 813. See also Governatorato di Addis Ababa, op. cit., p. 61; D'Ignazio, op. cit., 133.  
130. D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 133.  
131. "I servizi sanitari," p. 765.  
132. "I servizi sanitari," pp. 790, 813, 819, 822, 832. See also Quaranta, op. cit., p. 8; Four Power Commission of Investigation for the Former Italian Colonies, op. cit., I, 74; Governo del Harar, op. cit., p. 25.  
133. D'Ignazio, op. cit., p. 72.  
134. Governo del Harar, op. cit., p. 58.  
135. Trevaschi, op. cit., p. 34.  
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# ABUNA PETROS

An Ethiopian Patriot Martyr in the Modern Amharic Theatre

by Richard Pankhurst

The Italian Fascist invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-6, which was effected in defiance of the League of Nations, was accompanied by numerous acts of barbarism. These included the extensive use by the Italians of poison gas, both during the campaign itself and in subsequent operations for the "pacification" of the country, and the "Graziani massacre" of February, 1937, when the Addis Ababa fascists, determined to avenge an attempt on the life of the Italian Viceroy Marshal Graziani, ran amok for three days, shooting, stabbing and clubbing to death any Ethiopian they could see, and burning to the ground large numbers of Ethiopian houses, in some cases forcing their inmates to perish in the conflagration. This three-day "Graziani Massacre," as it was called, resulted in the death of thousands of innocent and defenceless Ethiopians.

Fascist repression and violence was also directed against Ethiopian holy men. On March 19, 1937, Graziani telegraphed to the Minister of the Colonies in Rome that because many such persons were prophesying the return of Emperor Haile Selassie the Viceroy had "given orders that all wandering minstrels, soothsayers and wizards in the town and the surroundings be arrested and shot," and added: "In all today 70 have been arrested and eliminated."<sup>1</sup> The fascist dictator Mussolini gave this action his full approval, telegraphing to the Viceroy on March 20: "I approve what has been done concerning wizards and rebels. It must continue until the situation is radically and definitely peaceful."<sup>2</sup>

Persecution was also directed against the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which the invaders regarded as a bulwark of national resistance, and resulted in the execution, on Graziani's express orders, of almost all the clerics at the principal Shoa monastery of Dabra Libanos. On May 20, Graziani telegraphed to Rome that he had ordered the summary execution of "all monks without distinction," and, on the following day, that he had given orders for the shooting of "297 monks, including the vice-prior and 23 others." He added in a subsequent telegram that he had ordered the shooting of 129 deacons, so that "there are left only 30 schoolboys, who have been sent to their native homes in various districts of Shoa. Thus there remains no more trace of the Dabra Libanos Monastery."<sup>3</sup>

The fascist murders at Dabra Libanos were but the culmination of a series of atrocities, one of the most poignantly remembered being the execution a few months earlier of the notable Ethiopian bishop of Dessie, Abuna Petros (or Peter), whose martyrdom made a deep impression on the Ethiopian public mind, and is the

subject of two post-liberation Amharic relays which are here discussed.

Addis Ababa, it will be recalled, had been occupied by the Italians on May 5, 1936, but Ethiopian resistance in the vicinity of the capital continued for several months (and was followed by Patriot activity in the country at large throughout the five years of Italian fascist occupation). The first months of the occupation of Addis Ababa was indeed a tense period for the Italians in the city, one of whom a nurse, Maria Giaconia Landi, noted on July 18: "There is always talk of attacks on the city. They say we cannot be quiet until the rainy season ends. It is thought the Abyssinians will try to make an invasion en masse or else infiltrate one day into the market."<sup>4</sup>

Addis Ababa was in fact attacked by the Ethiopians on two principal occasions, the first on July 28, when Patriot forces advanced into the city from the north-west and south-east.<sup>5</sup> Patrick Roberts of the British Legation reported on July 30, that the Ethiopian force attacking from the west "must have put up a remarkably fine fight," and adds: "That they were allowed to get so close to the town where the trees are so thick indicates a very bad fault in Italian defences."<sup>6</sup> Fighting continued for two days after which the Ethiopian forces withdrew. They left behind them Abuna Petros, who had accompanied them into the city, but had been captured during the battle.

