

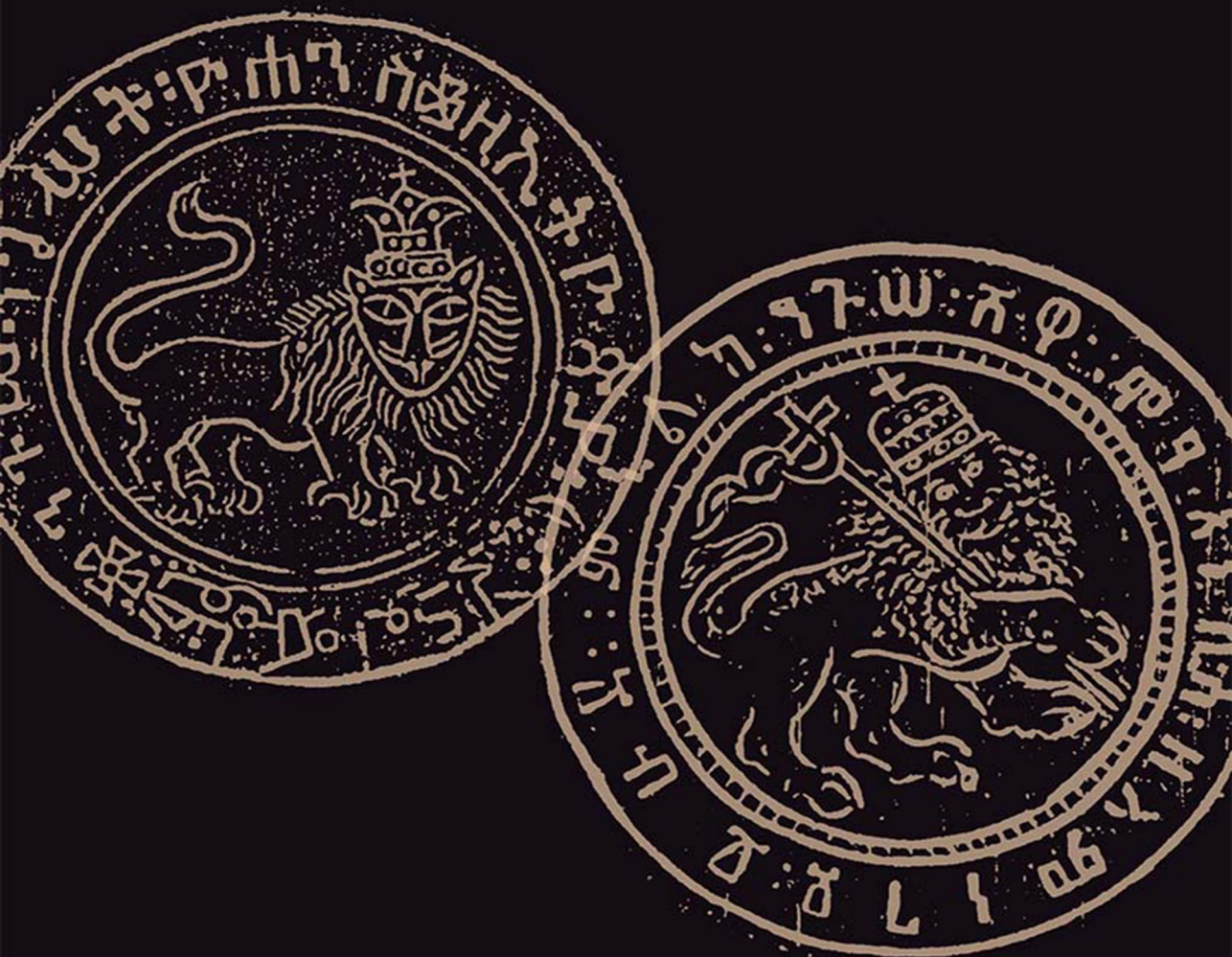
COLONIAL POWERS AND ETHIOPIAN FRONTIERS 1880-1884

Acta Aethiopica volume IV



EDITED BY
SVEN RUBENSON

CO-EDITORS
AMSALU AKLILU, SHIFERAW BEKELE
AND SAMUEL RUBENSON



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Preface

The background and aim of the series *Acta Aethiopica* was explained by Sven Rubenson, the editor of the series, in the preface and introduction to the first volume, *Correspondence and Treaties 1800–1854*, published by Addis Ababa University Press and Northwestern University Press in 1987. Co-editors of the first volume were Getatchew Haile, Colledgeville, and John Hunwick, Evanston. The second volume, *Tewodros and His Contemporaries 1855–1868*, was published in 1994 by Addis Ababa University Press, with the Lund University Press of those days – a scheme of collaboration between various Lund University departments and the academic publisher Studentlitteratur – as co-publisher, and the third volume, *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869–1879*, by Addis Ababa University Press and Transaction Publishers/Rutgers University. These two volumes were co-edited by Amsalu Aklilu, Addis Abeba and Hamburg, Merid Wolde Aregay, Addis Abeba, and Samuel Rubenson, Lund. Sadly, the first two of them passed away in the subsequent years.

This volume, the fourth in the series, was prepared by Sven Rubenson with Amsalu Aklilu and myself as co-editors, but owing to health issues publication was delayed, and when Sven Rubenson passed away in 2013 the material was left in an unfinished state. It was only when Shiferaw Bekele offered to assist me as co-editor that I was finally able to finish the work. I am also deeply grateful to Wolbert Smidt and Marianne Thormählen who have both read the entire volume and contributed numerous corrections at the last stage.

As with previous volumes, many colleagues have shared their skills and knowledge with us as we have dealt with the archival research; with Arabic and Ethiopian philology; and with details of biography, history and geography. Hussein Ahmed, Ezra Gebremedhin, Fisseha Mekuria, Tekeste Negash, Kjell Norlin, Kevin O'Mahoney and Richard Pankhurst are but a few of the many who have assisted us in various ways and deserve to be mentioned with gratitude. Special thanks are due to Jocelyne Girgis who translated most of the Arabic documents. Where several translations are possible, or at least seem to be so, the final choice has been made largely on contextual grounds. It is thus only fair that I accept the ultimate responsibility for any shortcomings of the volume, linguistic as well as historical.

Also, as with previous volumes, special thanks are due to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, to the *Conservateur en Chef* of the diplomatic archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to the authorities of the archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Archives of Egypt, as well as to the librarians and keepers of all other archives concerned, for their kind permission to have documents in their possession published in *Acta Aethiopica*. Our gratitude goes to librarians and archivists who have generously assisted us in our search in Cairo and Jerusalem, in Athens and Rome, in Paris, London, Stockholm, Moscow and St. Petersburg. They are too many to be listed by name. The generous financial aid of the Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) as well as of *Riksbankens Jubileumsfond* is acknowledged with deep gratitude.

Lund in October 2020
Samuel Rubenson

Introduction

The fourth volume of *Acta Aethiopica* only covers five years from the end of the previous volume, i.e. the start of 1880 to the end of 1884. The original plan was to include the entire decade up to the end of 1889, but the number of documents made this unrealistic, and with the passing away of the editor, Sven Rubenson, the material collected for the years 1885–1889 has been put aside waiting for a new editor to continue the work.

The title of this volume, *Colonial Powers and Ethiopian Frontiers*, refers to the fact that the documents included reflect the increasing colonial pressures on Ethiopia and the attempts of the Ethiopian rulers to define more clearly the frontiers of their country and their areas of influence. It is a period of tremendous importance as far as Ethiopia's position internationally is concerned. The internal rivalries of the 1870s are a matter of the past; the hegemony of Yohannis IV is no longer seriously questioned. Two major developments govern most of the writings included.

The first are the negotiations concerning the outcome of the Ethio-Egyptian wars of the 1870s. By 1880 that conflict had developed into a British-Ethiopian affair, which was finally ended with the Adwa treaty of June 1884. Although Ethiopia had clearly defended its frontiers and defeated the Egyptian offensive, European support for the Egyptians, as part of their colonial interests, made it extremely difficult for the Ethiopian emperor to make his voice heard and his conditions for a treaty accepted. The second major set of developments in the period are the increasing Italian and French colonial interests along the coast, in particular at Bab el-Mandeb and in today's Gulf of Djibouti, and the related commercial and political contacts with Shewa. Italy and France competed vigorously for support by local rulers and strongholds on the coast by inducing them to sell or donate territory and to enter into a series of treaties. This advance was to a great extent checked by the powerful ruler of Awsa, Maḥammad Hanfadhē (Amharic: Mehammed Hanferī; Arabic: Muḥammad Ḥanfārī), who on the one hand welcomed improved commercial links with Europe, but on the other defended his sovereignty and his close relations with the kingdom of Shewa.

* * * * *

The volume adheres to the principles and format of volumes I, II and III of the series. Thus, it contains all official letters and documents by Ethiopian rulers and notables we have been able to locate, with the exception of some minor notes that are of little significance and only preserved in translations. A special case is, however, created by the many letters written in Arabic by the rulers along the coast in response to the growing European activity in and around the Gulf of Djibouti. The large amount of often very brief and trivial letters about travel arrangements, and the difficulty in deciding which authors to include as "Ethiopians", have forced us to make a selection. Since they clearly relate to the issue of colonial interests in Ethiopia as well as the definition of the Ethiopian frontiers, we have included all letters of any importance by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē of Awsa and most letters by Ḥamad La'ita, the Sultan of Gobad, Burhān Muḥammad, the Sultan of Raḥayta, and Ḥamad Muḥammad, the Sultan of Tajura.

Almost thirty percent of the letters were written by Yohannis IV, the undisputed emperor at the time. Most of the letters are, as in previous volumes, addressed to foreign heads of state or their representatives, and they almost exclusively deal with asserting Ethiopian sovereignty in the north against the attacks of the Egyptians and their allies. The two most significant documents signed by Yohannis in this connection are the two treaties negotiated with William Hewett in

June 1884 (docs 167, 168). In addition, a substantial proportion of Yohannis' letters is directed to religious officials or deals with issues of religion. A number of letters to the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem reflect the emperor's support for the Ethiopian monastery and the building of an Ethiopian church in the city (docs 43, 44, 57, 65, 76, 77, 127, 182, 192, 195). Three proclamations only preserved as reports in French are included under the emperor's name, although their authenticity may be disputed (docs 68–70). More important are the unfortunately few preserved letters of Yohannis to his subordinates, Minilik and Tekle Haymanot. Furthermore, a few letters supply evidence of the emperor's relation with two independent European advisors, Gerhard Rohlfs and Demostenes Mitzakis.

The author represented by the second largest number of letters in this volume is, as expected, King Minilik, who has contributed some twenty percent of the documents. Again, most of them are to European governments, but in contrast to those of Yohannis, Minilik's letters are on the one hand all written to representatives of Italy and France, a vast majority to the Italians, and on the other they are – with a few exceptions – written to the consuls and agents of the states, not to the heads of state. The topics of the letters are, moreover, related primarily to commerce and the activities of explorers. This is also true of the two treatises signed by Minilik in 1883 (docs 118, 122). The first is interesting in that it is signed by Minilik even though it is between Italy and Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, identified in the Italian version as the supreme head of the Danākil, and in the Amharic as the great Adal chief. Of special interest is the single letter by *Weyzero Ṭaytu* to the queen of Italy (doc. 166).

A special feature of this volume is the large number of letters, amounting to thirty percent, written by the rulers of Afar and the Red Sea littoral and their representatives. Taking into account that a large number of rather insignificant letters by them were excluded, this shows to what extent letter-writing was an established custom among the Muslim elite of the Afar. The letters reflect the Italian and French colonial interests in the area as a stronghold in relations to the interior. Of these letters more than half are by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, the ruler of Awsa. They clearly reveal his powerful influence on the local rulers on the coast, but also on all relations between the coast and Shewa, his willingness to support European commercial and exploratory interests, as well as his strong opposition to giving up any of his territory. In addition to him the most important figure was Ḥamad La'ita, the Sultan of Gobad and probably the most significant ruler at the time in the Gulf of Djibouti. The letters reveal his close cooperation with Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and service to the Italians, as well as his hostility to Egyptian, British and French activities. Four agreements bear his signature, two with Italy and two with France (docs 157, 179, 194, 198). Except for the last, entitled "Donation", which is a rather strange document, they all focus on the protection of trade. The most important, the treaty with Italy, explicitly states that it should be ratified by Minilik, a ratification of which we have found no trace (doc. 194). The third Afar author, Burhān Muḥammad, was the Sultan of Raḥayta under whose authority lay the coast and islands around and to the south of Aseb up to the territory of Obok. The letters reveal his animosity towards Egyptian claims as well as the tensions with the Italians about the borders of the territory sold to them. Sultan Ḥamad Muḥammad of Tajura is the signatory to three somewhat suspect documents, a so-called treaty and two so called donations, all evidently drawn up in French and poorly or never translated into Arabic (docs 184, 190 and 198).

Among Ethiopian notables included in the volume are *Nigus* Tekle Haymanot, king of Gojjam, with four letters (7, 142, 143, 144), the first written before his appointment as king of Gojjam. All of them relate to his contact with the Italian explorers and the support gained from them for building the bridge across the Abbay river. *Ras* Alula is represented by 8 letters written to a number of European travellers and missionaries who were his friends or sought access to the

emperor. A letter preserved in the archives of the Swedish mission ([doc. 12](#)) shows that Alula, in spite of good relations with the missionaries, totally opposed any teaching that might make Orthodox Christians convert to Protestantism. *Ras Ar'aya* is represented with three letters. Two of them, written to the Spanish envoy of King Alfonso XII ([docs 72, 73](#)), are of great interest as they deal with the secret collaboration of *Ras Ar'aya* with the Egyptians and the role of the *nā'ib* of Arkiko acting on behalf of Emperor Yohannis. The two letters by *Ras Gobena* to the king of Italy and the President of France are simply acknowledgments of gifts received.

A few letters were written by emissaries, secretaries and agents of Yohannis, Minilik and Alula, either on their behalf or as more private communications, mainly in gratitude for gifts. They supply evidence of an evolving court bureaucracy slowly influenced by European standards. Most important are the five letters by *Azzazh Welde Şadiq*, minister at Minilik's court, two of which are addressed to King Umberto of Italy. *Lij Mirçha Werqê* and *Gebri'el Welde Gobena*, represented by one letter each, had studied abroad and knew English. *Bejirond Lewtê*, represented by two letters and signing as the treasurer of Minilik, was an active minister of the emperor. *Dej Agafari Tamrê Abba Sibsib*, commander of Minilik's rifle regiment, who signs his letter to King Umberto as *turk basha*, is otherwise unknown. Three letters were written by the brothers *Yoséf* and *Giyorgis Nigusê*, both agents of Minilik in his relations with the Italians, and two letters by *Gebre Abba Çhequn*, Alula's lieutenant.

A few letters included here were written by Church officials, mainly to the Coptic patriarch. A few of them relate to the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem, others to relations with the patriarchate. An interesting letter by *Abune Pëtros* ([doc. 85](#)) concerns an acquittal of seven local Ethiopians at Jenda, at least five of them belonging to the clergy. The reason is not stated, but may well have involved their collaboration with Catholic missionaries. Five letters from the archives of the Swedish mission give valuable insights into the views, experiences and activities of Ethiopian converts to Protestantism.

The documents are chiefly from the same sources as in previous volumes, that is the British, French and Italian official archives, with a clear dominance for the Italian archives because of the increased Italian colonial ambitions. Unfortunately, a number of important originals previously located in the Italian archives have since been misplaced or lost, and we have thus had to rely on contemporary translations. A small number of documents are from the official archives of Austria, Egypt and Germany. The archives of the Coptic patriarchate have still not been made accessible, but a few of its documents are produced from photographs made available to us from the collection of the late *Mirrit Butrus Ghali*. As in the previous volume, a number of documents come from the Ethiopian monastery in Jerusalem as well as from the Swedish Mission archives. Some documents are taken from publications by European travellers. A few very important letters are copied from *Hiruy Welde Sillasê*, *Tarike Negest*, and others from the edition of a chronicle of Yohannis IV edited by *Bairu Tafla*.

* * * * *

Compared to previous volumes, linguistic diversity has increased. *Gi'iz* is surprisingly used in a number of letters by Yohannis and others, for example in the letter by *Abune Pëtros* ([doc. 85](#)) and in one of Minilik's letters ([doc. 87](#)). Although Amharic dominates, almost thirty percent of the letters are in Arabic, a fact that reflects the importance of the rulers in Afar and on the coast. The increased use of European languages is also significant. French is gradually becoming an important language of diplomacy in Ethiopia. By contrast, English is only used in one letter and Italian in none. In addition there are a few letters in Swedish written by Protestant converts.

A number of treatises and conventions are bilingual or even trilingual, although the Arabic of the bilingual agreements on the coast often seems secondary and of little importance.

A special problem has been the translation of the many Arabic documents. In addition to poor preservation, this is in many cases due to rather poor handwriting in combination with poor orthography, incorrect grammar, the absence of punctuation and non-standard use of the language. Thus, the meaning is quite often obscure or ambiguous. In some cases, we have thus had to resort to translations made at the time. Wherever we have been able to check, these have, however, appeared to be reliable. The many agreements entered into with the Afar rulers form an exception, though; it seems clear that they were generally drawn up in the European languages and either only drafted in Arabic or later translated into Arabic with little concern for a correct Arabic version.

In concordance with previous volumes, Ethiopian titles have not been translated but appear in italics in transliteration with the exception of *nigus*, which has consistently been translated as king, and *aṣē*, translated as emperor. When used for a non-Ethiopian *ato* has, however, been translated as Mr. Since *Acta Aethiopica* is a publication of historical documents, the designation "Galla" is preserved as used in the documents, in spite of its derogatory connotations.

Finally, a note about calendars and dates. Dates are retained in their original form, with Ethiopian, Coptic, or Arabic names of months and with the years as indicated in the different calendars. Dates in the list, at the top of documents, and in the notes are all according to the Gregorian calendar.

Seals

With a few exceptions, noted below, the original documents are generally sealed, and we may thus assume that the documents that have only been found in copies or translations were sealed as well. The exceptions are, on the one hand, the letters from ordinary people, such as the Protestant converts and royal servants of less distinction, and on the other a number of letters from Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and local rulers on the coast, who normally sealed their letters. The seals used during the period covered by this volume of *Acta Aethiopica* represent an ongoing standardization already visible in the previous volume.¹

Yohannis, the ruling emperor, used two seals, both introduced in 1879. Both of these are bilingual Gi'iz and Arabic and thus use two different references for his nation, *Ītyopya* (Ethiopia) and *Ḥabasha* (Abyssinia), here regarded as synonymous. The first seal was introduced to emphasize that Yohannis had defeated the invading Egyptian army. The traditional lion holds a cross in one of his paws, and the legend includes the statement: “the cross has defeated the tribe of Isma’el (*mesqel mo’a negede isma’el* and in Arabic *al-ṣalīb ghalaba ‘umma ismā’il*)”. Below the lion the year 1864, the year of Yohannis’ coronation according to the Ethiopian calendar, is written in Arabic numerals. Though the Ethiopians had literally defeated the “nation of [Khedive] Ismā’il”, Yohannis clearly wanted to convey this in religious terms: Christianity as opposed to Islam or – in Old Testament terms – Israel as opposed to Ishmael. Both the words and the cross in the paw of the lion bear witness to this. The seal is used in all letters to the European powers, but only occasionally in other letters. That circumstance underlines what we know from the content of his letters, namely that it was when addressing European rulers that Yohannis was eager to emphasize his role as the defender of Christianity. In his letters to Ethiopians as well as to the khedive (with one exception, [doc. 173](#)), we find the simple seal with the bilingual legend “Yohannis, King of Kings of Ethiopia (*niguse negest ze-ityopya* and *mālik al-mulūk al-ḥabasha*)” and a cross between the Arabic and the Ethiopian text, as well as above the crown of the lion.

It is only in the first letter by Minilik in this volume ([doc. 10](#)) that we find the seal he had acquired as early as 1870 and used throughout the 1870s (see *Acta* III). All subsequent letters are sealed with a seal of a more traditional Ethiopian style, although with the same motto: “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed (*mo’a anbessa zeimme negede yihuda*)”. Although a quotation from the book of Revelation in the New Testament, the mention of “the tribe of Judah” called to mind the claims of the *Kibre Negest* according to which the Ethiopian kingship originated with Minilik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The contemporary Shewan ruler was thus the second Minilik, a designation he himself begins to use, although not consistently, from 1882 (see [doc. 78](#) with note). Though Minilik had been obliged to acknowledge Yohannis as his suzerain as early as 1878, he continued to use the seal and rule his kingdom autonomously, following his own foreign policy and concluding international treaties.

¹ For seals of Ethiopian dignitaries see Estelle Sohier & Serge Tornay, *Empreintes du temps*, Centre français des études éthiopiennes, Addis Abeba 2007.



1. King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'il. 1864



2. King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Abyssinia



3. Minyilik, King of Kings. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed



4. Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed



5. The seal of King Tekle Haymanot, appointed by Yohannis, King of Zion



6. The seal of Weyzero Ṭaytu



7. The seal of *Nebure id Tekle Giyorgīs*



8. The seal of *Ras Alula*



9. The seal of *Ras Alula* who is the *turk basha*



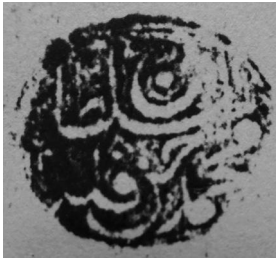
10. The seal of *Bejirond*
Lewtē, anbesa bē?



11. *Azzazh Welde Şadiq*



12. The seal of *Turk Basha*
Tamrē.



13. *Sultan Muḥammad*
Ḥanfari (Maḥammad
Ḥanfadhē)



14. *Abū Bakr*



15. *Burhan Muḥammad*



16. *Ḥamad La'ita*

Note on orthography

There is no widely accepted simple system of transliteration from Ethiopic to Latin script, and many conventional spellings of the names of persons and places are by no means well-established. The system used for Ethiopic script in *Acta Aethiopica* is fairly simple, containing only three diacritical marks: a dash for two of the vowels, a dot for glottalized consonants, and an apostrophe to indicate a glottal stop where it is pronounced by at least some Amharic speakers; thus Ya'iqob and Gi'iz, but Alī (not 'Alī or 'Alī). The consonants or combinations of consonants have their normal English pronunciation, *g* (as in *get*) standing for ገ, *j* (as in *jam*) for ጃ, *zh* (as *s* in *pleasure*) for ዝ, and *q* (glottalized *k*) for ቀ. The seven vowels are transliterated *e*, *u*, *ī*, *a*, *ē*, *i* and *o*, and pronounced approximately as in *bet*, *rule*, *machine*, *father*, *touché* (in French), *fit* and *lord*. When the vowel is not pronounced in the sixth order, the *i* is omitted in the transliteration. In view of the ambivalent use of the labialized consonants, we have decided in favour of the simpler forms Gojjam and Gonder, as well as Goshu and Mekonnin. In cases where some authors have consistently used the labialized consonants, we have allowed both forms, e.g. Gwela and Gola. For a full presentation of the system, see Sven Rubenson, *Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann 1976), pp. 413ff. In addition to this system and in order to achieve a better representation of names in Tigrinya, we have added a dot under the letter “h” where it represents a harsh “h”, for example in Ḥalḥal, and an inverted apostrophe to represent a clearly pronounced glottal stop, as for example in 'Aylet.

The system is applied as consistently as possible for all names, as well as titles and other Ethiopian words written in Latin script, except for those geographical names where the English spelling is now practically uniform and has, in most cases, resulted in a distinctly different pronunciation (Abyssinia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Massawa). In order to create consistency, place names are generally transliterated according to the Amharic spelling even in documents written in Arabic. Thus, Aseb and not 'Asab. Even where Ethiopian authors have transliterated their own names into Latin script differently, we have consistently used our own transliteration, thus for example Minilik for Menilik (docs 88, 159, 175, 176) and Gebri'el Welde Gobena for Gabriel Welde Gobano.

As for names of persons and places in Arabic, the transliteration follows the established system of modern standard Arabic used, for example, in the *Cambridge History of Islam* in spite of the fact that the Arabic in the documents may often refer to Egyptian or Sudanese Arabic, for which a different transliteration would have been more appropriate in order to convey the local pronunciation. Since Arab names were also used by non-Arabic speakers, this unfortunately leads to what some may regard as annoying inconsistencies in the spelling of names of Arabic origin. We thus have both Aḥmad and Ahmed, 'Alī and Alī, Muḥammad, Maḥammad and Mehammed, and Ibrāhīm and Ībrahīm. For the ruler of Awsa, who in Amharic documents (and the previous volume of *Acta Aethiopica*) appears as Mehammed Hanferī and in Arabic documents, including his seal, as Muḥammad Ḥanferī, we have decided to write Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, in order to respect his native Afar language. In fact, this concession to different orthographies in different languages is no different from the practice of writing Muhammad for an Arab but Mehmed for a Turk, or Butrus for an Egyptian but Petros (Pētros) for an Ethiopian, not to mention Peter for an Englishman. This principle does not solve all cases, but it does help establish some consistency.

Glossary

<i>Abba</i>	Father, monk (also used in <i>noms de guerre</i> or horse names)
<i>Abbatē</i>	Father, priest, monk
<i>Abun, abune</i>	Our father, bishop, metropolitan of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
<i>Aleqa</i>	Chief, head, vicar of a church
<i>Amba</i>	Flat-topped mountain, mountain fortress
<i>Anbā</i>	Father, bishop
<i>Aṣṣē, aṭṣē</i>	Emperor
<i>Ato</i>	Master, Mr.
<i>Azzazh</i>	Chief, commander, supervisor
<i>Balambaras</i>	Officer, sergeant
<i>Bejirond</i>	Treasurer, chief of storehouse, “Finance Minister”
<i>Bir Ṣāḥib</i>	Lord, master
<i>Blatta</i>	Honorific title for achievement in learning and literature
<i>Blattēngēta</i>	More prominent honorific title for achievement in learning and literature
<i>Debtera</i>	Chorister, scribe (not ordained member of the clergy)
<i>Degmaj</i>	The second, added by King Minilik to his name in 1882
<i>Dej agafarī</i>	Imperial guard
<i>Dejjazmach, dejjach</i>	“Commander of the entrance”, general, governor
<i>Ferenj</i>	Foreigner(s), European(s) (by implication Roman Catholic)
<i>Gezh</i>	Ruler, Viceroy, Governor
<i>Grazmach</i>	Commander
<i>Ḥajj</i>	Honorific title for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>Ḥākim</i>	Governor, ruler
<i>Hijra</i>	Year of the emigration from Mecca to Medina (632 C.E.)
<i>Itegē</i>	Queen, title of the consort of an Ethiopian monarch
<i>Khawāja (Amharic hawaja)</i>	Mr. (used in particular for Europeans)
<i>Lij</i>	Lit. “Child, son”, honorific title, mostly used for young members of the higher aristocracy and royalty
<i>Līqe pappasat</i>	Archbishop, patriarch
<i>Mekarī līq</i>	scholarly advisor
<i>Mel’ake Mihiret</i>	Lit. “Lord of Mercy”, honorary title of chief priest
<i>Mel’ake Selam</i>	Lit. “Lord of Peace”, honorary title of chief priest
<i>Memhir, memmirē</i>	Master, teacher, abbot

<i>Meridazmach</i>	Provincial ruler (of Shewa), commander
<i>Merīgēta</i>	Scholarly chief priest, director of <i>debteras</i> , mentor
<i>Muḥāfith</i>	Governor
<i>Musē</i>	Term of address for Europeans, from “Monsieur”
<i>Nā’ib</i>	Deputy, agent; title given by the Turks to the Ethiopian chief on the mainland opposite Massawa
<i>Negede</i>	Tribe
<i>Nibure’id, nebure id</i>	Head of the church of St. Mary of Aksum and administrator of the territory belonging to the church
<i>Nigus</i> (Arab. <i>nikus</i>)	King
<i>Niguse negest</i>	King of Kings
<i>Nigist</i>	Queen
<i>Nigiste negestat</i>	Queen of Queens
<i>Ḥappas</i>	Bishop
<i>Pasha</i> (Amharic <i>basha</i>)	Sir, honorific title for high civil or military official
<i>Qēs</i>	Priest
<i>Qumuṣ</i>	Chief priest
<i>Ras</i>	“Head”, governor, commander, lord
<i>Ṣāhib</i>	Lord, master
<i>Shaykh</i> (Amharic <i>shēh</i>)	Chief of an Arab clan or village; religious official
<i>Shifta</i>	Rebel, outlaw
<i>Shum</i>	District or village chief, in Tigray provincial ruler
<i>Ṣirag Maserē</i>	Chamberlain
<i>Tabot</i>	Replica of Tablets of Law
<i>Turk basha</i>	Honorific title
<i>Wakīl</i> (Amharic <i>wekīl</i>)	Agent, representative
<i>Wālī</i>	Governor, ruler
<i>Wazīr, wuzarā</i>	High government official, minister of state in Muslim countries
<i>Weyzero</i>	Mrs., Madame, lady
<i>Yumra</i>	Tribe, clan

List of abbreviations

AAPA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Bonn
<i>Acta</i>	<i>Acta Aethiopica</i>
AEA	Archives of the Eparchy of Adigrat, Adigrat
AECF	Correspondance politique, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AECPC	Correspondance politique des consuls, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AED	Archives diplomatiques du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AEMD	Mémoires et Documents, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
ANOM.OI	Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer, Océan Indien
<i>AP.DD</i>	<i>Atti Parlamentari, Documenti Diplomatici</i>
ASMAE, AE	Archivio Storico dell Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Archivio Eritrea, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome
ASMAI	Archivio Storico dell’ex Ministero dell’Africa Italiana, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome
ASSGI	Archivio Storico, Società Geografica Italiana, Rome
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
<i>BSGI</i>	<i>Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana</i>
<i>Chronicle</i>	Bairu Tafla, <i>A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannis IV (1872–89)</i> , Äthiopistische Forschungen, Bd 1, Wiesbaden 1977
Dayr al-Sultan	Archives of the Dayr al-Sultan, Ethiopian monastery Jerusalem
<i>Diplomatic History</i>	Richard Caulk, “ <i>Between the Jaws of Hyenas</i> ”. <i>A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia (1876–1896)</i> , Äthiopistische Forschungen 60, Wiesbaden 2002
<i>EAE</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Aethiopica</i> Vols 1–5 (eds Siegbert Uhlig and Baye Yimam), Wiesbaden 2003–2014
EFS	Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens arkiv, Uppsala
ENA	National Archives, Cairo
<i>Ethiopia and Germany</i>	Bairu Tafla, <i>Ethiopia and Germany: Cultural, Political and Economic Relations, 1871–1936</i> , Äthiopistische Forschungen, Bd 5, Wiesbaden 1981
<i>Evangelical Pioneers</i>	Gustav Arén, <i>Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus</i> , Stockholm 1978
FO	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London
Ghali Collection	Photographs of Ethiopian correspondence made by Mirrit Butrus Ghali and preserved in the library of the Société d’archéologie Copte, Cairo

Hertslet	Edward Hertslet, <i>Map of Africa by Treaty</i> , London 1894
HHS	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
<i>L'Italia in Africa</i>	<i>L'Italia in Africa: Serie Storica, volume primo, Etiopia-Mar Rosso</i> , I–III (a cura di Carlo Giglio), Rome 1959–1960
<i>Meine Mission</i>	Gerhard Rohlfs, <i>Meine Mission nach Abessinien: Auf Befehl Sr. Maj. des Deutschen Kaisers im Winter 1880/81 unternommen</i> , Leipzig 1883
<i>Survival</i>	Sven Rubenson, <i>The Survival of Ethiopian Independence</i> , London 1976
<i>Tarike Negest</i>	Hiruy Welde Sillasē, <i>Tarike Negest</i> [Addis Abeba 1936]
<i>Trattati</i>	<i>Trattati, Convenzioni, Accordi, Protocolli Ed Altri Documenti Relativi All'Africa 1825–1906</i> , vol. I, Rome 1906
<i>Wichale</i>	Sven Rubenson, <i>Wichale XVIII: The Attempt to Establish a Protectorate over Ethiopia</i> , Addis Abeba 1964
<i>Yohannis IV</i>	Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, <i>Yohannis IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography</i> , Oxford 1975

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1. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm to Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux [Jan. 1880]
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12. Alula Ingida Qubī to Erik Emil Hedenström 18 June 1880
13. Convention between Burhān Muḥammad and Giuseppe Sapeto 20 Sept. 1880
14. Burhān Muḥammad to Giuseppe Sapeto [20] Sept. 1880
15. Minilik II to Antonio Cecchi 6 Oct. 1880
16. Minilik II to Onorato Caetani 16 Oct. (?) 1880
17. Minilik II to Jules Grévy 1 Nov. 1880
18. Minilik II to Albert Delagenière 1 Nov. 1880
19. Ratification by ‘Abdallah Shahīm of 15 May 1880 convention 5 Nov. 1880
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21. Tekle Giyorgīs to Kirillus V 15 Nov. [1880?]
22. Alula Ingida Qubī to Gerhard Rohlfs 23 Nov. 1880
23. Alula Ingida Qubi to Gerhard Rohlfs [Nov. 1880]
24. Lewṭē Zewde to Gerhard Rohlfs [Nov. 1880]
25. Alula Ingida Qubi to Achille Raffray 10 Dec. 1880
26. Gebre Igzi’ to Kirillus V 15 Dec. [1880?]
27. Yohannis IV to Minilik II 16 Dec. 1880
28. Gebru *Abba* Ḥequn to Achille Raffray 16 Jan. [1881]
29. Yūsif al-Anṭūnī to Kirillus V 22 Jan. 1881
30. Yohannis IV to Wilhelm I 17 Feb. 1881
31. Yohannis IV to Otto von Bismarck 17 Feb. 1881
32. Yohannis IV, power of attorney for Gerhard Rohlfs 17 Feb. 1881
33. Yohannis IV to Gerhard Rohlfs 23 Feb. 1881
34. Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Jules Grévy 6 March 1881
35. Alula Ingida Qubī to Kirillus V 7 March [1881?]

36.	Minilik II to Umberto I	30 March 1881
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62.	Yohannis IV to Victoria	4 Nov. 1881
63.	Yohannis IV to Jules Grévy	4 Nov. 1881
64.	Yohannis IV to Minilik II	6 Dec. 1881
65.	Lewṭē Zewde to Kirillus V	9 Jan. 1882
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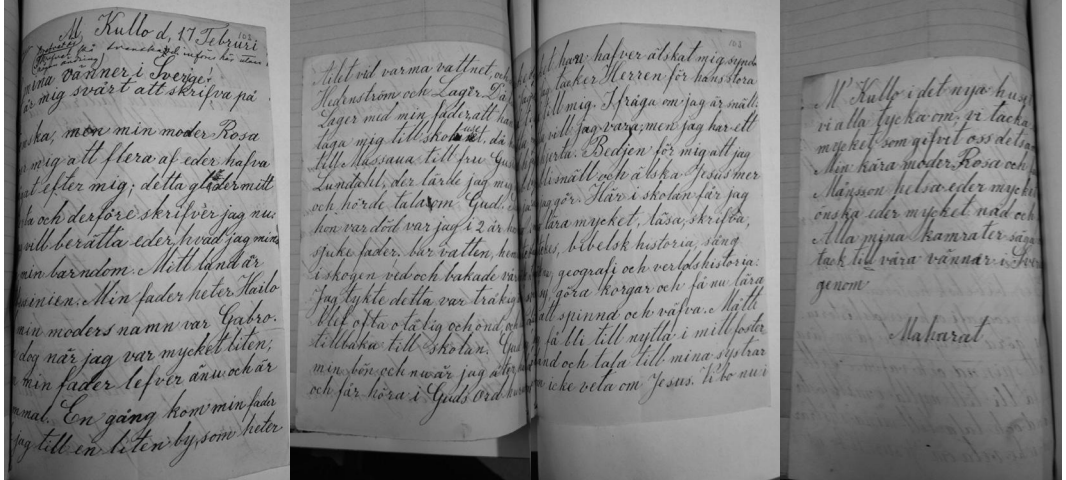
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133. Alula Ingida Qubī to Augustus Blandy Wylde	[June (?) 1883]
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135. Gobena Daḥī to Umberto I	3 July 1883
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138. Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini	21 Aug. 1883
139. Yohannis IV to Umberto I	1 Oct. 1883
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141. Ḥamad La'īta to Giovanni Branchi	27 Oct. 1883
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THE TEXTS

Mihiret Haylu to “friends in Sweden”, 17 Feb. [1880]



Imkullu (M'Kullu), 17 February

To my friends in Sweden.

It is hard for me to write in Swedish, but my mother Rosa says to me that many of you have asked about me; this gladdens my heart, and therefore I now write.

I want to tell you what I remember from my childhood. My country is Abyssinia. My father is called Haylu, and my mother's name was Gabro. She died when I was very young, but my father is still alive, and he is old. My father and I once came to a small village called Aylet at the warm waters, and Hedenström and Lager were there.

Lager spoke with my father [and told him] that he should bring me to the schoolhouse. Then I came to Massawa to Mrs. Gustava Lundahl. There I learnt Swedish and heard about God. When she was dead, I lived for two years with my sick father, carried water, collected firewood in the forest and baked our bread. I found this tedious and often became impatient and angry and longed to go back to the school. God heard my prayer, and now I am back here and can hear from the word of God how much he has loved me, a sinner. I thank the Lord for his great mercy towards me. You ask if I am good; this I want to be, but I have a wicked heart. Pray for me that I may become good and love Jesus more than I do. Here in school I learn much: reading, writing, catechism, biblical history, singing, arithmetic, geography, and world history. We sew, make baskets and now learn how to spin and weave.

May I be of use in my country and speak to my sisters who do not know about Jesus. We now live in Imkullu (M’Kullu) in the new house, which we all like. We thank you very much, who have given this to us. My dear mother Rosa and father Månsson send many greetings and wish you much grace and peace.

Also all my friends say thanks to our friends in Sweden, through Mihiret.

EFS, E I 24 no. 133, Swedish original. The letter was forwarded to Sweden by Mrs. Rosa Månsson, the head-mistress of the school opened by the Swedish mission in Massawa in 1876 and moved to Imkullu in 1878, together with translations from Amharic of five more letters with a covering letter, also dated 17 February.

The writer was one of the girls taught in the school in Imkullu near Massawa at this time. Mihirit’s father was *Aleqa* Haylu, a Gojjamē who had served as Tēwodros’ secretary and later became a co-worker of the Swedish mission at Massawa (see *Acta* III, no. 80). Mihirit was entrusted by him to the Swedish missionary Gustava Lundahl (née von Platen) in early 1872 at the age of ten, after her father had become a friend of the Swedish missionaries Lager and Hedenström at Aylet in 1871. After Gustava Lundahl’s death less than a year later, she had to go back to take care of her father, and it was only in 1880, most probably after her father’s death, that she was able to return to the Swedish mission at Imkullu. Her command of Swedish and her handwriting are outstanding, especially as she had no formal education in the language. The school she joined had been opened in Massawa in 1876 and moved to Imkullu in 1878. In 1881, Mihirit married Onesimus Nesib and accompanied him on two missions to the Oromo area. She died at Imkullu in the epidemics of 1888. The letter is included as a specimen of letters by Ethiopian pupils in mission schools written for circulation among the supporters of the European missions in Europe. See *Evangelical Pioneers*, pp. 218, n. 36, 250–251.

Convention between Burhān Muḥammad and the Rubattino Co., 15 March 1880

Shaykh Duran, 15 May 1880, Glory be to God.

Be it notified to those concerned, that this day, the 15th of the month of March 1880 and the 3rd day of the month of Rabī' al-ākhir of the year 1297 according to the Muslim era, I, Burhān Muḥammad, Sultan of Raḥayta, sovereign, absolute master and proprietor of the territory surrounding the village of Aseb, of Italian property, by virtue of a traditional and uncontested right declare that I stipulate, deliberately and with complete freedom (lit. spontaneity), on my own account and on that of my successors on one hand and on the other in favour of Professor Cav. Giuseppe Sapeto on behalf of the Rubattino Co. of Genoa, of which he is the legal representative, in the best of faith and under solemn oath the following contract, which is to be legally valid as if it had been drawn up by the public notary.