As soon as the assault was repulsed the fascist authorities on July 30, staged a public trial of the bishop who was thereupon executed in the full view of the crowd. This event created profound shock among the city's population, but all news of it was excluded from the officially controlled fascist press. One of the Italian journalists, Ciro Poggiali of the *Corriere della Sera*, who was present at the execution, noted in his diary: "Of the shooting of the Abuna one can telegraph nothing to Italy. It is permitted only to say that he was arrested."<sup>7</sup>

Poggiali's diary, the contents of which remained largely secret throughout the fascist period and have only recently been published, affords us a graphic account of the bishop's trial and murder. Himself an eyewitness of these events its author describes Petros as a tall and slender man, with "kind and intelligent features," who wore a dark cloak, bespeckled with mud from his previous travels. Though openly a propagandist for fascism Poggiali admits in the secrecy of his diary that the Ethiopian bishop (whose speech was later translated for the Italian journalist by the Greek hotelier Mandrakos) had "defended himself well, in a sedate manner," and

had requested only that his servants, who were innocent, should be spared. When the sentence of death was passed on him he listened calmly, holding in his right hand an Ethiopian cross in a piece of blue cloth.

After the sentence had been announced, Poggiali records, the Italians hastily took steps for the shooting to be carried out in the market square. While the preparations were being made Petros, turned to face towards the assembled crowd of Ethiopians, who were separated from him by a cordon of *askari* or "native troops." Poggiali describes him as standing solemn and erect, and says that on one occasion Petros took out his watch to check the time which remained until his execution. He then asked a nearby Italian soldier for permission to sit down, but, on catching sight of members of the tribunal, who, the Italian journalist states, seemed much more disturbed than the condemned man himself, he stood up, and gave his benediction to the men who had sentenced him. The journalist relates that at this point one of the judges came up to him, Poggiali, to inquire after his fellow-journalists, and comments that the judge had evidently "completely lost any shame."

The Abuna, walking with firm steps, then followed the *carabinieri* to the nearby place of execution. There an interpreter asked him whether he wished to be blindfolded, to which he replied "It is your affair, do as you like, and as you must, it does not interest me." Petros was then made to sit down his face to the wall. Eight *carabinieri*, who, according to Poggiali, were said to have competed for the honour, then knelt down at a distance of 20 paces, and fired at the command of their superior. The condemned man, his back riddled with bullets, crashed to the ground, but an Italian medical captain, on inspecting the body, stated that the cleric was not dead, and an officer of the *carabinieri* accordingly finished him off by shooting three revolver shots at his head.

These shots stunned both oppressors and oppressed. Poggiali records that immediately after the shooting the Italian Colonel who had presided over the court went around with obvious nervousness, asking, "where is the cemetery," as though he was afraid of seeing the dead man buried. The burial was indeed effected well away from the capital in a place kept strictly secret, but throughout the whole of the following night the shrill lamentations of the womenfolk could be heard coming from the houses of the Ethiopians who mourned the death of their prelate. The Ethiopian priesthood, Poggiali adds, was also greatly shocked, reasoning, he says, "If the Viceroy kills bishops, one can imagine what he will do to us."<sup>8</sup>

The martyrdom of Petros served as an inspiration for the post-war Ethiopian writer, and sometime Prime Minister, Ras Bitwoded Makonnen Endalkachew, who made it the theme of an Amharic three-act play entitled *The Voice of Blood* which was published in Addis Ababa in 1948, an English translation appearing in the following year.

This essentially patriotic play, which is in Ethiopian moralistic tradition, though couched in political terms

and entirely devoid of social criticism, is clearly the work of a man of deep scholarship, and full of Biblical and classical allusions.

The play opens in Graziani's office where the Marshal is sitting at his desk. He rings the bell and summons his generals to discuss what they should do with their prisoner the Abuna. Most of them advise that he be persuaded to sign a statement of allegiance to the King of Italy and then be given "plenty of money to carry on with his preaching, and to make a tool of him." General Maletti, however, objects to this proposal, and argues:

"I don't agree with an opinion of that kind; and my reason is that it's a policy of weakness, out of lines with fascist principles. We mustn't forget that the Ethiopians have been proud of their independence, and of their Emperor's honour, for more than 3,000 years. And now, what they hear these ecclesiastics preaching is that the Emperor will be back inside three years."

The General therefore urges the case for a public execution, but Graziani rejects this advice on the grounds that until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia was internationally recognised "it is better for us to be patient with a well-known man of this kind . . . especially if we can get him to sign a declaration of loyalty to Victor Emanuel as Emperor of Ethiopia, and can bribe him into preaching our cause."