I, the above-mentioned Burhān Muḥammad, declare that I sell, am [now] selling, to the above-mentioned Cav. Giuseppe Sapeto in his capacity of procurator of the Rubattino Co. all the islands, none excluded, situated in the big bay of Aseb and between the parallels of *Ras Sintyar* and *Ras Lumah*, among which the principal ones are the islands of Fatmah, Darmabah, Makawah, Halem, Delkos, Arukia etc., and all the littoral extending between the above-mentioned *Ras Lumah* and *Ras Sintyar* together with a piece of the mainland that forms a territorial zone two nautical miles inland from the seashore along the whole coastline from the bay of Būya to Shaykh Duran and a territorial zone four nautical miles wide inland from the seashore along the whole coastline from Shaykh Duran to *Ras Sintyar*. And by this sale I renounce for me and my successors all rights of property and of sovereignty, investing the above-mentioned buyer with both these rights with the consequent right to raise the national Italian flag in the places sold and declaring that I am determined to respect and to make respected the sale itself at all times and places by all possible means. Professor Cav. Giuseppe Sapeto, as procurator of the Rubattino Co., undertakes, with reference to the sale that is the object of this document and in the name of the company itself, to pay the sum of 13,000 (thirteen thousand) thalers, of which I, Burhān Muḥammad, sultan as above, declare that I have received, on account and as an advance payment, the sum of 4,000 (four thousand) thalers, and it is agreed that the balance is to be paid as follows: 3,000 (three thousand) thalers after three months from today and the rest, 6,000 (six thousand) thalers, within a year from the date of this second payment. Finally, the contracting parties recognize that the present document must not in any way invalidate agreements that may prior to the present stipulations have been made by Messrs Rubattino & Co. and their representative, Professor Cav. Sapeto, with other holders of rights or interests, and they further declare that no contestation can or should be made as to the form in which the present document has been drawn up.

In faith whereof we, the contracting parties, sign with our own hands in the presence of the witnesses indicated below, and swear solemnly upon the Qurān and the Gospel respectively to keep the agreement stipulated above. So help us God.

Made and signed at Shaykh Duran (*sic*) the year, month and day as above.

Burhān Muḥammad, Sultan of Raḥayta; Giuseppe Sapeto, Procurator of the Rubattino Co. Witnesses: Giuseppe Bienenfeld Rolph; G. M. Giulietti; Saʿīd ʿAwīḍān Saʿīd; Massaud Nahbur.

Trattati, no. 12, pp. 42–43, Italian text. No Arabic version is preserved, and it is unclear if there ever was one. Cf. [doc. 45](#). Burhān Muḥammad signed as *wazīr* of Sultan Dīnī Muḥammad in 1862, but became the ruler of Raḥayta before 1870 (see *Acta* III, doc. 35). He died on 22 November 1883 (see *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3, p. 31).

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūhannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864.

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach Queen Victoria, by the power of God [queen] of the United Kingdom [of] Great Britain [and] Ireland, defender of the faith, queen of India and all its dependencies.

I received your letter with its seal, which was written with good intent. I was extremely happy seeing this esteemed letter. The dignitaries and noblemen, after seeing this esteemed and honoured letter of yours, were also extremely happy. It is not only recently that you have done your best for my government. Did it not begin when Lord Napier came to fight Tēwodros 11 years ago today? Is it not because you gave me rifles, cannon and ammunition that I became a king under God? And now since I am your loyal son see to it that the issue is settled without delay.

As for Massawa and all the surrounding territories they are being occupied by force and deceit as they are not the countries and properties of the Turks. They are the property of the government of Ethiopia. And now see to it that they open an outlet for me so that the merchants can trade as in the past and not be hindered. Still all the territories which are around Ethiopia that they have taken by force, I will never hand over identifying them with my seal. However, as for what they claim, that they are attacked and mistreated, send me good arbitrators from your government who will hear my and their complaints.

Earlier when you told me, “Live in peace and love with the governments that are your neighbours”, I listened to your words and lived in peace and there is nothing that I have neglected. But the Turks claiming that they have progressed in knowledge felt stronger and came and fought me twice though I did not treat them badly. And Christian blood was shed without any offence [having been committed]. But since God is the God of the oppressed and not of the oppressor, he gave me power without any argument. Again, they misled a man called Welde Mīka'el, my servant from Ḥamasēn, for a lot of money and had him desert me. Twice they exterminated the surrounding people, not sparing even women and children. Let alone Ethiopians, finding a few Europeans they slew them all.

Believing that they would not let an Ethiopian get a passage, I sent an Englishman called “colonel” who lived with me, writing a letter to the English government indicating the occupation of my country and my being mistreated. They killed the messenger at Massawa and having torn up the letter they threw it into the sea. And now be informed that unless I found a town on the shore of the sea, so that Abyssinian and English traders [can] meet and trade with each other, it will be as before.

When the ruler (*gezh*) of Egypt, Tawfiq *Pasha*, sent a messenger, an Englishman called Gordon *Pasha*, I received him well with respect and honour. But he insulted and humiliated me saying “You are weak and have no power. I will bring an army along with me and fight you.” After this, expecting that he would bring along an army with him and fight me, I armed myself, declared war and waited. However, I do not intend to start a war before I have received the reply to the letter I have written to you.

Written in the camp of Guba Lefto of the district of Yeju, 22 Mīyazyā in the year of grace 1872.

FO 95/739, no. 216, Amharic original and English translation. The same day as the above, a letter was written to the British government (doc. 6 below). The letter mentioned in the text did reach the consul-general in Cairo (FO 78/2632). The Englishman “called colonel” whom Yohannis sent as his messenger to England but who died at Massawa was John Kirkham, a member of the British expedition to Meqdela 1867–68 who had remained behind and entered the service of the Ethiopian ruler. See *EAE* 3, p. 409. Welde Mīka'el Selomon had been appointed governor of Ḥamasēn by Yohannis but had revolted and joined the Egyptians who had made him *ras*. See *EAE* 5, pp. 1105–1107. On the role of *Dejjazmach* Welde Mīka'el see further *Survival*, pp. 326–327, 333–335, 337–341.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864.

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach all the princes and notables, the ministers of the government and advisers to Queen Victoria.

I have received your letter. I am very pleased by your efforts for the prosperity of my kingdom and my people. But the question of the Turks! Earlier, when I went to fight [my] enemies and to expand my country, they came behind my back and took my country. When I wrote and sent a letter to the kings [of Europe] telling what they did to me, they tore up the letter and threw it into the sea. After this, they came up to my capital (lit. my house) and shed the blood of all the Christians.

Secondly, when I appointed and sent my servant *Dejjach Welde Mīka'el* to Ḥamasēn, they misled him with much money. By giving him many guns, they exterminated my people twice, not sparing women and children. Let alone Ethiopians, he slaughtered the few Europeans who were found amongst them. Even now, they have stationed their army in the centre of my country, in Bogos (Moges).

The ruler (*gezh*) of Egypt is lying when he says that he did not commit acts of aggression (lit. evil) but of friendship. At this time also, he is still in possession of all my country, of [all the lands] around Ethiopia. He has not restored them to me, and he has closed the ports to me. In addition to this the ruler of Egypt sent an Englishman called Gordon *Pasha* asking me to make peace with him. I agreed and welcomed him properly, honouring him. But he spoke evil words to me. He insulted me, saying, "In any case, what strength do you have? I shall bring an army and attack you." Since his messenger told me so, I gathered my army [and] waited. Right away he sent a telegram accusing me of imprisoning him, when I had received him with honour. As for me, how can I fight before I send letters to the kings and [have their] replies?

Written at the camp of Guba Lefto, in the land of Yejjū on the 22nd of Mīyazya in the year of grace 1872.

FO 95/739, no. 217, Amharic/Gi'iz original and English translation. For the persons and circumstances see the footnote to the previous document. It may be noted that Emperor Yohannis is much more restricted in what he writes to the government than to the queen herself.

Adal Tesemma to *Abba* Rago [April 1880]

Message from *Ras* Adal, chief of chiefs and prince of Gojjam, to the king of Gēra.

Abba Rago, how are you? I am well, by the grace of God, and my country, my cattle and my army are also well.

I have heard from some merchants that two *ferenj* had come to your kingdom. One of them is dead, the other one I know that you are keeping as a prisoner since a long time. I also know that you deprived them of all their merchandise and made them suffer much. I forgive you for everything and do not accuse you. As for the one who is dead – to the distress and vexation of you and of your relatives, the kings – God has willed it and there is nothing more to be said about it.

As for the one who is still alive, I desire and wish that you, as soon as you have received this letter of mine, concern yourself with this and make an agreement with the kings of Jimma, of Kefa, Goma, Limmu and Gumma, and send him to me with not even a thorn getting into his feet. Take away from him, if you like, what he has left, it matters little, but send this *ferenj* back to me, for I need him, and without excuses. If you send him to me, we shall be friends, and what grows in my country and not in yours I shall send to you, and what grows in your country but not in mine you shall send to me. If you refuse, I shall come and take him by force and close the roads and markets to your people, and we shall no longer be related.

Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa*, vol. II, Rome, 1885, pp. 548–549, Italian text which is very clearly a translation from Amharic. No Amharic original has, however, been found. *Ras* Adal Tesemma was the ruler of Gojjam since 1874, and in January 1881 appointed *Nigus* with the name Tekle Haymanot. The addressee, here nicknamed *Abba* Rago, was in reality the queen of Gēra, Genne Gummiti. The two *ferenj* refer to Antonio Cecchi and Giovanni Chiarini who had been imprisoned by the queen in February 1879 on an expedition to the equatorial lakes. It is difficult to say when the news of Chiarini's death (5 October 1879) and Cecchi's captivity reached the outside world, but by April 1880 it was known *inter alia* through the above letter from *Ras* Adal. It was, however, only at the end of August 1881 that *Ras* Adal was able to have Cecchi liberated, and only in October that he could join Pietro Antonelli, Alfred Ilg and finally Gustavo Bianchi north of the Abbay.

Whether “without excuses”, “senza scuse” in the Italian text, refers to the writer, “I feel no need to excuse myself”, or the receiver, “don't bother about excusing yourself”, is not clear.

Declaration by Afar chiefs re. territory at Aseb, 15 May 1880

Glory be to God.

Today, the 15th of the month of May of the year 1880 according to the Christian era, and the 6th day of the month of Jumāda al-ākħira of the year 1297 according to the Muslim era, we Ḥasan Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm Aḥmad and Rāj Aḥmad, deliberately and of our own free will (lit. with complete spontaneity), in virtue of a traditional and uncontested right and with a view to an increase of the economical prosperity of our country and to future benefits for ourselves and the Danākil tribes inhabiting the same territory, benefits deriving from the creation of new working means, declare that we irrevocably cede, as if sold by us, the territory of Bar Assoli and that of the locality of Behtah, both situated north of Beylul, our exclusive and uncontested property, to Professor Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto as representative of the Rubattino Co. of Genoa, for him to have at his disposal and use as he pleases as a true owner with no possibility for us to intervene in any way or to claim any sort of compensation. We, the undersigned Ḥasan Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm Aḥmad and Rāj Aḥmad, recognize that the present document of cession is legally valid as if drawn up by the public notary. In faith whereof we sign with our own hands and in the presence of the witnesses indicated below, solemnly swearing upon the Qurān, and undertake to keep valid the integrity of the present cession of the localities of Bar Assoli and Behtah at all times and places with all possible means.

So help us God.

Made and signed at Aseb, the year, month and day as above.

Ḥasan Aḥmad,
Ibrāhīm Aḥmad,
Rāj Aḥmad.

Sa'īd 'Awīḏān confirms the above
Ja'dar confirms the above
Giuseppe M. Giulietti.

I, the undersigned, declare that the cession of the localities of Bar Assoli and Behtah made to me by the brothers Ḥasan, Ibrāhīm and Rāj is subject to the conditions stipulated by me as representative of the Rubattino Co. of Genoa with the parties involved for all purchases made by me in the bay of Aseb. In faith whereof, etc.

Professor Giuseppe Sapeto,
representative [of] the Rubattino Co.

Aseb 15th May 1880.

Seen for legalization of the signatures on board SS. Avviso Italiano Esploratore, the Bay of Aseb 15th May 1880. The officer in charge of port consular authorities.

Seal: SS. picket Esploratore.

Seen for registration at the Royal Consulate of Italy in Aden. Aden, 28th May 1880. The Royal Consul Bienenfeld Rolph. Seal: Royal Consulate of Italy at Aden.

ASMAL, no file or identification number; Italian, signatures of Afar chiefs in Arabic inserted; printed in *Trattati*, pp. 47–48. As sultans of Aseb, Ḥasan and Ibrāhīm Aḥmad signed the contract with Sapeto on 15 November 1869 (*Acta* III, doc. 22) as well as the contract of 11 March 1870 (*ibid.*, doc. 43). Sa'īd 'Awīḏān, on whose boat the first contract was signed, later became the interpreter and agent of the Italians in Aseb. As with these earlier contracts, it is highly unlikely that an Arabic version ever existed. The third of the signatures is spelled 'Raghe' in the Italian text, which probably represents Egyptian pronunciation.

Convention between Afar chiefs and the Rubattino Co., 15 May 1880

Aseb, 15th May 1880

Glory be to God.

Be those concerned notified that this day, the 15th of the month of May of the year 1880 according to the Christian era and the 6th day of the month of Jumādā-al-ākhirā of the year 1297 according to the Muslim era, we, Ḥasan Aḥmad, by virtue of the traditional and uncontested right, declare that we stipulate, deliberately and with complete freedom (lit. spontaneity), on our own account and on that of our successors and the parties involved, and especially ‘Abdallāh Shaḥīm, of whom we are the legitimate representatives, on one hand, and in favour of Professor Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto, on behalf of the Rubattino Co. of Genoa, of which he is the legal representative, on the other, in the best of faith and under solemn oath the following contract, which is to be legally valid as if it had been drawn up by the public notary.

We, Ḥasan Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm Aḥmad and Rāj Aḥmad, declare that we have sold, [and are] selling, to the aforementioned Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto in his quality of procurator of the Rubattino Co. the island of Sennabor as well as all the region on the mainland between *Ras* Darmah and *Ras* Lumah; for an extension of six nautical miles inland from the seashore. And by this sale we renounce for us, for our successors, and for the parties involved, all right of property and sovereignty, investing the above-mentioned buyer with both these rights with the consequent right to raise the national Italian flag in the places sold, and declare that we are determined to respect and to make respected the sale itself at all times and places by every possible means.

Professor Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto, as procurator of the Rubattino Co., undertakes, with reference to the sale that is the object of this document and in the name of the company itself, to pay the sum of 1,500 (one thousand five hundred) thalers, of which we, Ḥasan Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm Aḥmad and Rāj Aḥmad, declare that we have received two hundred (200) as an advance of payment on the day of 22 April 1880 of the Christian era and 12 Jumada-al-awal 1297 of the Muslim era, 300 (three hundred) thalers at the moment of the signing of the contract, and the remaining one thousand (1,000) thalers within a year from today.

And, in order to satisfy a wish expressed by the above-mentioned sellers, Professor Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto, as procurator of the Rubattino Co., undertakes, as a gracious concession, for his own part as well as that of the Rubattino Co. and that of other holders of rights or interests, to leave full and complete freedom of action to the Danākīl tribes living in the territory purchased according to the document with regard to habits, customs, practices and traditions, in so far as such freedom of action does not in any way interfere with the legitimate rights and interests of the above-mentioned Rubattino Co. or other holders of rights or interests.

Finally, the contracting parties recognize that the present document must not in any way invalidate agreements that prior to the present stipulations may have been made by Messrs Rubattino & Co.

and their representative Professor Cavalier Giuseppe Sapeto with other holders of rights or interests; and they further declare that no objection can or should be made as to the form in which the present document has been drawn up.

In faith whereof we, the contracting parties, sign with our own hands in the presence of the witnesses indicated below and swear solemnly upon the Qurān and the Gospel respectively to keep the agreement stipulated above.

So help us God.

Made and signed at Aseb the year, month and day as above.

Ḥasan Aḥmad
Ibrāhīm Aḥmad
Rāj Aḥmad

Giuseppe Sapeto
Representative of the Rubattino Co.

Witnesses:

‘Abdallāh Muḥammad, Sa’īd ‘Awīḍān,
Giuseppe Maria Giulietti, Ja’dar.

Trattati, pp. 44–46. The Italian original of this document is reported to have been located in ASMAI, but we have not been able to find it. This seems to be a revised and elaborated version of the previous document including a reference to ‘Abdallāh Shaḥīm, who ratified the convention only in November 1880 (see [doc. 19](#)), a much more precise definition of the area sold, including the island Sennabor, the right to raise the Italian flag, and detailed accounts of payments and previous agreements. This long version was probably produced for the Italian legal system and was never sealed or signed by the sultans.

May [this message] sent by King Minilik, who has become king of Shewa by the power of God, reach the honoured and respected mother of all the world, the Queen of Queens, the queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (lit. queen of Great Britain, the kingdoms that have become one, queen of Ireland), defender of the Christian faith, empress of India, the queen who has grasped in her hands and placed under her feet [all] the governments that remain (that remain, that remain), the queen of all kingdoms.

[Please] accept my greetings with great friendship as if they were many gifts. I received with great honour the letter of friendship and advice which came from you, the queen. It was for me a highly respected, appreciated, wonderful and praiseworthy letter. For it was above all a letter which [contained] the queen's words that would stabilize my government, show the path of wisdom and friendship in my country [and] give advice which would establish friendship with my neighbours.

Secondly, my happiness became great, beyond limit [and] beyond measure, when I heard that you were very pleased that I agreed with my father [and] friend *Aṣe* Yohannis becoming one body [with him]. I do not doubt that in the future also, with the power of God, the friendship between the two of us will grow stronger. I am very happy that in the eyes of the queen my deed was found to be a deed of Christian kings. For I used to think that compared with the deeds that the queen did in favour of oppressed Christians my deed was like a block of salt which was thrown into the sea.

Furthermore, I thank you, the queen, much because out of friendship for Ethiopia you have ordered the minister of your government to make an effort to create friendship between us. And I, following the queen's advice, shall do everything to establish friendship between me and my neighbours. I hope that what I have begun with the help of the queen [and] that everything I want on the seacoast will not be withheld from me.

[As for] the abolishing of the unlawful trade in slaves, which I have already begun, I shall to the best of my ability attempt to abolish [it] within the country that I rule. We have hopes that you, the queen, on your part, will complete the well-being of Christians, which you have already started by protecting us who are your Christian partisans from being enslaved by Islam.

I await, fulfilling your will with much care so that your friendship, of which one cannot have enough, will not be far from us. I pray to God, with much solicitude, that He may prolong the queen's life without your kingdom being shaken. May God give you health.

In our town of Debre Birhan, on the 27th of Ginbot in the year of grace 1872 after the birth of Christ our Saviour.

The second Minilik, King of Shewa. Written in the 15th year of his reign.

Seal: Minilik, King of Kings.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

FO 95/739, no. 223, Amharic original; no. 224, French translation sealed with the same seal as the Amharic.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Erik Emil Hedenström, 18 June 1880

መልክንገኝ፡ ዘ ልብ፡ ክሉላ፡ ደደረሰ፡ በክስተሮም።
 ክንደድ፡ ክሉላ፡ ክኔ፡ ክግዚአብሔር፡ ደመስገን።
 ደህና፡ ነኝ። ስግግር፡ ክሰጥ፡ ተቀመጥ። ነገር፡ ግን፡
 ሃይማኖታችን፡ ይገባ፡ ነው። ስላ፡ ክሳምናሁ፡
 ክስተሮም ሌላ፡ ክትብል። ሁላችን፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ብንሆን፡
 በሃይማኖት፡ ግንኙ፡ ይህንን። ክስተሮም ሌላ፡ ስላ፡
 ክሰብስብላለሁ፡ ይል። ክንደሆን። ክገረ፡ ክትቀመጥ።
 ቀድሞም፡ ደግሞ፡ ይህ፡ ነው። ነው፡ ክንደሆን።
 ሌላ፡ ምን፡ ክደርገኝ። በስግግር፡ ክሰጥ፡ ተቀመጥ።
 በሃይማኖት፡ ስመተደረግ፡ ይገባ። ይህ ደደረግ፡ ተገቢ።
 ክግዚአብሔር፡ ይስጥ። ማርሰሽ፡ ክደደረግ።
 ተደራሽ፡ ክሙ፡ ሰው፡ ስላ። ።

May the message of *Ras Alula* reach Hedenström (Asterom). How are you? I am well, thank God.
 As for the place (*sifirama*), yes, stay [there]. But since our faith is different, do not say, “I will convert people. I will teach.” [Even] if we are all Christians we are not in harmony about [our] faith. If you say, “I will teach. I will convene people”, do not stay in my country. This is what made us quarrel before; it is only this. What else did you do to me? All right. Stay at the place.
 May He make it possible for us to meet (lit. see each other with our bodily eyes). Thank you for the rifles you sent me. Send me a *mafiseshe*.

Written on the 12th of Senē.

EFS, E I 24, 146d, Amharic text, almost certainly a copy produced by the Swedish missionary E. E. Hedenström, who was stationed at Geleb at this time. Below the text a date, “21 June”, is added *in Swedish!* That Hedenström has been turned into ‘Asterom’ is not too far-fetched. What is referred to by “*mafiseshe*” is hard to say, probably some simple kind of machinery for road-work, perhaps a shovel.

Hedenström, moreover, mentions an exchange of letters with Alula in correspondence with the mission headquarters in Stockholm. “21 June” beneath the text probably refers to the day on which the letter was received.

Both calligraphy and orthography indicate that the text has been copied by a non-Ethiopian.

Convention between Burhān Muḥammad and Giuseppe Sapeto, 20 Sept. 1880

Glory to God.

In the year 1880, on the 20th day of the month of September according to the Christian era, 2197 (*sic*), Hijra, the 15th of the month of Shawāl. Burhān Muḥammad, the Sultan of Raḥayta, and Giuseppe Sapeto, the legal agent of the Rubattino Co. at Aseb, having met at Dumeira, have reached agreement on the following convention:

The afore-mentioned Burhān Muḥammad, by the right of succession recognized by the Adal and Danākil [as] Sultan of Raḥayta and proprietor of all the country and the littoral from ‘Assal in the Gulf of Tajura, to the present Italian possessions in the Danākil region, with the exception of the French possession of Obok, has, owing to his long acquaintance with the aforementioned Giuseppe Sapeto and his friendship with him, made good use of this friendship by freely (*lit. spontaneously*) and for the good of his own country, come to the following decisions:

1. to request protection from His Majesty Umberto I, King of Italy, while remaining invested with the full authority of sultan, and without paying any tribute;
2. to undertake not to permit nor tolerate slave trade in either sex (*lit. all sexes*), in all the territories of his own sultanate, unless he makes any further agreements with the Italian government in this matter;
3. to undertake to give to the said Rubattino Co. and to all Italian subjects of His Majesty the King of Italy ample possibilities to establish themselves and to freely transit in all parts of the sultanate for reasons commercial or whatever, and this without the obligation, for them, to have to pay to the same sultan or to his dependents any charges whatsoever for toll or residence;
4. to undertake to defend by all possible means in his power the Italian possessions in the bay of Aseb, the entire littoral acquired by the Rubattino Co. [and] the Italian agents or caravans staying in or crossing the territory of the sultanate;
5. to undertake to assist efficiently the Italian colony in the intent which the same has to open all the most convenient routes for putting Aseb in direct communication with Abyssinia, whether by Awsa or by Kwalima (?), or any other localities;
6. to undertake not to sell or transfer any part of his dominions and territories without the approval of the royal Italian government;
7. (and finally,) to undertake not to make war against foreign enemies and other Adal and Danākil tribes without the prior notice of the Italian authorities in Aseb, who will in all cases be called upon to examine the internal and external difficulties in order to make peace among the quarrelling tribes in a friendly way.

In exchange for such offers, submissions, obligations and privileges, the afore-mentioned Burhān Muḥammad, sultan as above, requests:

1. the authority to make known to all indigenous and foreign inhabitants, as soon as it is considered, in accord with the agent of the Italian government, that the opportune moment has arrived;

and in what manner and by what measures it seems most suitable, that he, Burhān Muḥammad, on behalf of himself and his successors, places himself under the protection of the Italian government;

2. (and finally,) to be considered while remaining under his own authority and his own rights of sultan, not discussed in the present document, a functionary of the royal Italian government is therefore compensated by an annual fixed stipend, to be decided by the government of His Majesty the King of Italy in conformity with the position of sultan and the services which he intends to grant to Italian subjects.

On his part, Giuseppe Sapeto, agent of the Rubattino Co. at Aseb and friend of the afore-mentioned Sultan Burhān, undertakes to convey the present agreement to the government of His Majesty the King of Italy for his acceptance.

Waiting for such adherence and as a token of the sincerity of his intentions Burhān Muḥammad, in accordance with the above declarations, swears on the Qurān to immediately execute, to the extent which concerns him, everything which is stipulated in the present agreement, while Giuseppe Sapeto, the representative of the Rubattino Co., swears on the Gospel to do everything which depends on him in order that this document shall be accepted by the royal government of Italy in its entirety.

In faith of which the contracting parties place their signatures on the present convention, signing in the presence of the witnesses mentioned below.

Confirming the above

Witnessing the above

Sign. I, Sultan Burhān
bin Sultan Muḥammad

Sign. Ibrāhīm Ḥasan
Sign. Sa'īd Awīḍan

Sign. Giuseppe Sapeto,
legal procurator of the
Rubattino Co.

Sign. Pietro Villani, witness
Sign. Giuseppe Nozzoli, witness

Seen for the ratification of the signatures:

Sign. G. Galaezzo Frigerio, commander
Commander of the royal frigate "Ettore Fieramosca"

ASMAI 1/1–7, fol. 134, Italian text. Printed in *Trattati*, pp. 49–51 as well as in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.2 no. 158, allegato, pp. 152–153. No Arabic text is known to exist. There are several rather different Italian versions in the Italian archives as noted by Giglio in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.2, p. 152, note 1. The above translation is based on the version in *Trattati*. The text printed by Giglio deviates slightly from this version, including a misprint of the year 1297 into 2197, which is also found in the manuscript in ASMAI. According to Giglio the passages marked in italics above were substituted by the Italian ministry for earlier less definitive versions. There are no signatures except Frigerio's whose signature verifying that the text is a true copy is, strangely enough, found on several rather different versions. It is obvious that the Italian government and its representatives felt they could revise the text of the so-called convention as they wished without regard for the Ethiopian part. Thus, it is unlikely that any one of the Italian versions conforms to an Arabic version, if such a version ever existed.

Document no. 14

Burhān Muḥammad to Giuseppe Sapeto, [20] Sept. 1880

Praise be to God alone.

To Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto,

Your letter has reached me and I have been informed of its content. As far as the allowance which the *pasha* pretends that I have long since been receiving, that is a lie. As for me, I have never accepted the Egyptians, neither an allowance nor a flag. It is they who have wanted me to do so, but as for me I have always refused. I take an oath on the Qurʾān that my words are true.

In faith [of which] etc.

Signed: Burhān Muḥammad, sultan

Ibrāhīm Ḥasan

His authorized agent is witness to the signature.

September 1880.

AP.DD., XXIII, p. 330 annex to number 104, French translation. Behind the French text an Arabic original can be recognized.

Document no. 15

Minīlik II to Antonio Cecchi, 6 Oct. 1880

Letter of His Majesty Minīlik, King of Shewa, to Mr. A. Cecchi.

How are you? I, by the grace of God, am well, and [so is] also all my army. I am very happy and pleased that the Good Lord has saved you by delivering you from the hands of the king of Gēra. I was very grieved when I heard the news about the death of poor Mr. Chiarini and that of your captivity. I have done much for your release by writing to the son of *Abba* Jifar of Jimma telling him to ransom you, whatever the cost, and if necessary to cede half of his kingdom, and in case this is refused he should notify me; and that it will then be up to me to free Captain Cecchi, by making an expedition to Gēra.

Today I am aware that you are released but robbed of all your belongings. If these belongings are lost for the moment do not worry. I undertake to return them to you to the last needle. All my preoccupations until now have been to achieve your release. At present I have no other wish than to see you, and I send you Mr. Count Antonelli and Mr. Ilg in order that they may bring you to me. I hope that you all return in good health. The guides who accompany these gentlemen are charged with bringing you back.

By the means of these gentlemen I am sending you a mule.

ASSGI, busta 21, fasc. 6, fols 14–15, French and Italian translations from what was most probably an Amharic original. The translation has been made from the French. The Italian is published in BSGI, XVI, XVII (1881), p. 168, and the French in Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle Frontiere del Caffa*, Rome, 1885, vol. II, p. 570. The date assigned to the document appears only on the Italian version, albeit in a different handwriting from the letter itself. For the circumstances, see [doc. 7](#) with note. The closing sentence about the mule appears only in the French translation.

Minilik II to Onorato Caetani, 16 Oct. (?) 1880

We, Minilik II, by the grace of God King of Shewa, to His Excellency Mr. President of the Italian Geographical Society, Rome.

How are you? By the grace of the Almighty we are well and so are all our armies.

We have duly received your letters and the objects which you have addressed to us through Mr. S. Martini. Once more, we thank you very much for it. This we have already done by the hand of Count Antinori.

We take the opportunity of this letter to communicate our joy, which is also yours, relative to the rescue of Captain Cecchi, who is now in Gudru, the land of *Ras Adal*, a land the possession of which he owes to our generosity. We have sent Mr. Ilg, our engineer, and Mr. Count Antonelli to meet Captain Cecchi with the necessary personnel and mules. We hope that he will soon be with us and we shall neglect nothing to send him to the coast in a proper manner, if such is his will.

As for the objects of which Captain Cecchi has been robbed by the king of Gēra, we undertake to have them restored to the last needle (*Fr.* aiguille, *It.* spillo).

Written at Debre Birhan, 16th October 1873 (Abyssinian calendar).

ASSGI, busta 20, fasc. 5, fol. 1, French version; fols 2–3, Italian version. The opening line with its use of *pluralis majestatis* and the reference to the grace of God indicates that the letter was written in French or Italian. Printed in *BSGI*, XVII (1881), p. 168. It is impossible to know for sure if “Abyssinian calendar” refers only to the year or also to the date of the month. If the latter is the case the date should be 16 Ṭiqimt, i.e. 25 October. For the circumstances see also [docs 7](#) and [15](#).

Alfred Ilg was a Swiss engineer who had arrived and settled in Shewa in 1879. He rapidly learned Amharic and played a crucial role in the development of Ethiopian manufacture, industry and building, including the city of Addis Abeba, and was highly trusted and decorated by Minilik. Pietro Antonelli was a young Italian adventurer (born 1853) who had come to Ethiopia in late 1879 and settled at the Italian exploration centre at Liṭ Marefīya. He soon became one of the most important suppliers of weapons to Minilik and the chief agent in the attempt to set up an Italian protectorate over Ethiopia finalized in the treaty of Wiḥalē in 1889. See *Diplomatic History*, pp. 25–34, and *Survival*, pp. 384–395.

Minilik II to Albert Delagenière, 1 Nov. 1880

Minilik II, by the grace of God King of Shewa, to our good friend Mr. Delagenière, consul of France at Aden. How are you? We, by the grace of God, are well and so are all our armies.

We have received all your letters, and we thank you very much for all the information which you give us. We have also taken into consideration your recommendations with regard to your compatriot, Mr. A. Brémont, whom we have kept close to us for about two years during which time we have been able to convince ourselves that we could place full confidence in him.

We do so by acknowledging him as our general agent and charging him to give his attention to the conflict which exists between us and the firm of Turrer and Escher of Aden, a conflict, you will see, for which we have gathered the Europeans and on which they had not dared to pass judgement because of the insufficiency of the documents. In this business we have taken the liberty to appoint you, you and the consul of Italy, arbitrators, and we hope that you accept this task as a friend.

We would very much have wished that Mr. Turrer would have presented himself to us with acceptable accounts, but in spite of our ignorance of European matters simple common sense informs us that it was assumed that the largesse of a king could be counted on. We would have been able to be equal to such assumptions if some services had been rendered us, but on the contrary we have received from this unhappy affair nothing but disagreements, deceptions and a very distressing impression. You may judge about this yourself. We have given to Mr. Brémont our full authority to carry out some business in France. Our best wishes follow him, that he may achieve that your government will reckon us among the number of its friends and protégés.

Our greatest desire would be to see the port of Obok considered as the natural port of Shewa. This would then put an end to the Egyptian obstacles which cause Abyssinia to find itself in an iron ring, which the civilization which we call ours cannot break. The most disturbing rumours reach all the way to us. Egypt and perhaps other powers seem to have their eyes set on our kingdom in a spirit of conquest. We therefore seek the friendship of the disinterested powers and we would like to see France, which we love, accord us its high protection. We have not forgotten that the first ideas of civilization were brought to us by a French subject, and all the old people of our kingdom still mention the name of Rochet with veneration. This is well-nigh exactly the mission which we have confided to Mr. Brémont and we beg you to bring to it from your side all your good will with regard to us. This would give you [but] even greater right to our friendship, which as you know is already yours.

We are sending to the president of the French republic some small gifts, insignificant you may say, but which nevertheless give an idea of the industry of our country, even if it is still in its infancy. In line with this we ask you to grant Mr. Brémont the bracelet [implying] high rank, which has been deposited at your consulate since the unhappy Arnoux affair. If Mr. Brémont manages to make some installations at Obok in favour of our kingdom, we have designated Muḥammad Abū Bakr, the son of the *pasha* of Zeyla, to represent us there. Muḥammad is our son and we know him to be totally devoted to our interests. He is Abyssinian and not Egyptian. His influence along this still difficult route is uncontestable and we do not see among our subjects anyone we can entrust the [task to], the notables of our kingdom imagining such a journey too perilous, and this is the only reason that has prevented us from sending an embassy to Europe. It is

therefore in Mr. Brémond and Muḥammad that we place confidence in all matters. May God grant you health and prosperity.

Made in our royal city of Debre Birhan on the 1st of the month of November 1880.

The seal of the king.

AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 510–512; also AED, Protocole C 41, French translation of a reportedly sealed Amharic original of which no trace has been found. C.-X. Rochet d’Héricourt was a French trader and explorer who played an important role in Ethiopian foreign relations in the 1840s; see *Survival*, pp. 147–164. Pierre Arnoux was a French artisan and adventurer who had won Minilik’s confidence and been entrusted in 1876 with a significant diplomatic and commercial mission to Egypt and France. The mission was, however, a failure, and Arnoux was killed in Afar in 1882. See *Survival*, pp. 372–375, and *Diplomatic History*, pp. 19–31.

Ratification by ‘Abdallah Shahīm of 15 May 1880 convention, 5 Nov. 1880

Aseb 5th November 1880

Glory be to God.

I, ‘Abd Allāh Shahīm, sultan, declare in all conscience that I have given my consent to and accepted the contract stipulated in my name and in that of Ḥasan, Ibrāhīm and Rāj Aḥmad with Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto, procurator of the Rubattino Co., the 15th of the month of May of the year 1880, according to the European era, and the 6th of Jumād al-Ākhir of the year 1297 according to the Arabic era, for the sale in my name and in theirs to Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto of the island of Sennabor and the mainland from (*Ras*) Lumah to *Ras* Faranah.

Likewise, I approve the cession of the territories of Bar Assoli and Behtah made by the above-mentioned persons in my name and in theirs by another contract in favour of Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto. I also confirm that I have received from Mr. Giuseppe Sapeto one hundred thalers of the one thousand that remain of the total payment of the price for the purchased localities, which he has committed himself to paying within the terms established in the above-mentioned contract.

Aseb, on the 5th of the month of November of the year 1880 according to the Christian era and the 3rd of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja of the year 1298 according to the Arabic calendar.

I, ‘Abd Allāh Shahīm, confirm as above.

Witnesses: Sa’īd ‘Awīḍān – Francesco Sa’īd Maryam.

Trattati, p. 52, no. 16, Italian text. There is no trace of any Arabic version and probably there has never been one. The document refers back to the convention with the Rubattino Co. of 15 May ([doc. 9](#)), here called a contract, as well as the declaration by the Afar chiefs of the same date ([doc. 8](#)). *Ras* Darmah in the convention has, however, been exchanged for *Ras* Faranah in this document. The name Francesco Sa’īd Maryam strikes us as rather strange. We have, however, not been able to identify the person.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Gerhard Rohlfs, 23 Nov. 1880

መ ል ክ ክ ት ዙ ራ ዩ ክ ሎ ካ ሲ ይ ረ ክ ክ ሮ ፍ
ል ክ ሳ ሃ ም ሳ ሳ ሃ ም ታ ት መ ካ ክ ት ፍ ሲ ሳ ይ ት
ክ ስ ህ ክ ኢ ክ ሃ ዜ ክ በ ሐ ር ይ መ ስ ሃ ሃ ይ ሳ ሳ ህ
ኒ ሻ ክ ሳ ሳ ህ ይ ም ክ ሸ ቶ ኩ በ ሳ ክ ሃ ም ሳ ስ ክ
ኪ ይ ል ካ ስ ህ ወ ረ ቀ ት ክ ህ ት ም ቶ ኩ በ ስ ህ
ሩ ሻ ሳ ሳ ህ ይ ክ ቆ ር በ ሲ ኩ ክ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ህ
በ ክ በ ር ቀ ሐ ም ይ ከ ይ ይ ስ ሳ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ሳ
ቤ ይ ረ ስ ሻ በ ስ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ሳ ህ
ሐ ረ ት በ ሰ ክ ዜ ሃ ከ ተ ማ ቶ ስ ሳ ሳ ህ ይ ስ ሳ ህ
ሳ ሳ ህ



May the message of *Ras Alula* reach Rohlfs, the envoy of the kings of Austria. How are you? I am well, thank God.

Yes, I shall at once send an express messenger with a letter to His Majesty on your behalf, and you will hurry [to tell] that I am informing you, as soon as His Majesty orders that you be given an audience. The politely worded letter, which you sent me, has reached me.

Written in the camp of Şe'azzega on 15th Hidar in the year of grace 1873.

Seal: The seal of *Ras Alula*.

HHS, RA 14.80 (3), Amharic original; *Meine Mission*, pp. 89–90, German translation. Gerhard Rohlfs was one of the great explorers of Africa and had taken part in Napier’s expedition to Meqdela in 1867–1868 on behalf of the Prussian government. He was sent by Emperor Wilhelm I to Yohannis in late 1880 in reply to Yohannis’ letter of 20 November 1879 (*Acta III*, doc. 231) offering assistance in finding a solution to the conflict with Egypt.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Gerhard Rohlfs [Nov. 1880]

መ ል ኦ ክ ተ፡ ዘ ራ ኦ፡ ኦ ራ ኦ፡ ደ ድ ሪ ኦ፡ ክ ክ ቡ ር፡
 ክ ቂ ር ሃ ል ተ፡ ር ል ፍ ኦ፡ ወ ያ ሲ፡ ከ ቆ ሩ ክ ያ፡ ጓ ጉ
 ሥ፡ ኦ ጊ ደ ተ፡ ከ ነ በ ተ ህ፡ ኦ ሩ፡ ኦ ገ ዘ ኦ ብ ል ር፡
 ዲ መ ከ ገ ጊ፡ ደ ላ ፍ፡ ነ ሻ፡ ከ ተ መ ጣ፡ በ ሃ ዲ ከ ተ፡
 ኦ ድ ር ገ ህ፡ ኦ ጊ ድ ተ መ ጣ፡ በ ጊ ጊ ዳ፡ ኦ ኦ ኣ ሞ ች፡
 ወ ጊ በ ዲ ዎ ች፡ ኦ ሱ፡ ይ ሚ ቀ መ ሱ፡ በ ጊ ጊ ደ ሴ፡ ኦ ቶ
 ም ጣ፡ ዳ ዲ ከ ተ፡ ከ ቶ ደ ር ኦ ኣ ክ ብ ሻ፡ ከ ጥ ጉ፡ ከ
 ው፡ ኦ ከ ድ ል ህ ሱ ሆ፡ ይ ሚ ተ በ ል፡፡



May the message of *Ras* Alula reach the honoured Gerhard Rohlfs, servant of the king of Prussia.
 How have you been? I am well, thank God. When you come, arrange so that you come to Aylet.
 At Jenda (Ginda) there are Muslim robbers who plunder. Do not come to Jenda. When you arrive at
 Aylet write to me. I will at once send you people who will escort you.

Seal: The seal of *Ras* Alula.

HHS, RA 14.83 (7), Amharic original; *Meine Mission*, pp. 91–92, German translation. Rohlfs writes (p. 91) that he received a “rechtzeitig schnell” reply to the letter of 27 November – in all probability the above letter. The letter itself has no date, but on top of the document “1 Dez. 1880” is added, probably the date when the letter was received.