Petros is accordingly brought into the presence of the Marshal who asks him "why is it that you refused to submit to the Government of Italy and to the glorious Mussolini?" to which the Abuna replies, "Your Excellency, I am not a military commander, and I did not come to fight; but it was simply to die for my country and my faith, and for the honour of my Emperor." Graziani then enquires, "what profit would you gain by dying?" and Petros replies, "if my blood flows for my country on my native soil, I believe - I know - that it is a gain." Turning to the fascist oppression with which Ethiopia was then afflicted he declares:

"The violence with which the glorious Mussolini is now acting is no new thing. Just like this, in the ancient Roman Empire many harsh and arrogant kings arose to trouble the world . . . Among these Roman Emperors there was one called Nero: in his excess of arrogance he took delight in watching houses burn, and for his burning of the city of Rome he was struck down by his own people, and died in ignomy. The fate of the glorious Mussolini cannot fail to be just like that."

Graziani angrily exclaims that he had never heard such affrontery as this, and thereupon orders the Abuna from his presence. He again summons his generals for consultation. Maletti once more urges the Abuna's execution, for, he says, "if we kill one important personage it will break the people's spirit far more than executing a whole host of riff-raff." Graziani, however, decides on a second approach to the priest, this time through the help of some chiefs who are to visit him in his cell.

In the next scene Petros is in prison. The envoys on arriving express their satisfaction that he had been spared the perils of war, but he patriotically replies, "when Ethiopia has not got free from enemy hands, I cannot say that I have been delivered from peril." Later he gives vent to an indictment of the invaders, and declares, "The meaning of 'Fascists' is, an association of

<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia, Département de la presse et d'information, *La civilisation de l'Italie fasciste en Ethiopie* (Addis Ababa, n.d.), I, 61-3.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 64-5.  
<sup>3</sup> U.S.A., The National Archives, 821/468/37; Département de la presse et d'information, op. cit., I, 128; Ethiopia, Ministry of Justice, *Documents on Italian War Crimes* (Addis Ababa, 1949), I, 18-20, 51-3.

<sup>4</sup> M. G. Landi, *Crocerossina in I. A. O.* (Milano, 1938), p. 126.  
<sup>5</sup> C. Zoli, *La conquista dell'Impero* (Bologna, 1937), p. 284.  
<sup>6</sup> Great Britain, Foreign Office, 371/20167/418.  
<sup>7</sup> C. Poggiali, *Diario A.O.I.* (Milano, 1971), p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-8. A brief biography of Abuna Petros by Makonnen Work Agegneu was published in Amharic in Addis Ababa in 1945-6.



outlaws, united and bound together by a bond of evil doing."

The envoys, having failed in their mission, return to Graziani and report that the Abuna had refused to cooperate. The Viceroy expresses himself uninterested, and exclaims, "what do I care? Since he has passed sentence on himself, and wants to die, let come what may."

Act two opens with Petros praying at night in his cell. He asks how it is that Ethiopia, which had never known an alien yoke, was then under fascist subjugation. An angel visits him, and tells him to have courage, for the invaders "may kill thy body, but they cannot kill thy soul." The angel also informs him of the future martyrdom of the monks of Dabra Libanos, but goes on to declare: "Take heart; the freedom of Ethiopia shall be restored; the Emperor is going to shine on his throne. The arrogant Mussolini will be weighed by the measure wherewith he weighed."

The Abuna's guards, who are Ethiopians, then enter to search him. Petros asks them, "why is it that you have become faithful servants and tools of your enemy?—or haven't you heard that they've killed your mother Ethiopia?" One of the guards dismisses this as raving, for, he says, "Our mother Ethiopia has just married a husband, and she is flourishing and getting prettier all the time—so who can have killed her?—On the contrary, long live the glorious Mussolini—for he has thrown down off our shoulders the heavy load of our king and chiefs and princes, who used to oppress us."

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This collaborationist speech opens up a discussion on life in the old days in which Makonnen Endalkachew, himself an aristocrat, presents an interesting, and very sympathetic, picture of traditional Ethiopian feudalism, in which he emphasises the devotion and mutual oyalities which customarily linked nobles and commoners in traditional Ethiopian society.<sup>9</sup> In this discussion, one of the guards asks Petros what the Emperor, princes and chiefs had done for Ethiopia and her people. The Abuna, expressing the playwright's own position, replies:

"Very well, my children: listen to me and I'll tell you. The first kings and princes and chiefs who with their lood laid the foundations of Ethiopia's liberty valued men more than property. Property was nothing to them their property was their men. Therefore their estates, cluding their private property, represented sustenance r your fathers and fore-fathers. The property of these asters being the property of the people, any soldier uld call the master's house his own house. Then when e master died, he would bequeath his land and property, to a son, to his followers and servants who had ndered service to Ethiopia. The prosperity and wealth these masters was directed solely towards the security their servants, and—through maintaining their houses wards their strength. Through a unity of this sort ween governor and people, the freedom of Ethiopia s protected and lasted long. O, my children, how ny are the benefactions of which I could tell you, formed by governors in Ethiopia! To sum it up, their ses were offices for the organisation of poor relief— weren't their private houses at all."

The guards, by now fully convinced, assent to this statement, and each of them cites examples from their own experience of the manner in which nobles, notably Ras Makonnen, Ras Tesemma and Ras Dargé, had given away land to their dependents.

The third act opens with the Abuna still in prison. A trumpet sounds to announce the hour of the execution which is proclaimed by a herald. Petros bids farewell to his guards, and prophecies, "Ethiopia shall not lack her freedom." He is then taken to the market place where the people have been assembled for the execution. There a captain of the guards binds a black cloth over his eyes but Petros tears it off, declaring, "I wish to be a spectator of a death for my country." Turning to the crowd he cries out:

"O children of Ethiopia—and my own children too—farewell! In the last moment that I have my word to you is this: I beg of you, be not ruled by your enemies the Fascist Government; nay, not only you, but the land itself have I changed under pain of execution that it be not so ruled."

The captain of guards orders his men to fire, the Abuna falls to the ground with arms outstretched like a cross, and the captain shoots him through the head with a revolver.

There is a long silence during which the people depart after which a heavenly choir sings that "the flesh of Thy righteous ones also is for the beasts of the field. And their blood flowed like water round about Ethiopia; and they lacked one who would bury them." The angel then calls on the soul of Petros to rise up to heaven; the captain of the guards orders his men to throw the prelate's body into a torrent-bed where it would be consumed by the hyenas and then to clear up the blood.

"Clear up the blood," mutters the guard, "Gor-blimey! Blood that's real blood won't come out even if it's washed with soap."

The final scene, obviously designed by its author to create an atmosphere of national unity, consists of a discussion, after the execution, among Ethiopians from the seven main regions of the country, all of whom extol the virtues of Petros. Adafirisaw, a Shoan, speaks for all when he says that "the pure blood of this saint which flowed over our soil can't fail to bind together in unity the whole of Ethiopia," and he adds, "for my part, I've made my choice—to go to my own district, and for my country's sake to become a wild animal among the forests and the cliffs. I don't want to stay with the enemy on this accursed and proscribed ground."

They then hear a knock at the door, and a woman enters. She turns out to be a Muslim, but is no less moved than they by the murder of the Christian prelate, for his death, she says, has "made me hate being a Moslem" and she adds: "Allah be praised, there's no doubt that here where the blood of this saint flowed on this ground, it will become a hell to destroy the Italians—not only those who are on the soil of Ethiopia, but those in Rome as well. When I saw this monk die with such patriotism, as though it was a *jihad*, I honoured the Christian Faith."

The play ends with an Epilogue consisting of an anthem recalling the life of Moses, set to solemn music, after which we are told that on July 29, 1941, after the liberation of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie stood upon the ground where the blood of the martyr Petros had

flowed, and had said: "Petros, though dost die, thy name is alive for all eternity."

Bitwoded Makonnen piously comments, "It is said that he who begins his work faithfully with God shall likewise finish his work faithfully. So the Fascist axe, wetted with blood, has been shattered and has fallen: and behold, by the goodness of God our Emperor has returned, and has had the good fortune to set up a memorial to Petros, who bore Christ's Cross and was patient under suffering."

"Fear not! Though they kill the body, they cannot kill the soul."<sup>10</sup>

The theme of the martyrdom of Abuna Petros was taken up three decades later by a second Ethiopian author, Tsegaye Gabre Medhen, an American educated writer of a later generation, whose one-act play "Petros at the Hour" was performed in 1969 in both Addis Ababa and Algiers, but has thus far not yet been published.