Lewṭē Zewde to Gerhard Rohlfs [Nov. 1880]

የ ተ ጎ ከ ፡ ከ በ ጅ ሮ ግ ድ ፡ ከ ው ጤ ፡ ዲ ድ ረ ስ ፡ ከ መ ካ ሪ ፡ ኪ ቅ ፡ ዲ ክ
ተ ር ፡ ጊ ር ህ ር ድ ፡ ር ል ፍ ፡ ስ ግ ዲ ተ ፡ ሰ ነ በ ቱ ፡ አ ኔ ፡ ስ ግ ሊ አ ብ ሎ ር ፡
ዲ መ ስ ግ ግ ፡ ዲ ጎ ር ፡ ነ ጎ ፡ ል ጂ ግ ፡ ነ ጎ ር ፡ አ ዲ ር ሱ ጎ ጾ ጾ ጾ ጾ



May [this letter] sent by *Bejirond* Lewṭē, reach the scholarly advisor (*mekarī līq*) Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs. How are you? I am well, thank God. Since I am your son, do not forget me.

Seal: The seal of *Bejirond* Lewṭē.

HHS, RA 14.78, Amharic original. Lewṭē Zewde was an important official in the service of Yohannis, responsible for the finances of the court. See *EAE* 3, pp. 525–526. According to [doc. 43](#), he was sent to Jerusalem with provisions in 1881 and it was most probably in this connection that he wrote to the patriarch in January 1882 ([doc. 65](#)). We have not been able to establish what *anbesa bē* in the legend of the seal refers to.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Achille Raffray, 10 Dec. 1880

May the letter of *Ras* Alula reach the consul of France, Raffray.

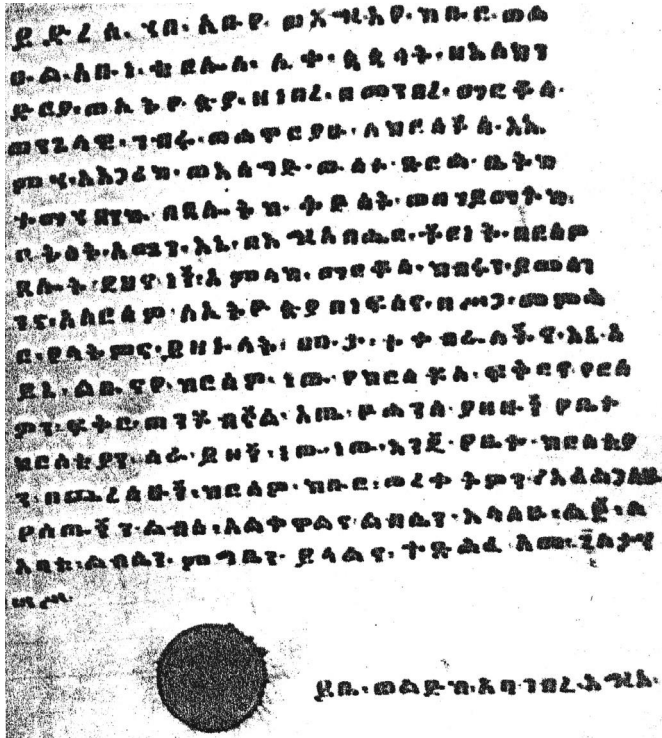
How are you? As for me, I am well, thank God. The letter in which you have sent me a good message (lit. *bonne parole*) has reached me. Let the person whom you have recommended so well to me come.

Written in the town of Şe'azzega on 2 December 1873 (10 Dec. 1880).

Signed: The seal of *Ras* Alula.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 194, French translation. Achille Raffray was a French naturalist and traveller who travelled in Ethiopia in the 1870s and was French vice-consul at Massawa 1880–1881. The person referred to was a French officer, Captain Lombard, who planned scientific research in Ethiopia.

Gebre Igzi' to Kirillus V, 15 Dec. [1880?]



May [this letter] reach my father and my master, the honoured and exalted *Abune Kirillus, Iiqe pappasat* of Alexandria and Ethiopia, who sits on the chair of [St.] Mark the Evangelist, the servant and apostle of Christ.

I bow down at your feet and prostrate myself in the hall of your house. I have put my confidence in your holy prayer and your orthodox faith. Amen. I am well, by the mercy of God, and through your prayer, praise to the glory of the God of [St.] Mark.

Grieve for Ethiopia for she is dead and buried because she does not have a teacher in soul and in body, except for you. My thoughts (lit. eyes of my heart) are with you. The love of Christ and the love of you have overwhelmed me.

I have been kept busy by the work on the church commanded

by *Atē* Yohannis, but when I have finished [the work] on the church I shall need the honoured letter from you.

Since the clothes you gave me are worn out, I am asking for clothes for myself, just as a son asks his father for his clothes and his food.

Written on 7th Tahsas.

Seal illegible.

So says your son *Abba Gebre Igzi'*.

Ghali Collection, no. 49. Amharic original. We have not been able to identify the author. Most probably he was a monk in the service of Yohannis. If it is the same person as mentioned in doc. 155 and the addressee of doc. 182, he served as an envoy to the patriarch in Cairo and to the community in Jerusalem. The dating does not include the year, and the contents do not reveal much. We have tentatively put in 1880, but it could well belong to 1881 or even later.

Yohannis IV to Minilik II, 16 Dec. 1880

መልእክት ፡ ዘሥዮሙ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ጽዮን ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ፤ ይድረስ ፡ ከንጉሥ ፡ ምኒልክ ፡ በአማን ፡ እስራኤላዊ ፡ ዘአልቦ ፡ ጽልሑት ። ሰላም ፡ ለከ ፡ ወሰላሙ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ የሃሉ ፡ ምስሌክ ። እኔ ፡ በእግዚአብሔር ፡ ቸርነት ፡ በእምነ ፡ ጽዮን ፡ አማላጅነት ፡ አምላክ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ይክበር ፡ ይመስገን ፡ ይህና ፡ ነኝ ። ምሕረቱ ፡ ለዘለለም ፡ ነውና ።

ራስ ፡ አዳልን ፡ የጥምቀት ፡ ዕለት ፡ የምሾመው ፡ የማነግሠው ፡ ነኝ ። ሲሆን ፡ በሰላ ፡ አብረን ፡ ሁንን ፡ መሾም ፡ ይገባን ፡ ነበር ። ቀኑ ፡ የሚያጥር ፡ የማያዳርስ ፡ እንደ ፡ ሆነ ፡ አንድ ፡ ደሀና ፡ ሰው ፡ ሁንታውን ፡ ሁሉ ፡ የሚያይ ፡ ገስግስ ፡ ለጥምቀት ፡ እንዲገባ ፡ ይሁን ። እኔ ፡ ይህን ፡ ማለቱ ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ ተብሎ ፡ እኮራለሁ ፡ ብሎ ፡ አይደለም ። አንድ ፡ ጊዜ ፡ ስሙም ፡ ወጥቶልኛል ። የእግዚአብሔር ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ እንዲጸና ፡ እንዲሠፋ ፡ አሕዛቦች ፡ እንዲጠፉ ፡ ብሎ ፡ ነው ። ለኢትዮጵያ ፡ ምቀኛዋ ፡ ብዙ ፡ ነውና ፡ ጸላቶቻችን ፡ እንዲጸክሙና ፡ እንዲያፍሩ ፡ ብሎ ፡ ነው ።

ደግሞ ፡ ይህንን ፡ ጉዳይ ፡ ከደረገኝ ፡ በኋላ ፡ ወደ ፡ አምናችን ፡ የምመጣ ፡ ነኝና ፡ መምጣቱ ፡ የሚቸግር ፡ እንደሆነ ፡ ከዚያው ፡ እንደገናኝ ፡ ይሁን ።

የኢጣልያ ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ አምና ፡ በረከት ፡ ሰዶልኝ ፡ ነበር ። ዕቃውን ፡ አኑሮ ፡ ሰምቼን ፡ መልሶ ፡ ወሰዳቸው ። ፍቅር ፡ ጀምሮ ፡ ሰምቼን ፡ መልሶ ፡ መውሰዱ ፡ ብልሃቱ ፡ ጠፍቶኛል ። የዚህ ፡ ነገሩ ፡ ወደርሱ ፡ ይገኛል ፡ ይሆንን ።

ተጽሕፈ ፡ በአምባጫራ ፡ ከተማ ፡ አመ ፡ ሰሙኑ ፡ ለታጣሥ ፤ በ፲፱፻፸፩ ፡ ወ፫ ፡ ዓ ፡ ም ።

we weaken and disgrace our enemy. When we have dealt with this matter I will return to last year's business.

If you have difficulties coming here, I will come to where we met last year; let us meet there. Last year the Italian king sent me a gift. He ordered the people who came with the gift to return to him when they had delivered it. I do not understand why he ordered them to return after entering into a friendly relationship, and I am confused about this. Is it possible to find an explanation of the enigma from him?

Written at the town of Amba, Chara on the 8th of Tahsas in the year of grace 1873.

Tarīke Negest, p. 71, printed Amharic text. *Blattēngēta Hiruy's Tarīke Negest* was at the stage of being printed in 1936 when the Italians entered Addis Abeba and prevented its publication. See Asfa-Wossen Asserate, *Die Geschichte von Šawā (Äthiopien) 1700–1865*, Wiesbaden, 1980, pp. 18–21. It has not been possible to trace the original or a copy of the letter in any collection in Ethiopia. Very few copies of the text were saved. In one, which was preserved by Qēs Badima Yalew, a few pages from the manuscript were added in handwriting. The biblical quotation “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (John, 1, 47) is also found in Yohannis’ letters to Minilik and to Tekle Haymanot. See docs 64, 66, 67 and 86.

May the message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach King Minilik, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Peace be to you, and the peace of God be with you.

By the mercy of God and the intercession of Our Mother Zion, I am well. May the Lord of the saints be praised, for His mercy is forever.

I am going to appoint and crown *Ras Adal* king on the day of *Ṭimqet*. It would have been appropriate for us to appoint him together. If, however, there is not sufficient time, see to it that a competent man be sent without delay [in time] before *Ṭimqet* to come here and observe everything.

The reason I say this is not because I am a proud king who can say anything he wishes to say. No, I am not like that. I am already elected King of Kings; I do not need to do that. The reason why I do this is to make firm the religion of God and expand it, [and] at the same time eliminate the pagan, since those who are jealous of Ethiopia are so many. That is why I do this. By doing this

Gebru *Abba* Çhequn to Achille Raffray, 16 Jan. [1881]

May the letter from *Blatta* Gebru reach my friend Raffray, the consul of France.

How are you? As for me, by the grace of God, I am well. You will rejoice with me in learning that I have been appointed governor of Mereb Melash. You ask me to tell you the reason for Captain Lombard's return. He has come back because of his dragoman and because he did not feel well in the country. He did not want to stay with us, but has wanted to go to another place. The *ras* has not hurt him; he is the one who has become unfriendly.

As a token of our friendship, send me a watch and a gold-embroidered dress.

Written on 16th January.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 199, French translation. The preserved document states that it is a copy of a translation annexed to a letter from Massawa 29 Jan. 1881. No original has been found. Achille Raffray was the French vice consul at Massawa 1880–1881. Gebru *Abba* Çhequn of Tembēn had been appointed *blatta* by *Ras* Alula in 1877 and served as his lieutenant and deputy until he was killed at the battle of Kufit in Sept. 1885. See Haggai Erlich, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa*, Lawrenceville, 1996, pp. 16, 33, 68–69.

Yūsif al-Anṭūnī to Kīrillus V, 22 Jan. 1881

الي قدس الابن الاكبر والابن الفخيم من رقب منبر رياسة الكهنوت ذات الاصل البركري وتخلق من قسوس
 المصطفى في الكرسي الاثندري واذكروا السبب الابوي ليس من الوفاق واليهما الحلة الكهنوتية القابض
 بيمينه عجايب الشياخ والباسط بشماله علا الرياسة اعني ريس الروسل وواجب الاغناء والناظر
 والبرادي فراقه الي مناهج الحق بتعاليمه العادقة ابنا كيرلس البطريك الكرسني المرقس المعظم
 ادام الله تعالى قدسه بالبقا المنتطاب واعاد علينا من بركاته عاه المستجاب علي مدير الايمان والادب
 غب لثم مواخير الاقداء الطاهريه والتماس در زاد عيتكم الفاضله مع رفه الودعا المستد بطول بنا ايام ورياستكم
 الزاهرة وحلود الانعام علي قدساتكم الباهره ثم السوال عن شريفي خا طركم الكريم واقتعاد عن احكام الفاضل
 السليم فتراجا من العزه الالبيه بان يكون وجود عيطتكم باحسن صحة ورفاهيه فالعروض لدي
 سياتكم المشيغه وصا معتم الشريفه هوان ملكك الملوك يوهنسا رسل انوه الرهائز الي غدري
 ابونا جريس وقال لي الكتب لحضرة ابونا البطريك بالوصيه علي المذكور وقول له وناظر
 الله عليكم عيطتكم في الارض اقبلوا منكم في السما هذا ورجوع عدم ابرحنا من فيوضات عيطتكم
 وانحيازنا في خطه دايرة اهاطتك وانشمانا بالسير انظار قداسكم ويكل احترامه وقار نكرر لثم
 مواظب اقامكم الاطهار ورجوكم يا سيدي الحل والبركه وبالخضوع والاحترام نلتصق انفسنا بعيتكم
 المستجابيه للدوام تانيا وتالشا ولد سياتكم
 القسيس يوسف
 الاطون تاجيد المطرك
 بسلامة
 ٥٥ شهر طوبا

وعبدكم الخ منصور يضرب
 مطنوا الحبت اذمامم ودمتم

To His Holiness, the most noble father and most honoured *anbā* who has ascended the pulpit of the presidency of the priesthood, the incumbent of the pure foundation, appointed as the successor of St. Mark, elected for the chair of Alexandria. Since he holds the See of the Fathers, he is vested with the dignity and splendour of the priestly vestments. He holds in his left [hand] the sceptre of government and stretches out his right over the presidency. I mean the supreme head, the guardian of the rational herd, by his righteous teaching guide of the lamb on the road of truth, *Anbā* Kīrillus, Patriarch of the Chair of St. Mark the venerated. May God Almighty perpetuate his sainthood in eternal bliss and return upon us the blessings of his indispensable intercession in the course of time and days.

After repeated kissing of the soles of the pure feet, the petition is that your lofty supplications together with the elevation of everlasting prayer may flow copiously throughout the remaining days of your brilliant leadership and [likewise] the perpetuity of favours upon Your Dazzling Holiness.

Then, as for the question of the nobleness of your honoured mind and the review of your excellent perfect condition, we expect from the divine might that Your Beatitude might be found to be in the best health and comfort.

What is well known to Your Excellency and to your noble ears is that the King of Kings Yohannis sent his spiritual father to me together with Father Girgis and said to me: "Write to His Honour, our Father the Patriarch for instruction about the above mentioned. Say to him: 'The comfort of God be with you! Your gift on earth will be accepted from you in heaven.'" This is what we ask for, that we may not be deprived of the abundance of Your Beatitude.

Our seclusion is within the realm of Your protection and our inclusion is in the course of the jurisdiction of Your Holiness. With all reverence and dignity we repeatedly kiss the imprints of your pure being. We ask you, our Master for absolution and blessing and in humility and respect we request the most splendid of your prayers for ever granted twice and thrice.

The son of Your Lord, the priest Yūsif al Anṭūnī, the disciple of Salāma.

15 in the month of Ṭūbā, the year 1298.

And your servant *al-Ḥajj* Maṣṣūr lies prostrate under your feet. May you live [for ever].

Ghali Collection, no. 147, Arabic text. Yūsif al-Anṭūnī is not known from any other letter, but was probably a Coptic monk from the monastery of St. Antony who had worked with *Abune* Selama and remained in Ethiopia after Selama's death at Meqdela in 1865. He was apparently used by the court as an Arabic secretary for relations with the Coptic patriarchate in Cairo.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God. Praise be to him.

May the message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the revered [and] respected Wilhelm, by the grace of God, emperor of Germany [and] king of Prussia.

How are you? I, together with my army, am well, praise and thanks to the God of the righteous, since His mercy lasts forever. I received your respected letter with its seal, written in clear conscience and enlightened spirits, through the hands of the scholarly advisor (*mekarī līq*) Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs. I am very pleased to learn of the well-being of your people, the prosperity of your country, and your concern for peaceful reconciliation. On this matter I had written to Your Majesty last year, informing you about the injustices done to me by the Turks. Up to the present day they have not refrained. As recently as last November, they ambushed and killed my emissaries sent to the Barya country to collect taxes; and they also Islamize the Christian population. Yet, my restraint is not due to lack of power, thank God, but because of uncertainty as to the stand which the Powers may take on the issue. It is because I thought I should not take any measures before I get permission from you, the kings, that I have not made any move to recapture even the nearby lands, let alone those farther out.

I shall be satisfied if Your Majesty will mediate, as long as it is done on the basis of what my ancestors, the emperors of Ethiopia, held prior to the fall of the regime due to the advent of Grañ. After Grañ the empire was regained during Serše Dingil, İyasu, and Fasīl, and later was lost by a certain Gugsā. There are not many things of which you, the European Powers, are aware with regard to Ethiopia. To the east and the south the boundary is the sea. To the west and the north, where there are no seas, it is bounded by Nubia (Nuba), Sewakin, Khartoum, Berber, Sinnar, Inariya, Sudan, Belew, Dingula, Hadendowa (Harendawa), Gashī, Massawa, Bedew, Shēho, and Ṭilṭal. Further, the regions inhabited by Galla, Shanqilla, and Adal are all mine, and yet recently, in the middle of Shewa, a place known by the name of Harer was taken [from us]. All the same I listed these places so that my country's boundaries be known. Previously, during the Era of Judges in the times of Alī and Wībē, and recently during the times of the King Tēwodros, and even in my times, the areas taken from us are: Borī, Asawirta, Zula, Asgedē Beqla, Ad Habte Maryam, Marya Qeyyah (Barya Qeyyih), Marya Şellam (Barya Şellīm), Ad Welette Maryam, Ḥalḥal, Bogos (Moges), Te'ander, Ḥibub, Mensa', Bīdel Çetel, Guḥmet, Dumē, Dahmīla, Shēho, Weyta, Taka (Takuy), Nara (Inariya), Habab, Kunama, Bazēn, Galla Bēt, Gedaref, and Harer. This is [the list]. Please do mediate in these affairs, for unless the worldly powers enable me to make peaceful reconciliation, how else can there be reconciliation; for the heavenly powers will not intervene. If I regain the areas I have enumerated, all right, I am willing to be reconciled. I request Your Majesty to permit your servant, the scholarly advisor (*mekarī līqi*) Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs, to be delegated by me to negotiate on my behalf.

Written at the camp of Semera, on the 11th day of Yekkatīt in the year of grace 1873.

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

AAPA, Abt. A, I.B.9, Africa, Abessinien, vol. 2, Amharic original. Printed in *Ethiopia and Germany*, p. 200. The letter was a response to a letter by Wilhelm I, dated 18 Sept. 1880, and brought to Yohannis by Rohlfs in Feb. 1881. A very similar list of places is found in [doc. 53](#) in which Yohannis makes an attempt to define the borders of his country. Inariya in the text must have been confused with Nara, since Inariya is in a different area and the adjacent names are direct neighbors of Nara. For identifications see Wolbert Smidt: "History, Historical Arguments and the Ethio-Eritrean Conflict. Between Xenophobic Approaches and an Ideology of Unity", in: *Stichproben, Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien, Vienna Journal of African Studies* 22 [Umstrittene Geschichte/n], 12. Jg., 2012, 103–120.

Yohannis IV to Otto von Bismarck, 17 Feb. 1881



በአመ፡ ደብ፡ መወልደ፡ ወ መንግሥት፡ ቀዳሽ፡ ዕድሜ ላይ፡ ስፊት፡ ስብሐት፡
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 ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡
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 ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡ ገዢ ግዛታችን፡

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūhannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'īl. 1864.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God. Praise be to Him.
 May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the exalted and honoured Bismarck.
 How are you, [although known to me only] by hearsay? I and my army are well, thank God. I am very happy to hear that you are a kind man and a perfect Christian, and [to learn] about your good reputation.
 And now, since the kings are trying to reconcile me with the Turks, and since a Christian ought to help another Christian, do your best to assist me. The scholarly advisor (*mekarī līq*) Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs is negotiating on my behalf. As I had written to His Majesty that he is my lawyer (lit. finisher of my case), [please] have His Majesty give him permission.

Written in the town of Semera, on 11th Yekatīt in the year of grace 1873.

AAPA, Abt. A, I.B.9, Africa, Abessinien, vol. 2, Amharic original. Printed in *Ethiopia and Germany*, p. 204.

Yohannis IV, power of attorney for Gerhard Rohlfs, 17 Feb. 1881



መልእክት፡ ዘከላ ለገዳማ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡ ሆሎሎስ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡
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ገዳማ ገብረ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡ ገዳማ ገብረ፡

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

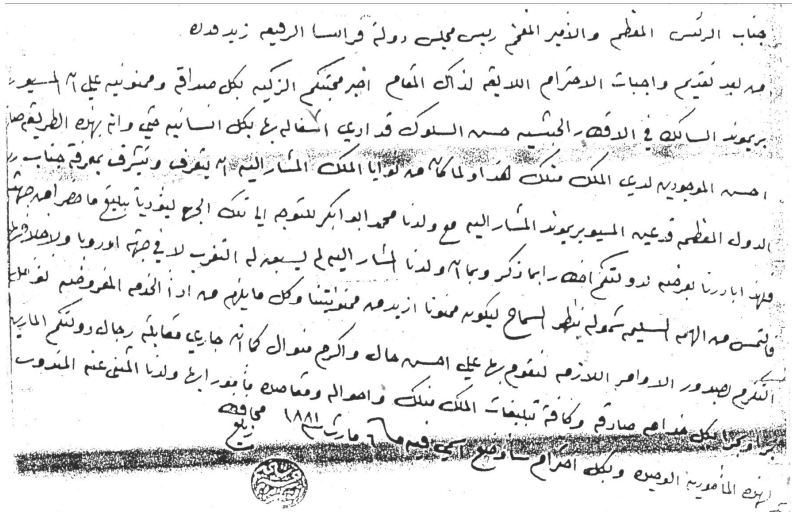
Message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Kings, King of Zion of Ethiopia.

I have sent the counsellor, the scholarly advisor (*mekarī līq*) Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs, with the instruction, “Carry out my business with the governments on my behalf.”

Written at the camp of Semera in the year of grace 1873, on the 11th of Yekafīt.

HHS, RA 15.6, Amharic original. The document carries a note: “Vollmacht des Negus für mich” reportedly in Rohlfs’s own handwriting. For Rohlfs mission see [doc. 22](#). Rohlfs did not only gain Yohannis’ trust but was, as the above shows, appointed to be his delegate and conclude peace on his behalf (see further *Survival*, p. 348). The title *mekarī līq* is only, but consistently, used for Gerhard Rohlfs. It denotes a counsellor as well as a scholar and manifests the high regard Yohannis had for him. See further [docs 33](#), [52](#), [53](#) and [91](#).

Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm to Jules Grévy, 6 March 1881



To His Highness, the exalted president, the magnificent prince, president of the state council of [the] great [nation of] France. May its power increase.

After presenting respectful greetings befitting your rank, we honestly and gratefully inform Your Loving-kindness that Monsieur Brémont, who is travelling in the lands of Ethiopia, observing appropriate manners, has completed his mission in full friendship. This is how he became one of the most faithful people surrounding King Minīlik.

In fact, as King Minīlik wishes to be introduced and honoured to meet with the honourable and exalted president of the French government, he assigned Monsieur Brémont and our son Muḥammad Abū Bakr to go to the land of France and inform you of what they have seen on our side. This is what we would like to propose to Your Excellency and tell Your Highness. And since our above-mentioned son Muḥammad has neither been to Europe nor elsewhere, I beseech you to be concerned and generous and to take him under your wings; we will be grateful for [this] additional favour of yours. On the other hand, your demands will be fulfilled. All you have to do is to issue orders which we will fully execute and completely implement. In addition, we shall receive your honoured officers who come to us by land or by sea and offer them all good services. Our laudable son is subject to King Minīlik’s orders and intentions. He is assigned solely for this mission. Concluding greetings.

I affix here my name, on 6th March 1881.

The governor (*muḥāfiṭh*) of Zeyla.

Seal: Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm.

AEMD, Afrique 62, Abyssinie 3, fol. 507, Arabic original; fol. 506, French translation. The seal differs from the seals used earlier by Abū Bakr.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Kīrillus V, 7 March [1881?]

ደ ድ ረ ስ ፡ ከ መ ም ህ ረ ፡ ላ ለ ም ፡ ብ ፡ ፊ ፡ ፀ ክ ሱ ር ፡ አ ቡ ፡
 ት ር ሱ ፡ ስ ፡ ል ተ ፡ ፋ ራ ላ ተ ፡ ጠ ስ ስ ከ ገ ድ ፡ ር ም ፡ ዘ ፡ ነ ሰ ረ ፡ በ መ
 ገ ሰ ር ፡ ማ ር ፋ ላ ዌ ፡ ገ ብ ቶ ፡ ወ ሐ ዋ ር ም ሆ ፡ ለ ክ ር ፋ ስ ፡
 ስ ል ም ፡ ፋ ፡ ለ ደ ዌ ክ ፡ ወ ስ ገ ሪ ክ ፡ በ ስ ም ፡ ፊ ፡ መ ገ ል ላ ዌ
 ት ፡ ለ ገ ት ፡ አ በ ዌ ፡ ፊ ዋ ር ም ት ፡ ፋ ተ ሐ ሊ ፡ ወ ስ ገ ድ ል
 ሊ ፡ ለ ስ ሱ ፡ ለ ወ ል ድ ክ ፡ ገ ብ ረ ፡ ማ ክ ስ ል ፡ ራ ስ ፡ አ ሱ ላ ፡
 ዝ ው ስ ቱ ፡ ተ ር ስ ፡ ባ ሻ ፡ መ ድ ፡ ፊ ፡ ላ ለ ም ፡ ጤ ል ፡ ደ ስ
 ጥ ል ፡ ት ፡ ብ ዌ ፡ ለ ፍ ፡ ለ ፡ ነ ማ ስ ሆ ፡ ለ ማ ር ም ፡ መ ፡ ነ ፡ ዌ ፡ ደ
 ወ ል ፡ ለ ገ ዘ በ ት ፡ ብ ዌ ፡ ፍ ፡ ብ ር ፡ ስ ድ ፡ ሸ ስ ሆ ፡ ል ፡ ስ ሰ ቴ ፡
 ሆ ደ ፡ ስ ስ ገ ዝ ተ ው ፡ መ ል ክ ም ፡ ደ ወ ል ፡ ደ ስ ደ ዌ ል ፡
 ተ ድ ል ፡ ለ መ ፋ ወ ም ፡ ለ ደ ክ ቴ ት ፡ በ ሐ ማ ሲ ገ ፡ ክ ተ ማ ፡



May [this letter] reach the teacher of the world, the blessed and honoured *Abune Kīrillus*, *liqe pappasat* of Alexandria who sits on the chair of Mark, the servant and apostle of Christ.

I kiss your hands and your feet with the spiritual kiss of our fathers, the apostles. Absolve me and cleanse me, O my father, me, your son Gebre Mika’ēl, *Ras Alula*, who is the *turk basha*. I raise my hands saying, “May the Saviour of the world give [you] health”. I am sending 100 thalers to purchase a bell for Maryam Menewē. O my father, have a good bell bought and send it to me.

Written in the camp of Ḥamasēn, on the 29th of Yekkatīt.

Seal: This is the seal of *Ras Alula* who is the *turk basha*.

Ghali Collection, no. 43, Amharic/Gi’iz original which is followed by an Arabic translation. This is, however, not literal. The most important difference is that the Arabic includes the name of the emissary sent to buy the bell, *Abba Mel’ake Birhan*. Menewē was the place of origin of Alula.

We have tentatively dated this letter to 1881 assuming that it has a connection with the synod held on 8 July 1881 to solve the problem of a new leadership for the Ethiopian Church.

Minilik II to Umberto I, 30 March 1881

Message sent by King Minilik, King of Shewa, to King Umberto I, King of Italy, Jerusalem and Cyprus.

How is Your Majesty? I, by the grace of God, am well, and all my army is well. May God glorify Your Majesty for having sent to me the decoration of the Cross of the Kingdom of Italy and for all the other very beautiful gifts, and the letter.

Now, by this letter, I let Your Majesty know that Captain Cecchi has been released and is [here] with me. I have done much work and made as many efforts as I could to save this man. In order to get him released, I sent three letters to the Queen of Gēra by [the hands of] *Abba Jiffar*, [promising] that if they released him in a friendly way I would give them great riches; but if they refused I would, once the winter had passed, have them destroyed.

Now, by this letter, I let Your Majesty know the honour I feel and the care I take of the Italians who come to my country and who stay here. I would have liked to do more, but I do not have any arms. Three years ago rifles should have arrived at Zeyla, where I sent 300 camels, but those who said they would bring them did not bring them.

Now, send me 2,000 Remingtons which I will purchase. These rifles can come from Your Majesty's country as far as to Aseb, and from there I will bring them here. If this is done, we will with the help of Your Majesty set the route in order, and it will be possible to come and go regularly from my country to Your Majesty's and vice versa.

Written at Debre Birhan on the 22nd of Meggabīt 1873 (March).

ASMAI 36/1–6, Italian translation. No Amharic original in the archive. *L'Italia in Africa*, I.2 no. 176, p. 172 has dated this letter "27 Marzo". On the document itself someone has added the note "1880 del calendario gregoriano" which is obviously an error, Meggabīt 1873 corresponding to March 1881. The release of Cecchi was already communicated to Italy in Nov. 1880 and is apparently an introduction geared to the actual message about the purchase of arms.

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

In the name of the God, the merciful and forgiving, praise be to Him.

May [this] message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured and exalted Khedive Muḥammad Tawfīq *Pasha*, King of Misr and Egypt and those who likewise are [his] subjects. Peace be to you and may the peace of God also be with you. As for me, I am well and live in peace by the power of God Sabaoth and by the prayers of our Lady Mary, the mother of the Lord [of] Holy Zion. Praise be to God who has helped us to reach this hour.

Your respected letter written on the subject of the bishops and archbishops about whom we had written to you, [requesting] that they be sent from you to us, and about the merchants who used to trade by land and sea, and the closure of the gate through which the Ethiopian merchants used to pass, has reached us on the 25th of Meggabīt, the chosen day of the first Sabbath.

We received it with honour. As we opened and saw your honoured and praiseworthy message we were extremely happy and joyous because the words that were written by you were pleasant and very beautiful. And after having heard and seen your straightforward message, we wrote to you at once concerning the bringing of the archbishop and the bishops and their reception with honour and great joy, and [for this reason] we sent the scholars and knowledgeable people by the name of *Mel'ake Mihiret Desta* and *Şirag Maserē Fenta* and *Memhir Welde Aregawī* and *Aleqa Asrat* and *Bejirond Abustelī*.

Only, let the bishops and archbishop come quickly and the messengers return before the rainy season starts, since the rainy season of our country is heavy. As you might know, it is not good to travel during the rainy season.

Written in the land of Delanta, 28th Meggabīt in the year of grace 1873.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/1, Gi'iz original. None of the envoys are known from other documents. The last name is most probably Amharic for Apostoli and refers to an envoy of Greek descent, perhaps related to *Merīgēta* Matēwos Apostoli, the Bible translator, and his brother Ingida Apostoli, who worked for the d'Abbadie brothers. For the Apostoli brothers see *Acta I*, docs 30, 101, 105. Two of the titles used in the letter are fairly unusual ecclesiastical titles. *Mel'ake mihiret* refers to the chief priest of a church or monastery called Mihiret, where *melake* is an alternative to *aleqa*. *Şirag maserē* means chamberlain, in Amharic *ye-nigus albesh*.

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V, 5 April 1881

رسالة من الملك يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشة الى قداسته الابن الطوباني البطريرك ابنا كيريلوس
 في ١١ طوباني ارسلتم لنا خطابات وبوصولها حصل لنا الفرح والسرور وشكرا فقل الله على صحة
 سلامتكم والان مرسل لعدسكم المعلمين وهم ملاك السلام دسنا وسراج اساري فاننا والاب
 ارجاوي والكد اسرات وبيرونند ابوستولي وحبسنا نابعوم لاجل تسليم المطران والاساقفة
 الديرين والمقصود الاسعاف برسال المطران والاساقفة السادة قبل انقضاء
 قدسكم ورسولهم حالاً وهانحنه تحت امر سيادتكم بحيث يكونون في الامام الاثني عشر
 المعلمين بحيث ان الله لما بانفقال نفسه ابنا المطران ابنا اتناسيوس الذي كان حسن السيد
 فنتيحه دائماً فرحينه بوجود قدسكم بفاية الصحة طالبين منكم الدعاء الصالح على الدوام في ١١ طوباني ٩٧

A letter from King Yohannis, King of Kings of Abyssinia (al-Habasha) to His Holiness, the blessed father, the patriarch, *Anbā* Kīrillus, dated 11 Ṭuba [15]97. You have sent me letters. When we received them joy and pleasure befell us. We give thanks for God's favour towards the health of your well-being.

Now we send our teachers to Your Holiness. They are *Mel'ake Selam* Desta and *Sarāj Asārī* Fenta and *Abba* Aregawī and *Aleqa* Asrat and *Bejironnd* Abusteli together with their followers so that you may hand over the metropolitan and the bishops asked for to them. The purpose is to facilitate the sending of the metropolitan and three bishops before the rainy season. With the permission of Your Holiness they should be sent immediately. Behold, we are under the command of Your Excellency, that they be [elected] from among the pious, praiseworthy, educated, since it was the will of God that the metropolitan *Anbā* Atinatēwos, who was of good character, passed away. We always hope that Your Holiness will remain in the utmost health and we ask from you devout prayers forever.

28th Baramhāt [15]97.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/8. Arabic account of a letter most probably kept in the archives of the Coptic Patriarchate. Letters from Yohannis to the Coptic Patriarchate were regularly registered and copied by the Egyptian authorities and preserved as part of the correspondence of the khedive. The letter of which this is an account must have had approximately the same content as the previous letter to the khedive. The titles of the members of the delegation are, however, rendered somewhat differently: *Mel'ake Mihiret* Desta is here *Mel'ake Selam*, *Širag Maserē* Fenta is *Sarāj Asārī* Fenta, and *Memhir* Welde Aregawī is *Abba* Aregawī. The reference to *Anbā* Atinatēwos is missing in the previous letter. On the other hand, the Arabic account omits the reference to the trade issue.

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V, 5 April 1881

خطاب رحمة بعد اداء السلام
رسول لدينا قدسه البطريرك يبلغ عشرة الاف ريات
وبرسم مصروف المطران المرعوب برسم الفينه ريات وثمانه الاف ريات برسم مصروف الكاهن اساقفة
لدا خماسية ريات منه الاجراس السابق ارسالها فطرف قدسكم ثم ومنه حيث انه قد سبق صدور امر
اجتباب العالي اخذ يوي بدخول تجار اجبشه لمصوع ودخول تجار مصوع لجوة اجبشه فالاموال قدسكم
ان نشاوروا اجناب السامى ببيان مشرى جانب بنديق ويرسل لطرقا ولذبح ارسلنا
جانب نفيد برسم مشرى البندقى الله زمم } ٤١ برولات ٩٧

After extended greetings. The amount of ten thousand riyāl has been sent to our father, His Holiness the patriarch. Two thousand riyāl are for the expenses of the requested metropolitan, and three thousand riyāl are for the expenses of the three bishops. Consequently, five hundred (*sic*) riyāl is the price of the bells sent previously by Your Holiness.

Then, as for the fact that orders were previously issued by His Highness the Khedive concerning the entrance of Abyssinian merchants to Massawa and merchants from Massawa into Abyssinia, what we hope from your goodness is that you will consult the highest authority in the matter of the purchase of some rifles, and let him send [them] to us. Likewise, we will send the necessary amount in cash for the purchase of the rifles.

28th Baramhāt [12]97.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/8. See previous note. No Amharic text with the equivalent content is preserved. The opening phrase of this text clearly indicates that we are dealing with a report about a letter, which does not exclude the possibility that what follows is a translation of the text of the letter itself.

Yohannis IV to the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, 5 April 1881



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūhannā, King of Kings of Abyssinia.

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach my saintly fathers, the monks of the Orthodox faith, the monks of the community of Jerusalem, who live in Dayr al-Sultan. Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you.

By the mercy of God and the intercession of our mother Zion – may the God of the saints be praised – I am well. His mercy is everlasting. I have sent 35,000 thaler for the building of a church [and] 50,000 thaler for your allowances. The total is 85,000.

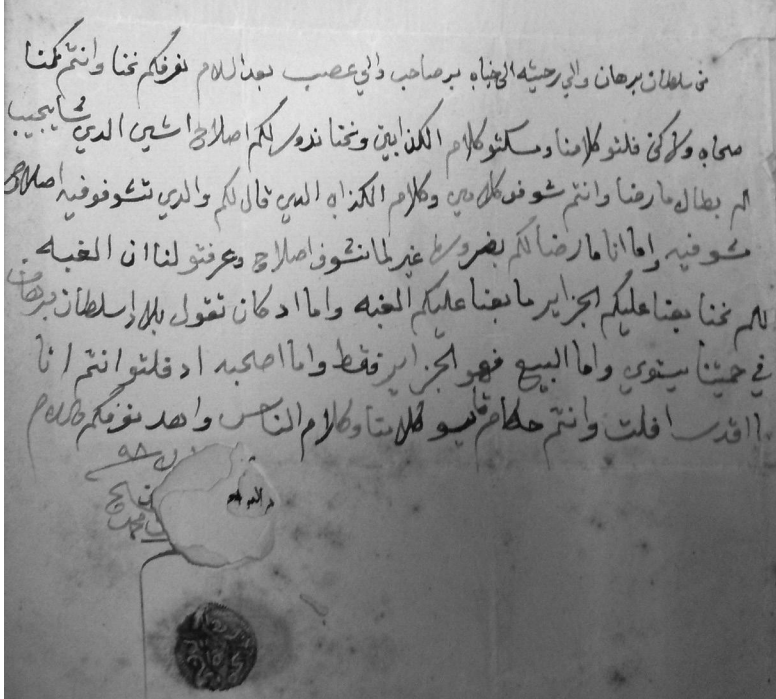
As long as God instils love amongst you, [and] I am informed about it, I do not have any problem and, as of now, I will not let you be worried regarding your food. Let alone you who do not have a share in taxes and appointments. I maintain the clergy of the churches of Ethiopia by giving them, in addition to appointments, taxes, salaries and provisions. Moreover, you consulted one another and testified that *Abba Welde Sema* it is a good man like *Abbatē Gebre Giyorgīs*, and appointed him. Now, if he wrongs you, since it is unbecoming to quarrel, you have the archbishop (*līqe pappasat*) there. Write to me and inform me, but do not quarrel over nothing. Do whatever he orders you, and do nothing against his will. Now then, if you disobey me, I will confuse and scatter you.

Moreover, you know the case of Egypt. Not only the clergy, even the soldiers, draw their rations together. In the same manner, buy [your] provisions together. But if you want to live like soldiers (lit. divisions), the divisions that are [here] with me are more numerous.

Written at the camp of Yibaba (Baba), 28th Meggabīt in the year of grace 1873.

Dayr al-Sultan, no. 7, Gi'iz/Amharic original. Printed with English translation in *Chronicle*, no. 10, pp. 170–173, no. 10. The amount for building the church differs from the amount in the previous letter of the same day, but here the total sum is correct. In the *Chronicle* the sums are 15,000 and 7,000 and the total 22,000.

**Burhān Muḥammad to the Italian representative in Aseb,
[22 April] 1881**



From Sultan Burhān, ruler of Raḥayta to His Honour, *Bir Ṣāḥib*, the ruler of Aseb.

After greetings we want you to know that we and you were friends, but you have disregarded our words and listened to the words of liars. We seek your welfare and wish you nothing evil (?). You should observe my words and the liar's words, which he told you, and follow the ones you think are good. You have told us that the gulf is yours. We sold you the islands. We did not sell the gulf. But if you say that all the land belongs to is under your protection, it is fine. But as for the purchase it was for the islands only. As for our friendship even if you untie it, we will not untie it.

22nd Jumād al-Awwal 1298 (21st April 1881).

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original and French translation. The Arabic original is damaged and difficult to decipher. The translation above is thus partly based on the French version where the addressee is designated as “gouverneur”. The date is lost in the Arabic original and taken from the French version. The letter reveals that the Italian version of the so-called “convention” of 15 March 1880 (doc. 4) did most probably not agree with the Arabic version, if there ever was a written Arabic text. The French text summarizes the argument and specifies Markable as the issue at stake, where the Arabic speaks about the gulf. See further doc. 112 in which Burhān returns to the issue and explains his reason for demanding Markable to be returned to him, and doc. 140 in which he finally renounces his claim and asks for compensation for the injustice done to him.

Yohannis IV to Jean-Marcel Touvier, Jean-Baptiste Coulbeaux and Sixtus Barthèz, 19 June 1881

May the letter from the Elect of God (lit. the Lord) Yohannis, King of Kings of Ethiopia reach *Abba* Yosēf (Mgr. Touvier), *Abba* Yohannis (Mgr. Coulbeaux) and *Abba* Pēṭros (Mgr. Barthèz). How are you?

I and my army are well, thank God. Since the Lord helps me, I am not afraid of anyone; why do you always trouble me? You have come to my country and devote yourself to teaching; however, does not that mean, “My teaching is better?” Seeing that you teach, do not many countries with pagans remain? But now leave my country. Go to your country! I have given orders to return your property to you. All persons who devote themselves to teaching do so only with the approval of the king; to teach without his approval is to take sides for the opposition. What you love, you other [people], is to make Christian blood flow in vain. Earlier you wrote to king Tekle Gīyorgīs and caused him to come and fight me. Now in contempt of my edicts you arrange to sell and trade in tobacco. You banquet with *shifta* (rebels) and offer them refuge. All of this does nothing but create hostility and destroy all friendship. If I speak like this it does not mean that I have given orders to plunder you. That was done without my approval. For the time being, this is the answer I send you.

Written at the camp of Zobil, 14th June (19th June) in the year of grace 1873 (1881).

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 226, French translation of what must have been an Amharic original now lost. Not only are the three Catholic priests called by their names as missionaries in Ethiopia, i.e. *Abba* Yosēf, *Abba* Yohannis and *Abba* Pēṭros, but the Amharic word *shifta* appears with a translation into French. The Catholic mission had been robbed and the three missionaries taken captive by *Dejjach* Tedla, a cousin of Yohannis, and *Dejjach* Meshesha, Yohannis’ nephew, on 1 June. For a detailed account see Kevin O’Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix: A History of the Vicariate of Abyssinia 1860–1881*, book II, Asmara, 1987, pp. 242–249. Although Yohannis, in order not to create diplomatic problems, ordered them to be released as soon he was informed (see [doc. 51](#)), it is evident that he had no sympathy for them. In fact, the letter reiterates what Yohannis had already written in 1872 about the Catholics meddling in Ethiopian politics and supporting his rivals. See *Acta* III, docs 88 and 100.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Louis Auguste Brémond, June 1881

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد
 النبي بعده وعلى آله وصحبه الذين يدعونك وسومهم الله ائمة بعدنا فان سلمتم
 عتاقنا نحن اجمعين خير وعافيه جعلتم الله كذا كذا كذا فاسأل الله لنا ولكم بعافيه
 مني حضرة الاكابر الملكة التي التي اسلمت بن السلطان محمد بن حفص
 الى حضرة وزير الملك من اعيان به يدوسو القضاوي عمود وكيل الملك
 في جوارله لنا ولكم العافية وما ارجو قد وصل اليه ابان الذي ارجو
 بيد عبد الرحمن بن شيخ يوسف التتور وعفاة لما كذا كذا كذا ما عافيه
 بقولك وقول سلطان منك ولكن اذا توجهت اليه لا تتوجه الاله مع عبد الله
 يوسف وسهنا انك تتهون في ذلك ابو يعقوب رخصنا لكم فندول من ابو يعقوب
 لاجل الملك مناسي ان تذلوا له وعافيه من ابو يعقوب وسهنا
 الا لا يتوجه مع غيركم ولا تتوجه اليه الاله مع عبد الرحمن يوسف
 ومن جهة الاخوة اقلنا وانت اذ في ان شاء الله في الدنيا اذ وصلت عندي
 لا تخفق ولا تخدن مما يجنب من الخلق الا من الخلق اذ وصلت عندي
 بما عرفتني من طرفي الى الوجود وهو في الخلق على المال حتى الابد
 الا بما طلبت قلبك واذا من جهة الاخبار تجد وفهامي عبد الرحمن
 وهو وسهنا او امينكم وتساخروه مساعدا لكل كليات وان كذا كذا
 صاحبهم ووكيله هذا واسلامه مقام من محمد حفص



In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful.

Praise be to God alone and blessings and peace be upon him after whom there is no prophet, and upon his companions who sacrificed themselves for God.

Now, if you inquire about us, we are well and healthy. May God make you likewise. We pray God [to grant] us and yourself health.

From His Excellency, the most noble and most honoured, the pious and pure, Sultan bin Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē (Muḥammad bin Ḥanfadhē) to His Excellency the deputy of King Minilik, by this I refer to Brémond, the Frenchman, general agent of Minilik. We beseech God for health for us and for you. What we want to tell you is, that the letters you sent with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, bin Shaykh Yūsif, the deceased, reached us.

We read it, your message, and understood its content, and we accept what you and Sultan Minilik have said. But please, if you address us, do not address us except through ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif. We heard you wish to embark at Obok. For the sake of King Minilik we approve of your coming to Obok. If you come, support and sustenance will be [supplied] from Obok. You will stay with me. But for now, no one should set out with you except yourself. And do not set out except with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif. As for the brotherhood, we accept it and will benefit from each other, God willing, in this world. When you come to me, do not fear or feel saddened about what is happening, it is of the creatures and not of the Creator. If you come to me, the grace you knew in me is still there. Do not worry about provisions, not even a needle, except for what your heart says. As for the news, you will find them with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif, who is our and your confidant. Do help him in all ways. I am likewise his friend and trustee. Concluding greetings.

From Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Seal: Muḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

AEMD, Afrique 62, Abyssinie 3, fol. 519, Arabic original; fol. 520, French translation. The letter is undated, but annotated “reçue le 27 Juin”. The author, Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, was the Sultan of Awsa from 1862 to 1902. Fighting against the Egyptians and their ally, Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm, he was responsible for the attacks on the caravans of Arnoux and of Munzinger in 1875 (see *Acta* III, no. 125 and 179). For details on him see *EAE* 3, pp. 647–648. Since Brémond stayed at Obok it was most probably written a week or two earlier. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif was the trusted agent of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Minilik II to Umberto I, 11 July 1881

Message sent by King Minilik to His Majesty Umberto I, King of Italy, our friend.

How are you? I, by the grace of God, am well and all my court is well.

Your Majesty! In the past I had already written a letter to Your Majesty in order to let you know that Captain Cecchi had been released and what I had done to get him free.

This very day Captain Cecchi unexpectedly comes to me to tell me that because of illness he wishes to go back to his country. On his departure from here I supplied him with all he needs for the journey so that no accident will occur to him and I have sent him away. God will bring him, as I hope, in good health to Your Majesty. He will not fail to tell you everything we have done for the Geographical Society.

I pray to God that he will grant Your Majesty a long life and guard our friendship.

Written at Werreṭlu, our city, the 5th of July, 1873.

ASMAI 36/1–6, fols 101–102, Italian text. Printed in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 71 as dated 11 July 1880 (*sic*), which is an obvious mistake since Cecchi was released in August 1880 (see [docs 15–17](#)). The cover (101) gives the correct date ‘11 Luglio 1881’, which corresponds to Hamlē 5 in the Ethiopian calendar. It thus seems obvious that “luglio” in the text above is simply a translation of Hamlē, leaving the date of the month unchanged just like the year. No Amharic version of this letter or the two following ones is recorded in ASMAI.

Minilik II to Umberto I, 12 July 1881

Message sent by King Minilik to Umberto I, King of Italy.

How is your health? I, by the grace of God, am well. Today I add to the letter of the 5th of July the current month as follows: Earlier I had written to Your Majesty through Captain Martini about the rifles, but Captain Martini has not concluded this matter. If I had had a quantity of rifles and war-materials, Captain Cecchi would not have returned like that from halfway (uncompleted journey). What I lack today are rifles. Your Majesty on the other hand, since your heart is benevolent, will not be embarrassed. As for us we do lack weapons against our enemies, but we lack nothing else. Among us a chief with a hundred men flees and abandons his land in front of ten riflemen. The Egyptians, our neighbours all around us, close our way and prevent us from purchasing any with our own money. As for getting rifles our only hope lies with Your Majesty’s calculations and goodness and we have no other hope. Only Your Majesty’s heart with regard to such injustice, and that alone, can put an end to this situation of ours.

Written at Werreṭlu (from) our city, the 6th of July 1873 of our salvation (according to the Julian calendar).

ASMAI 36/1–6, fols 105–106, Italian text. Printed in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 72, dated 11 July 1880 (*sic*). See [doc. 48](#) above for our dating.

Document no. 50

Minilik II to Benedetto Cairoli, 12 July 1881

Message sent by King Minilik so that it will reach the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the direction of the minister of the king of Italy, Mr Cairoli.

How are you? I, by the grace of God, am well. I have already written to you about the release of Captain Cecchi, telling you about all my efforts in that matter. Today Captain Cecchi suddenly wants to leave because of illness, and so I send him away hoping that it will please you. He will tell you everything that was said and done here.

As for the past, the reason why Captain Cecchi came back in the middle of his journey was shortage of weapons. If I had had many rifles, I would have had him accompanied by many people and everything would have turned out well. Today I am short of rifles, but as for all the rest I do not lack anything.

From all sides the Turks, having closed the door, intercept our passage. I have always been at peace with the realm of Egypt and to this day I do not know of having given them any reason for offence; in spite of this they always shut their doors to us. For this reason, I appeal to your heart so that you do everything possible to make rifles arrive to me. Of course, I intend to buy them.

Written at Werreʿilu, our city, the 6th of July 1873 of the Christian era (according to the Julian calendar).

ASMAI 36/1–6, fols 103–104, Italian text. Printed in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 71 as dated on 12 July 1880 (*sic*). See [doc. 48](#) above for dating. Cairoli had actually resigned as early as 29 May 1881.

Document no. 51

Yohannis IV to Achille Raffray, 17 July 1881

Message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, to Consul Raffray of France.

How are you? I and my army are well, thank God. I have subdued the Wello and the Adal, and made them Christians; I tell you this, I have left. After my [departure] (lit. behind me) *Dejjach* Tedla wrote to me, “I have found *Abba* Yosēf, Yohannis and Pētros with the *shifta*. I have laid hold of them.” It is with my permission that they have baptized and taught the ignorant. I have told him, “Who has given you the right to their goods? Restore everything, release them. I am very angry. Look what I wrote to him. Now, have them come. I will make him come who has done evil to them, and I shall render justice.”

Written in the camp at Zobil, 17th July (Greek calendar).

AEPCPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 240, French translation, copied in a sixteen-page report by the French vice-consul of Massawa Achille Raffray, dated 22 November. The original was reportedly kept in the archives of the vice-consulate at Massawa and may very well have been lost. When claiming to have subdued Adal, Yohannis IV refers to his Afar campaigns, during which he gained control of the Afar area nearby Meqelē, where he constructed the Mikaʿēl church. Further Afar areas such as Awsa entertained a political relation with Shewa, as further letters show, but no campaign to subdue them took place. The three priests mentioned are the Catholic missionaries J-M. Touvier, J-B. Coulbeaux and S. Barthèz, who had been captured by *Dejjach* Tedla, a cousin of Yohannis, and *Dejjach* Meshesha, Yohannis’ nephew. See [doc. 46](#).

**Burhān Muḥammad, declaration on relation with Egypt,
19 Aug. 1881**

I, the undersigned Sultan Burhān bin Muḥammad, declare that as far as I know no act of submission to Egypt has ever been made until this day, neither during the time of my father, nor that of my forefathers, the sultans of Raḥayta, neither by myself, nor by my above-mentioned predecessors, nor has the Egyptian flag ever been raised at Raḥayta, nor has the Egyptian government ever exercised any jurisdiction whatsoever at Raḥayta, as they do not have any rights whatsoever to the country of my father and my forefathers.

In faith of which I have signed, 1298, 23rd Ramadān (August 1881).

(Seal)

Signed: Burhān.

AP.DD, XXIII, no. 150, Italian text. The date in the Muslim calendar and the style of the text indicate that this is a translation from Arabic, but it is unclear if there ever was an Arabic document.

Nigusē Tasho and Amanu’ēl Hamed to Bengt Peter and Emelie Lundahl [Aug.–Sept. 1881]

To our father Lundahl and our mother Emelie. We wonder very much how you are; we are well. Yohannis, however, has long been ill. When we went to Shewa, we stayed a week at the Abbay without being able to cross, but then we gave one thaler and crossed. When we had crossed, our belongings were examined, and they took our saw from us. We were allowed to keep the other things.

The reason why we left Agewmidir is this: When we were sitting and teaching children, *Abba* Welde Giyorgīs, a priest, came in order to Christianize the Mohammedans by forcing them to [accept] baptism. Then the priests accused us and he said: “Bring them”, and then we were brought to him. “Why do you say that Mary and the saints do not intercede for us; why do you eat during the fast?” he said and fettered us in iron for five days. “Whether Abyssinians or Galla, we teach them. You are not allowed to do so.” And then they took our books.

Then we went to Shewa, as we had heard that the missionary Mayer had received a district in Galla and freedom to work [there]. So, we decided to go to them, and went.

From Agewmidir to the Abbay is four days’ journey. Very lovely country! From the Abbay to Ballī, Mayer’s station, seventeen days’ journey. Christ got us through safely. From Ankober to Ballī, four days. It is situated at the border of Minīlik’s kingdom. He often comes into Galla and kills.

O our father, do not forget us in [your] prayers! Tell your children and brothers to pray for us. The German brothers received us with joy. They still had no houses, but they gave us a tent, where we still live. We have been here two months. In Agewmidir, I took myself a wife, after having conferred with the brothers. Her name is Mihiret and she can read the Bible. A respected person named Meharī accompanied us with his wife – persecuted as we are.

Yohannis has much pain in his body. He suffers so that he cries day and night. He has been ill four months. Pray for him. Mayer and Greiner said that Lundahl has written to us and asked if he could send missionaries here. Therefore, we stay until you write further to us. We are building ourselves a house here, and Greiner has helped us cut [trees] for timber.

Greet all the brothers, big and small, each one by his [own] name. O my brothers, when we stood fettered in front of the high priest, we recalled the word of Christ, which he told his disciples, Matthew 10, 16–18.

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
Nigusē, Amanu’ēl, Yohannis, Ēlsabēt.

EFS, E I 24, 173a–d, Swedish translation incorporated in a letter dated 2 Oct. 1881, from B. P. Lundahl to J. Neander at mission headquarters in Stockholm. Since Nigusē’s and Amanu’ēl’s letter has first travelled from Ballī, a Protestant mission station in Oromo to Imkullu, our dating is obviously very tentative. The writers of the letter are Nigusē Tasho and Amanu’ēl Hamed, both mentioned by Lundahl as the authors. The blessing, however, comes from all four. Amanu’ēl was an Oromo Muslim who had been baptized by the Swedish missionaries in 1872 and Nigusē was an Oromo merchant who entered the Swedish mission service in 1877. They had been ordained as evangelists and sent to the Oromo people in November the same year. Yohannis was their assistant and Ēlsabēt Amanu’ēl’s wife. For details about the authors and their activities see *Evangelical Pioneers*, pp. 234–238 and 243–248.

Welde Şadiq to Umberto I, 4 Sept. [?] 1881

I raise my hands, wishing you good health in the name of the Saviour of the world. I pray to God that he will save your kingdom that is so honoured and has done so much good for the realm of Shewa.

I have received the most beautiful and precious revolver, sent to me by the Italian Geographical Society through the travelling geographer, the illustrious Captain Martini, as a sign of his highly desired friendship. And when I, Your Majesty's slave, unworthy of polishing your shoes, thought of the great gift you sent me, I took immense pleasure in it. As I lack something worthy of Your Majesty to let you know my love and gratitude, I [nevertheless] send you something from my country, i.e. a ceremonial garment (*lemd*), which a warrior of great merit usually dresses in, and a buffalo horn, which our *dejjazmach*, or army general, usually drinks from, in the hope that you will receive it as if it were a great gift, since it is a sign of my most sincere friendship and veneration. So I hope that your affection for me, your slave, and for my master, a great friend of Your Majesty, will always keep increasing and that the agreement that has been made about the rifles with Count Antonelli will be accomplished. Then my king will be satisfied in all his plans, helped by Your Majesty, and God will bless you.

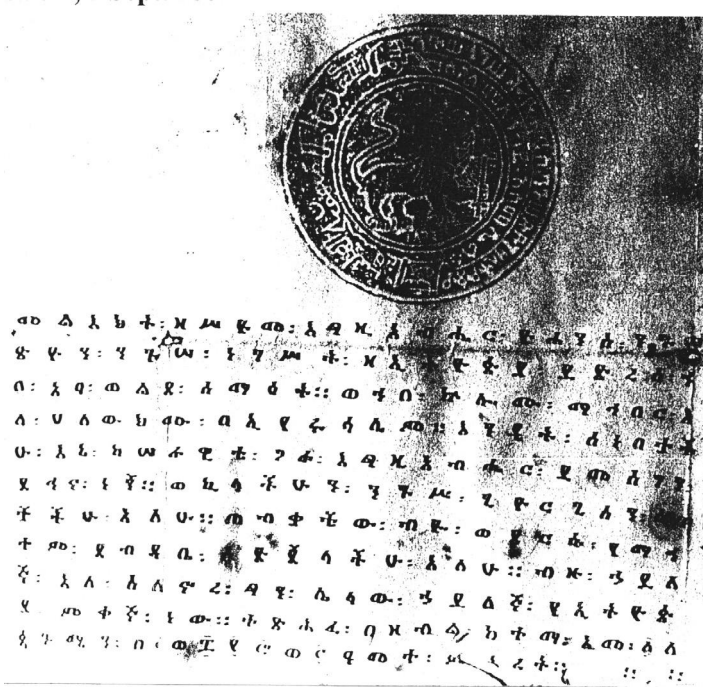
I beg Your Majesty to receive the gift I send you through Captain Cecchi, sent out by this Geographical Society. I for my part will not fail to show every consideration I can for the representatives of the Society that remain here and for those that will come later on.

Written at Ankober the 30th of August 1873 (according to the Julian calendar).

Azzazh Welde Şadiq.

ASMAI 36/1–6, fols 107–108, Italian translation of a supposedly Amharic original. The date is confusing in the sense that we cannot know with certainty whether “30 agosto” refers to the Gregorian or the Julian calendar. Concluding from the reference to the Julian calendar and the year 1873 we have read “30 agosto” as 30 Nehasē and converted the whole date to 4 September 1881. The indication that this letter was sealed, “loro sigilli” (their seals), is confusing. If a sealed original of this letter has existed, it is hard to understand why it should have had more than one seal. In a document of Jan. 1875 (*Acta* III, doc. 125), *Azzazh Welde Şadiq* is referred to as the “minister of the king's palace”. He was apparently closely involved in the work of the Italian explorers. See also [docs 82](#), [136](#), [147](#) and [161](#).

Yohannis IV to Welde Sema'it Welde Yohannis and the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, 5 Sept. 1881



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūhannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'il. 1864.

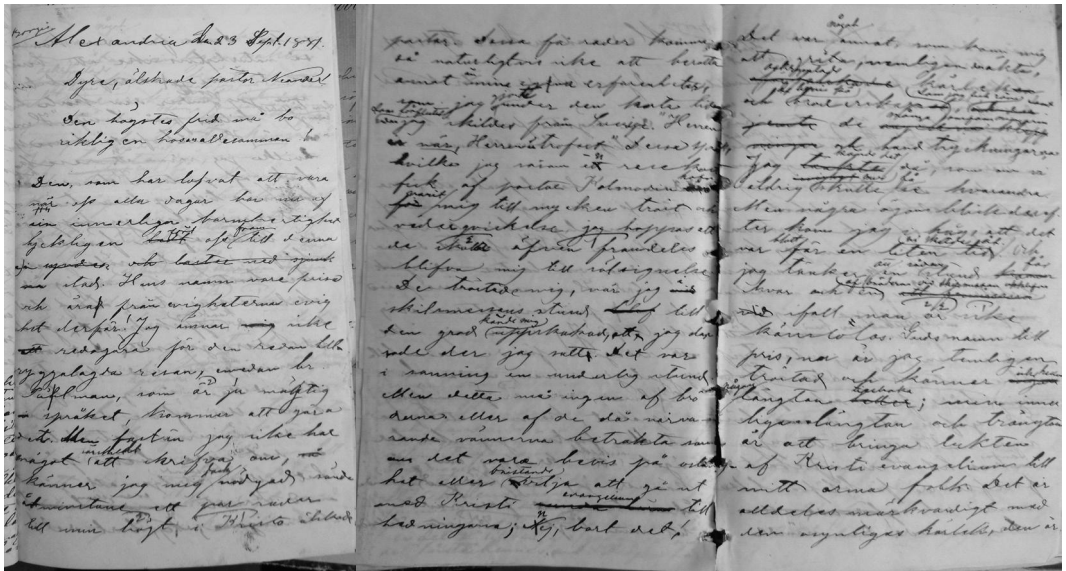
May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach *Abba Welde Sema'it* and all you [members of] the community, who live in Jerusalem.

How have you been? I, together with my army, am well, thank God. I have given you King George (*Nigus Giyorgīs*) as your representative (*wekīl*). As there are many trouble-makers, I have sent him a sealed letter, saying “protect them for me”. One of the powerful persons, however, is an enemy of Ethiopia.

Written at the town of Zobil on the 1st of Paḡumē in the year of grace 1873.

Dayr al-Sultan, no. 8, Amharic/Gi'iz original. Printed with English translation in *Chronicle*, no. 8, pp. 168–171, where the king is called “Welde Giyorgīs”. Probably Yohannis is referring to King George of Greece who, being so much closer to Jerusalem, had better opportunities to protect the Ethiopians there than Yohannis. But we have not been able to find any letter that fits the letter mentioned here.

Onesimus Nesib to Johannes Neander, 23 Sept. 1881



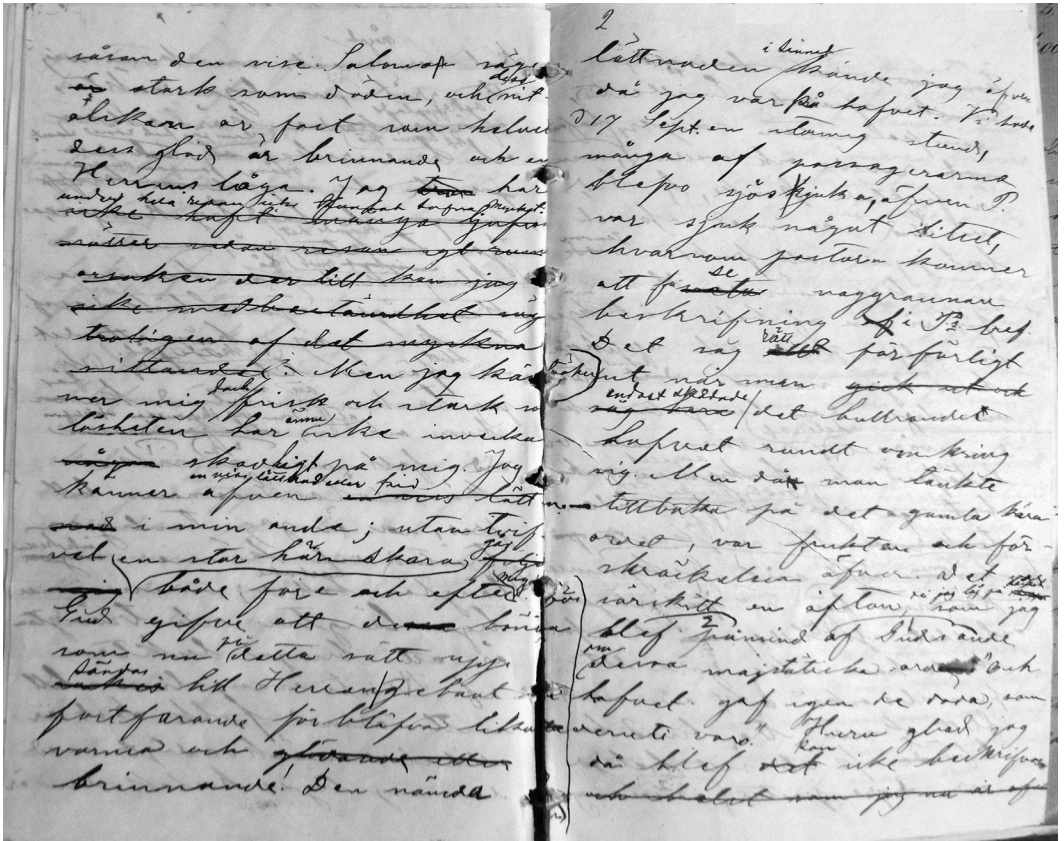
Alexandria 23rd Sept. 1881

Dear, beloved Pastor Neander,

May the peace of the Highest be abundantly with us all.

He who has promised to be near us every day has now in his compassion brought us safely to this town. His name be praised and honoured from ages of eternity for this. I do not intend to give an account of the journey already covered, as brother Pählman who is capable of the language will do that. But although I do not have anything in particular to write about, I do, however, feel compelled to send at least a couple of lines to my pastor highly beloved in Christ. These few lines will not of course tell other than my own experiences which I have met with during the short time which has passed since I was separated from Sweden. "The lord is near, the lord is faithful". These sayings which I received as provisions for the journey from Pastor Kolmodin have been much comfort and refreshment. I hope that they will be a blessing to me in the future as well. They consoled me when I in the moment of separation felt so upset that I was shaking where I sat. It was in truth a remarkable moment. But may none of the brothers or the friends present regard this as if it was a sign of uncertainty or failing desire to proceed with the gospel of Christ to the heathen.

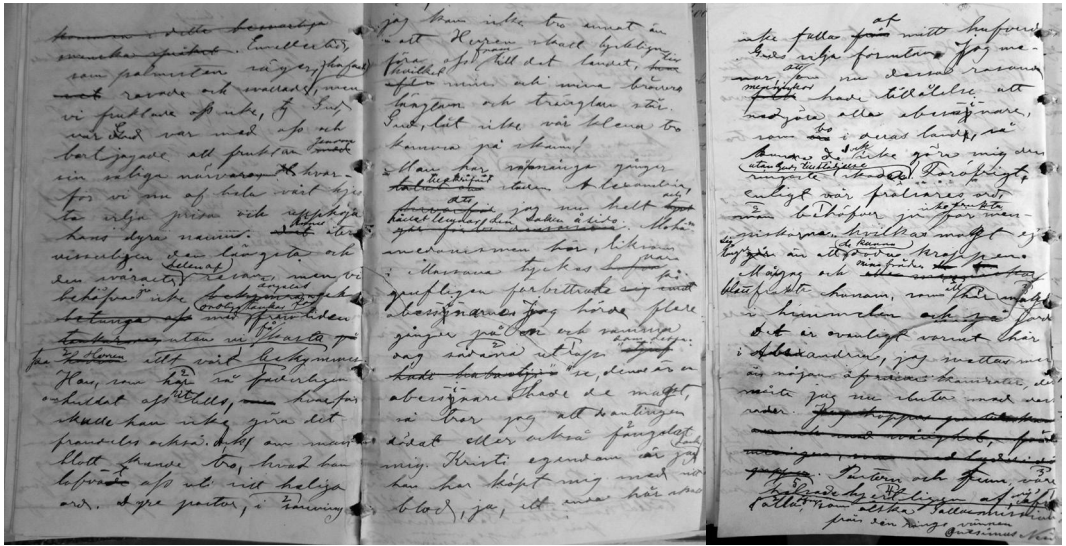
No, God forbid! It was something else which made me weep, namely all the pure ingenuous love, and the evidence of brotherhood, which I was given the opportunity to experience, and the many hugs and shaking of hands. I felt then as if we never more would see each other. But some moments later I remembered that it was only for a short period we were separated here. And I believe that each and every one of the brothers will experience such a moment at separation, unless they are without feelings.



The name of God be praised, I am now quite comforted and do not feel any longing to go; my yearning and wish is to bring the savour of the gospel of Christ to my poor people. It is very strange with the love of the Unseen; it is as the wise Solomon says: "strong as death, and its jealousy as solid as hell, its ardour is burning and a flame of the Lord."

I have not been able to sleep much during the whole journey. I do, however, feel healthy and strong, and the sleeplessness has not yet affected me. I also feel a certain relief and peace in my spirit; an army of hosts is no doubt both before and after me. God grant that the prayers that are now in this way sent to the Lord Sabaoth will remain strong and burning! I felt the mentioned relief in my mind also while being at sea. 17 September, we had a stormy moment. Many of the passengers were seasick, and P. was also a little ill, about which the Pastor will hear a more detailed description in P.'s letter. Only seeing the rumbling ocean on all sides, it looked quite frightful. But thinking back on the dear words, the fear and the fright was over. Particularly one evening, when I was lying on deck, I was reminded by the Spirit of God of these majestic words: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." The joy I then felt, cannot be described. However, the waters, as the psalmist says, roared and were troubled, but we did not fear since God, our God, was with us and chased away all fear through his blessed presence – and consequently we now want to praise and exalt His Holy Name with all our heart.

Nevertheless, the longest and most difficult part of the journey still remains, but we do not need to be worried with restless thoughts about the future; instead we may throw all our worries on the Lord.



He who has in such a fatherly manner cared for us until now, why should he not do that in the future as well. Oh! if one could only believe what he has promised us in His Holy Word. Dear Pastor, I can honestly not believe other than that the Lord shall bring us happily all the way to the land to which my and my brothers' longing and desire stands. God, do not let our weak faith come to nought.

The city Alexandria has been described so many times that I now leave that matter entirely aside. The Mohammedans here, just the same as in Massawa, seem to be terribly angry with the Abyssinians. I heard several times on the same day exclamations like the following: "Look! This man is an Abyssinian." If they had power, I believe that they would either have killed or imprisoned me. However, I am the property of Christ, He has bought me with His blood, yes not a single hair shall fall from my head without God's will. I mean that if these furious people had permission to cut down all Abyssinians who live in their land, would they nevertheless be able to do me the least harm without the permission of God? Besides, according to the words of Our Saviour, one does not need to fear men whose power does not extend further than that they can kill the body. Be it so that I and my brother fear him alone who has all power in heaven and on earth.

It is unusually warm here in Alexandria. I sweat more than any of the others, so I must now finish with these lines.

The Pastor and [his] wife, as well as all others who love the mission to the Galla, be cordially greeted from the humble friend,

Onesimus Nesib.

EFS, E I 24, Swedish original. Onesimus Nesib was an Oromo who had been sold as a slave, liberated by Werner Munzinger and entrusted to the Swedish mission at the age of fourteen in 1870. He was baptized two years later. In 1876 he was sent to Sweden where he studied at a theological training institute until September 1881. This letter reports on his journey back, but also on his thoughts about the forthcoming mission to his own Oromo people. See further *Evangelical Pioneers*, pp. 164–167 and 249–251. Pastor Kolmodin refers to the Swedish theologian, Adolf Kolmodin, who taught at Johannelunds Theological seminary when Onesimus studied there. He was the father of the Ethiopianist scholar and later adviser of Ras Teferi, Johannes Kolmodin.

As a rule we have turned to the King James' version for quotations from the Bible. The Swedish text of the above letter, however, differs so much from the King James' version that a literal translation seems preferable in this particular case.

Minilik II to Onorato Caetani, 9 Oct. 1881

May [the] message, sent by King Minilik, by the grace of God King of Shewa, reach the President of the Italian Geographical Society.

How are you? By the grace of God I am well and all my army is well.

I intend to send an order to Count Antinori to leave with all his people. As the letter arrived the very day of the departure of Captain Cecchi, and I had much business waiting with Count Antinori, for this reason, I have forbidden Count Antinori to leave until we have finished our business. Thus, since I have forbidden him to leave, I hope that you are not feeling anxious about him (alt. do not think evil of him.) Otherwise, being a respected elderly gentleman, who has the witness of everyone about what he has done (lit. pro e contro), this seems a very just case; and therefore, do not reprimand me for making him wait.

Written at Ankober, the 9th of October 1874 (Julian calendar).

Place of the seal.

ASSGI, busta 20, fasc. 5, fol. 5, Italian translation of a supposedly Amharic original. It cannot be taken for granted that the day and the name of the month should be understood according to the Ethiopian calendar even if it is indicated that the year, in this case 1874, is according to the Julian calendar. We have come to the conclusion that the day and month here may just as well be Gregorian and have only converted “1874” to 1881. This is supported by the fact that “9 ottobre” is clearly written in the handwriting of the letter itself while the year 1874 seems to have been added in a different hand. Moreover 1881 has been added at the bottom of the document without bothering about “9 ottobre”. For Antinori, see [doc. 20](#).

Minilik II to Umberto I, 14 Oct. 1881

Letter written by Minilik, King of Shewa, to His Majesty Umberto I, by the power of God King of Italy.

[Your] Majesty,

Because of the friendship which I had with your venerated and amiable father [and because of] my friendship with Your Majesty and your [agent] who has come to me as a consequence, I give to the learned men of Italy a place in which to rest and live called Liṭ Marefiya, where the invited persons from the Italian Geographical Society can stay in peace; and because of this I ordered all my subjects and officials to receive them and to respect them as they are entitled to be. If the two invited persons from the Italian Geographical Society who have departed for the South are not successful with regard to the outcome of their travels, the fault is not mine. Your Majesty should know, and that is what I have written to your father, the king, namely that I will not be able to protect them outside my kingdom, whatever evil might happen to them. Now I have heard to my great dismay the news that fourteen Italians have been betrayed in the dependency of the kingdom of Awsa; and that your government is sending a warship with soldiers to punish the assassins. I for my part intended to descend and help to destroy the guilty. Because of what the government of Italy has already begun by this expedition, I am prepared for everything. I shall descend or send soldiers to Aseb to receive the rifles which Count Antonelli should bring to me, and on this trip I expect that they shall be able to speak about the exchange of merchandise between the land of Shewa and that of Italy. This could be an affair of great advantage to both countries.

Your Majesty should know that on my side I shall do everything to instruct my people well. I have already communicated another matter, which is to abolish the trade in slaves who come from Kefa and to prevent the slave-traders from passing through any longer.

Your Majesty, I love Italy and respect its king, however in order that our relations shall become strong it is necessary that the government of Italy makes a treaty of friendship and commerce with us. Five years have already passed, during which Count Antinori has stayed in my country, where he is much loved. If Your Majesty consents, I wish that Count Antinori might continue to remain there as before as the head of the geographical expedition, with the addition of a [consular] representative, who can finish all issues and conclude the treaties and conventions which might be required with the government of Italy. For this purpose it is not necessary to send another person. Your Majesty should be able to do me this favour for the good of the two countries in agreement with the president of the Geographical Society.

With regard to the blood shed on the borders of the kingdom of Awsa, I have sent a messenger to investigate if this king really has the intention to come to an agreement about restitution for the Italian blood, as he has informed me. This done, which I am waiting for with impatience, I shall come down with my soldiers resolved to give Italy proof of the very particular friendship which I have always harboured until this day, and a token of my recognition and love.

May God meanwhile preserve you for a long time for the welfare of your country.

Written at Debre Birhan, 5th October 1874 (Julian calendar).

ASMAI 36/1–6, fols 109–111, Italian translation. For the date, see note at [doc. 48](#). We once located the Amharic original in ASMAI 1/3–17, but the document seems later to have been misplaced. At any rate we have not been able to acquire a copy for publication in this volume. For Minilik's earlier contacts with Umberto and his father Victor Emmanuel II, see *Acta* III, docs 165, 187, 208 and 211.

Yohannis IV to Minilik II, 6 Dec. 1881

መልእክት ፡ ሆሎሎ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ የሐንስ ፡ ንጉ
 ሠ ፡ ጽዮን ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ፡ ይድረስ ፡ ከ
 ንጉሥ ፡ ምኒልክ ፡ በአማን ፡ እስራኤላዊ ፡ ዘክልቦ ፡ ጽልሐ
 ት ፡ ሰላም ፡ ለከ ፡ ወሰላም ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ የገሉ ፡ ምስሌ
 ከ ፤ እኔ ፡ በእግዚአብሔር ፡ ቸርነት ፡ በእምነ ፡ ጽዮን ፡ አ
 ማላጅነት ፡ አምላክ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ይክበር ፡ ይመስገን ፡ ደኅና ፡
 ነኝ ፡ ምሕረቱ ፡ ለዘለዓለም ፡ ነውና ፡ ደብዳቤውም ፡ ደረ
 ሰኝ ፡ ለንጉሥ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖት ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በፊትም ፡ ል
 ኬአለሁ ፡ እንግዲህም ፡ አሺ ፡ አልካለሁ ፡ ደግሞ ፡ ለየራሳ
 ቸሁ ፡ አንዳንድ ፡ ሰው ፡ አለመስደድም ፡ ወደ ፡ ሸዋ ፡ የሔ
 ደው ፡ ለሸዋ ፡ ወደ ፡ ጎጃም ፡ የሔደውም ፡ ለጎጃም ፡
 ያደላልና ፡ ነገሩ ፡ አያምርም ፡ ብዬ ፡ ነው ፡ ነገር ፡ ግን ፡ አን
 ድ ፡ ጳጳስ ፡ ሶስት ፡ ኤጲስ ፡ ቆጶሳት ፡ አራት ፡ ሁነው ፡ ሲወ
 ጡ ፡ በኢትዮጵያ ፡ ተደርጎ ፡ የማያውቅ ፡ ሐዲስ ፡ ነገር ፡ ሲ
 ደረግ ፡ የረከሰ ፡ በሚቀደስበት ፡ የተጣላ ፡ በሚታረቅበት ፡
 ጊዜ ፡ እላንተ ፡ ትጣላላችሁን ፡ እኔም ፡ ለሠራዊቱ ፡ ስን
 ቅ ፡ አሲይዝ ፡ ብዬ ፡ ነው ፡ እንጂ ፡ ምን ፡ አደርጋለሁ ፤ ይ
 ኸው ፡ መጣሁ ፡ ተነሥቼአለሁ ፡ ሲሆን ፡ ወይ ፡ ከዋድላ ፡
 ወይ ፡ ከቤጊምድር ፡ ላይ ፡ ከእኔ ፡ ስንገናኝ ፡ አለያያችኋ
 ለሁ ፤ አትቸኩሉ ፡ እስክመጣ ፡ ድረስ ፡ ቆዩ ፡ የቸኮላች
 ሁ ፡ እንደ ፡ ሆነ ፡ ግን ፡ ካለሁበት ፡ ድረስ ፡ እየራሳችሁ ፡
 የሚለያይ ፡ አንድ ፡ አንድ ፡ ሰው ፡ ስደዱ ፡ የሚመጣው ፡
 ሰው ፡ ግን ፡ በጥንተ ፡ ውሉ ፡ ተጋጥሞ ፡ የሚለያይ ፡ ነው ፡
 ተጽሕፈ ፡ በመቀሌ ፡ ከተማ ፡ አመ ፡ ፳ ወ፳ ፡ ለኅዳር ፡ በ
 ፲ ወ ፳፻፸ ወ ፱ ዓመተ ፡ ምሕረት ፡

A message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia.

May it reach King Minilik, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Peace be to you and the peace of God be with you.

By the grace of God and the intercession of our mother Sïyon, may the God of the saints be honoured and praised, I am well. For His mercy is forever.

The letter has reached me. I have written to King Tekle Haymanot earlier and, yes, I will write also in the future. Furthermore, the reason why I did not send one person for each of you is because I thought that the one who goes to Shewa would be partial to Shewa and the one who goes to Gojjam to Gojjam, and that the matter would not look good. However, when an archbishop and three bishops, four [in all], come, and when something new that has never been done in Ethiopia is done, and when the defiled should be blessed and the quarrelling reconciled, how come that you quarrel?

As for me I now want to get hold of provisions for my army; what else have I to do? I shall come; I have started. I will have you reconciled when we meet either in Wadla or in Begēmdir. Don't hurry; wait until I come. If, however, [both of] you are in a hurry send a man each at the place where I am, who should reconcile you. However, the man that should come [to me] should be a man who remains firm on former terms to make peace.