This play is far more sophisticated, as well as more sensitive, poetical and full of imagery, than its predecessor. Tsegaye Gabre Medhen is primarily concerned with dramatic tension brought about by the interplay of characters whereas Makonnen Endalkachew's purpose was essentially didactic. The earlier writer, who sought to show that the martyrdom of Petros inspired patriotism and national unity, gave his principal characters single dimensions either good or evil, and selected carefully balanced minor characters to represent Ethiopia's more important ethnic and religious groups who are all equally moved by the Abuna's martyrdom. Tsegaye Gabre Medhen, on the other hand, has more complex characterisation. Graziani, who was presented by Makonnen Endalkachew only as a chief administrator taking the council of others, though making the decisions himself, now appears both a fascist fanatic and a megalomaniac. Tsegaye has also enriched his plot by adding the figure of a quisling, who is a materialist, as one of his principal characters. Abuna Petros, in the later play is tempted by this traitor in a sequence reminiscent of the denial of Christ by St. Peter instead of being portrayed as the immovable rock of faith presented by Makonnen Endalkachew.

Tsegaye Gabre Medhen's play, which also makes greater use of scenic effects, opens at Graziani's Palace. It is night, and, according to the stage directions, a red violent moon glows blood across a cold dark sky, and through the palace entrance we see a mortar turned to face the audience. Lightning flashes, thunder crashes, and there is a complete black-out followed by the sound of heavy firing; thick smoke covers the stage, and we hear battle cries swallowed up by agonising screams.

The first scene begins with a "voice" which echoes Emperor Haile Selassie's famous address to the League of Nations. It asks the representatives of the world, "Must your silence condemn Ethiopia while the poison gas of Italy scorches the faces of my people? Must the fury of Mussolini's fascism blight the dreams of my land?" The voice proceeds to inquire of the world statesmen why they hesitate, and "keep my people on the cross of oblivion," while "international morality is at stake," and adds, in the Emperor's own words, "God and history will

remember your judgement." This speech is then drowned by the sound of explosions.

When this noise dies away a second "voice," clearly that of the fascist dictator, whose speech announcing his victory it echoes, proclaims, "I announce to the Italian people and to the world that the war is finished." These words are followed by hysterical Italian cheering, after which the voice continues, "I announce to the Italian people and to the world that Abyssinia is Italian." There are more enthusiastic cries, clearly identified as "si," i.e. "yes" in Italian, and, later in the speech, cries of wounded people.

The stage once more glows red from the moon with the result that Graziani, who until then had scarcely been visible, is clearly seen. He introduces himself by name, explains that he has been nicknamed the "Hyena of Libya" and will soon be known as the "Butcher of Addis Ababa." At the end of this speech the stage darkens. In the gloom footsteps are heard as the chained figure of Abuna Petros walks to a table where he lights a candle which illumines his face, and he proceeds to tell the story of his life from childhood. A spot-light then turns to another part of the stage to reveal Girsha, the quisling of the play, who proudly informs us that the Italians had given him the title of *shumbash* and that he already coveted that of *cozbash*, which was, as he claims, "the furthest a black man will ever go" under fascist rule.

In the next scene Girsha, who has sold his soul to the invader, comes to the imprisoned Abuna in an attempt to persuade him to make an agreement with Graziani. A long conversation ensues in which the collaborator tries to prove to Petros that he should "save his neck," for Ethiopia, he says, has "long ceased to exist." Petros, however, refuses to accept this, and replies:

"Yes She has ceased to exist in you, since you have lost faith in her. Nor have you faith in yourself, in God or in humanity. As such, you are a chained, desperate juggler, a pawn-broker of faiths. As for me, I believe in her, and she will live in my as long as I do."

Girsha answers that the Abuna had been blinded by his faith, and proceeds to paint a tragic picture of the cruel punishments meted out to Ethiopians who refused to accept Italian rule, but Petros replies that behind these "naked facts" lay the "supreme truth" which Girsha failed to see, that the victims of fascist oppression, "under-dogs of their own society, strangers in their own land, beggars of their own food," were becoming increasingly united under the alien yoke.

Later in the scene Girsha scoffs at the idea of life after death, and asks what help was it to the thousands of "rebels" killed by Italian bullets every day, or to those whom Italian poison gas "smoked out like rats." This discussion is interrupted by a herald who announces the time and place of the Abuna's execution "where each and everyone or you is expected to be present." Girsha at this point seems to ask for the Abuna's blessing, but his speech is interrupted by the crowing of the cock—a clear allusion to the betrayal of Christ.