Written in the town of Meqelē on 28th Hidar in the year of grace 1874.

Tarike Negest, p. 56, Addis Abeba [1936], printed Amharic text. For the reference to “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile”, see [doc. 27](#).

Lewṭē Zewde to Kīrillus V, 9 Jan. 1882

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 وانا امين يا ربنا يا ذا الجلال والإكرام
 والحمد لله رب العالمين
 والصلوة والسلام على
 سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه
 وسلّم
 وبعد
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 والصلوة والسلام على
 سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه
 وسلّم
 وبعد
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 والصلوة والسلام على
 سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه
 وسلّم
 وبعد
 الحمد لله رب العالمين
 والصلوة والسلام على
 سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه
 وسلّم



The holy God, the sacred Father, the all-benevolent, he who is full of virtue, of the seat of the Coptic church of Alexandria, the slave of the Lord, son of St. Mark, the apostle in the land of Alexandria which is called the land of all the apostles and which lives under the umbrella of the Jacobites and the firm foundation of Abyssinia, the fourth of the evangelists and the second most beloved of the apostles, the father and benevolent *Abba Kīrillus*, patriarch of the see of St. Mark. May He prolong his life.

After greetings and prostration (lit. under your feet), and reception of your blessing from your respected hands, we pray always that you may live in peace for a long time. Indeed, that this has taken such a long time is because we wished to have it in the mind of Your Holiness, since we are your sons and you will forgive us. If there is a wrong or sin that we have committed, the Deity, the Son of the living

God, who is wanted by all, has given you the key to redeem the wanted ones from among the unwanted and to turn as your sons the kings that have committed sins.

And we implore you that you visit your son with your fatherly zeal, with your peaceful power, and bless and absolve the sins of our wives and sons. May the Lord prolong your potential with long life with all justice. Amen. And now we have sent to your holiness by the hands of my father *Qumūs Mīka'ēl*, and for the sake of your beloved son Tamru, presents of two bells for the church. May the Lord prolong your life for our sake.

Your son the *bejirond*, the treasurer of the king (one word illegible)
 The year 1598, 2 Ṭuba. (one word illegible) 58
Bejirond Lewtē.

Seal: The seal of *Bejirond Lewtē*.

Ghali Collection, no. 156, Arabic original. This Arabic text has been extremely difficult to decipher and understand, thus the above translation must be regarded as a paraphrase. For the author, see [doc. 24](#).

Yohannis IV to Minilik II, 15 Jan. 1882

መልአክት ፡ ዘሥዩመ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ዮሐንስ ፡ ን
 ጉሠ ፡ ጸዮን ፡ ንጉሠ ፡ ነገሥት ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ፡ ይድረስ ፡
 ከንጉሥ ፡ ምኒልክ ፡ በአማን ፡ እስራኤላዊ ፡ ዘአልቦ ፡ ጽ
 ልሁት ፡ ሰላም ፡ ለከ ፡ ወሰላመ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ የሃሉ ፡ ም
 ስሌክ ፡ እኔ ፡ በእግዚአብሔር ፡ ቸርነት ፡ በእምን ፡ ጸዮን ፡
 አማላጅነት ፡ አምላክ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ይክብር ፡ ይመስገን ፡ ደ
 ህና ፡ ነኝ ፡ ምሕረቱ ፡ ለዘለዓለም ፡ ነውና ፡
 ደብዳቤውም ፡ ደረሰኝ ፡ ከዚህ ፡ በፊትም ፡ የሁለታ
 ችሁን ፡ መልአክት ፡ በደብዳቤ ፡ አመላላሳለሁ ፡ አትጣሉ
 ብኝ ፡ ተፋቀሩልኝ ፡ አንደ ፡ ከሰማይ ፡ አንደ ፡ አናት ፡ አ
 ንደ ፡ አባት ፡ እመክራለሁ ፡ አገላግላለሁ ፡ እንጂ ፤ አንደ ፡
 ንጉሥ ፡ ይህ ፡ ይሁን ፡ ብዬ ፡ ያዘገቡት ፡ ነገር ፡ የለኝም ፡
 አሁንም ፡ የአሕዛብና ፡ የሰደጣን ፡ መሪዎቻል ፡ እንዳንሆን ፡
 ከባሕር ፡ ወዲህ ፤ ከባሕር ፡ ወዲያ ፡ ብዙ ፡ ጠላት ፡ ሳለኔ ፡
 እርስ ፡ በርሳችን ፡ ብንዋጋ ፤ የክርስቲያን ፡ ደም ፡ በከንቱ ፡
 ቢፈስ ፡ ለክርስቶስ ፡ ደስ ፡ አያለውም ፡ አሁንም ፡ የሁለታ
 ችሁ ፡ ጦር ፡ አያገናኝ ፤ ከተገናኘ ፡ ዘንድ ፡ ከመዋጋት ፡ ይ
 ደርሳል ፡ እኔ ፡ እስከመጣ ፡ ድረስ ፡ ታገሁልኝ ፤ ጦራችሁ ፡
 በያለበት ፡ ይቆይ ፡ ደግሞ ፡ እኔ ፡ ፊቱን ፡ ወደ ፡ ትግራ ፡
 ብመልስ ፡ በወረ ፡ በቦ ፤ ሰርጉብ ፡ በወሎ ፤ ብዙ ፡ ነገር ፡
 ይደረጋል ፤ ማተቡን ፡ ይቆርጣል ፡ ሲሉ ፡ እሰማለሁ ፡ ከቀ
 ድሞውም ፡ ያጠፋ ፡ ያባ ፡ ዋጠው ፡ ምክር ፡ ይሆንን ፡ ብዬ ፡
 ነበር ፡ አሁንም ፡ ቢመከርበት ፡ ይሻላል ፡ ነገር ፡ ግን ፡ እኔ ፡
 ባጠፋው ፡ ቸግርኝ ፡ አይደለም ፡ ከወንድሜ ፡ ጋራ ፡ እንዳ
 ልከፋፋ ፡ ብዬ ፡ ነው ፡ እንጂ ፡ ተጽሕፈ ፡ በጭኒ ፡ ሰፈር ፡
 አመ ፡ ጅለጥር ፡ በገደብ ፡ ግመት ፡ ምሕረት ፡

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach King Minilik, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Peace be to you and the peace of God be with you.

By the grace of God and the intercession of Our Mother Zion – may the God of the saints be honoured and praised – I am well, since his mercy is forever.

The letter has reached me. Earlier I have answered both of your messages by letters: “Please, do not quarrel, love one another.” I advise and serve as an elder, as a mother, as a father but it is not something that I ordered you, like a king saying “Have this done”. And now let us not be the target (?) of the mockery of gentiles and of Satan. As we have many enemies on this side of the sea and from the other side, if we fight against one another and if Christian blood is shed in vain Christ will not be happy.

And now let not the armies of you two meet. If they meet it will come to fighting. Please, have patience until I come. Let your armies stay where they are.

Besides, if I turn my face towards Tigrē many things will happen in Werre Babo, in Argobba and in Wello. I hear [people] saying that the neckband (*mateb*) will be cut; they will become Muslims. I was saying, “Can it be the lost advice of *Abba Waṭew*?” And now it is better if it is discussed. However, it is not that it would have been difficult for me to destroy him but [I have no desire] to be on bad terms with my brother.

Written in the camp of Čhinī on 8th Ṭirr in the year of grace 1874.

Tarike Negest, p. 56, Addis Abeba [1936], printed Amharic text.

Yohannis IV to Tekle Haymanot, 30 Jan. 1882

መልእክት፡ ዘሥዮሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ንጉሠ፡
 ጽዮን ፤ ንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ። ይድረስ፡ ከንጉሥ፡
 ተክለ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ በአግን፡ እስራኤላዊ፡ ዘአልቦ፡ ጽል
 ሁት ፤ ሰላም ፡ ለከ፡ ወሰላሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዮሃሉ፡ ምስ
 ሌከ ። እኔ ፡ በእግዚአብሔር ፡ ቸርነት ፤ በእምነ፡ ጽዮን፡
 አማላጅነት ፡ አምላክ ፡ ቅዱሳን ፡ ዲክበር ፡ ይመስገን፡ ደ
 ሀና ፡ ነኝ ፤ ምሕረቱ ፡ ለዘለዓለም ፡ ነውና ።

ደብዳቤውም ፡ ደረሰኝ ፡ እኔም ፡ የሁለታችሁን ፡ ነገር ፡
 እየሰማሁ ፡ መከራ ፡ እየተቀበልሁ ፡ ተቀምጫለሁ ። ነገር ፡
 ግን ፡ ኢትማኦ ፡ ለእኩይ ፡ በእኩይ ፤ አላ ፡ በገቢረ ፡ ሠናይ ፡
 ነው ። እንኳን ፡ በቅርብ ፡ ያለውን ፡ ጠላቴን ፡ በሩቅ ፡ እ
 ንኳን ፡ ያለውን ፡ ጠላቴን ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ በቸርነቱ ፡ ይ
 ጎዳልኛል ፡ እንጂ ፡ እኔ ፡ አልገዳውም ። አሁንም ፡ መ
 ግፋት ፡ ክፉ ፡ ነው ፡ እንጂ ፤ የተገፋ ፡ ሰው ፡ ምን ፡ ተገድ
 ዶ ፡ ያውቃል ። ለሁሉም ፡ እኔ ፡ ወደዚያው ፡ መጣሁ ፡ ሀ
 ሉም ፡ ስንገናኝ ፡ ይሆናል ። ተጽሕፈ ፡ በአድዋ ፡ ከተማ ፡
 አመ ፡ ፳ ወ፤ ለጥር ፡ በ፲ ወ፤ ፳፻፸ ወ፤ ዓመተ ፡ ምሕረት ።

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach King Tekle Haymanot, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

Peace be to you and the peace of God be with you.

By the grace of God and the intercession of Our Mother Sion, may the God of the saints be honoured and praised, I am well, since his mercy lasts forever. I have received the letter. Having heard the case of both of you I remain anticipating trouble. But since it is said “Do not overcome evil with evil, but by doing good”, let alone [against] my enemy who is near by; but even he who is far away, not I but God, by His grace, takes

steps on my behalf. And now it is bad to do wrong; I do not act wrongly. For a wronged person has never been disadvantaged. Anyway I am coming there. Everything will be done when we meet.

Written in the town of Adwa on 23rd Tīrr in the year of grace 1874.

Tarike Negest, pp. 56–57, Addis Abeba [1936], printed Amharic text. The messenger carrying this letter is also said to have been entrusted with an oral message from Minilik intended for Tekle Haymanot. It has been preserved in Hiruy’s book as follows: “Why do you always humiliate me? Some time ago you came in force and had my country Gojjam destroyed, and [then] left. And now again you have appointed people over the country of the Galla which I have brought under my control. Now after this I am coming; don’t go away. Choose a place which you prepare in Haro, Jimma [or] Chelliya and wait for me in an open field. I am not sending this message in a letter believing that you would read it alone by yourself, tear it into pieces and throw it away, pretending not to have heard about it and run away. But if it is delivered orally and if you have heard and flee, your servants would make critical observations against you. It is for that reason that I have sent it orally.”

Yohannis IV, proclamation on the faith of *ferenj* [Jan. 1882]

Look here, I have brought you an *abun*. Approach him and receive his benediction. You have entered [into] a foreign creed, i.e. one different from mine, return; you have accepted the creed of the *ferenj*, return to the creed of your fathers, return to the *abun* and swear the oath to him, in order to make yourself liked and blessed by him . . .

If you say, “I will do nothing of [the kind]”, know that your hand is at stake! [You will give] your hand to me and your property to your accuser.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 267, French translation. The person who has recorded this and the following two proclamations dated them “Vers le 10 Janvier”, “Vers la fin du même mois” and “Le même jour” respectively. Whether he ever saw them in writing is impossible to know; indeed they may have been proclaimed orally, which may explain the lack of proper, solemn introductions and dates. In any case the proclamation is clearly addressed to Catholics. The last phrase indicates the punishment of having one hand cut off and the property handed back to the missionaries.

Yohannis IV, proclamation on the practice of Islam [Jan. 1882]

You who were a Muslim I made a Christian three years ago; if you do not remember it, calculate yourself. But [in reality] you are a Christian only by day and exercise Muslim practices by night. You do not eat meat together with Christians, you do not partake of the Communion. Be a real Christian, come to the *abun* to be blessed, take a confessor, eat Christian meat . . . If you marry, marry a Christian girl, and do not give your daughter to anyone but a Christian. Whoever does not do [anything of] this, may he be killed like a *Ṭiltal* or a Galla, and the killer may receive the insignia of an elephant killer.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 267, French translation. For the date, see [doc. 68](#). The insignia of an elephant killer was reportedly a small silver chain rolled round the *mateb*, the blue ribbon of a Christian.

Document no. 70

Yohannis IV, proclamation on schismatics [Jan. 1882]

While I am bringing back the Muslims to Christianity, braggarts (*foucarotes*) and *ferenj* have come who say, “We are the ones who have the true creed, we are the ones who have the *abun*.” Regard them and those who have the same creed as Muslims. If you find any of them, tell them: “Return to the creed of your fathers.” If he refuses, do not bring him to me, I do not want to see him, shoot him like a Ṭilṭal and receive the insignia of the elephant killer.

Whoever uses tobacco, kill him likewise. . . .

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 267, French translation, ending with four dots. For the date, see previous document. We have concluded that “*foucarotes*” is a form of the Amharic *fokkara*, “to brag, to boast”. It is quite obvious from this text, if authentic, that Yohannis had as little sympathy for, or patience with, the European missionaries coming to Ethiopia as with propagators of Islam.

Document no. 71

Ar’aya Sillasē Dimṣu to Achille Raffray [Jan. 1882]

May the letter of *Ras* Ar’aya, a notable of the nation, reach the vice-consul of France.

How are you? You are my representative (*wakil*); find what has been taken from me, and try to have it returned to me. Bichou has carried out your commission for me; you have acted well in this matter. O my son and my friend, you have begun; now finish it. Tell me what you want from my country. You have been of service to me, I shall not forget it. Continue to look for what belongs to me so that it will not be lost.

(His seal at the bottom.)

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 270, French translation. No date, but assigned to January 1882 since it is preserved in the archive together with the two following documents. *Ras* Ar’aya served Yohannis successively as governor of Inderta, Akkele Guzay and Dembiya and was killed at the battle of Metemma in March 1889. We have not been able to find out who the person named Bichou was, nor what was the concern of the commission.

Ar'aya Sillasē Dimṣu to Juan Víctor Abargues de Sostén [Jan. 1882]

Ras Ar'aya to his friend the consul of Spain.

How are you? I know the interest which you take in me. Thank you for the good message which you have sent me. It is full of hope for me. I do not ask for anything else but that the measures you take for the fulfilment of this promise will lead to the solution I desire. If His Highness the viceroy accepts my services, nothing but my name will be useful for him. If His Highness 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Pasha* tells me, in accordance with his orders, "We will gladly receive you in our ranks", let him just say how, and I will accept any condition. If he tells me, "Come to us", I will descend with the number of faithful soldiers he decides for me, be it few or many; all I have, or very few or even no one, whatever he wishes. If, on the contrary, he tells me, "Stay in the high country, until we tell you", I have an *amba*, Debre Mēla, near the Sahos where I can seek refuge and wait for his message, and pass the evil days before undertaking anything in union and agreement with you. But on this *amba* and during this time of waiting I cannot expect from anyone but you the supplies necessary for me and the men you tell me to keep. If our offers are not accepted, I ask of you, my lord, the consul, that the greatest secrecy as to the subject of my request be maintained. My head is at stake, and my defeat will be certain. I beg you to take the greatest possible precautions in communicating this to His Excellency 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Pasha*, because in his entourage there are spies and informers who denounce me in front of Emperor Yohannis. If my plan is successful, I am assured of the consent of King Minīlik (Shewa) and King Tekle Haymanot (Gojjam) as soon as I have notified them. Above all I ask of you the greatest secrecy and the greatest precautions, especially if you doubt success. You understand why I do not write in Amharic, nor place my seal [here]. The roads are not safe.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 268, French translation. No date. In the archival copies the letter follows upon the proclamations above (docs 68–70) dated January 1882 and is thus assigned to January 1882. As stated, the letter was not written in Amharic, but it is impossible to know if the original was in Arabic or in a European language. Juan Víctor Abargues de Sostén had been sent by the Madrid Geographic Society to Ethiopia in 1881 with a letter from King Alfonso XII. A note on the document states that the letter was attached to a letter no. 1 to Abargues de Sostén, 1st April. This letter has not been found and it is impossible to know if the date refers to 1881 or 1882. It is obvious from the last words of this letter that Ar'aya was very anxious that his treason against his nephew, Yohannis IV, should not be discovered.

Ar'aya Sillasē Dimṣu to Juan Víctor Abargues de Sostén [Jan. 1882]

Letter from *Ras* Ar'aya to his friend Abargues de Sostén, consul of Spain. How are you?

I have received the messenger whom you sent to me. Thank you for what you for friendship's sake have done for me with His Excellency 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Pasha*. The signed and sealed letter which you demand from me I am entirely disposed to send you, having absolute confidence in your friendship. But now the king's great spy, the most dangerous enemy of Egypt in Abyssinia, *Nā'ib* Muḥammad, has been sent and will arrive at Massawa to inform the king about everything that is happening, is being decided, plotted, or prepared at Massawa and overseas against Abyssinia. This man, who has been educated by Egypt and has not served anybody but Yohannis until this day, has associations that are kept most secret from the government, and by him I am sure to be denounced at once as soon as he is there so all planning is useless since he has in his hands all the secrets and will turn them all to the advantage of the king while at the same time appearing to serve his masters. The military and diplomatic failures of Egypt have no other cause. I am therefore obliged not to undertake anything compromising. And if the governor believed me, he would remove him or keep this spy of the king whom the Egyptian chiefs have been unlucky enough never to distrust under good guard (they have failed to follow this advice!).

Only 'Alā' ad-Dīn *Pasha*, this I know, will have understood, and it is no doubt because of this that the *Nā'ib* has worked so much against him with the king. I therefore and above all fear this man and it is this that forces me to be prudent. However, I understand that engagements are necessary where mutual oaths are given, but at the decisive moment when all is agreed upon it will be necessary to go into action. After this preliminary agreement, I am prepared to swear loyalty in the terms which you have sent me, but in a way less (word illegible) than [on] paper. So, by an intermediary in whom you have confidence I myself even said to your messenger, "Accept yourself my oath and convey it". If Egypt then wants to take up arms again, I am its man, and in that case I am prepared to sign an agreement and to place myself at the disposal of His Excellency. If it should begin with reprisals, I am prepared, at the first notice of the arrival of troops, to go where I am told. If there should be a delay, I can wait on my *amba*, near the frontier as I have already told you.

But if it should be more or less lengthy, it would be better that I remain pretending to be in the service of the king until the time (word illegible) provided that the secret is protected between us. Otherwise it will be my defeat, that of my children and of those faithful to me. For the moment I rely on you and completely trust you, a European and a Christian, and by (word illegible) 'Ala' ad-Dīn *Pasha*, but not on the *divan* where all the secrets are always sold, which I know with certainty. I also ask you for secrecy between (word illegible) and 'Ala' ad-Dīn *Pasha* alone, and all necessary precautions so that nothing is allowed to transpire until our desires are fulfilled. But even if these desires would not have any result at this moment, from the day the Egyptian government begins the fight, it will be able to judge the sincerity of my present plans.

Please destroy this letter and my preceding one.

AECPC, Massaouah 4, fol. 269, French translation. No date, but a note in the margin of the French translation says 24 January, and the archival copy follows upon the preceding document. See the note on the previous document for context. The four places indicated as illegible are because the binding of the volume covers the text.

Yohannis IV to Muhammad Tawfiq, 14 Feb. 1882



بسم سينا يسوع المسيح كلمة الله الازليه الذي به كان كل شيء له السبح دائما
رحمات المريد من الله يوحنا ملك صربيون ملك ملوك لعيسى

الى المعظم المحترم الجليل القدير حاكم صربيه وتاب النيه الملك المعظم لحديوي محمد توفيق باشا الزايد الفهم وحب المحبه
السلاخ لكم وسلام الله جل عليكم انا وكل حيوش طيبين بقوه الله الصاوت المجدله الذي ارسلنا الي هذه الساعه
وها قد كتبنا لكم كتابا لاجل عظم شرفكم وسبب تايديكم المعظم و لاجل ثبات ضميركم الطاهر رتاله هديه صالحه من زيادت
الفرح والابتهاج مما فعلتموه معنا من مراسلة المطران والاساقفه بما طلبتنا ان يكونوا معا يرون بداخل مملكتنا ايتزيا
رنا لنا لاجل مرسلتكم لنا الهديه الكرمه التي عندها تتجابه بتدقيقه لاثبات المحبه ولذلك اتبع قلبنا ومجدوا الله الملوك
زورنا وارباب الدوله جميعا وفرحوا وابتهجوا لاجل هذا الصنيع تايدين يا هذا القاض ولرب العظيم وايضا فلتسبح
الله لاجل نياقكم كل الفرح والخيرات وتبارك اسم مجده القدوس الذي اقم عليكم بنعمته واجلكم بكرم
والدم سماش يا شا وسابق تاييدنا سماش باشا لاجل المحبه قد ارسلنا لجا به هديه صغيره لاجل لب اتباع بها ابتهاج
كامل جدا قابلا ان من قبل هذا كان ملكا يدعى اسمه المدعو تاوروس حيث ايجي سعيد باشا ارسل له هديه من
جنايه جدول الفكرينات بالله والشينه وعرض لغير شرا والان يوحنا ملك صربيون ملك ملوك حبشه مقدس
هذا طالب المحبه الرجل المثل قابل بالابتهاج ومن زود ابتهاج المحبه ارسل لنا اتنا سيوس المطران وقال هذا
سبارك هو انه اذيب اقام لنا الرجل الموصى يعضا المريد من الله ملك صربيون ملك ملوك حبشه
وبعد ذلك بسبب الناس الاثرت قد تعدينا عداوه عظيمه والان انا اطلب المحبه مما تقط وتكون تايدين
محلات عملا كما تنا الاصليه بحالات منذ القديم لكيلا يكون عداوه ما بين بعضا بعض وتغزل الحدود
التي لم تكن ايتويا التي كانت منذ الاصول باياكي ملوك حبشه ويكون ما يحض حبشه لانيه وما لمصر
وقدرتها سابق هذا الموصى اوريا قابلا لهم اعلموا وفرحوا لانا لحدود حبشيه والمهم لكيلا يكون لنا عداوه معكم وداع حكم
١٨٨٤
١١٤

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia, Yuḥannā King of Kings of Abyssinia.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the everlasting wisdom of God, to whom the time and the days belong, a message of the beloved of God, Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Abyssinia. To the august, respected and potent, without self-aggrandizement and firm in his will, the honoured and revered Khedive Muḥammad Tawfiq *Pasha*, endowed with understanding and one who likes friendship. Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you. I, and all my army, by the power of God the Sabaoth, are well. Praise be to God who has brought us to this hour.

We have written you a letter in respect for your exalted honour and splendid strong support and in respect for the constancy of your pure consciousness, a message righteously guided by the abundance of happiness and joy.

What you have done to us by sending an archbishop and bishops, based on our request, to become apostles inside our kingdom Ethiopia, and secondly by sending us respectful presents whose number is 800 guns in order to prolong our friendship, for all this our heart became happy and as a result we praised God, the possessor of all; and the dignitaries of our nation were very happy regarding the present, saying, “What humility and great love!”

Therefore may God bestow on you all blessings and benevolence and may His glorious name be sanctified who has given you all his blessings, who made you sit on the throne of your father Ismā’īl Pasha: And Ismā’īl Pasha owing to our friendship towards him, we sent him presents and he was fully satisfied with it saying, “The one who was before, whose name was Tēwodros, when Said Pasha sent him presents instead of thanking him responded by calling him bad names, therefore, returning evil for good. However, now Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, to the extent of his love he accepted our presents with happiness and joy”. And as a result of his happiness and friendship, Atinatēwos, one of the bishops, said, “Blessed be God who raised to us a believer called Yohannis, King of Zion and King of Kings of Ethiopia.”

And after this owing to wicked people we became fatal enemies. But now I don’t ask only friendship but also [that we] stay in our respective original kingdoms, as it used to be in former times so that no enmity arises between us, and demarcate the borders of the Ethiopian kingdom which used to exist for ages in the hands of Abyssinian monarchs. Therefore, what may belong to Abyssinia be awarded to Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) and that of Egypt to Egypt.

1874, on the 8th of Amshīr.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/4, Arabic original. A copy of the letter from Muḥammad Tawfiq to Yohannis dated 6 Dec. 1881. A list of the gifts for Yohannis is found in ENA 5/3/2 and 5/3/5 respectively.

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

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, praise be to Him.

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured and respected, the great and exalted, [he who enjoys] pleasant reputation and an upright mind, Khedive Muḥammad Tawfīq *Pasha*, the scholar (lit. knowledgeable) and lover of friendship. Peace be to you and the peace of God be with you. By the might of God Sabaoth, I and my army are well. Praise be to God who has kept us until this moment.

And now, I had written to you about your greatness and the greatness of your honoured appointment [which is] due to your upright and pure mind. A word of gratitude for the great happiness and pleasure for what you have done for me regarding the coming of the archbishop and the bishops whom I wanted to be teachers in my kingdom of Ethiopia, and regarding the gifts you sent me for the strengthening of friendship, numbering eight hundred rifles. For this reason my heart was joyful and happy about this matter saying, “What modesty and friendship!”

Again I praise God for all the grace that you have received. And may His Holy Name be praised because He has granted you the appointment to the throne of your father, Ismāʿīl *Pasha*. And earlier when I had sent a small present of friendship to Ismāʿīl *Pasha* he was very happy and said, “He who was before by the name of Kasa, when my brother Saʿīd Pasha sent him presents instead of praise he paid him back by calling him bad names. But the King of Kings of today Yohannis, King of Zion of Ethiopia, is earnestly (lit. very much) looking for friendship”. [Ismāʿīl] said, “Be happy”, and to the extent of his happiness he sent me *Pappas* Atinatēwos. And he said, “praise be to God who has elected for us a faithful man, Yohannis, elect of God, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia.”

And after this we quarrelled very badly because of wicked people. And now I am seeking friendship with you; let us abide by the early positions of our agreement in order that quarrels may not arise between us, and may the borderlands of Ethiopia which were in the hands of the Ethiopian kings be demarcated, so that what was Ethiopia’s [may be awarded] to Ethiopia and [what was] Egypt’s [may be awarded] to Egypt. Earlier I had written to the kings of Europe saying, “Demarcate my land so that I will not quarrel with you.”

Written in the town of Adwa in the year of grace 1874, on the 10th of Yekkatīt.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/1, Giʿiz original. The letter seems to be a Giʿiz version of the previous letter, but dated two days later. The only significant difference is that the Arabic text does not mention the letters sent to the rulers of Egypt asking them to assist in demarcating the borders.

Minilik II to Jules Grévy, 7 March 1882

ሚሮ ማይ : መኒ ልክ ስክግክ ስሎር ጌይ ስ ምቅጋጋ
 ሥፊ : የሠነ፡ ይቋረክ ማይ ስብረ ማይ ታረረ የረረገ ሲክ ማረ ዜዳጊ ጋይ ል
 ጋረ ዜዳጊ ክግ ይላት ነገ ስክ ክግ ስክ ስሎር ም መስገን፡ ይላና ነገ፡ ሠራዊቱም
 ቆሎ፡ ይላና ነገ፡

የለረው ላ መተ ካዲ ስረ ሞ ጋራ ስወቅገና የጭር ይብ
 ያሴ በረከት ከክዳጋ፡ ስድሴ ነበር፡ መድረኩን ስማሁ ምላሹን ግን አላገኘሁም
 የላክሁት የበዳ አህያ ምረክ በገባ በክስረካ ምስት ቀት ሞተ በሎ ክስከራ ገብረ
 ምላሴ ገንቤ ዳረ ልሻ ከርሰ ምስክር አዘኑ ሲኩ ስማ ሁ ምላ ም የሚቸግር ነገር
 የለም ላገራ ሃሪ ነገር ለኔ ክዳቸግረኝም የሚቸግረኝ ነገር በየውሮም
 ያለ ነገር ነው ክሁን በኔ ስወቅ፡ በተጋይራ የሚኖሩ በርቱ ታላቅ ግጥ፡ ተሠራ

ከቅድመ ክዳቸ፡ ጋር ምሮ ስ መታቸውን ያልተናጠባ መታ
 ያመት ሁለት ሁለት የየ አገህቦ ሌላው የሚገብ ራ ልግ ሌላውም የኔ ያገ
 ቀቹ የደግቹ የሠነ ከተጋይ ጋር ምሮ ስዋ ይረክ ያሉት አዳሎቻም የኔ ስክ
 ት ከንዳሠነ ላለም ሁሉ የሚያውቅው ካገዳሽ ማግኖች በቅር ስቸተው የሚ
 ይረፉ ወደ ምስር የላክሁት መልክ ከተኛየ ስወ መለኩ ተርከች ስሞቅገ አክጠ
 ይተው ማይ መርከብ ከግብተው ከ ሞረዱ ሞቸው ነገ መርከብም ማይ ጋር ል
 ባ ግሉ ሞቸው ሌላውን በግድ ስጡ ከሃሎ ማገም ማገን ሲ ስጠው የሚያገ
 ላውን በግድ ስጡ በለው ከሞረዱ ሞቸው ክኒህም ስወች ማይ ራዎ ዘጉ ል
 በታ፡ የላተው ምና ከኔም የየውሮም ነገ ሥታት ከግራ ላት ህጋራ ተሰማሚ ስሉ ገ ከሱ በ
 የ፤ በርላገር ግን ጭና ነገር ካገዱ በረት ማሳደር ከይቻ ልምር የሚላክ ልቀው
 ሠነ ስገግ ሊክት ማይ ላበሻ የመጡ ጊዜ በየውሮም ነገ ሥታት ስሥራት ተመልክ
 ሙ ሂደ ይህም ምስጋና ለረረገ ሲክ መገገሥት ከላ ስግ ሞላጊ ስራ ተርከች ከፋት
 ን ሊክጉ ይረ ልጋ ለ፡ በረት ነገ ከገዳ ከገት ከኛ ም ሌላው ከስተከጉ በግ ከገጠ
 ብቅም በሆን በሥራት አገራት ነገ ይላቅሉ ከላ ሊደ በግድ የበረታ ይ ወሳደ ሞላ
 ከስክገረና ከላ ላክቡ መሞት ነውር ከይደላም በግደክ የረረገ ሲክ መገገሥት
 ስም ሊቸው በተ ነው በለው ግደን ያሉት ስወቅ፡ በድፋ ልሻ ከደግ ደክ አላሻ ስላሴ
 ር ያርገው ቡት ከደሠነ መገገና ይቅና ነበር ከርሰ ም ሲ በረቱ በዚህ ነገር የረረገ ሲ
 ለ ስገብ በኛ ከገና ከኛ ግ የክበረ ይሠነ ነበር የጋይ ል ግ ረከሎ ከ ምም በኛ ከገደ
 ስገዳ ላይ ያበራ ነበር ከድ ማይ ሌላውን ይክጠው
 በግካት ፤ ህ በገገ ህ በገገ ስክግክ ስሎር ስላት ነገ፡



[May the letter of] the second Minilik, who by the power of God has become king of Shewa, reach the honoured and respected president of the French, Jules Grévy.

How are you? I am well, thank God. All my army is also well. Last year I sent my people with Mr. Brémont with a letter and gifts of friendship. I have heard that they have arrived, but I have not yet received a reply. My servant Gebre Sillasē Nigusē has written to me saying that the zebra I sent died 15 days after arriving in Paris. I have also heard that you were sorry [for this]. This is no problem. I have no difficulty about anything that is found in my country. What is difficult for me are things [found] in Europe.

Now a serious injustice has been done against my people who live in Tajura. The whole world knows that, except for some clans who live as bandits, the Adal who live from Tajura up to Shewa are my subjects; that the salt belongs to me [as] to my fathers and to my grandfathers; and that from [the days of] my grandfathers, with no one challenging their right (lit. governorship), they pay to us every year a tribute of 2,000 bags (*ankabo*) of salt. Before my messenger whom I sent to Egypt returned, the Turks summoned my officials, made them board a ship and humiliated them. Then forcing them out of the ship, they threw them into a boat, compelling them to sell the salt. They humiliated them by compelling them to sell the salt, which no one, whoever he may be, had the right to sell. These people have appealed to me because they have no power [themselves]. And I have agreed to live in peace with my neighbours, as the kings of Europe told me. But as it is impossible to make a goat and a leopard live in the same pen, it has become something I cannot endure. When the English came to Abyssinia they returned according to the law of the Europeans. We are indebted for this to the French government also.

Today, the Turks want to shut our mouths just as they have closed our ports. And we shall not wait until they shut us in completely. In fact, they ought to leave our lands lawfully. If not, [the ports] will be taken by force, by whoever is stronger. It is not a shame to die for one's country and one's people. I was very pleased when my people who are in Aden wrote to me saying that the French government is going to appoint an official over Obok. May God make it a reality. If it turns out [to be] true, the route would be opened up. If you acted vigorously on this matter, the French people would be much respected amongst us and the name of Jules Grévy would shine like the sun amongst us.

May [God] give you long life and health.

Written at the camp of Inṭoṭto, on the 29th of Yekkatīt 1874.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

AECPC, Angleterre, Aden, 1858–1884, 57, fol. 251, Amharic original fols 254–255, French translation. This seems to be the first letter preserved in Amharic where Minilik styles himself as *degmaj*, “the second”. Earlier letters in French and Italian add “II” after his name, but we cannot know how this was represented in the Amharic texts. *Degmaj* is, however, not used consistently until 1884 at a time when his letters were often written in French.

The letter was reportedly translated by *Azzazh* Gebre Sillasē Nigusē, who was recommended for the task by Minilik. He is to reappear in many of the following letters as a trader and messenger of Minilik in relation to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and the rulers along the coast as well as the Italians. He is sometimes referred to as Gīyorgīs Gebre Sillasē or Gīyorgīs Nigusē.

Minilik II to François Soumagne, 7 March 1882

Please forward my letter to Grévy. You already know, perhaps, what has happened to my subjects and tributary chiefs at the hands of the Egyptians.

I have been the friend of the Egyptians until now. I have never sought conflict with them. I have even sent emissaries with gifts, and now look how the Egyptians have seized the salt which nourishes all Ethiopia. My chiefs who have been maltreated are Sultan Ḥamad from Tajura, *Wazīr* Ibrāhīm and Aḥmad La'īta.

The salt plains belong to me since the days of my forefathers. Moreover, I know, and many know, that Tajura is the port of Shewa.

No one should give up what is his unless he is forced to do so. You have with you my trusted man Gebre Sillasē Nigusē. You also have 'Abd al-Raḥmān. You can ask them.

I protect the French and ask for your assistance to my people. I want all French to have passports when they come. If they do anything wrong, I will send them back to you. If they have no passports, I will punish them according to our laws. Those who come without papers or recommendations will be treated as Abyssinians. I have sent letters through Awsa, and I have been told that these letters were given to Arnoux and that he has kept them. If this is true, ask him to send them.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

29th Yekkatīt 1874.

AECPC, Angleterre, Aden, 1858–1884, 57, fols 252–253, French text. Whatever the reason it is quite obvious from this letter that the task of forwarding Minilik's letter to the French government was entrusted to Soumagne rather than to Arnoux. Soumagne replaced Raffray as French vice-consul of Massawa at the end of 1882. Aḥmad La'īta is probably Sultan Ḥamad La'īta. Gebre Sillasē refers to Minilik's chief agent on the coast, Gebre Sillasē Nigusē. Ḥamad Muḥammad was the Sultan of Tajura from 1880 to 1912. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif was the trusted agent of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Minilik II to Pietro Antonelli, 9 March 1882

I have heard how Mr. Martini has written things against me, but I do not believe they have done any damage. I would have been able to write to the Geographical Society of Italy and to the king himself about what has happened here in this country. But it would be a dishonour for me to occupy myself with such a small matter. He opens his mouth to disseminate false information against me, but you, Count Antonelli, and Captain Cecchi, and all the Europeans who are living in Shewa, know his conduct and how he has squandered my goods. All the same, what should I say? May God repay him. I would not have spoken if he had not been impossible to reach. Be aware of this!

ASSGI, busta 20, fasc. 5, no. 16, Italian translation. The document is prefaced by the following paragraph: “A letter from King Minilik to Count Pietro Antonelli dated 9 March 1882, in which he expresses himself according to the translation [made by] Father Massaia on behalf of S. Martini.” In all probability the text is a genuine translation of an Amharic original, in which case the opening paragraph was part of the letter itself. We have omitted it above because of the information about the translation and the fact that the text, beginning “Ho sentito come . . .”, is within quotation marks in the document. We have translated SGI into “the Geographical Society of Italy” because of the unusual form “d’Italia” used instead of “italiana”.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pietro Antonelli, 28 May 1882

To His Excellency, the respected friend of His Majesty King Minīlik, Count Pietro Antonelli. I wish you good health, and as for us, we are, thank God, very well.

We have received your letter of the month of March, and we have acquainted ourselves with it. As for the merchandise for King Minīlik, have no fear; when it comes to Aseb, you will consign it to Gebre Sillasē and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who will inform me as soon as they have received it, and from that moment on it will be my responsibility and it will be my task to protect it till it is consigned to King Minīlik.

It is not true that I oppose the passage of Europeans in my territory, but since (text missing) without distinction of nationality (text missing) all Europeans, I have dissuaded [Europeans] from passage in my territory. But I am not opposed [to them]. And when the Italian government con[sults] me and King Minīlik, I shall come to an agreement with the Bedouins in order to open a safe route for both men and merchandise, and for this purpose we shall make a treaty between us to be valid for the future.

In the meantime, I shall provide a safe way for you and the merchandise for King Minīlik. As soon as you reach Aseb, you will inform ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who will undertake to inform me. I ask you to present the translation of this letter to your government to let them know that the route is clear.

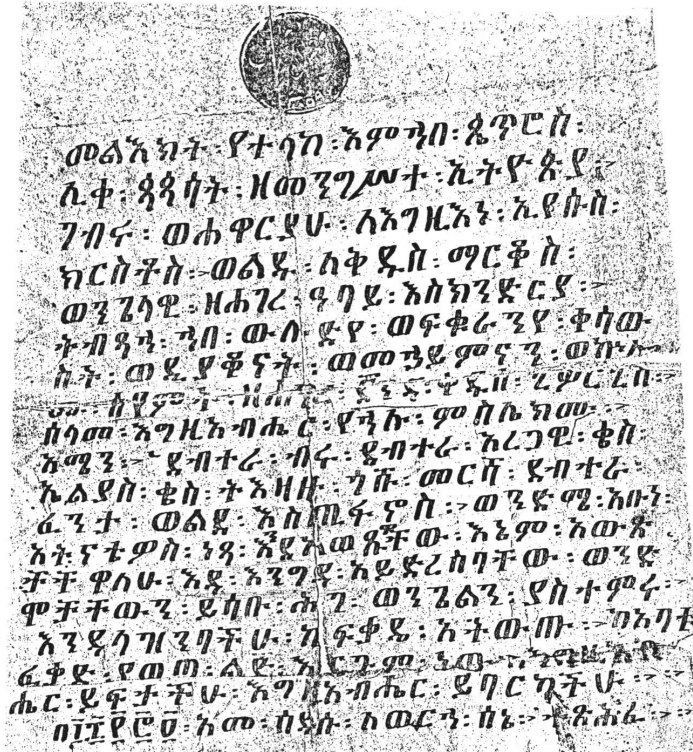
Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

10th Rajab 1299.

N.B. Ḥanfadhē writes to Gīyorgīs that the letters he has sent to King Minīlik are on their way to their destination. This is for your information.

ASMAE, AE 2, Italian translation. No Arabic document has been found. There is a hole through the paper of this letter, indicated above by “(text missing)”. Described as a “traduzione approssimativa”, the translation is clearly made by someone ignorant of Ethiopian and Arabic names; Gebre Sillasē, for instance, appears as “Gabriel Sallasi” and “Abd al-Raḥmān” as “Habdu Rheman”. Gebre Sillasē refers to Minīlik’s chief agent on the coast, Gebre Sillasē Nigusē. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif was the trusted agent of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē. At the end of the translation there is a note in Italian stating: “Hanferī writes to Gīyorgīs that the letters he has sent to King Minīlik are on their way to their destination. This is for your information.” Whether Gīyorgīs in the note refers to Gebre Sillasē, who was also known as Gīyorgīs Gebre Sillasē, it is impossible to know.

Ṗētros to clerics and believers in Jenda, 12 June 1882



Seal: illegible.

A message sent from Ṗētros, *liqe pappasat* of the state of Ethiopia, the servant and apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of St. Mark, the evangelist of the great city of Alexandria, may it reach my sons and beloved, priests, deacons, believers and all appointees of the land of Jenda St. George. The peace of God be with you. Amen.

As my brother *Abune Atinatēwos* acquitted *Debtera Birru*, *Debtera Aregawī*, *Qēs Ēlyas*, *Qēs Ti'izazu*, *Goshu Mersha*, *Debtera Fenta* [and] *Welde Isṭifanos*, I have also acquitted them. I do not want them to encounter any unexpected trouble. Let them win over their brothers and teach the laws of the Gospel.

In order that I do not get angry with you, do not disobey me (lit. go out of my will). A son who disobeys his father is a cursed one. May God absolve you and bless you.

Written on the 6th of the month of Senē 1874.

Private archives of the Flad family, St-Légier, Switzerland, Gi'iz/Amharic original. Ṗētros was one of the four bishops sent to Ethiopia in 1881. The clerics acquitted are otherwise unknown. The seal is clearly in Arabic, but unfortunately illegible, except for the two numbers "59". This might indicate that the seal carries a year in the 1590s Coptic calendar, corresponding to 1874–1883 in the Gregorian calendar.

Yohannis IV to Minilik II, 8 July 1882

መልእክት ፣ ዘሥዮመ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ዮሐንስ ፣ ንጉሠ ፣ ጸዮን ፣ ንጉሠ ፣ ነገሥት ፣ ዘኢትዮጵያ ፣ ይድረስ ፣ ከ ንጉሥ ፣ ምኒልክ ፣ በአማን ፣ እስራኤላዊ ፣ ዘአልቦ ፣ ጽልሑት ፣ ሰላም ፣ ለከ ፣ ወሰላመ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ የሃሉ ፣ ምስሌክ ፣ እኔ ፣ በእግዚአብሔር ፣ ቸርነት ፣ በአምነ ፣ ጸዮን ፣ አማላጅነት ፣ አምላክ ፣ ቅዱሳን ፣ ይክበር ፣ ይመስገን ፣ ደህና ፣ ነኝ ፣ ምሕረቱ ፣ ለዘለዓለም ፣ ነውና ።

በጊምድር ፣ ሳለሁ ፣ ሁለቱ ፣ ነገሥታት ፣ ተዋግተው ፣ ድሉ ፣ ለንጉሥ ፣ ምኒልክ ፣ ሆነ ፣ ንጉሥ ፣ ተክለ ፣ ሃይማኖትንም ፣ ይዘው ፣ ወደ ፣ ሸዋ ፣ ተጓዙ ፣ ሲሉ ፣ ብሰማ ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ የፈቀደውን ፣ ሠርቷል ፣ ብዬ ፣ የክርስቲያን ፣ ደም ፣ በማይረባ ፣ ነገር ፣ በመፍሰስ ፣ የእናንተን ፣ ደብዳቤ ፣ ስጠብቅ ፣ ደብረ ፣ ታቦር ፣ ላይ ፣ ወር ፣ ሙሉ ፣ ተቀመጥሁ ፣ ኋላ ፣ ግን ፣ ወሬያችሁ ፣ ቢጠፋብኝ ፣ ይህስ ፣ ነገር ፣ አለበት ፣ ብዬ ፣ ስመጣ ፣ ሳይንትን ፣ ሳልፈው ፣ የንጉሥ ፣ ወረቀት ፣ ደረሰልኝ ፣ ደብዳቤውንም ፣ አይቼ ፣ መዘግየቱ ፣ በመንገዱ ፣ ርዝመት ፣ እንጂ ፣ ሌላ ፣ ተንኮል ፣ አለመኖሩን ፣ ባውቅ ፣ ወደ ፣ በጊምድር ፣ ለመመለስ ፣ አሰብሁ ። ነገር ፣ ግን ፣ ክረምቱ ፣ ተጭኗልና ፣ ሠራዊቱ ፣ የሚጎዳብኝ ፣ ሆነ ። ስለዚህ ፣ በወሎ ፣ እንድክርም ፣ ፈቃድ ፣ ይደረግልኝ ። እኔም ፣ አገር ፣ አልበድልም ። በጥቢ ፣ ተገናኝተን ፣ ሁሉንም ፣ ነገር ፣ ተማክረን ፣ ወደ ፣ በጊምድር ፣ መመለስ ፣ ይሻላል ፣ ብዬ ፣ ነው ፣ እንጂ ፣ ሌላ ፣ ጉዳይ ፣ ኖሮኝ ፣ አይደለም ።

ደግሞ ፣ ይህ ፣ የሚያሳዝን ፣ ነገር ፣ ሲሆን ፣ ተመልኬ ፣ ሠራዊቱ ፣ በውሀ ፣ ሙላት ፣ በጭቃ ፣ ያለቀው ፣ አልቆ ፣ የተረፈውን ፣ ይገር ፣ መመለስ ፣ ይሻለኛል ። ሐምሌ ፣ ፪ ቀን ፣ ፲፰፻፸፬ ፣ ዓ ፣ ም ።

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach King Minilik, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Peace be to you, and the peace of God be with you.

By the grace of God and the intercession of Our Mother Zion – may the God of the saints be praised – I am well, since his mercy is forever.

When I was in Begemdir, I heard that the two kings had fought; that the victory was King Minilik's, and that [you] captured King Tekle Haymanot and proceeded to Shewa. I said, what has happened was God's will, and since Christian blood was spilled for nothing I waited a whole month at Debre Tabor expecting your letters. Then not hearing from [any of] you I thought that there must be something strange going on, and as I passed Sayint I received the king's letter. After seeing the letter, I understood that the letter was delayed due to the distance and not to any other foul play.

I wanted to return to Begemdir. However, since the rainy season has become so heavy, and in order

that my soldiers should not suffer, may I have your permission to spend the rainy season in Wello?

As for me, I am not going to pillage the country. I am only considering that we should meet each other after the rainy season and discuss matters before I go back to Begemdir. Otherwise I have no reason [to stay]. Moreover, this is a sad story. I thought it appropriate to return with the remainder of my army leaving behind those who have perished due to floods and mud.

The 2nd day of Hamlē in the year of grace 1874.

Tarike Negest, p. 60, printed Amharic text.

Minilik II to Pētros, Matēwos, Marqos and Luqas, 11 July 1882

ትብጻሕ ፡ ጎበ ፡ ልዑላን ፡ ወጎሩያን ፡ ቡጎበ ፡ አግቢአ ብሔር ፡ አቡነ ፡ ጴጥሮስ ፡ ወአቡነ ፡ ማቴዎስ ፤ አቡነ ፡ ማርቆስ ፡ ወአቡነ ፡ ሉቃስ ፡ ጳጳሳት ፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ ። ብርሃና ተ ፡ ዓለም ፤ ወሐዋርያቲሁ ፡ ለአግቢእነ ፡ ኢየሱስ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ወውሉዱ ፡ ለማርቆስ ፡ ወንጌላዊ ።

የተላከ ፡ ከንጉሥ ፡ ምኒልክ ። አዲምጎከሙ ፡ በአምኃ ፡ መንፈሳዊት ፤ ወአኃሥሥ ፡ በረከተክሙ ፡ ዘትረድእ ፡ ለኩሉ ፡ ፍጥረት ። አነ ፡ ዳሀን ፡ ወሰላም ፡ በጸጋሁ ፡ ለአግቢእነ ፡ ፀባዎት ፡ ወበስአለታ ፡ ለአግዝእትን ፡ ወላዲተ ፡ ሕይወት ። በሰኔ ፡ ፪ ቀን ፡ የተጻፈ ፡ የውግዘት ፡ ደብዳቤያችሁ ፡ በተዋጋን ፡ በ፳ ቀን ፡ ደረሰልኝ ፤ እኔም ፡ ንጉሥ ፡ ተክለ ፡ ሃይማኖትን ፡ ለመውጋት ፡ አልፈለግሁም ፡ ነበር ፤ እርሱ ፡ ፎክሮ ፤ ከወደ ፡ ኋላዬ ፡ ገሥግሶ ፡ ቢመጣብኝ ፡ አልሞት ፡ በይ ፡ ተጋዳይ ፡ እንደሚባለው ፡ ዙሬተዋጋን ።

እኔ ፡ ግን ፡ ለመውጋት ፡ ፈልጌው ፡ አንደ ፡ ሆነ ፡ ያወገዥሁትም ፤ የረገማችሁትም ፡ ይደረስብኝ ። ደግሞ ፡ ክርስቲያን ፡ ለክርስቲያን ፡ በመዋጋታችን ፡ ጃንሆይን ፡ አስቀየመን ፡ ይሆናል ። የጃንሆይም ፡ ልቡና ፡ እንዳይለወጥብኝ ፡ ስለ ፡ ሥላሴ ፡ ብላችሁ ፡ አስምሩኝ ፡ እንጂ ፡ በደለኛውንስ ፡ እኔ ፡ በጥቢ ፡ ስመጣ ፡ እዚያው ፡ ከጃንሆይ ፡ ፊት ፡ ታገኙታላችሁ ። ሐምሌ ፡ ፳ ቀን ፡ ፲፰፻፸፬ ፡ ተጻፈ ።

him in self-defence. However, if I fought with him deliberately, may your excommunication and curse fall upon me.

Moreover, when we Christians fought against Christians it might have hurt the feelings of His Majesty. In order that the attitude of His Majesty towards me does not change, for the sake of the Holy Trinity have him forgive me. As for [who is] the wrongdoer you will find out for yourselves, in front of His Majesty, when I come after the rainy season.

Written on 5th Hamlē 1874.

May [this message] reach the exalted and elected of God, *Abune Pētros* and *Abune Matēwos*, *Abune Marqos* and *Abune Luqas*, bishops of Ethiopia, lights of the world and apostles of Jesus Christ and sons of Mark the Evangelist.

[Message] sent by King Minilik. I greet you with spiritual greetings and look forward to your blessing, which helps all creatures. I am well and live in peace by the grace of the Lord Sabaoth and the intercession of Our Lady, the mother of life.

Your letter of excommunication written on Senē 2 reached me twenty days after we waged war. On my part I did not want to fight King Tekle Haymanot. But since he bragged and attacked me from behind I fought with

Tarīke Negest, p. 59, printed Gi'iz/Amharic text.

Minilik II to Victoria, 20 July 1882



Nous, Menilik II, par la grâce de Dieu.
Roi de Choa, à Sa Majesté la Reine Victoria, Souveraine
du Royaume Uni et des Indes.

Comment se porte Votre Majesté ? Nous par la
grâce du Tout-Puissant, sommes en bonne santé ainsi
que Nos armées.

Nous sommes heureux de pouvoir annoncer à
Votre Majesté qu'une longue et laborieuse campagne de
sept mois contre les royaumes esclavagistes, musulmans pour
la plupart, situés au Sud et à l'Ouest de Nos domaines et
maîtres de la route du Choa à Kaffa, vient de Nous mettre à
même de soumettre et de rendre tributaires les Rois de Limou,
Gomma, Gomma, Ghera et le Roi chrétien de Kaffa. Nous
avons détruit entièrement ces centres de l'esclavage, et avons
rendu à la liberté des milliers de malheureuses Créatures humaines.

Unique descendant direct et légitime de la dynastie
de Salomon, héritier et gardien jaloux du nom glorieux de
Notre aïeul Sala Dalkassie, Nous, Menilik II, avons voulu par
cette guerre opiniâtre contre les États esclavagistes, prouver à
toute l'Europe civilisée Notre sincère attachement à la cause
de l'humanité inaugurée par le Christ.

Nos armées victorieuses commencent à se retirer
et regagnent paisiblement leurs foyers, lors qu'elles furent

provoquées par des paroles injurieuses: par trois fois le Roi Ekla Haimanot, Souverain du Godjam, Nous défia au combat dans les plaines mêmes du Godru, possession qu'il devait à Notre générosité. Blessé dans notre honneur, nous nous vîmes forcés d'accepter le combat.

La journée du 5 Juin restera mémorable dans les annales du Choa.

Une lutte acharnée dura jusqu'au soir, et la victoire Nous fut enfin assurée par l'impétuosité et la bravoure de Notre cavalerie Galla, qui armée de lances seulement et bravant les fusils et les canons, divisa en deux l'armée ennemie et parvint ainsi à la mettre en pleine déroute.

Ekla Haimanot et ses deux fils, son général en chef Kas Derrasso ainsi que les autres généraux et Choums en grand nombre, tous ses soldats, armes et bagages sont tombés entre Nos mains. Ekla Haimanot, grièvement blessé, et les autres principaux chefs, conduits à Notre résidence royale, y sont chrétiennement traités. Les soldats et les femmes ont été renvoyés dans leur pays. Les Choums remis également en liberté ont préféré, pour la plupart, rester au Choa.

Nous aurions pu Nous emparer du Godjam et étouffer ainsi ce foyer du commerce des esclaves; mais Nous devons penser à défendre Notre propre patrie. Nous savons, en effet,

que Nos victoires Nous ont suscitè de puissantes inimities, et ce n'est que confiant dans la saintetè de la cause que Nous avons entrepris de défendre, confiant dans la protection de Dieu et la sympathie de la libre Europe que Nous attendons les événements quels qu'ils soient.

Nous n'en poursuivrons pas moins Notre œuvre d'ouvrir et d'assurer à la Science, au Commerce et à l'industrie les routes qui conduisent aux riches pays du Sud, d'éloigner et de punir avec une sévère justice les avides et cruels marchands de chair humaine.

Nous Nous réservons de faire connaître à Votre Majestè les dispositions intérieures que Nous jugerons convenable de prendre pour que Notre œuvre demeure efficace, et que les fruits du sang si généreusement versé ne soient point perdus.

Fait en Notre ville Royale d'Antoto, le 20 Juillet 1882.



We, Minilik II, by the grace of God King of Shewa, to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the sovereign of the United Kingdom and India. How is Your Majesty? We are in good health, and so are our armies by the grace of the Almighty. We are happy to be able to announce to Your Majesty that a long and laborious campaign of seven months against the slave kingdoms, for the most part Muslim, situated to the south and west of our domains, and masters of the route from Shewa to Kefa, has recently made us able to subjugate the kings of Limmu, Goma, Gumma, Gēra, and the Christian king of Kefa and make them tributaries. We have completely destroyed these centres of slavery and set free thousands of poor human beings. The unique direct and legitimate descendant of the dynasty of Selomon, heir and jealous guardian of the glorious name of our forefather Sahle Sillasē, we, Minilik II, have desired to prove, by this unyielding war against the slave states, to all civilized Europe our sincere attachment to the cause of humanity initiated by Christ.

Our victorious armies began to retire and peacefully regain their bases when they were provoked by insulting words. Three times King Tekle Haymanot, the sovereign of Gojjam, challenged us to fight on the very plains of Gudru, a possession which he owed to our generosity. Our honour offended, we saw ourselves forced into combat. The day of 5 June shall remain memorable in the annals of Shewa. A furious battle lasted until evening and our victory was finally assured by the impetuosity and valour of our Galla cavalry which, armed with lances alone, and defying rifles and cannon, divided the enemy army into two and thus succeeded in routing it completely.

Tekle Haymanot and his two sons, his commander in chief *Ras* Dereso, as well as his other generals and numerous chiefs, all his soldiers, weapons and baggage fell into our hands. Tekle Haymanot, who was seriously wounded, and the other principal chiefs were conducted to our royal residence and are being treated there in a Christian manner. The soldiers and women have been sent back to their country. The chiefs, who were also set free, have for the most part preferred to stay in Shewa.

We would have been able to capture Gojjam and thus stamp out this centre of trade in slaves. But we have to think about defending our own homeland. We know in fact that our victories have aroused powerful animosity against us, and it is only through confidence in the sacredness of the cause which we have undertaken to defend and in the protection of God and the sympathy of free Europe that we await whatever events may come.

Nevertheless, we will pursue our work to open up and secure to science and commerce and to industry the routes which lead to the rich countries of the South, to expel and punish by severe justice the greedy and cruel traders in human flesh.

We reserve to ourselves [the privilege of making] known to Your Majesty the interior dispositions which we judge it convenient to make, in order that our effort remains effective and that the fruits of the blood so generously shed shall not be lost.

Made in our royal city of Inṭoṭto, 20th July 1882.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

FO 95/742, no. 128, French original. Identical letters were sent to several European heads of state. They were either written by a French-speaking secretary – but the handwriting is neither that of Yōsēf Nigusē (see [doc. 170](#)) nor that of Gebri'el Welde Gobena (see [doc. 177](#)) – or possibly on his instructions by the French merchant L. A. Brémond, who was engaged in establishing Obok as a French trading base in 1882.

In addition to the above to Queen Victoria, the copies for King Leopold of Belgium and President Jules Grévy of France have been located, Archives des Palais Royaux, Brussels, and AEMD, Afrique 62, fols 567–568, respectively. The differences in the wording of, for instance, the letter to Leopold and the one to Victoria are insignificant, e.g. “defiant” instead of “bravant”, “soignés” instead of “traités”, and the explanation “pour rentrer dans leur patrie” added in the letter to Leopold. The original of the letter to Umberto seems to have disappeared, as affirmed by Carlo Giglio who published Umberto’s reply in *L'Italia in Africa*, I,2, p. 251. A translation into Amharic in very poor handwriting, certainly made by a European, is found in ASSGI, 19, 5, fol. 35.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Achille Raffray, 20 July 1882

May the letter of *Ras* Alula, who is *turk basha*, reach the consul of France, Raffray. How are you? As for me, thank God, I am well.

Your letter has reached me. As for the matter of the money, I have communicated the words of your letter to His Majesty. And he answered me, “Until today, no one has come to me; [it is] not that I have refused [to receive] him. So now, from Mesqel (26 September) onwards, as soon as an accredited person shall come to me, I shall willingly hand it over.”

Besides, His Majesty has, at the news of a battle between King Minilik and *Nigus* Tekle Haymanot, gone to Wello in order to find out the cause of their quarrel. And now, King Minilik has sent this message to Yohannis: “It is he (Tekle Haymanot) who wanted to oppress me and who offended me; as for me, I have used no violence, sought no quarrel in order to join battle with him. It is not I who am responsible or at fault. So now, may His Majesty accord me the proper, and in his opinion just, judgement, and condemn me if I ought to be [condemned]. I am prepared to come bringing with me *Nigus* Tekle Haymanot and appear before you, and confront each other in every respect and on all points in dispute.”

Now, His Majesty has established his camp at Werre’ilu, in order to keep an eye on them and wait for them until their arrival. Moreover, the Italians have written to him: “It is because Minilik is our friend, that we are sending him cannon and arms and everything we have”, and His Majesty has replied to them: “The French government is my friend. I have not written to it; otherwise it would not send me one or two, but a great number.[”] If I write this to you, it is to let you know that His Majesty loves you and [will tell you] all that happens.

Written in the camp of Werre’ilu, 14 Hamlē in the year of grace 1874 (20 July 1882).

AEPCP, Massaouah 4, fol. 287, French translation. The issue – the matter of the money – is somewhat obscure. Most probably it is the question of a purchase of arms for Yohannis, with Raffray as agent. The French text uses “roi” for Minilik and “neguss” for Tekle Haymanot. While the Amharic original in all likelihood had *nigus* for both Minilik and Tekle Haymanot, the French missionary M. Coulbeaux, who translated the letter, was obviously influenced by the fact that Minilik was known also in Europe as the “King of Ethiopia”. Thus, the translation of this and the following letter refers to Minilik as king while using *nigus* for Tekle Haymanot.

Yohannis IV to Achille Raffray, 17 Aug. 1882

May the letter of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Kings of Zion and Ethiopia, reach the consul of France, Raffray.

How are you? As for me, by the grace of God and the intercession of Our Lady of Zion, I am well, blessed be her mercy forever. The two kings, King Minilik and *Nigus* Tekle Haymanot, had by the instigation of Satan a distressing encounter on the borders of the Galla territories. To put an end to these hostilities and better see who is to blame in this case and reestablish accord, I had come to Wello. But now the two kings have submitted themselves. I have had returned the possessions that had been taken away, reconciled the hostile parties and reestablished accord through a solid convention. I have set up camp for the time being on a height in a territory called Werre'īlu.

I write these details to you as a friend in order to let you know what has happened. Since a long time back the kings of France have been the friends of my ancestors, the kings of Ethiopia, and up till now, up till my reign, it is from the French government that presents have come to us.

Moreover, and lastly, when its missionaries wrote about the burning of their church and the injury they had suffered, they nevertheless wrote good words to me and said nothing that hurt my heart. We are thus your friends of long standing, so let me therefore become friends with the French government. Please write to it on my behalf a letter of friendship. Please obtain for me from it the opportunity to have sent to me at my expense cannons, guns, gunpowder and all other munitions and arms that become a king. It is not difficult for it to provide this franchise for me by its will. If you are authorized to come and see me, I would be pleased to see you, since you are my friend. So if there is nothing to prevent you, please come and see me.

Previously, the English, in response to a letter from me, wrote to me, "You and the Egyptians are both our sons, we will reconcile you . . ." But I, fearing that this might seem like pride on my part, answered them: "Well, may some man suitable for this, among you or the French government, become aware of the injustice I suffer, and we shall each stay where we are until your arbitration."

After having started, they abandoned this matter of mine.

It is because you are my friend that I write this to you to let you know about the injustice and violence I am subjected to. It is not that my strength fails me or that I need someone to complain to. Do your best then to provide me with a solid and perfect friendship.

Written at the camp of Werre'īlu on the 13th of Nehasē (17 August 1882) in the year of grace 1874.

May the message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach Gerhard Dr. Rohlfs.

How have you been? I, with my army, am well, by the grace of God, through the intercession of our Mother Zion, with the God of the saints, to whom be glory and praise, for His mercy lasts forever.

Your letter has reached us by the hand of *Lij* Ingidashēt. To the English, since they let my country Bogos (Moges) be taken away by the late Munzinger (Misinjir), I addressed a letter complaining about the taking away of my land. They said to me: “He has no right to this, instead your land should be vacated.” With this they betrayed me, they did not see to the leaving of the land. With the words, “Go, fight him” they urged on the Turks and let me be attacked. After that they wrote to me again, “Do not quarrel with your neighbour. Christian blood should not be shed for nothing; we want to bring you peace; stay in your countries.”

Since I deemed it good, I wrote to those who claim to want to bring me peace in a good way, inasmuch as I added the humiliation and the act of violence committed against me by the Turks the following answer, “Good! You may bring me peace, if you arrange so that I can stay in the land, possessed by the ancient kings; according to this you may determine my borders.” However, they did not determine my borders and did not bring me peace. After examining my claim they said, “But you have peace.” With this statement they gave up the matter which they had taken up.

Now this is nothing I care about any longer. It is God who made me king. My land is in his hands. Nevertheless, it is my wish that you should be informed about it; but as I have no one [here] to whom I want to express any complaint about [the matter], you should rather come here so that we can have a meeting. The two kings, King Minīlik and King Tekle Haymanot, had become enemies over the boundary and fought each other. Nowadays, both my sons and I have, after having restituted to both the property lost to them and thus reconciled them, taken residence in Wello and stay there. The wording of both, the Gi’iz and the Arabic, is the same.

Written in the camp of Werre’īlu, on 14 Nehasē in the year of grace 1874.

HHS, RA 14, Amharic original; AAPA, Abt. A, I.B.9, 1/1–3, German translation dated 20 August. The German text, a translation by Rohlfs (?), is poor. It attempts to translate the Amharic literally, and in some cases it is impossible to say with certainty what the text means. *Lij* Ingidashēt is the son of the German migrant Wilhelm Schimper; see [doc. 52](#).

Ḥamad La'īta to Pietro Antonelli, 28 Sept. 1882

Praise be to God!

To the respected and beloved Count Antonelli, may God protect him.

I give you my compliments and inform you that I have learnt about all your concerns from 'Abd al-Raḥmān. When he came, I had war in my country. The cause of it is Abū Bakr *Pasha*, the one who made himself great owing to our work. He sent the Egyptian soldiers to occupy my territory.

As for your imminent departure, it was 'Abd al-Raḥmān who told me about it. I shall be the one who lets you pass on my route and wherever you want. Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and I are but one person, and with regard to the caravans I was appointed responsible by Sultan Ḥanfadhē. King Minīlik and all the Abyssinians know about this. As soon as I had received your letter, I sent 'Abd al-Raḥmān back to you in Aden, and my brother with 'Abd al-Qadir to Awsa, so that they bring you the protection of the sultan.

Since we know who you are, everything will be done, and you will have camels and your feet will not touch the earth; I myself will carry you on my head. From the letter that Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will send, you will learn about my work and you will see that he tells you the same as I say. Before now, I already knew you by name, because Gīyorgīs and 'Abd al-Raḥmān had talked to me about you. Be assured that you, apart from possible misadventures sent by God, shall pass through our territories respected and untroubled.

In order that I may be able to send the caravan of the king (Minīlik) faster, I am sending 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Gebre Sillasē to Aden.

Health and prosperity [to you].

The 15th day of the month of Dhū al-Qa'da 1299.

(Seal of Ḥamad La'īta).

AP.DD, XV, p. 85, Italian translation. Gīyorgīs must here refer to Gebre Sillasē Nigusē who was also known as Gīyorīs Gebre Sillasē.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Sa'īd 'Awīḏān, 16 Oct. 1882

God be praised and to Him prayer and salutation.

To our distinguished and generous friend Sa'īd 'Awīḏān. May God keep him healthy. If you ask about our condition, we are in good health and prosperity, and may God accord the same grace to you.

I let you know that I have received the letter and understood what you say to me. I have already defined the question a first time with Minīlik and with them (i.e. the Italians): if they wish to send goods to Minīlik, they should send them to me and I will see to it that they reach Minīlik. To them I have written these words and also to Minīlik. If they wish to accompany the goods, they should address themselves to 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Yūsif, since we have accorded them passage on his behalf. I have only one word, and God is one. So if they wish to send the goods on my route, they can just send it, but if they wish to accompany the goods, may they go to 'Abd al-Raḥmān, to whom we have indicated a route in this vicinity. That is what I let you know.

From Sultan Maḥammad, bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased. May God be gracious to him. May it be so.

ASMAE, AE 2, Italian translation. Printed in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.2 no. 275, allegato 1, p. 247. The Arabic original has not been located. A note above the letter states that it was received in Aseb on 15 November 1882 and written on 16 October. Another note in the margin states that the letter was accompanied by a letter from Sa'īd 'Awīḏān to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē dated 4 October 1882 concerning Antonelli's travel to Shewa and request for a safe trading route, to which this is most probably the reply. The letter by Sa'īd 'Awīḏān has not been found.

Minilik II to Giulio Pestalozza, 18 Oct. 1882

Seal

Werre'ṭlu, 9th Ṭiqimt 1875

I have received the letter that you have sent me about which I am happy. I am satisfied with the news you give me of the arrival of Antonelli. Since I had earlier understood that Antonelli would come to Obok I have sent 60 camels. Since he has not disembarked there my camels have loaded merchandise to be sent with my people.

I now correspond with Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to open the route, and I conduct negotiations for that purpose. Even earlier I have written to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē in that sense. I have now asked Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to provide the necessary camels for the escort. I added that Antonelli should come by way of Zeyla this time, but his luggage by way of Awsa. Ḥanfadhē had written to me that he would not receive a European on his territory and therefore the route of Zeyla is preferable for the moment, but when the new route finally will be open the Italians can pass by it. For the moment it is better to abstain since white people cannot travel there. If signor Antonelli would like to take this way I am not of his opinion and would take the other way. It would be better though that his luggage went by way of Awsa. I am conducting negotiations and will make it possible to open this way since this is to the advantage of my country and to the country of the king of Italy, and to make something that is approved by the king of Italy I will make every effort.

Mr Pierre (Labatut) has bought 40 rifles for me and since I hear that they are already in Aseb, I ask you to send these arms to me.

ASMAI 1/5–31, Amharic original, either misplaced or lost. Printed Italian translation in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 296, allegato, p. 23. Giulio Pestalozza was appointed “segretario” with the title “Reggente il commissariato civile i Assab” from June 1882 to November 1883 after the transfer of the rights of the Rubattino Co. to the Italian government in June 1882 during the absence of the appointed “Regio Commissario Civile”, Giovanni Branchi. He was reinstated as “Reggente” in August 1884. See *L'Italia in Africa*, I.2 p. 247. Pierre Labatut is known as a French arms dealer.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif to Pietro Antonelli, 20 Oct. 1882

God be praised.

Salutation to the respectable Count Antonelli.

On my arrival at Obok, I did not find Gebre Sillasē Beddo to send camels to you, so I left my uncle *Shaykh* Osman so that he is the one who will bring you the camels and the men. I will leave Sagallo on the 7th of Dhū al-Ḥijja and you will see how our business will succeed by the grace of God. *Shaykh* Osman is a man who will remain in our service in Aseb, so that he becomes our agent: try to make the consul accord him an employment, for without paying you cannot avail yourself of people. When he arrives with the camels, we ask you from our part to give him money to send to his family. Do this, I tell you. Do this.

As for myself, Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē has sent me two couriers and told me, “Come, come”, and this is in order to make the necessary agreements for your journey in Abyssinia. Fear nothing, be calm. I beg you to give my compliments to the consul and tell him that I will not forget his words and that, with God’s help, I shall arrive with all our affairs in order.

In the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja on Friday, the 7th day, 1299 (Gregorian calendar: 20 October 1882).

‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif.

ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian translation. Printed in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 83. No Arabic version has been located. We have not been able to identify Gebre Sillasē Beddo, but it is quite probable that he is the same as *Azzazh* Gebre Sillasē Nigusē who appears in numerous documents in this volume as Minīlik’s agent on the coast. The Italian administrators at Aseb were most often designated as “consuls” by the Afar. The administrator in Aseb at this time was Giulio Pestalozza. See further [doc. 100](#).

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pietro Antonelli, 24 Oct. 1882

Praise be to God. Prayer and salutation to the One Almighty.

To our distinguished and generous respectable friend Antonelli. May God always and everywhere be propitious to him.

We have received your good letter and have understood what you say to us. You intimate your wish to go from Aseb to Shewa. May it be so and fear nothing. God willing, I shall protect you and protect others. As for the camels, we have none at our disposal for the time being. They are all engaged for Shewa. One of my men will come to you with ‘Abd al-Qādir bin Ibrāhīm and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, and he will accompany you. For my part, I send greetings and wishes of prosperity to you.

In the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja, on Tuesday the 11th day, in the year 1299 of Hijra (this date corresponds to 24 October 1882, in the Gregorian calendar).

Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Commissario Regio in Aseb, 24 Oct. 1882

Praise be to God and prayer and salutation to Him, the one Almighty.

To my illustrious, generous and dear friend the Italian consul. May God always and everywhere be favourable to him.

If you ask about us, we are, thanks to God, well and content. I let you know that I have received the letter that you sent me earlier and have studied it. As to the person that you tell me that he intends to go to Shewa, there is neither any difficulty nor anything to fear, and God willing, I shall protect him and protect others. This I have written to him as well as to you in answer to your letter brought to me by messenger. I have agreed to all this merely in order to please Minilik and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif and because ‘Abd al-Raḥmān wanted that route. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān is my agent and Minilik’s and I have granted him a (illegible word), and if you help me on your part I will help you. Greetings.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, on the 11th day, Tuesday, of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja in 1299.

ASMAE, AE 2, Italian translation. Printed in *L'Italia in Africa*, 1.2 no. 275, allegato 2, pp. 247–248. The Arabic original of ASMAI 1/4–28 has been misplaced or lost. The Italian translation carries a note stating that the letter arrived in Aseb on 17 November 1882 with ‘Abd al-Qādir, a Danākīl messenger sent by Antonelli from Aden together with a letter to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē in which he advised him to answer the letter from the Commissario in Aseb.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 25 Nov. 1882

تاريخ في شهر محرم الحرام خلى منه رابع عشر يوم الاحد سنة من الهجرة

الدعاء الوافر والثناء المتكاثر يهديان جناب عالي وجاهه والجاهه سلاله الاجلاء
الاكابر الاجل الاخم الاكمل الاشيم محمود السجايا والاشيم الصاحب الحليم
قصر عصب حرس الباري من الاكدار ذاته وجاهه من الاضطر صفاته والارال
في بارخ المجد والاجلال وشامخ العرو والاقبال امين قداما بعدنا الباعث التخيير
ذريعة الارخلاص هو السؤال عن صحة ذاتكم السنية واعتدال اوقاتكم الزكية
الثمان هما الامل من حضرة عالم الارال لاوارال انجاب في اكل الخير والسرو سركم
الحقيقي من كرم الله تعالى في انتم الخير والسرو يسال عن حال انجاب بالغدوات
واليكوسنم لايجفي محترم ان الشخ عبد الرحمن بن الشخ يوسف بلغني سلامتكم
واما من جهة الجوابات امر سفركم الى سفركم شوي نصبا لكم شيخ عبد الرحمن بن شخ يوسف
اعتمد واعليه بكل ما بديلكم بطريق او غيره بحيث انه كفاية ونهاية وهو جعلناه محل الثفا
بكل امر كان ما كان واوسلنا بيده علامة من عندنا تصديقا لكم واعتمد واعليه بدوام الدوام
وارسلت لك هدية منا لاجل ارتباط المحبة وعقد اساس المودة ثوب جشني منقشات ومعلومات
حرية وترس وجنبه وخلقنا لبيد شيخ عبد الرحمن بن شخ يوسف فنفضل منه بالقبول

كان ما يليق بنا لكم هدية حتى القليل من الخليل جليل للحيث عبد الرحمن المذكور استعجل بالرجوع

الكم لا لومنا ماد منا في الحياة ونشا الله تتم المراد داسر والدوام
واما الجوابات الذي يجي من عندكم بما ارادتم
خلى تخينا بطريق عبد الرحمن يوسف
وان تفضلتم من احسانكم
السابق ولاحق من الهدية
فتقبضوني بيد عبد الرحمن
شخ يوسف الرجوم
يا - لديكم معلوم

Dated in the month of Muḥarram, the sacred, fourteen days having elapsed, on Sunday, the year 1300 Hijra.

Abundant prayers and generous eulogy presented to His Honour, the high-standing and honoured, offspring of the illustrious and the majestic, the most illustrious and magnificent, the most perfect and most virtuous, the laudable of nature and conduct, the clement friend, the consul of Aseb. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame, and remain in might and prosperity. Amen.

And now, the reason for writing [and] the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times, which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God's kindness, your true beloved is well and pleased and prays for your well-being morning and forenoon. As is not hidden from Your Honourable Highness, *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān, bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, the deceased, has reassured me of your health. As for the letters, your trip to Shewa has been authorized [and] we have assigned *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif to you; count on him whatever faces you on the way since he is sufficiently aware and fully authorized. We have given him authorization to settle and resolve any issue. In fact, we have also given him a power of attorney so that you could trust him. Rely on him at all times. Finally, I have sent you a present to tie us together in love and establish friendship; actually, I have sent you an Ethiopian dress, engraved pieces, milestones, a lance, a shield, a pound and an anklet with *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. Please accept it, even though you deserve better than this present, since from a friend the insignificant is significant [and] since the named 'Abd al-Raḥmān was hurrying back to you. Do not reproach us as long as we live. If it is the will of God Almighty, your wishes will be fulfilled for ever and ever. As for any other correspondence, please do send it only with *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif.

And if you wish in accordance with your former and further benevolence to offer me a gift, please send it to me through 'Abd al-Raḥmān, bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, the deceased. Of this you have been informed.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad, bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased

Seals: Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.
Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

ASMAE, AE 2, Arabic original; ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian translation. The letter is written to “the consul of Aseb”, a designation often used by the local rulers referring to the Italian administrator in Aseb. Giovanni Branchi had taken up his post as *Regio Commissario Civile* in Aseb in 1881, but in his absence from early 1882 it was Giulio Pestalozza in the capacity of “Segretario” with the title *Reggente* who was responsible until Branchi returned to his post as from November 1883 until August 1884, when Pestalozza was again reinstated as *Reggente*. The mentioning of “your trip to Shewa” must be understood as a reference to the Italian expedition of Pietro Antonelli, interpreted by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē as an official Italian expedition.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pietro Antonelli, 25 Nov. 1882

Praise be to God.

To my highly respected and very wise friend Count Antonelli, may God always and everywhere keep him safe; may it be so.

What urges us to address this friendly letter to you is our wish to be informed about your health, which we hope that God will always grant to be perfect. As regards your true friend he is, due to God's generosity, well and keeps asking with great interest for news about you. We wish to let you know that the one who brought your letters was *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, your friend, who arrived here in good health. We know your feelings and from 'Abd al-Raḥmān we have learnt the truth of your word. We put our hope in God and in the growth and continuation of our friendship. We send you a gift with 'Abd al-Raḥmān to confirm our friendship, an Abyssinian mantle, a shield, a lance, a knife and two bracelets; receive them and enjoy them. The value is in the friendship with which the gift is given, for these things are certainly not worthy of being given by a man like me to a man like you, but 'Abd al-Raḥmān did not want to stay to give me time to prepare my gifts. For this reason, excuse me for sending you a small thing this time; under other circumstances we will complete what we want.

As of your departure to Shewa we have given the assignment to *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. Count on his word about the route and other matters, for he is a competent man and I have nominated him my agent and representative and we have given him our seal (?) to make this clear.

Both with regard to letters and other things that you may wish to send me, always use 'Abd al-Raḥmān.

May God help you.

Dated in the month of Muḥarram, the 14th day, Sunday, in the year of Hijra.

Sultan Maḥammad, bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased.

(Seal of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.)

Translator: C. Hag.

ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian translation. Another copy with minor differences is found in ASMAE, AE 2. The translation is introduced as: "Translation from Arabic of a letter from Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, Sultan of Aussa to Count Antonelli received in Aseb on 17 December 1882" (our translation of the Italian text). It is somewhat unclear what the Italian translation refers to in the phrase: "dato un nostro signo /si allude al bastone/ affinche ciò sia palese". We have interpreted it as referring to the sealed power of attorney dated the next day; see the following document.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, power of attorney for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, 26 Nov. 1882

ختم

نعم اقول انا السلطان محمد بن (السلطان حنفذ الهادي)
 من كبريت لا في كبريت له عبد الرحمن بن قسيه بن
 بطرني على الاشغال انذرتنا لحيث تدرك ما يصلح لنا وما
 يضرننا ما اني اعطيت امرتني وحكمه جائذ واسم تانز
 ومن نقرض قلبه وخالفه ما في لفة اتى من الفرجي ومي نعمهم
 من اهل شقوك وغيرهم من كان رادوا علينا لم يسبح كلته فعد خاب
 وخيسر ومن تبعه فاز وفسر. تاريخ في شهر ربيع الاحرام سنة
 عشر منه يوم الاثنين بعد صلاة الظهر العشر ننتج وثلثا من راد
 بعد الاجت المصطفى طاله عليه وسلم وراحمون سبب لدران
 بن شيخ محمد تارا برس

ختم

السلطان محمد
حنفذه

Seal.

I, Sultan Maḥammad bin [son of] Sultan Ḥanfadhē the deceased, herewith declare that I have written ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif a power of attorney. He is appointed as my attorney in fact and therefore controls our interests and judges what is for our benefit and what is against it. I have delegated him my power; hence, his orders are valid and effective. Whoever contradicts and opposes his orders is considered to be one of the *ferenj* and their followers among the Shewa residents. Whoever disobeys him and does not abide by his word has betrayed me and will be severely punished whereas whoever follows him shall gain victory and triumph.

Dated in the month of Muḥarram the sacred after fifteen days had elapsed, Monday after the afternoon prayer, the year 1300 after the Hijra of the chosen; God bless him and grant him salvation. The writer of this letter is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, bin Muḥammad Turāb.

Seal of Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

ASMAE, AE 2, copy of Arabic original, Italian translation; ASMAI 7/1-1 has two different Italian translations, one of which is very close to the ASMAE, AE 2 version.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pietro Antonelli, 6 Dec. 1882

Praise be to God.

To the highly respectable and very wise friend Count Antonelli, may God keep him safe, may this be so.