Graziani now makes his appearance to ascertain whether Girsha has succeeded in overcoming the bishop's resolution. The collaborator reports that though Petros had still not listened to reason the inmate of the neighbouring cell was asking for Italian forgiveness. The Marshal dismisses the appeal. He declares that "one forgiven foe is worse than a 1,000

<sup>10</sup> Makonnen Endalkachew, *Three Plays* (Addis Ababa, 1955), *passim*.

enemies," and orders Girsha to "eliminate" the wretch who is immediately shot off-stage.

Graziani and Petros then engage in a long dialogue in which the Viceroy declares that "there is no law, never has been, other than the victor's will," and likens the prelate's position to that of a rabbit caught in a trap or a wild bird held in a cage. The Abuna however proudly replies that "rather than live under your haughty insolence... I would rather have a death with some sense in it." As this dialogue proceeds the Viceroy becomes increasingly angry, and finally, swearing and stamping his foot, he tells the Abuna that "rather than die a pointless death, the kind of death a mad dog dies" he should "take my hand, my hand of hope, of peace, of hope." Petros hesitates for a moment, irresolute, and suddenly a cock's crow is heard, for the second time in the play, and Petros cries out, "your hand is not of life, my son. It's a hand of the death of deaths." The scene ends with Petros stretching out his hand to bless Graziani who, refusing the blessing, springs on the prelate with rage. The lights go out, and in the darkness one hears Petros being beaten. The Viceroy declares that his prisoner is a "clever barbarian monk," and "raving fanatic," who "must be punished."

In the final scene Petros, his body battered and his clothing torn, is still in his cell, praying. Addressing the Lord he says that He had too long turned his face away from Ethiopia, which had been "rendered a fascist prey," and he asks his maker for strength "for I am alone and frightened, frightened in this land of mine, where at birth I kicked out at the brightness and made my presence felt, frightened in this land of mine out of whose earth I claimed my flesh."

Girsha then enters the cell in a final effort to tempt the Abuna, and after trying various approaches, shouts out to Petros that, as he had already told him, "our Motherland is long, long dead," but Petros replies, "Dead only in you, and in your kind alone, Girsha."

The stage then begins to grow lighter to indicate the coming of morning. Girsha informs Petros that "your hour is up... Yet all you have to do is to ask the Viceroy to grant you an extension of time." And he adds: "Are you not indulging too much in your own will, almost blinded by it, give God's will a bit of a chance: Ask the Viceroy. Humble yourself Father. To obey, remember, is the greater test, not self-sacrifice."

Petros, apparently disconcerted by these words, addresses himself to the Virgin Mother, imploring her help, and at this moment Graziani intervenes, sneering that the Abuna was still locked in his "evil alliance with death." Turning to Girsha the Viceroy tells him to "let him be," for there was no point in offering justice to such rabble-rousing scum." The quisling replies that he had one his utmost to get the bishop to recant, and addressing Petros, declares that the death he deserved was waiting him, to which the bishop replies that this was all he could expect from him, "a natural extension of Judas, renegade of faith, a human pest, his people's pest." Graziani, who has listened to these exchanges, then enters the discussion to ridicule the Abuna's concern for people, whom the Italian dismisses as a "menial rde" and an "unwashed mass of slumbering 'barism,'" but Petros replies by prophesying that the "lague of fascism" would not last, for the very people whom the Viceroy so despised would soon "force our

truth right out of your lustful mouth, to care for our own dreams between our own bare arms, to stand on our own feet and to face our own sun." Girsha, anxious to please his Italian master, intervenes to tell Petros that he had "an appointment with death," to which Petros pithily answers, "an engagement with death requires a baptism in faith." The Viceroy thereupon forces Petros into a kneeling position, and the herald is once more heard reading out the proclamation of the Abuna's imminent death. The walls of the stage cell are then removed to transform it into part of the market square destined for the execution. Petros rises, and, turning to the crowd, urges his compatriots to remain steadfast in spirit. He declares:

"Do not allow your dreams to submit to idolatry, my children. Let not the flesh claim that which is of the spirit. Do not bend your humanity to this infernal tyranny. Any who submit to it is declared excommunicated, here and now. Even the earth, this motherland, is declared so..."

While speaking these words Petros blesses the crowd, after which Graziani gives the orders for the shooting. Petros falls, whereupon Girsha approaches and shoots him in the head. A voice declares, "My countrymen of Ethiopia... This is the voice of your sovereign... Our valiant patriots, with their bones crushed..." Music is heard, and the curtain falls on one most highly acclaimed pieces of the modern Ethiopian theatre.