We inform you that your letter as well as your gifts have arrived with ‘Abd al-Qādir on the 11th of Muḥarram. We have already sent you many letters announcing that we have sent gifts to you as well as to the consul. We now send you *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif and Bassitri, who will serve to protect you and let the Bedouins know that your blood is my blood; therefore fear nothing. You will hear all that we wish from you from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s mouth. If you continue to let us know the truth and if you keep your word, you shall always have our ever-growing friendship. See to it that your word is not like that of the French. Help yourself and the consul, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, and do not listen to the words of the house of Abū Bakr, who has betrayed the Danākil. He who uses him can never be our friend. As for the camels we have spoken to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Bassitri and we have informed Sultan Burhān.

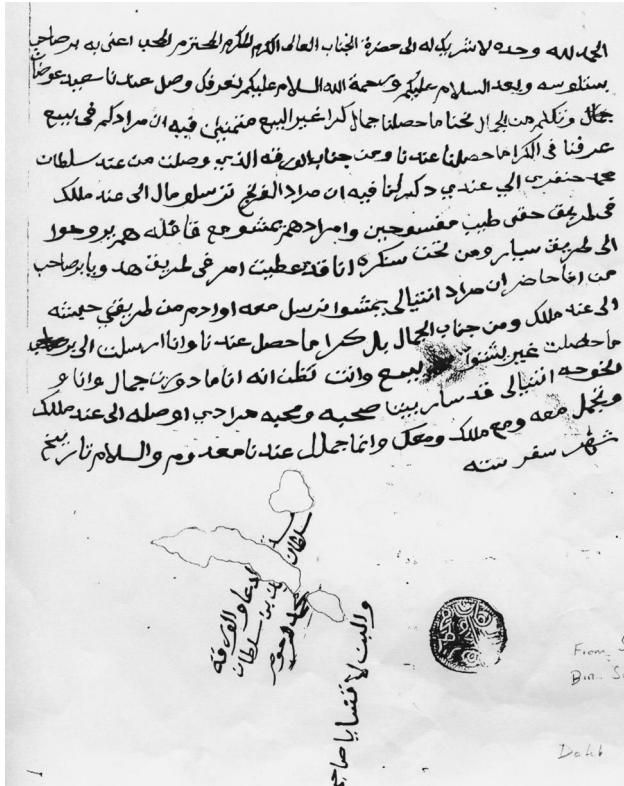
In the month of Muḥarram, the 25th day of the year 1300.

From Sultan Maḥammad, bin [son of] Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased.

(Seal)

ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian translation. Printed in *AP.DD*, XV, p. 89. The Italian text states that the letter arrived in Aseb on 17 December 1882 through ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

Burhān Muḥammad to Giulio Pestalozza, 17 Dec. 1882



Praise be to God alone, He who has no partner. To His Honourable Excellency, the most noble and most honoured, the respected and beloved, I refer to the true friend Giulio Pestalozza. Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah, peace be upon you.

We inform you [that] Saʿīd ʿAwīḍān reached us and spoke about the camels. We did not obtain camels for rent only for sale; we hope that you desire to buy some. We inform you we did not obtain any for rent. As for the letter that was sent to me from Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, in it he mentioned the desire of the *ferenj* to send goods to Minīlik on my route. This is fine, they are authorized. They want to go with the caravan and take the route of Siar and below Sinkara. I gave orders [to take] that route. O true friend, I am willing, if Count Antonelli desires to travel, to send with him people from my route to Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) to King Minīlik.

As for the camels, we did not obtain camels for rent; I sent but obtained except (unintelligible word) only for sale, and you think that I did not look for camels thoroughly. Mr. Count Antonelli and I have become bound in friendship and affection. It is my desire that he reaches King Minīlik, and [my desire] to be generous to him, to the king and to you. As for the camels, we have none. Greetings. Dated the month of Safer, the sixth.

Signature half erased:
The greetings and the paper come from
Sultan [Burhān] bin Sultan Muḥammad, the deceased.

And don't forget the coffee O my friend.

Seal: Burhān Muḥammad

ASMAE, AE 2, Arabic original; ASMAI 7/1-1, Italian translation. In the Italian translation the date was misunderstood. Arabic *sanna* (year) was read *sitta* (the sixth), thus *sesto* instead of *anno*. The sixth of Ṣafer corresponds to 17 December.

Ḥamad La'īta to Giulio Pestalozza, 9 Jan. [1883]

الرسالة
 ما بعنا فاما يبلغ من حمد بن لبيته الى حضرته بسطاول حاكم عسب ان سالتم عنا ف نحن كخير ومما نعرفكم ارسال تلك
 ليك اعلانا بخروجه السفر الى السلطان محمد بن حنفري وتكون مشاهرة تجرى على عادتنا التي غبت عنكم على حسب
 لقوانين محفوقه عناءكم حتى اصل اليكم ^{ايضا} وصولي اليكم يكون بزمن قريب بعنا قراخ استغنا لنا وحصول
 لمولنا عنده من وصلت ومن بعد ذلك متوجه اليكم كل اجل للودّه ومرغوب باليك لا اجل الملاقاه ومما
 نحن والفرنسيس كان معاشرتنا مختلفه واراؤنا غير متفقه ذلك تقتضى المناقرة وتجب الباعادة
 والمفارقة نترانه لا ينتج الشروط المتفقّه ولا المبعاد المثبت بل انه يظهر المشوكة والقوة وتختي الصافه والو
 والرافه ومعاشرتنا عنفا وشراطه انفا لا بان اظهار تلك الحال غير متفقين ولا متصاحبين هذا عنر فنا كتم
 وايضا حولنا من المبرحقتنا ثلاثين ريال اعنونه الله اللهم الله صحيح محمد قد يرسل كتي اعطوله لا تقلوه كالي لله له
 حمد لعيت
 تاريخ في عرفة شهر صفر
 يوم الاثنين

And now, the message comes from Ḥamad La'īta to Mr. Pestalozza, the Governor (*hākīm*) of Aseb, if you inquire about us, we are well. We would like to inform you that we are sending you this letter to announce that the delegation to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē has left. Until I came to you a monthly payment has to be made for the months I have been away from you, counted according to the rules kept by you. And my arrival shall be soon, after our work is finished, and our money is collected from [the people] where I have been. I will come to you for the sake of friendship, and because you long to meet me.

As for the French, our relation has been different; we held opposing views, which lead to mutual aversion resulting in estrangement and separation. In addition, the French do not follow agreed conditions and do not respect fixed dates and deadlines. They show arms and power, and they withhold generosity and kindness. Their companionship is violent, and their conditions are haughty. It is necessary to inform you that this was the case with them; we disagreed and are not on good terms. And this is what we tell you. Furthermore, we are entitled to thirty riyal as monthly payment. God, God, and God, God.

Ḥamad La'īta.

Seal illegible.

Dated the last day of the month of Safar, Tuesday.

Seal illegible.

ASMAI 7/1-1, Arabic original. The addressee of the letter, “Bustālī”, is obviously Giulio Pestalozza, the representative of Italy residing in Aseb at the time, in Arabic referred to as the *hākīm* of Aseb. See doc. 100. The last sentence of the letter is unclear and the translation must therefore be regarded as tentative.

Burhān Muḥammad to Giulio Pestalozza [Jan. 1883]

الحمد لله وحده

سلامه جناب المحب العزيز حضرة بر صاحب عصابة جوليو بيلوزا هدهم الله تعالى امين
 اما بعد سلام الله تعالى ورحمته وبركاته ننحس بذلك حفيظكم والذي نوصيكم عنه بحيث ان الكونت النوبلي مسافر لا اجبته عن طريق اوسه
 كما وانته بارادة السلطان محمد حنغلر وسجانيته .. وحيث ذلك افكرنا بما لو افقت ارفاقه بنا لحد السلطان محمد حنغلر حتى نحضره
 بنفسنا قدامه والحالة هذه نحن مسافرين معه حتى ناكده بفضركم بصفة وكيل الدولة لتدليانه اننا بدلنا ونبدل مال محمد
 ومجربونا في الشئ الذي يعود صالحا على الدولة المقدمه الذي نحن ما خرجنا من كوننا تحت حمايتك ونؤكد لوفركم باجرار
 ما امكننا من الاتفاق والموافق مع السلطان محمد حنغلر نحو قضاة ومسالكم وتبديل تجاركم في بلادنا لئلا يتابع
 لادارته وليكن معلوم لفضركم ان سفرنا مخصوص لهذه المقصد الذي فيه مصالح ولدنا ارجو من حضرتكم الاطمان علم جناب
 الوزير السنية بذلك واحمدكي سديك لفضركم
 سلطان
 محمد حنغلر

Praise be to God alone.

To His Honour, the dear and beloved, His Excellency, the pure friend, governor (*bir şāhib*) of Aseb, Giulio Pestalozza. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

The peace of God Almighty and His mercy and His blessing is what we bestow upon Your Excellency. What we tell you is that Count Antonelli is travelling to Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) by the route of Awsa with the authorization and protection of Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē. We agreed that he joins us to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, so that we can personally introduce them to one another. Thus, we are travelling with him to assure Your Excellency as representative of the Italian government, that we have done and will do our best and utmost in whatever benefits the above mentioned government whose protection we have not left.

We assert Your Excellency that we shall do our best, in agreement and alliance with Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, to serve your interests and to exchange your merchandise in the land of Danākil depending upon his administration. Let it be known to Your Excellency that our travel is dedicated to this purpose which is of advantage. Therefore I ask Your Excellency to inform your sublime ministry of this. I present my greetings to Your Excellency.

The sender of the message is Sultan Burhān bin Sultan Muḥammad, the deceased.

Certified. (lit. It is true.)

ASMAE, AE, Arabic copy; ASMAI 7/1-1, Italian translation. The letter is not dated and has no seal. It is dated in the Italian archives 27-I 1883, but was probably written earlier, as suggested by a comparison with the following letter.

Burhān Muḥammad to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 27 Jan. 1883

الحمد لله وحده كما في المهمات ودافع البليات الي العزيز بسعادة المستر هلمه الله
 امين فان سالتنا عنا فنحن في خير وعافيه نسلم عليك الذي الذي سلاح ونعرفك الفرح
 الشديد والاعتبار والمفروض حق الصفر حق كنت أنت نوي والا وادع حق
 ملك ملك لمان عرفنا ان هو يودي حق ملك الطليان الي ملك ملك الذي
 هو صاحبنا ومتوافقنا لا اجل هذا ي ساعدناه بقلب فرح وقد مناه نفسنا و
 اعطيناه الجمال ومحتاج الصفر الذي تقدر عليه سهلناه وخر جناه بالامان
 وانالمان عرفنا ان هو من سول من طرفكم وليل ويودي الهديات حق
 ملك الطليان شاورت نفسي وقتل في نفسي هذي الاالواصل نجعله انكم انتم
 دولة الطليان الذي وصلت عندي وتمت معه ومثبت بنفي معه الي
 السلطان محمد بن فلي حتى نتم اصلاح الطريق التجارته ما بين عسب
 ويشوي مع مساعدت ملك ملك وخصوصت الذي من حني وقومني الحكم
 والشرط الامان والمحبة الذي انكبت من سعادة امتستري الكذاب الشرع
 لمان فتر لي كنت أنت نوي واننا ننتري خا عليك باسعادة المستر انك نتر
 و لي لا فصر عسب وللا الكمندلر با نور حرسن لل العيال حقي وللا لمان
 حقي حتى سمر سوي مدة ما انما غاب مع كنت أنت نوي وان شأ الله أنا
 بر وجرمي من اوسه نجر كذا اخبار السفر حقه بالطيب والاشغال
 الذي بانصلحها لا خصوص و منفعة عسب وان شأ الله نحن
 نفرح ونفتر حكم بالامان والسلاح

تاريخ شهر ربيع اول ثمانين ثمان مائة

١٨

من السلطان برهان
ابن السلطان محمد

Praise be to God alone, He who dispels anxieties and makes afflictions disappear.

To His Eminence, the dear minister. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

If you inquire about us, we are well and healthy, and we send you our very best regards. We are pleased to inform you that Count Antonelli has the full right to travel, the same right as the loyal people who obey King Minilik. When we were informed that he is the messenger of the Italian king to our friend and provider King Minilik, we were delighted to help him. So, we introduced ourselves and offered him, as much as we could, camels and provisions to travel. Then we did our best to facilitate his travel, and finally we sent him off in safety.

But, as soon as I realized that he was your representative and that he was bringing presents to King Minilik, I thought and said to myself: We will treat this visitor as if it were you, [representing] the government of Italy, who had reached us. Thus, I accompanied him personally to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē so that the commercial route between Aseb and Shewa would be improved with the help of King Minilik.

What in particular made me delighted and happy were the provisions and terms for safety and friendship that were expressed by Your Eminence, the minister, in the legal letter which Count Antonelli explained to me. I beseech you eminent Minister to inform the Consul of Aseb and the commander of the warship that these are my people and this is my money, so that they guard them while I am away with Count Antonelli.

If it is the will of God Almighty, after I come back from Awsa I will report to you the news I gather during my travel about the improvements and works that we are doing, especially for the benefit of Aseb. And if it is the will of God Almighty, we will both rejoice in safety. Greetings.

Dated in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal, on Monday the 18th, the year 1300.

From Sultan Burhān [of] Raḥayta, bin [son of] Sultan Muḥammad, the deceased. May God bless him.

ASMAI 36/2–12, Arabic original and Italian translation. Pasquale Stanislao Mancini was the Italian minister of foreign affairs 1881–1885.

**Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini,
14 March 1883**

من سلطان محمد
بن سلطان حنفي

تاريخ في شهر جماد الاول
يوم الخميس خامس منه سنة ١٣٠٢ من الهجرة



الدعاء الوافر والثناء المتكاثر يهده يان جناب عاتي الجاه والجناب
 سلاله الاجل الاكابر الاجل الاغتم الاكل الاشيم محمود السجاي
 والشيم صاحب الحكيم منسراي عهد الاعظم حرس الباري من
 الاكدار ذاته وحما من الاضرار صفاته ولازال في بانح المجد و
 والاجلال وشامخ العز والاقبال امين اما بعد فالباعث التي برذيرة
 الاخلاص هو السؤال عن صحة ذاتكم السنية واعتدال اوقا تكم
 الركية الملتان هما الامل من حضرة عالم الازل لا زال الجناب
 في اتمل الخير والسرو ومجكم الحقيقي من كوم الله تعالى في اتم الخير
 والسرو يسال عن حال الجناب بالغدوات والبكوات اما بعد الذي
 اعرفكم وصل اليانا من جنابكم الرسول منكم ووكيلكم كنت انتواني
 فاويناها واكرمناها والزمناه واحشماناه على حسب طاقنا واستخبرناه عن
 حالكم واحوالكم وفهمنا من كل طرف من الصداقة والمجبة والكلامات الذي
 انتم اصلحتم وربتم من طريق التجارية من عصب الى شوي بطريقنا قبلنا
 وحيننا واعطينا الامر للوحيثا حتى ينزلوا الى عصب القوافل للتجارة واما الشرط
 والقطار ان خيلنا على سلطان منبلكو حتى يقطع ويتوافق مع كنت انتواني
 وارسلنا معه جوابا تنسا ومرادنا ووكيلنا الى سلطان منبلكو ونحن فهمنا الحسد
 والفساد الذي كان يباعد بيننا وبينكم حتى ما يكون العدو بيننا قبلنا صحبتكم
 ومحبتكم بقلب طيب وفرح واما من جناب كنت انتواني شيعنا وحصننا
 الى شوي مع فالتناء هو اعطانا باسكم هدية لنا قبلنا منه بالعز والناموس
 ونحن نعرفكم مرادنا من ابائنا واجدادنا ما سكين ملتنا ولا نتعد على ملة
 غيرنا ونطلب من دولتنا الحراسة من البحر بالابوس تكلم كل عدو وخاصة

ونصلح لهم طرفان في الارض حقا بمنفعة التجارينة
 ونصلح لهم طرفان في الارض حقا بمنفعة التجارينة
 ونصلح لهم طرفان في الارض حقا بمنفعة التجارينة

Abundant prayers and generous eulogy presented to His Honour, the high-standing and honoured, offspring of the illustrious and the majestic, the most illustrious and most magnificent, the most perfect and most virtuous, the estimable and laudable of nature, the clement friend, the minister of the Supreme Sovereign. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame, and remain in might and prosperity. Amen.

And now, the reason for writing, the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times, which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God's kindness, your true beloved is well and pleased and prays for your well-being morning and forenoon.

And now, we inform you that your messenger and representative, Count Antonelli, has reached us. We welcomed him, sheltered him, served him and honoured him as much as we could. We asked him about your condition and your well-being, and we understood that there is friendship and kinship on all sides.

We accepted and appreciated the statement that you approved of and settled for the commercial route from Aseb to Shewa passing through our land. Thus we ordered our people to bring down their commercial caravans to Aseb. As for the conditions and the terms (*al-qanṭaraz*), we leave it for Sultan Minīlik so that he will conclude [the issue] and agree with Count Antonelli. Actually, we sent our letters, our wishes and our representative with him to Sultan Minīlik. We realized the envy and corruption that had estranged us from you. In order that there be no enmity between us, we have accepted your friendship and your kinship with joy and pleasure. As for Count Antonelli, we have equipped him and escorted him to Shewa with our caravan. He gave us a gift in your name, and we have accepted it according to law and honour. We would like to inform you of our objectives: since the days of our ancestors, we stick to our religion and do not offend any other religion. We ask your government to guard our coast with your steamer against any enemy especially the Egyptians who invade [our land] without any right. As for us, we will guard your people and your commerce on our land; we shall ensure their comfort and fix them routes on our legal lands for commercial benefits.

Dated in the month of Jumād al-Awwal, Thursday, the 5th, the year 1300 of *Hijra*.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Seals illegible.

ASMAI 7/1–1, Arabic original and Italian translation. The same day Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē sent a very similar accompanying letter to the consul in Aseb. See *AP.DD*, XV, pp. 112–113.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and Burhān Muḥammad to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 16 March 1883

الى جناب عالي الجاه والجناب سلاله الاجلاء الاكابر الاجل الانعم المفخم الاكل الاشيم محمود السجايا و
 والشيم المراد به صاحب الحليم منسري سد الاعظم سلطان تليان بلدة رومة حرس الباري من
 الاكدار ذاته وجاه من الاضراس صفاته ولا زال في بارخ المجد والاجلال وشاخ العز والاقبال امين
 اما بعد ناءك ونظهر اليوم سبع في تاريخ جماد الاول سنة الف وثلثمائة وفي الشهر ارباوي
 في مرتسا سنة ١٢٨٢ هـ نفخ الطريف التجارية واصلاح التجارية ما بين عصب واوسه ثم الى شوي
 بحر استنا في ارض الدناكل قبلنا نفخ الطريف لرعيه التليان بغير عشو ولا الحشمة والناموس بحضور
 حقاكم كنت انت نلي وحلنا اخر كلانا والشرطا وقطعتا الكلام وينتج مع السلطان منلك ونطلب من جناب
 المكرم سعادة منسرا انك تعطى اخر تمام الامر للحيث كنت انت نلي تخنا مستتمين عليه ونطلبك تعرف
 الدر عيتكم حتى يوقفوا من الخروج الى البر حتى يرجع من شوي تمام الشرط واللاء تفاق مع كنت انت نلي وهو
 المدكوكنت انت نلي يعرفكم مرادنا وعرفناه انه يدكر لكم في خطه ما في قلبنا من الحبة والصدقة لمجا ورتكم هذا عرفناكم
 ايضا نعرفكم الحراسة من البحر من كل عد و خاصة من المصرون المتعدين بغير طريق ولا حق هذا عرفناكم

من سلطان برهان
 بن سلطان محمد

من سلطان محمد
 بن سلطان حنفي

صليح

Firma del Sultano Burhan



*Firma e Bolli del
 Sultano Mohamad Aufan*

*Visto per l'autenticita dell'atto delle firme e dei Bolli
 Pietro Ardemani*

The high-standing and prestigious, offspring of the illustrious and the grandees, the most illustrious and magnificent, the most perfect and most virtuous, the estimable and laudable of nature, the clement friend, the minister of His Supreme Sovereign, the Italian ruler (sultan) of the city of Rome. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame, and remain in might and prosperity. Amen.

We confirm and proclaim today, the 7th of Jumād al-Awwal, the year 1300, in the fourth month, 16 March, the year 1883, we open the commercial route and restore the commerce between Aseb and Awsa, and then to Shewa, under our protection in the land of Danākil. In the presence of your representative Count Antonelli, we have accepted opening the route for the Italian people without collecting any taxes whether dictated by law or by fair-mindedness. This is our final word and decision and King Minilik will be the one to give the final word on this matter. We ask Your honourable Eminence, the Minister, to give Count Antonelli the final word since we trust Count Antonelli. We would like you to tell your people not to take these routes until Count Antonelli brings back the agreement and the terms from Shewa. In fact, Count Antonelli will inform you of our desire, and we asked him to mention to you in writing the friendship and kinship in our hearts for your neighbourliness. This is what we tell you. We would also like to ask you to guard the coast from all enemies and especially from the Egyptians who invade the lands for no reason and without any right. And this is what we tell you.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.
Two seals, both illegible.

From Sultan Burhān bin Sultan Muḥammad.
Certified. (lit. It is verily he.)

Yohannis IV to Īyasu Dagmawī, 19 March 1883

A letter of the Elect of God Yohannis King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia.

May it reach

I am totally confused. I cannot go to Tigre hurriedly for I do not have time: Kremt is coming in. I have not given my soldiers food, clothes and salary. It will take me much time. The people will be disquieted and ask, “What has happened to him?” *Ras Ar’aya Sillasē* is in Wello. For this reason, I want some advice. The prophet and saintly David sought advice from the saintly and sinners alike. Why should I not do the same? I am troubled from two sides. The hour of the coming of God is not known. I am afraid for Tigre when I cross to the land of the Amhara. I do not feel fear for myself. On the other hand, I am afraid that these devils, the whites, will enter my land from behind. As for God, he has given me everything. I am not in want of anything. I seek your advice because I do not know what to do and I know that the fate of an undecided person is uncertain.

Semera, 11th Megabīt 1875.

Maryam Şiyon Church, Aksum. The above is the English translation by Gebre Medhin Kīdane, Addis Abeba, who copied and translated the document and to whom we are greatly indebted. Unfortunately, the phrase presenting the addressee was not translated. The most likely addressee is the *nibure’id* of the Maryam Şiyon Church, Īyasu Dagmawī. The “whites” mentioned most probably refers to the European colonial powers who tried to establish control of what was to become Eritrea in the aftermath of the Ethio-Egyptian war.

Ḥamad La'īta to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 22 March 1883

الدهاء الوافر والشان المتكاثريه يان الى سعادة المنستر سلطان
طليان بلد رومه اما بعد نعرفكم لمان وصل كنت انت فوله انا
كنت غائب باشغال البد وان ومن بعد انا وصلت في الاخر وثوا
جهنا مع كنت انت فوله والكلامات الذي كتبوا لكم سلطان محمد حن فلي
وسلطان برهان منهم ومن طرفي انا عندي مقبول الذي كتبوا لكم انا كذا
من طرفي بحرس ونقبيل تجار رعية الطليان انا بحرس في ارض عده جمره
ومحمد حن فلي بحرس في ارض عسه جمره وكلنا نتساءل للالحرس احقكم وا
انتم احرسوا نحنا من البحر من طرفنا اعرفوا ان نحنا والسلطان منلك شورنا
وحالنا واحد ما هو اثنين هه صدقوا هه واللام

تا وبيع شهر جماد
اول شهر جماد
١٣
من السلطان حمد ابن
السلطان لعيسى الحزم

Abundant prayers and generous eulogy presented to His Eminence the Minister of the Italians, ruler (sultan) of the city of Rome. And now, I would like to inform you that when Count Antonelli arrived, I was away because of the affairs of the Bedouins. Then, finally I came back and met Count Antonelli, and agreed to the letters written to you by Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and Sultan Burhān. I agree with what they wrote to you and I am also willing to guard and accept the commerce of the Italians. I shall guard the land of the 'Idda (*yumra*) while Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē guards the land of the 'Isa (*yumra*). We shall all work on guarding your rights. On the other hand, you are to guard us from the sea. In addition, know that Sultan Minīlik and we have consulted and we are one and not two. Believe so and peace be to you.

Dated in the month of Jumād al-Awwal, Friday the 13th, the year 1300.

From Sultan Ḥamad bin [son of] Sultan La'īta, the deceased.

**Burhān Muḥammad to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini,
25 March 1883**

الى سعادة الاكبر المكرم الامجد الاعد الكامل الاكل الاجل الجليل الاحشم المحشم العزيرين المحترمين
 صاحب المحل سعادة منسراي سدس الاعظم السلطان تليان حرس الباري من الاكدار ذاته وحماه
 من الاضرار صفاته ولازال في بارح المجد والاجلال وشايع العز والاقبال اما بعد فالبايعت التحرير
 ذريعة الاخلاص هو السؤال عن صحة ذاتكم السنية واعتدال اوقاتكم الزكية اللتان هما الامل من حضرة
 عالم الازال لان الجنبات في المل الخير والسرو ومحبكم الحقيقي من كرم الله تعالى في اتم الخير والسرو يسال
 عن حال الجنبات بالغدوات واليكوس ثم لا يخفى محترم الجنبات بالاعتبار والمشي حقنا مع وكيلكم كنت انت نلي
 الي اوسه ووجوالة السلطان متلك ومسكوه الي عند السلطان محمد بن السلطان حنقري ومشا في الطريق بايسر طريق
 بلا تعب ولا نصب ومع طيب القلب وقبوله بالعر والناموس والايكرام غايت الاكرام ونعرفكم في جوابات الذي
 كتبنا لكم اثنتين حقنا انه مسألة الطريق صلحنا بحضور كنت انت نلي بالمحبة حقنا واقفة بالقلب الطريق مفتوح
 بالطيب واشغالنا اشتوا بالبير والحين حتى يصلح ويتم المحبة حقنا حتى لا يخرب انا وسلطان محمد نطلبكم تحكوا الذي
 كانت تفارق بيننا وبينكم وهذا الكلام سلطنة حتى في مركيله والان الشرط الذي كتبنا انو العالم سبيته ما كنت
 تعرف ان بلاد مركيله في داخل الميلين ولا ذكرنا اسم المركيله وانا اءلف بالله اني ما كنت اعرفكم قد الميل
 وعلى هذا تخالفنا والان نقل لكم انكم تخرجوني الحق وتورد لي مركيله حتى قدوم المحبة وبالقلب الطيب ونعرف
 ان حكومة التليان ما يرضنا علينا ضرره ه هذا محرفناكم

تاريخ جماد اول ١٢٠٣هـ
 شهر ربيع الاول ١٨٨٢هـ

سلطان برهان
 بن سلطان محمد

صحيح

To His Eminence, the most noble and most honoured, the bravest and most victorious, the most perfect and most virtuous, the most illustrious and most venerable, the most decent and most humble, the beloved and respected, the clement friend, the Minister of His Supreme Sovereign the Italian Sultan. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame and remain in might and prosperity. Amen

The reason for writing, the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God's kindness, your true beloved is well and healthy and prays for your Honour's well-being morning and forenoon. As is not hidden from Your Respected Honour, your representative Count Antonelli left for Awsa in full honour, truly, and with the authorization of Sultan Minilik and his soldiers, he continued to Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē. He took the easiest way and met no fatigue nor hardship, but happiness. They received him in honour, glory, and dignity, full dignity.

In the two letters we wrote to you, we informed you, truly, that with love truly filling the heart we settled the issue of the route in the presence of Count Antonelli. We are pleased that the route has been opened; our work has been immense. In order that our friendship is truly restored and complete and so that Sultan Maḥammad and I are not ruined, we ask you to reconsider what had estranged us, that is my right to rule Markable.

And now the agreement which I and the learned Sapeto signed, we were not aware that the land of Markable was located within the two miles, nor did we mention the name of Markable, and I swear to God that I did not know how far a mile extended. On this we disagreed, but now I ask you to give me back my right and restore Markable to me so that friendship and good-heartedness prevail, knowing that the Italian government is not pleased if we are harmed. That is what we tell you.

Dated on the 16th of Jumād al Awwal 1300.

The 16th of the month of March 1883.

Sultan Burhān bin Sultan Muḥammad
Certified Burhān [himself].

ASMAI 7/1-1, Arabic original and Italian summary. The Italian summary is printed in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 285, p. 7. The European date is obviously wrong, the secretary apparently equating Jumād al Awwal with March. Markable refers to the commercially important salt pans off the coast at Aseb, which Sultan Burhān apparently believed not to have been included in the agreements with Sapeto and the Rubattino Co. in 1880 (docs 4, 8, 9, 13 and 19). With the Italian government replacing the Rubattino Co., the issue of the sovereignty of the area came to a head, and Sultan Burhān felt he had been deceived. Some six months later he finally renounced his claim to Markable, declaring himself satisfied with economic compensation by the Italian government (see doc. 140).

May the message of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured and exalted above all, Queen Victoria, by the grace of God [appointed] defender of the faith, queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen of Queens of India (Hindikē).

How are you, really? I am well, by the loving kindness of God. Previously I used to write to you frequently about all the injustices done to me by Ismāʿīl *Pasha*, the territories that he took from me by trespassing, telling how he had my territories taken, by sending his servant Munzinger. It is Munzinger who brought us into all this conflict. And now, since the rule of the Muslims is destroyed and the country is in the hands of Christians, see to it that my country is restored to me. Last year you sent a letter telling me, “I will have your territories restored to you”.

Even in former times, you were my helper. When all the kings rule their respective countries, their respective patrimonies, what have I done that my country should be taken away from me? Until now, I have not stopped writing and sending letters. However, the Turks tear them up and throw them into the sea. The reason why this happens is that the ports on the sea are closed to me. They have closed them in such a way that messengers cannot go back and forth, merchants cannot trade, goods that I want cannot be brought to me. [Please,] look at this letter and find the appropriate solution for all these matters. When we brought bishops according to ancient tradition, we brought them by giving money [and other] gifts. Accordingly, when I brought bishops by sending my men, Mr. Malet, your consul-general in Egypt, wrote to you saying, “He has made a peace agreement with Tawfiq *Pasha*.” On the contrary, I have not made a peace agreement. I am writing all this because I am your son and friend, and you would not like me being wronged. And now, it is because I want the Kingdom of Christ to expand and the religion of the unbelievers to be destroyed. Except for this I have no quarrel with Christians. If the Kingdom of Christ does not expand now in your time and with your might, when will it expand?

The reason for my writing like this is that I want to get a port on the Red Sea so that I may have weapons and [other] goods that I want brought to me. I would not have appealed [to you] and complained about the Turks in order to restore my own territory, which is within my reach, had it not been for my desire to satisfy my claims with your permission.

Written in the town of Semera on 2nd Mīyazya in the year of grace 1875.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Ismaʿēl. Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismāʿīl. 1864.

FO 95/743, no. 221, Amharic original and English translation. In the translation, the letter is dated “7 Mīyazya at the town of Samra”, which is in parenthesis converted to 15 November 1883! The translation by Charles Speedy is rather free and occasionally totally misleading. A note in the printed records states that the letter was received 10 December. A draft copy of a reply from Victoria is dated 2 January 1884 (FO 95/744). For the circumstances of the letter see *Yohannes IV*, pp. 128–129, and *Survival*, p. 352. Two almost identical letters to Emperor Wilhelm of Germany and President Grévy of France were written the same day and all entrusted to the Austrian explorer Anton Stecker, who was returning to Europe after several years in Ethiopia (see [docs 114](#) and [115](#)).

Yohannis IV to Kīrillus V, 10 April 1883

رسالة الملك يوحنا ملك ملوك الحبشة الواردة لفظه السيد الاب بطريرك
 تاريخها ١٩ برموز ١٨٩٩ وكان ورودها في ١٠ اذار سنة ١٨٩٩ وهدى صورته
 شكر الله ونجد الذي خلق السما والارض الى قدس الاب بطريرك القاطن الفداه
 خامس الاربين ثلث عشر مواريز ذوالملكه والكهنة خليفه الرس الاطهار
 هادس غفه من الدياب الاربابية والنطورية عمور واساس الديانة المسيه
 ساقية شعبه بالغايم الروحانيه المملو من الرسرار الالهيه كماله الثمانية عشر
 عشيره عمور الديانة المسيه الحقيقيه العابد الساهر الطالب عن جميع شعبه البكر
 الطاهر والارابي الهالي الذي اضاع لنا بضيائه ابنا وسينا ابنا كيريسيس
 هافه الكنديه والحبشه والنوبه وافرنديه ونحمه مدن القيسه اطلب من الله
 ان اطرفكم في خير واقبل له قدام واله يري وانما ان اطرفكم بعناي امين
 ايها الاب اله قدس اننا انتم الساجد وجميع ملوكي سجودك لخدمه جميع العوزراء
 والشاوات والقائمه والفسوس والشامسه وجميع الشعب الكبار والصغار يطلبوا
 ونفر عطفنا لخدمه بان تديموها الصلوة عنا وعن جميع شعبه نعم ان اله يقف
 ابنا فسرنا لاصح مصوع كان حال له عييا ولا تقابلنا معه كان عمان واخيرا
 ارسلته الى بلد تسمى (الرفيق) وقد تسم ابننا وفسل سقف بحبته في ١٦ كرمك
 وجميع مته وكانه ارسلنا حاجبه افواجيه كخالي واما الصليب الذي له وضعناه في الارض
 مع كذا افواجيه نمولة مصورا في لم تقابل معنا اله بدغمه شعور بالنسب لعياه
 في مدينه عدوه وعرقاه بان يعلم المهورا بيه الموجودين بطرقنا وانما بعد
 تعليه المهورين عندنا يري بالسلام لخدمه رزينا يخطم على السلام اليها

وله الشكر دائما
 السلام الرب يسوع المسيح
 اوله زينا بجميس السيد
 له مشاهع ابوكلنا حضرت
 المهورا منه وفي دنوا بلدي
 الكور ومعه اله مشيات الاله
 ابي زينا فاذا حضرنا
 القويسه اطلبه عن حضرتكم
 فهدى اجوابه التي حضرتنا
 كعمله الموصي الاكرامه
 صف الاناجيه فلو خفي
 خليه

Translation:

A letter from King Yohannis, King of Kings of Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) written to His Beatitude the Father the Patriarch, dated on the 3rd of Baramūda 1599, received the 10th of Tūt of the year 1600 Coptic. This is its copy.

We thank God, and we praise Him who has created heaven and earth. To His Holiness the Father the Patriarch, the exceedingly holy, the fifth apostle, the thirteenth disciple, holder of the kingdom and the priesthood, successor of the virtuous apostles, protecting his herd from the Arian and Nestorian wolves, the pillar and foundation of the Christian religion, pouring spiritual teaching filled with divine mysteries on his people, he who makes the three hundred and nineteen complete, the pillar of the Christian religion, the truth of the vigilant worshipper, the pleader for all his people, the pure and unprecedented, the good shepherd who enlightens us with the brightness of his sun, our father and our master *Anbā* Kīrillus, the Archbishop of Alexandria, Abyssinia, Nubia, Africa, and the five cities of the West. I ask God that I may witness Your Holiness flourish, I kiss your feet and hands and I hope to see you with my own eyes. Amen.

O Holy Father! I am your son prostrating, and all my kings prostrate before Your Holiness, all the ministers (*wuzarā*), the *pashas*, the archpriests, the priests, the deacons, and all the people, elderly and youngsters beseech and implore Your Holiness to present your prayers for us and for all the people.

We inform you that when the bishop *Anbā* Marqos came to Massawa, he had already caught the plague and when we met him, he was very ill. Then, I sent him to a village called Arqūb, and *Anbā* Marqos, the bishop of Abyssinia, passed away on the 16th of Kiyhak 1599. We sent all his belongings with Mr. (*al-khawāja*) Manālī. As for his cross, we deposited it with him in the coffin. Mr. (*al-khawāja*) Nicola, the painter (?) (*masūrātī*) did not meet us until five months later because of the plague in the city of Adwa, and then we told him to inform the painters (*maṣūrātīya*) present on our side. If it is God's will after informing the above-mentioned who is with us, he will present himself to Your Holiness in safety.

May God guard you at all times. Amen.

His Excellency, the dear son, Mr. (*Khawāja*) 'Awaḍ Sa'dallāh, the revered, may God bless him abundantly, presents his greetings to you through this copy of the translation of the letter that reached us in the mail. May Your Excellency review it adequately. If the above-mentioned *khawāja* comes carrying the items that we sent, do take them from him and notify us officially.

Our greetings and blessings to their Excellences our children in the eminent council.

May God's peace engulf you all. To him all our thanks always.

11th Tūt 1600.

Ghali Collection, no. 3, Arabic text. As stated at the top this is a translation, probably of an Amharic original, although the letters by the Ethiopian rulers to the Coptic patriarch were generally written in Arabic. It is unclear if the reference to "this copy of the translation of the letter" is a note by the copyist and refers to the letter itself, or part of the original referring to another letter. *Anbā* Marqos was one of the four bishops who arrived in Ethiopia in October 1883. He died on 25 December 1883.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, Burhān Muḥammad and Ḥamad La'īta to Giovanni Branchi and Giulio Pestalozza, 14 April 1883

الى حضرة الجناب العاليان الاكرامان الكرمان
العربون الاجلان الحليمان المحب برنكي
وصاحب عصب بشلوسي هداهما الله تعا
في كل زمان واوان وان سالتهم وعن يلودينا
فاننا بخير وعافية ولاننا الاعنكم وعن
احوالكم التي هي القصد والمراد من سب العباد
وصلنا جوابكم وفيها ما ذكرتم وصار لدينا
معلوم والجوابات الذي ارسلتموه لانت نلي
ارسلناه حاتما وصل الينا واتشا الله يبلغه وبلغنا
من جهة تجرة ان المصريين يعمرن ساكلوا
للحيت ابونكرواسة وصل بنفسه مع عساكر المصريين
وكان بيننا وبينكم عهدا وميثاقا الحماية من
اليومنا وحماية البرمتم الان فكيف يعمرن
بلداننا وانتم في حيات لان الفرساوي كتب لنا
كتاب لا تحاربون المصريين لان المصريين
نزوله في ساكلوا بلادن الا بحر يولان فصل

To Their Excellences, the high-ranking, the most noble and the most honoured, the beloved and most illustrious, the clement friends, the beloved Branchi and the ruler (*ṣāhib*) of Aseb, Pestalozza. May God Almighty guide them at all times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you and your well-being which is the ultimate aim and desire of the Lord of the faithful. Your letter reached us and we understood and took account of what you mention. As soon as we received the letters you sent to Count Antonelli we forwarded them to him, God willing he will receive them. We were informed from Tajura that the Egyptians had invaded Sagallo since Abū Bakr *Pasha* has arrived there himself with the Egyptian soldiers.

We had made an agreement and an accord between us and you that you guard the coast and we guard the land. So, how come they invaded our lands while you are still alive? In fact, the French sent us a letter asking us not to attack the Egyptians since the Egyptians landed at Sagallo with the permission of the English.

Now, the French Consul has written to the French authorities [that] we were in agreement with the English government. Then, after settling things with the English on behalf of the Egyptians, he ordered them: “By God by God, do not fight them”. And now, what is your opinion and what is your suggestion on how to protect us and yourself on our land? Now, do inform us of your situation since you have to inform Sultan Burhān of everything. Sultan Burhān and we are one; there is no difference between us. Since he is closer to you, he shall be our authorized representative. Let it be known to you.

The sender of the message is Ṣulṭān Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and Sulṭan Burhān Muḥammad and Ḥamad La’īta, dated Saturday afternoon, 6 Jumād al-Ākhir, the year 1300.

Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and Ḥamad La’īta send their very best regards to Sa’īd ‘Awīḍān.

Seal: illegible.

ASMAI 7/1-1, Arabic original with Italian translation. The letter clearly demonstrates the cooperation between the Danākil sultans in their opposition to the Egyptian attempts to capture their lands with the tacit support of the British and French and their anger at the failure of the Italians to prevent this in spite of their previous promises.