The life and death of Abuna Petros have more recently inspired Claude Sumner, a Canadian Jesuit and professor of philosophy at Haile Selassie I University in Ethiopia, to write a very sensitive one-act play in 1971 entitled "Petros" which is a French "adaptation" of Tsegaye Gabre Medhen's "Petros at the Hour," and written in Alexandrine blank verse. This, the third dramatic work on the martyred Ethiopian bishop, has thus far neither been published nor acted.

Sumner's play, which is a loose adaptation of "Petros at the Hour," uses the basic characters as employed by Tsegaye, but also introduces an entirely new figure in the form of the Abuna's mother who is sent to join the quisling Girsha in the attempt at persuading Petros to recant. Though the central theme is still the refusal by Petros to accommodate himself to fascist demands, the Canadian has somewhat modified the emphases of the earlier play in that he concentrates more on the confrontation with the bishop and has less to say about the miseries of the fascist occupation in general. The various characters have moreover been somewhat redrawn. The Abuna, who is perhaps a firmer, less wavering character than in Tsegaye's play, is in some ways reminiscent of that presented by Makonnen Endalkatchew; he talks, however, in more poetical language, has surprisingly little to say about religion and does not quote the Bible. Graziani is no longer the megalomaniac conceived by Tsegaye, but a European conqueror and colonist made to claim that he has a "civilising mission" to accomplish in Africa. The quisling Girsha, who in this play, unlike Tsegaye's, scarcely explains his motives, has become less important, in part because his role as a foil to Petros has been taken over by Graziani and in part because his role as tempter has to some extent been usurped by the bishop's mother. The latter, though apparently a poor peasant woman, is

at times made to speak in surprisingly convoluted language, asking her son on one occasion for example "are we infinite?" ("sommes-nous infinis?").

The dialogues with which the play abounds, those between Petros and Graziani being now the most important, are by no means translations from Tsegaye. They are indeed often entirely different from those in the Ethiopian original, and are based on new imagery and expression, which, though frequently poetic, is at times somewhat florid, reminding one that the playwright is a philosopher brought up in the tradition of French classical poetry.

Sumner's play, like Tsegaye's, opens at night in the then palace of Graziani, but, postponing both the Prologue and Graziani's appearance on the stage, the first character to be introduced to the audience is Petros himself. As the curtain rises the Abuna is thus sitting, chained, at a table illumined by the light of the moon and that of a flickering candle. Footsteps are heard, and Girsha enters - he is described in the stage directions as a "quisling intellectual". He comes up and kisses the bishop's hand. A conversation full of metaphor follows in which the quisling declares that he brings "a ray freer than the moon" ("un rayon plus libre que la lune"), but Petros, refusing to yield to his entreaties, replies, "I am the tree which stands straight when the forest bends" ("Je suis l'arbre qui tient quand la foret s'incline"). Girsha, touching the bars of the Abuna's prison, then speaks of the solitude of imprisonment, whereat Petros answers that, like the dawn which grows into the day, he was never alone. Pointing to the bars he declares that they were those which deprived freedom to his country, whereupon Girsha, in one of the few passages directly drawn from Tsegaye, exclaims, "What country? Ethiopia? It does not exist any more... not even on the map" ("Quel pays? L'Ethiopie? Elle n'existe plus... pas meme sur la carte"). He goes on to declare that the only empire than in existence was that of Italy, or, as he says, of the fascio, symbol of fascism, and of the black shirts. Petros, undaunted, proudly answers that for his part he stands for Africa, for the entire continent, and that he would raise Africa and perhaps the world.

The second scene, the first part of which is an adaptation of Tsegaye's Prologue, but without the speech of Emperor Haile Selassie, begins with the voice of the Duce announcing the conquest of Abyssinia, and is followed by the sound of fascist cries of applause. Petros in a part of the play not to be found in Tsegaye, is then illumined by a halo of light, during which he delivers a poetic monologue on liberty in which he declares that the invader has deprived him of everything, his country, his honour and his pride.

The halo of light then disappears, allowing us to observe Graziani who is watching the prisoner. The Viceroy turns to Girsha, and enquires, in another passage reminiscent of Tsegaye, whether the Abuna had learnt common sense, to which the quisling replies that "a mule is less stupid" ("une mule est moins bete"). The two men, as in "Petros at the Hour," then talk about another prisoner who has agreed to submit. Graziani declares that a pardoned man was as dangerous as a 1,000 who remained in defiance, whereupon the quisling walks away, and a shot off stage tells us that the unfortunate prisoner has been despatched. Graziani in a conversation entirely different from Tsegaye's, then addresses Petros and

declares, "Everything is finished, old priest" ("tout est fini, vieux 'pretre'"), to which the latter profoundly replies, "Everything is to begin" ("Tout vient de commencer"). The Viceroy goes on to claim that whereas the Abuna represents the past the Italians represent the future. When the bishop attempts to challenge this by a question Graziani tells him to ask no more questions, for it was the Italians who were doing the building, whereupon Petros, in sharp repartee, exclaims that they are doing this with poison gas. After another such exchange the Viceroy accuses the bishop of having attempted to resist Italy like a barbarian, to which Petros answers that he was one "if one is barbaric to defend peace" ("si l'on est barbare a defendre la paix"). Graziani then declares that the Italians had come to bring civilisation, and mentions such innovations as schools, roads and bridges, at which Petros asks whether the Italians would do this with or without the Ethiopians. After several more exchanges of this kind the Abuna, apparently voicing Sumner's own position, declares of the material aspects of Italian civilisation:

"My people are not rich and my rivers are dry. I admire your planes, I envy your radio. But I love better to walk barefoot on the stones. Provided that they are ours. My poor mule does not go far, but... he carries a free man. Your chains are of gold. I appreciate their splendour. All the gold of the universe does not remove their weight."

("Mon peuple n'est pas riche et mes torrents sont secs.

J'admire vos avions, j'envie votre radio. Mais j'aime mieux, pieds nus, marcher sur les cailloux

Pourvu qu'ils soient a nous. Mon mule etrique ne niene pas bien loin, mais... il porte un homme libre. Vos chaines sont en or. J'apprécie leur élat.

Tout l'or de l'univers n'abolit pas leur poids.")

After further debate, in which Petros declares the asphaltting of Ethiopia's roads vain as long as they do not unite the hearts of men, the play returns to the plot of Tsegaye's work, for Graziani loses his temper and physically assaults the Abuna. The stage at this point darkens as table and chair are knocked over and the candle falls to the floor. In the following scene which is once more drawn from Tsegaye, it is early morning. Petros is alone, musing to himself on the future, when the herald reads out the proclamation of his impending execution.

The Abuna's mother now makes her appearance in an entirely new penultimate scene which dispenses with the imagery of the cock in Tsegaye's play. In this scene, which reminds us in some ways of Shakespeare's Hamlet, Petros asks her repeatedly whether she has not been sent to him by the Italians, but she refuses to answer, saying that they do not exist, that the only thing that was real for her was a mother's love of her son. Their conversation is, however, soon interrupted by the footsteps of Graziani and the quisling which remind them that their time together is drawing to a close.

Girsha and Graziani are together in the final scene. The former realising that Petros has remained adamant despite all their efforts, angrily complains to the Viceroy that common sense, torture and a mother's implorings

had all failed, and that the bishop therefore clearly hoped for a martyr's death. He and Graziani then bait the cleric whom they accuse of desiring a cheap death and the glory of a martyr, but Petros resists also this last approach, whereupon Graziani, somewhat as in "Petros at the Hour," declares that the prisoner is not a martyr but a madman. As the conversation proceeds we hear, as in Tsegaye's play, the noise of the crowd assembling for the execution, and the scene lights up to indicate morning. Girsha then approaches Petros, tries to place a piece of cloth over his eyes, but the bishop refuses this. He then slowly blesses the four points of the compass (but without delivering the address attributed to him by the Ethiopian playwright), and, turning towards Graziani, begins to trace out the sign of the cross. The Viceroy immediately gives the order to shoot. In a slightly different ending

from Tsegaye's, drums are beaten, and Graziani and Girsha walk off stage, followed by Petros. There is a confused noise from the crowd, followed by a moment of silence and then a fusillade which takes place off-stage. We then hear the national anthem of independent Ethiopia rising to a crescendo as the curtain falls on Claude Sumner's "Petros."

The martyrdom of Petros, a faithful son of the church, was thus, as we have seen, one of the landmarks of Italian fascist oppression, as well as a source of national awareness which has served as a source of creative inspiration for two noted though in many ways very different Ethiopian writers of modern Ethiopia, the latter's play having been also adapted more recently into French verse.

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