Treaty between Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and Italy, 18 April 1883

118a Arabic text

بشروط
 مع اللطاف محمد بن المرحوم هنتفي مملكة إيطاليا كد الذي يساق من غزاية اسب
 مدينة شوا في عهد هنتفي غاقية وحرأس
 الاول
 الموحيا والسلام على ليد مع والى اسب المهد هنتوي وكل جمعته في اهل الدر ك
 يدبو زايست
 والثاني
 من التتيت الاطراف يوالوكل واحد واحد واي الرب يفحص الشرط
 والثالث
 محل هنتفي دان وغافر للكل الموسافرين في البر وفي الباجر دان وغافر مملكة الجا
 والرابع
 محل هنتفي يتتاي مع المثنى بين الدناكل ويتتايام ليو و كح ويساقر وال
 الحاليا بلاجر وكن ويطيهر الرقيه
 والخمس
 السادسة
 محل هنتفي يكل الحيه واحد محل للموسافرين يتتايه فيه لجال الذي جا من
 ملكه مملكة الحاليا
 والسادس
 وآيات كل واحد في الدينوا يجلس وويكلم واحد على آيات وآدين
 والسابع
 كل اهل الحاليا اتوجاه بيت والسوا جيبنا بناقروا على ما حلتهم وكا اجنتهم
 وبعده يستمر محل هنتفي في مملكة الحاليا تحفة ونخر وس اهل كل الدناكل
 وجميع محل هنتفي في الباجر
 والثامن
 الباجر الحاليا كل ونية في طم في الباجر تحروس جمعته محل هنتفي وديعه
 نية كل المحل الدناكل
 والتاسع
 وهذا الشرط في اروت ملك منبلك يتتاي في يد كونت انتونياي
 والاشرا
 هذا الشرط مكتوب في الوفا
 التوت لوفا في عبي وفي الحبش
 وفي الحاليا في والسام ختام
 في شهر جومان الثاني ط
 في السنة ١٣٠٠



List of clauses

between Sultan Maḥammad bin Ḥanfadhē, the deceased, [and] the Kingdom of Italy. Whoever travels from the village (*qarāya*) of Aseb to the city (*madīna*) of Shewa shall be protected and guarded by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

First

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship for ever between the governor (*wālī*) of Aseb and Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and all the people of Danākil.

Second

Each of the two parties shall appoint a representative to implement the clauses.

Third

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will be the guarantor and protector of all the travellers by land. On the sea, the Kingdom of Italy is the guarantor and protector.

Fourth

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will consult with the *shaykhs* of the Danākil and . . . the customs so that the Italian people shall travel without paying taxes and be exempted from transit duty.

Fifth

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will provide . . . a place for the travellers in which the camels and people who come from Italy can rest.

Sixth

As for the faith, each one shall remain (*yijlis*) in the religion and no one shall discuss faith and religion.

Seventh

All Italians, be they merchants or visitors, may come and go as they wish and are pleased. They are protected and guarded by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē; and the kingdom of Italy will guard and protect the people of all the Danākil and the dependents of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē from the side of the sea.

Eighth

The Italian steamship shall always protect and guard the dependents of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē from the sea, and no one shall invade the land of the Danākil.

Ninth

These articles are in accordance with the will of King Minīlik and are concluded through Count Antonelli.

Tenth

This treaty is written in three languages, in Arabic, in Amharic, and in Italian.

Concluding Greetings

Dated on the 10th of Jumād al-Thānī, 1300 of *Hijra*.

Seal: Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Seal: King Minīlik of Shewa.

Seal: Italian Antonelli.

Progetto di una Convenzione fra il Governo
S. M. il Re d'Italia e il Capo supremo di tutti i
Danakil, il sultano Mohamed Hanfadh.

Art. 1°

La pace e l'amicizia saranno costanti e perpetue
tra le autorità italiane e Aseb ed il sultano Moham-
med e fra tutti i loro dipendenti.

Art. 2°

Ciascuno delle due parti nominerà un suo rap-
presentante per il disbrigo degli affari.

Art. 3°

Il sultano Mohamed Hanfadh garantisce al govern-
o italiano e al S. M. il Re Minilik la sicurezza della
via fra Aseb, Awsa ed il regno di Shewa in tutta la
parte italiana e per il mare.

Art. 4°

Il sultano Mohamed Hanfadh dichiara secondo cap-
to il sultano di Shewa e tutti i regni sottostanti
che i carovani italiani provenienti e diretti per
Aseb.

Art. 5°

Il sultano Mohamed Hanfadh concede al govern-
o S. M. il Re d'Italia l'uso della terra di Ablis/Awsa
sulla parte del territorio di Awsa atto alla coltivazione
e stabilisce una stazione commerciale italiana.

Art. 6°

Entrambe rispettate tutte le religioni.

Art. 7°

Il S. M. il Re d'Italia viaggeranno liberamente
in tutta la parte italiana del sultano Mohamed Hanfadh.

Plan of a convention between
the government of H.M. the
King of Italy and the supreme
head of all the Danakil, the
Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē

Article 1.

Peace and friendship shall
be constant and perpetual
between the Italian autho-
rity of Aseb and Sultan
Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and
between all their dependents.

Article 2.

Each of the two parties shall
nominate a representative
of his for the dispatch of
business.

Article 3.

Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē
guarantees to the Italian
government and His Majesty
King Minilik the secu-
rity of the route from Aseb
and Awsa to the kingdom
of Shewa, to all the Italian
caravans.

Article 4.

Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, in common accord with the other sultans, declares all Italian caravans proceeding from or directed to Aseb exempt from duty or tribute.

Article 5.

Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē concedes to the government of His Majesty the King of Italy the use of the land of Ablis/Awsa, on the part of the territory of Awsa which is suitable for cultivation in order to establish an Italian commercial station.

Article 6.

All religions shall be respected.

... in dipendenza di questi saranno sempre affidati
alle autorità consolari italiane.

Art. 8:

Le navi da guerra di S. M. il Re d'Italia vi-
ranno sotto la protezione della marina alla sicurtà
del littorale Danakel.

Art. 9:

Questa Convenzione sarà sottoposta all'appro-
vazione di S. M. il Re della Sicilia e verrà ratificata
in Sicilia dal rappresentante del Governo di S. M.
il Re d'Italia.

Art. 10:

Di questa Convenzione saranno fatte tre copie
in lingua amarica, araba, italiana che con-
cordino perfettamente nelle rispettive traduzioni.

Hadele - Gubo 15 marzo 1883
(Senghera)
محمد علي



Ankober 22 Maggio 1883
Il Rappresentante di Sua Maestà il Re d'Italia



Pietro Antonelli

Article 7.

The subjects of His Majesty the King of Italy shall travel freely in all the land depending on Sultan Maḥammad Hanfadhē and his dependents shall always be under the Italian consular authority.

Article 8.

The warships of His Majesty the King of Italy shall supervise the security of the Danākil coast from the side of the sea.

Article 9.

This convention shall be submitted for the approval of His Majesty the King of Shewa and shall be ratified in Shewa by the representative of the government of His Majesty the King of Italy.

Article 10.

Of this convention, three copies have been made in the Amharic, Arabic and Italian languages, which agree perfectly in the respective translation.

Hadele Gubo, 15th March 1883 (Senghera).
Certified: Sultan Maḥammad

Seal illegible
Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Ankober, 22nd May 1883.
The representative of His Majesty the King of Italy, Pietro Antonelli.

Seal: The Royal Italian expedition.

A treaty reached between the great Adal chief and the Italian government.

The first

Friendship and peace will always prevail between the chiefs of Aseb and Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē and their subjects.

The second

One person from each side will be appointed to implement the treaty.

The third

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will in front of King Minīlik and to the Italian government be the guarantor for the travellers, for all the people who come and go.

The fourth

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē in consultation with the *shaykhs* (*abadulloch*) will see to it that the Italian traders shall not pay customs duties.

The fifth

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē will give the Italian government one place as a residence for people, goods and camels. *The sixth*: We have accepted that every one lives according to his religion. *The seventh*: In the land of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē Italian people may move around in liberty as they wish. The Italians will be the protectors of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē's people. *The eighth*: Italian steamships shall supervise all areas in order to protect the land of the Adals so that they shall not be touched. *The ninth*: This agreed-upon treaty which accords with the will of King Minīlik, the King of Ethiopia, is concluded by the representative of the King of Italy, Count Antonelli. *The tenth*: This treaty is written in three languages, in Amharic, in Arabic and in Italian.

Ginbot 13, 1875

Ankober 22 May 1883, Pietro Antonelli

Seal: Spedizione Italiana. Regio di Scioia

Seal: Minīlik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASMAI 7/1–1, no. 17, Italian, Arabic and Amharic originals. Italian text printed in *Trattati*, pp. 60–61, with the date 15 March. The circumstances under which the signing of this agreement took place resulted in three versions of the treaty. The first to be written was the Italian plan dated “Kadelé-Gubo 15 marzo 1883” (Kadelé-Gubo, or rather Ḥadele Gubo, identified as Sengherra, that is Sinkara, the capital of Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē). We have decided to ignore this date since that version is called a “progetto”, thus it may be seen as Antonelli's draft. Nevertheless, it must later have been regarded as a valid version of the treaty because of the seals below the text, added on 18 April and 22 May. We have put 18 April which is the date when Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē sealed it and the date on the Arabic version. But since Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē recognized the authority and the interest Minīlik had regarding the routes to the coast, Antonelli proceeded to Ankober, and an Amharic version dated 13 Ginbot 1875 (= 20 May 1883) was produced and sealed by Minīlik. Antonelli must have decided to postpone his signing until Minīlik had, so to speak, ratified the treaty by applying his seal to all three versions; Antonelli signed and sealed all three versions two days later, on 22 May. The Amharic version was, however, never sealed by Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Except for two important clauses the three versions are basically in agreement. In the fifth article the Italian version is more specific concerning Italian settlements. Where the Arabic and Amharic versions simply refer to a “place to rest”, the Italian texts states that Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē concedes to the Italians the land of Ablis, part of Awsa, for cultivation and for establishing an Italian commercial station. In the seventh article, the Italian version refers to the assistance given by the Italian consular authority where the other versions speak about Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē's protection of the Italian travellers.

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 8 May 1883

መልእክት፡ ዘሥላሞ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዮሐንስ፡
 ተሠ፡ ጽዮን፡ ግጥም፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ ደደ-
 ረሰ፡ ገበየሁ፡ ክብርተኛ፡ ወልዕልታ፡ ቢክቶርያ፡ ዘበጽ-
 ጋ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ግጥም፡ ግጥም፡ ወሁዳ፡
 ዘውእቶሙ፡ ቢርታ፡ ወአዲርአግድ፡ መሥተጋድ፡
 ይ፡ እጅግ፡ እግዲት፡ አኩእኔም፡ በእግዚአብሔር፡
 ጭርቶ፡ አምሳክ፡ ቀዳሳ፡ ይክበር፡ ይመስገን፡
 ይሰና፡ ነገ፡ ምሕረቱ፡ ለዘሰላም፡ ነው፡ ግጥም፡
 ወም፡ ደረሰኝ፡ ቃሉም፡ እጅግ፡ መልካም፡ ነው፡ ነገ-
 ጥጽሐ፡ በሠላም፡ ክብር፡ አመ፡ ልክግንቦት፡ በገጠ-
 ጌደር፡ ወጌዳመት፡ ምሕረቱ



May the letter from the elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the respected and exalted Victoria, who, by the grace of God, is the Queen of Queens, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, protector of the faith and of the country (*ahigure lidjūt*) of India. How are you, really?

As for me, I am well, by the grace of God, may the Lord of the saints be honoured and praised. His mercy is everlasting.

The letter has reached me. The message is very good. May God, however, bring it to completion.

Written at the city of Semera, on 1st Ginbot in the year of grace 1875.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma'el. Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā'il. 1864.

FO 95/743, no. 216, Amharic original and English translation. The letter from Victoria, the reception of which Yohannis acknowledges here, was a letter of 9 November 1882 (FO 95/742, no. 130). See *Survival*, pp. 351–352.

Yohannis IV to Edward Malet, 8 May 1883

May the letter from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach Sir Edward Malet, minister plenipotentiary, commander and knight, consul of the kingdom of England in the country of Egypt, etc.

How are you? I also, by the bounty of God, am well, the holy God be exalted and praised for His mercy endureth forever. The letter which came by the hand of the *nā'ib*, has reached me, and its word is very good, but God grant its fulfilment.

Written in the royal residence of Semera, the first Ginbot in the year of Grace 1875.

FO 1/30, p. 72, English translation. No Amharic original has been found. Except for standardization of the spelling of names and some phrases, and the elimination of explanatory parentheses, the text is reproduced here as preserved in the translation. A letter by a Norwegian scholar attempting to explain one of the titles apparently used for Malet shows the Foreign Office had difficulties in translating the Amharic correspondence. See FO 1/30, pp. 145–146.

Onesimus Nesib to Johannes Neander, 14 May 1883

Minkullo d. 14 Maj 1883 330

Dyr pastor Neander!

Nåd och frid!

i penningar äro nu nära utt
 ut, vi hafva icke mer än 28
 lsd sparad. Vi bedja därför så fort
 möjligt om hjälpen. Huru områden
 Hedenströms saker det var många
 deribland, som inihede behöft
 i en förstående expedition, men
 brist af penningar köpten jag in-
 steg mer än något till skuld och
 behåller. Afven min bästa flick
 behåller i hopp att i skolen
 jag förint bed Eders betalt
 i hemmet återkomma. Det är en
 annan sak att Hedenström blef
 förklarad, icke blott i vår församling
 utan afven af alla sam-
 som kunde hindra men trolig

oh hoppades att han skulle
 mar ut till och med före hit
 men helt oförberadt gick
 den sorgliga parten af honom
 "sälj mina saker jag kommer
 ut."

Ras adal är nu lösen från
 fångenskap och har blefrit
 satt till öfver några del af
 förda område. Han är mycket
 galegen om att få lärare
 han kunde sända till Gudru
 skulle föra dem hit på eget
 ned. Två af falscha mission
 na af hafva redan begifrit
 så berättade åtminstone till
 Genard, som hade kommit
 för att hemta dem penning
 och detta är mycket möjligt
 har aldrig varit fiende till
 lium. Vår bröder blef, utom
 från Gudru, utom hans re-
 öfversten presten, hvilken
 förbundet med löpsiga ankning

Minkullo (Minkullo) 14 May 1883

Dear Pastor Neander,
 Grace and Peace.

Our money is now nearly finished; we do not have more than 28 thalers left. Therefore we beg for help as soon as possible. The other day Hedenström's things were sold. There were many things among them which we would have needed for our coming expedition but because of lack of money, I bought nothing more than a little gunpowder and percussion caps. I was even allowed to keep my rifle hoping that you, as I asked you before, would pay him for it at home. There is common sadness as Hedenström was dismissed, not only in our congregation, but also by all those who knew him. People thought and hoped that he would come out even before the fall, but completely unexpected the sad mail was received from him, "Sell my things. I am not coming out."

Ras Adal is now free from his captivity and has been appointed [to rule] over some parts of his earlier territory. He is very eager to receive teachers whom he could send to Gudru. He would bring them there at his own cost. Two of the Felasha missionaries have gone there. That is at least what their servants who had come to bring money to them told [us]. And this is quite possible, since he has never been an enemy of the Gospel.

^{utgörande}
 utkom våra bröders ~~slut~~ ^{slut}
 vara slutet sina dagar. ³³⁰
 tyckes som om slaf handelen
 skulle sättas i sin vanliga gång
 och sträffas ut här och där
 af, som mysligen hafva blifvit
 förda och sålda. En dag såg jag
 invidmättigt stora gossar, som
 skulle säljas, jag hörde dem ta
 sig till Galla och emellan åk,
 som frätte mig icko nitelöskan
 mitt armar fäste, hade jag
 sagt så skulle jag gjort, ^{och} ^{handen}
 som Samuel gjorde med Agag,
 1 Sam 15: 33.
 Äro till Harar en nu säkare än
 när den var när Svensson var der
 guvernören bestådes har blifvit
 afsett, gifve Gud ett den som
 kommer öfver honom måtte blif
 en man som vill befrämja
 evangelii framgång. Vi längta
 inderligen att komma till värt
 mål. Måttan i rike glänne

af: ej heller Gallas. Nu är
 rät, Gud vare lof och pris be
 hafva vi. Galla böcker, som
 komnade i Khartoum äro på
 hit till Massawa. Dessom
 från London komna em
 några läror hänsko i Ap
 månad. Det fattas endst
 gås men icko annat mer
 Måtte Gud öfver alla guder
 tända alla sina trognas hj
 med sin helige andes el
 att de måtte så länge de
 i detta främlings land
 arbete ~~tröskel~~ i sin Her
 gård. Helas på alla Guds
 vänner särskilt vänner
 på Johanneland

Onesimus

Our brothers were expelled from Gojjam without his knowledge. The *aleqa* who caused the expulsion of our brothers in secret agreement with other adherents [of the Orthodox faith] is said to have ended his days. It seems as if the slave trade will be started as usual; here and there one meets slaves who have recently been brought down and sold. One day I saw two middle-sized boys who were going to be sold then. I heard them speak genuine Galla (Oromo) with each other. Oh, how the zeal for my poor people gnawed at me; if I had the power, I would have done to the slave trader as Samuel did to Agag, 1 Sam 15:33.

The route to Harer is now safer than it was when Svensson was there. The governor there has been deposed; may God permit that the one who comes after him will be a man who will promote the spread of the Gospel. We sincerely long to reach our goal. Please do not forget us, nor the Galla (Oromo). Now, everything is well. Glory and praise be to God, we are in good health. Books in Galla (Oromo) [language] which we left in Khartoum are now on their way here to Massawa. In addition, some boxes will soon come from London, perhaps in the month of April. The only thing that is missing is to start, but nothing else. May the God above all gods kindle the hearts of all his faithful with the fire of his holy spirit so that they, as long as they remain in this foreign land, will be able to work faithfully in the vineyard of their Lord.

Greet all the friends of the Kingdom of God, especially the friends at Johanneland.

Onesimus.

EFS, E I 24, 230. Swedish original. Onesimus had studied in Sweden from 1876 to 1881 and his Swedish is quite good. Onesimus, himself an Oromo, used the word "Galla" without any negative connotations as simply referring to the Oromo and/or their language.

Treaty between Shewa and Italy, 21 May 1883

በኢጣል፡ መንግሥት፡ በሸዋ፡
 መንግሥት፡ ማኅል፡ ባተደረጉ፡ ባቆቅር
 ፍ፡ ባንግድ፡ ውል፡ ይህ፡ ነው፡፡
 መሆመር፡ ክፍል፡
 በኢጣል፡ ንጉሥ፡ በሸዋ ንጉሥ ማኅል፡
 በልጁ ቻቸው፡ በዚጉ ቻቸውም ማኅል ለ
 ልጅ፡ ልጅ፡ ባሚኖር፡ ፍቅር፡ ይደረጋል፡፡
 ሁለቱም፡ ወገኖች፡ ለዘላለም በፍቅር፡ በ
 ስላም፡ ይኖራሉ፡፡
 ሁለተኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡
 እኒህ፡ ሁለቱ ንግሥታት፡ ከዚህ መንግሥት
 ቻቸው፡ ሲኖሩ፡ እንዲ፡ ካንዲ፡ ንጉሥ ምስ
 ለኒውን እያኖረ፡ በዓምስላኔቸው ጉዳ
 ደቻቸው፡ ይጨርሳሉ፡ ምስላኔቸው ጉዳ
 ምስላኔቸው፡ ሹመታቸውን፡ ባመሰክሩ
 ላቸው፡ ርቸው፡ እንዲ፡ ባንዲ፡ አገር፡ ነጋዲ
 ቁቻቸው፡ እንዲልባቸው፡ እንዲነጻዲ፡ ቁ
 ንሱልም፡ ቢሆን፡ ቁንስልም፡ ወኪል፡ ቢሆ
 ን፡ መሾም፡ ይቻላቸዋል፡ እኒህም፡ ቁናስል፡

ደመንግሥትን ለሥራ፡ ላይጣከቀ፡ ርቸው፡ መክበ
 ር፡ ይገባቸዋል፡ ለሥልጣንም፡ አላቸው፡ እንዲ፡ አገ
 ሩ፡ ልማድ፡ እንዲወደዋቸው፡ እንዲያከብሩባቸው፡ ይደረጋላቸዋል፡፡
 ሶስተኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡
 ባንዲህ፡ ባሉላቱ፡ ወገኖቻቸው፡ ቢገቡ፡ ባንዲ
 ፍ፡ እቋቸው፡ ሌላም፡ ገንዘባቸውን፡ እደይዙ፡
 በኒህ፡ ሁለት ንግሥታት፡ አገር፡ እንዲልባቸው፡
 መሄድ፡ መምጣት፡ ይቻላቸዋል፡ በባሕርም
 ቢሆን፡ በዋክስም ቢሆን፡ መሄድ ይቻላቸዋል፡
 በደመንግሥታቸው ጥገና፡ በደዘጉ ቻቸው፡
 ጥገናት፡ ባሉ ሌላቸው፡ ይኖራሉ፡፡
 አራተኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡
 ባኢጣል፡ ሰዎች፡ በሸዋ መሪት፡ ላሸዋም፡
 ሰው፡ በኢጣል፡ አገር፡ እንዲ፡ አገሩ ልማድ፡
 ይኖራሉ፡ በንግድም ቢሆን፡ በግብርናም፡ ቢ
 ሆን፡ እንዲ፡ አገሩ ልማድ፡ ይገሩ ሌላጋት
 ይልክላቸውን፡ ለሥራ፡ ሁሉ፡ እንዲደረጉ፡ ይኖራ
 ሉ፡ በቀረው ነገር ተሰማምተው ይኖራሉ፡፡

This is the treaty of friendship and commerce made between the government of Italy and the government of Shewa.

Article 1. There shall be a perpetual peace and constant friendship between the king of Italy and the king of Shewa as well as between their children and their subjects from generation to generation.

Article 2. These two kings, as long as they live in their respective realms, shall place representatives and accomplish their affairs through their envoys. Each king can appoint a consul or a representative of a consul in the respective countries to make it possible for their merchants to trade as they wish. Since these consuls protect the activities of governments, they should be honoured. They also have authority. Steps shall be taken so that they will be loved and honoured according to the custom of the country.

Article 3. Those who belong to these two and their citizens are allowed to take their goods and other properties and come and go as they wish within the countries of these two kings. They are allowed to travel both by sea and by land. They shall live happily under the protection of the respective governments and their subjects.

አምስተኛ ክፍል፡፡

የኢጣልያ ሰዎችና የሸዋ ሰዎች፡፡ ለሀገራዊ ማኖታቸው፡፡ ይኖራሉ፡፡ አለመቀስቀስ፡፡ የኢጣልያ ሰዎች ግን፡፡ ሀገራዊ ማኖታቸውን፡፡ በሸዋ መረከብ፡፡ ማስተማር፡፡ አይችሉም፡፡ የሰዎች በኢጣልያ፡፡ እንዲዘሉ፡፡ አይቻላቸውም፡፡

ስድስተኛ ክፍል፡፡

በሸዋ መረከብ የኢጣልያ ሰው የሞተ፡፡ እንዲሆን፡፡ የሸዋ መኪንን ትንንክቡን ሁሉ ይጠብቃሉ፡፡ የኢጣልያን ሾሞች ፈቃድ እስኪደገፍ ድረስ፡፡ ወይም ደግሞ የኢጣልያ መግለጫ ይዘዘታቸው ሰው ፈቃድ እስኪመጣቸው ድረስ አስቀምጠው ይጠብቃሉ፡፡ በኢጣልያም አገር የሸዋ ሰው የሞተ፡፡ እንዲሆን፡፡ የኢጣልያ ሾሞች አሁን እንዲተናገር፡፡ ይደርጋሉ፡፡

ስባተኛ ክፍል፡፡

የሸዋ መንገድ ለወሰንተኛ አይመችምና፡፡ የመንገዱ ክፋት ከዚህ ቀደም ስላለ ነው፡፡

የጉሙ መኪክ በርሰዎ በኮል ያለውን የኢጣልያ ነጋዴች ሲመጡ፡፡ በኮል ያለውን ገደብ እንዲያቀጥላቸው፡፡ የሚሰጡትን ክሬዲት በጥቂት ገንዘብ እንዲያደርጉላቸው፡፡ ለኢጣልያ ሰው በዜህን ያህል ይሁን ብለው ክርክሩን እንዲቀርጡላቸው ይሆናል፡፡

አምስተኛ ክፍል፡፡

የኢጣልያ ሰዎች የንግድ እቃ በሸዋ መረከብ ሲገቡና ሲወጡ፡፡ ቀረጡን ይህን ያህል ጭሁን ብለው ይቀርጣሉ፡፡ ጉሙ ወደሌላ አገር አልፎ የሚሄድ እቃ የሆኑ እንዲሆን ግን ቀረጥ የለባቸውም አልፎ ይደገፍ ነውና፡፡ እቃው ሲሄድ ግን ጉሙ ነፍጥ እንዲሉ አይተው ያሳልፋሉ፡፡ ነፍጥ አለገንጉሙ ፈቃድ አይሸጥም፡፡ በዜህም ለውጥ የሸዋ ነጋዴች የጉሙ ዜጎች የሚያመጡት የንግድ እቃ በዜህው ውል የተደረገውን እስኪደርስ ሲገቡም ሲወጡም መንገዱ

Article 4. Italian people in Shewa and Shewan people in the country of Italy can live according to the custom of the country. As far as trade and agriculture are concerned, they shall live according to the custom of the country doing all the things which the laws of the country do not forbid. As to the rest they shall live in concord.

Article 5. The people of Italy and the people of Shewa shall live according to their own religions without provocations. However, the people of Italy cannot teach their religion on Shewan soil, neither can the people of Shewa do so in Italy.

Article 6. If an Italian dies on Shewan soil the noblemen of Shewa will guard all his property. Until Italian authorities get permission, or until persons authorized by the Italian government receive their permit, they shall store and guard it. If a person from Shewa dies in Italy, the Italian authorities shall do according to what we have said.

Article 7. As we have seen before, the routes of Shewa are not comfortable for strangers. King Minilik, from your side see to it as much as possible that the routes are made accessible to them when Italian merchants come. Make the rent that they pay low. Determine the costs of pack animals for the Italians, saying: "Let it be so much."

Article 8. When mercantile goods belonging to Italians enter and leave Shewa, the king shall determine the duty ("5 %" is added between the lines). But if it is a matter of goods which pass to go to another country, they are not obliged to pay duties because the goods are in transit. But when the goods move on, the king shall check if there are rifles and then permit transit. Rifles cannot be sold without the permission of the king. In exchange, the goods which are brought in by merchants of Shewa and by subjects of the king are not liable to duties during the period of the validity of this agreement. According to this agreement, beginning from January 1883, they do not have to pay at the Italian gate at Aseb.

ቀረጽ፡ እዚ ነፍሱ ሆኖ፡ ይህም ውል፡ ከጥር፡
፲፰ ደብዳቤ ገደም ሮ፡ በአሰብ፡ በአጠልፊ ሰር፡
መክረል፡ የለባቸውም፡፡

ዘጠነኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

እኔ ህ፡ ሁለቱ፡ ነገሥታት፡ የንግድ፡ መንገድ፡
ከሸዋ፡ መንግሥት፡ አንገሥቶች፡ አስተኔ ሊጠልፉ፡
በር፡ አሰብ፡ ይረስ፡ የቀረጽ፡ የረታ፡ የተከፈተ፡
መንገድ፡ እንዲሆን፡ ይደርጋሉ፡፡ አጠልፊዎች
በባሕር፡ በኩል፡ አይላዩለው፡ ይጠብቃሉ፡፡
የሸዋም፡ መንግሥት፡ በበኩሉ፡ የግቢውን
መንገድ፡ መቅናቀጥ፡ በጣም፡ ይደረግ፡ ይጠብቃሉ፡፡
ቃሉ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ምድላክ፡ ወይ፡ አሰብ፡ ነጋዴ፡ እ
ንዲሁ ሆኖ፡ ይደርጋሉ፡፡

አሥረኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

ንጉሥ፡ ምድላክ፡ የሚገዙባቸውን ሹሞች፡
ሁሉ፡ የአጠልፊ ነጋዴች፡ እንዲልባቸው፡ እንዲ
ነግዱ፡ እንዲይከለክሉባቸው፡ እንዲፈቅዱላ
ቸው፡ ለሹሞች ምድላክ ስሙላቸዋል፡፡ የተበደሉ
ም፡ እንዲሆን፡ የተገባ፡ ዲኛነት፡ ይወጡላቸዋል፡፡
ዲግጦኛም፡ ንጉሥ ምድላክ፡ ከአውሳ፡ ሹሞቻሉ፡፡

ከአሰብ፡ ከሸዋ፡ ማክል፡ ያለውን መንገድ፡

መቅናቀጥ፡ እዚተው፡ የተቻለዎት፡ ሁሉ፡

እዚ ደረጉ፡ ከአዲሱ፡ ከሰላላ፡ ይጠብቀዎ

ቸዋል፡ ይደቱዎቸዋል፡ ይከለክሉላቸዋል፡

ይህም መንገድ፡ እንዲቀና፡ የአጠልፊ፡ መን

ግሥት፡ ለአውሳው፡ ሹሞ፡ የሚከፍለውን

ንግዘብ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ምድላክ፡ ይቀርጣሉ፡ ይ

ህም፡ ስፈር፡ በወጣ፡ ቀጥሮ፡ ለአውሳው፡ ሹሞ፡

ይህን ይህል፡ ተቀበል፡ ወይም፡ በመቅ፡ ይህን

ይህል፡ ተቀበል፡ ብለው፡ ይቀርጣሉ፡፡

፲፬ኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

የአጠልፊ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ወይ፡ አሰብ፡ የሚመጡትን

የሸዋ፡ ሰዎች፡ ምድር፡ አለገንዘብ፡ ይሰጡባቸው

ዋል፡ ሴት፡ ሠርተን፡ እንኖራለን፡ ይሉ፡ እንዲሆ

ን፡ በሰጣቸው ምድር፡ ለሥልጣን ይሰጣቸዋል፡፡

፲፱ኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

የሸዋ ሹሞች፡ ከአጠልፊ፡ ዜጎችን ራሱ ጠብሮ

Article 9. These two kings shall see to it that the commercial route from the government of Shewa to the Italian gate at Aseb is fully accessible. Italy shall keep guard thoroughly on the side of the sea. On its part the government of Shewa shall diligently see to it that the internal routes are accessible and guard them. King Minilik shall see to it that merchants go to Aseb.

Article 10. King Minilik shall inform his subjects, the appointees of Shewa, that they should not forbid any Italian merchant to trade as he wishes. If these merchants are wronged the king should see to it that they receive due justice. Furthermore King Minilik shall protect, rescue and defend these merchants from the Adal and the Somali in cooperation with the governor (*shum*) of Awsa by seeing to it that the route between Aseb and Shewa is accessible. King Minilik shall determine the fee to be paid to the governor of Awsa by the government of Italy so that the said route remains accessible. Whenever the terms for payment expire the king shall determine the yearly payment to the governor of Awsa.

Article 11. The king of Italy shall see to it that Shewan people who come to Aseb shall receive land without the paying of money. And if they say "We shall build a house and live here", then the king shall give them control of the land which he has given them.

Article 12. The appointees of Shewa have no quarrels with the citizens of Italy. If Italians come into conflict with each other they shall be judged by an Italian consul who lives near the king, or by a person who has come by the authorization of the government. If subjects of Shewa happen to come to Aseb and quarrel with each other there they should not be judged by the government of Italy.

ክርክር የለባቸው ምን ዓይነት ሰዎች እርሱ በርሳቸው ይጠፋ እንደሆነ ወይ በአጣልጃ ቊንሱል ከንጉሥ በጠገብ የሚኖር አለዚያ በመንግሥት ተዘጋጅተው ወይ ፈረድባቸዋል የሸዋዎ ዜጎች አሳብዎት ስለሆኑ እንደሆነ እርሱ በርሳቸው ጥልብ ሲሰጥ የአጣልጃ መንግሥት ሸዋች መደገፍ የለባቸውም ንጉሥ በሸዋች አለዚያ ምንጉሥ አለቃ አድርገው በሌሎች ደደዱ በሸዋ መረት የአጣልጃ ሰዎች የሸዋ ሰው የተጠሉ እንደሆነ የአጣልጃው ቊንሱልና የአገራዊ ገደብ ዘንድ ሆነው ተቀምጠው ደደዱ ሆኑ ሆኑ የሌላ አገር ፈረንጅና የአጣልጃ ሰው የተጠሉ እንደሆነ ያሌላው ሰው ቊንሱል ያለው እንደሆነ የዚያ ቊንሱልና የአጣልጃው ቊንሱል ሰዎች ተቀምጠው ደደዱ ሆኑ ሆኑ አለዚያ የአጣልጃ ያው ቊንሱል ሁለቱን ደደዱ

፳፻፮ ክፍል

የሸዋ ንጉሥ ወይ እውሮፓ ጉዳይ አልክ ለሁለቱ ሰዎች እንደሆነ የአጣልጃ ቊንሱል ሆኑ አሳብሱ ወይ የሚኖረው ሹም በንጉሥ ምኒልክ ለሌላው ሰዎች ናቸው በህዜህ እጅ ወይ ፈቀደህ መንግሥት ልከው ያሰቡትን ጉዳይ መረጃ ይቻለዎታል የሸዋ መንግሥት ዜጎች ሁሉ የአጣልጃ ቊንሱል ሆኑ በንጉሥ ተልኩ የመጣ አባሳይር ክለቦች ለሌሎች የሆኑ እንደሆነ አኔህ ሸዋች እንደ አገራቸው ልጅ እንደ አጣልጃ ሰው ጥገና እረጃት ይሆኑ ሆኑ ሆኑ የተባደሱ ጊዜ ይረዱ ሆኑ ሆኑ

፳፻፮ ክፍል

አኔህ ሁለቱ ወገኖች ሰዎች አጣልጃ በሚወዱ ሁለቱ ላይ ወገኖች እርሱ በርሳቸው የሚሰሩትን የቆራሎ ሁለቱ ምን ደረጃ ሆኑ ይህን ማለት ቸርነትና ጥቅም ይላው የንግድ ለሥራ እንዲሉ

They shall be judged either by someone appointed by the king or by some authority sent by the king. If Italians and Shewans quarrel the Italian consul and a judge from the country shall sit together and judge them. If another foreigner and an Italian quarrel and if the other person has a consul, that consul and the Italian consul shall sit together and judge them, otherwise the Italian consul shall judge both.

Article 13. If the king of Shewa considers sending messages to Europe, he can send what he has intended to send to whatever government it may be and thus accomplish his business through the hands of the Italian consul or the commissioner who lives in Aseb, since these people are under the authority of King Minilik. And if citizens of the government of Shewa happen to find themselves in the same place as an Italian consul or an ambassador who has come by the accreditation of the king these Italian officials shall treat the aforementioned citizens of Shewa as if they were children of their own country and give them protection and help like Italian people, and if these people are wronged they shall help them.

Article 14. These two parties, Shewa and Italy, shall perform the deeds of love which two parties who love each other do reciprocally. And this means that the two parties will not neglect to show kindness and practise beneficial acts of trade reciprocally without the demands of the law.

Article 15. Since all people quarrel, if by chance Shewa and Italy should quarrel because of minor or major causes, the two kings shall be judged by a third king of their own choice in a spirit of friendship, and they shall accept the judgement with respect and willingness.

የቀረውን ደለሱግ፡ እርሱ፡ በርሳቸው፡ ለማ
ድረግ፡ እዚ ቀርባቸው፡

፲፮ኛ፡ ክፍል፡

የሚደግፍ፡ ሰው፡ የለምና፡ ምናልባት፡ ሽዋር፡
አጠልፏል፡ የተጣሉ፡ እንደሆኑ፡ በትኩረት፡
ነገር፡ ሆኑ፡ በትልቅ ምኞት፡ ነገር፡ ሆኑ፡ በጣሉ፡ ሆኑ፡
ተፋገሙት፡ በመረጡት ገራጭ ገንዘብ፡ ለመገንጠል፡
ምረው፡ በውይይት፡ ለሆኑት፡ አክብረው፡ ወይ
ደው፡ ይቀበላሉ፡

፲፮ኛ፡ ክፍል፡

ይህ የውል ደብዳቤ በሽዋ፡ ተጻፏል፡ በአጣ
ል፡ ተጻፏል፡ ትርጉሙ፡ ተስተካክሎ፡ ተጻፏል፡
በመንግሥት፡ እጅ፡ ይቀመጣል፡

፲፮ኛ፡ ክፍል፡

ይህ የውል፡ በተደረገባቸው ሰዓት፡ በኋላ፡ ከሁለት
ነገሥታት፡ ልዩ ልዩ ጉዳት፡ ሲቀረጹ፡ ወይ፡ ከው
ሉ ለይ፡ ለመጨመር፡ ወይ፡ ለማግኘት፡ ልዩ ጉዳት፡
እንደሆነ፡ ከ፲፮ ሰዓት፡ ልዩ ልዩ ጉዳት፡ ሲቀረጹ፡
መጣ ላይ፡ ለቀረ፡ ከዚህ፡ በኋላ፡ አንድ፡

አንድ፡ የተገኘ ጉዳት፡ ተገኝቶ ላለው፡ በመ
ሰማማት፡ ለሚደረግ ጉዳት ገባቸዋል፡

፲፮ኛ፡ ክፍል፡

ይህ የውል በጥቂት ቀን፡ በጣም ይጨምራል፡
ስለ፡ በርማ፡ ከተማ፡ እስተካከረው፡

በግንባታ፡ ለግንባታ፡ በከንብር፡



*Il Rappresentante di S.M.
il Re d'Italia
Pietro Antonelli*



Article 16. This agreement shall be translated into the languages of Shewa and Italy, adjusted, written and kept in the hands of the governments.

Article 17. Ten years after the writing down of this agreement: if one of the kings thinks of adding to or subtracting from the agreement, he can make a request to this effect one year before the end of the term of validity of the agreement. After this they should renew the agreement after having discussed the damage which each party has suffered.

Article 18. This agreement will be finished after a few days; in the city of Rome up to six months.
14th Ginbot 1875 in Ankober

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. The representative of His Majesty the King of Italy. Pietro Antonelli.

ASMAI 7/1-1, Amharic original and Italian translation. The Italian translation also carries Minilik's seal. The Italian version states: "On this the 21st day of the month of May in the year 1883 (Gregorian calendar) corresponding to 14th Ginbot 1875 (Ethiopian Calendar) in the city of Ankober, the representative of His Majesty King Minilik II and the representative of the government of His Majesty the King of Italy have hereunto affixed their respective signatures so that the treaty reaches the city of Rome as early as possible for the necessary ratification." Both Amharic and Italian drafts are found in ASMAI 36/2-13; one is also printed in *AP.DD*, XV, pp. 62-63. For context see *L'Italia in Africa*, I.1 pp. 144-146 and *Wichale*, pp. 41-43. It was the negotiation of this agreement that was the main purpose of Antonelli's mission, and it was only when he had come to an agreement with Minilik that he placed his seal and signature on the agreement with Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē negotiated a month earlier; see [doc. 118](#) above.

Minilik II to Giulio Pestalozza, 21 May 1883

Minilik II, by the grace of God King of Shewa, of Kaffa and all the countries Galla, sends this letter to his respectable friend, Cavaliere Giulio Pestalozza, governor of the royal administration of Aseb.

How are you? I am well, by the grace of God, and my whole army is also well. I received through the hands of our friend Count Antonelli your very kind letter dated 10 January, 1883. May God repay you for all you have written to me and for the news you have given me about the services that have been rendered to my servants on the coast. May God keep you in his holy custody, since you are so well disposed to favour and protect my interests.

Our friend Count Antonelli, with all the gifts His Majesty King Umberto, and in the company of my servants, has arrived happily without losing a needle. I received with much respect and satisfaction what His Majesty, the King of Italy, sent, and above all I was delighted by the treaty of friendship and commerce that I read, accepted and returned. I was very satisfied with this treaty since I hope it will prove to be useful to the subjects of Italy and of Shewa. I hope it will be equally useful for the Bay of Aseb, as I have many hopes of progress and happiness for my kingdom from the port. For my part I will do everything possible and in my power to keep the road of Aseb open. Already today I am organizing a caravan to send it to Aseb before the rainy season, God willing.

Our friend Antonelli will rest a little and after the rainy season we will have him return with one of our generals.

And now I beg you to assist me in the affair that Count Antonelli will tell you about and that make a great service to my kingdom. I also warmly beg you to protect my servants who come to Assab, as I for my part will effectively protect the Italian subjects who come to my kingdom. My hope is that the Italian merchants in my kingdom and those of Shewa in Aseb will be mutually assisted and protected and will live with full agreement among themselves with the intent to take advantage of the work begun by His Majesty King Umberto and myself.

Written in the city of Ankober on 14th May 1875 Abyssinian (calendar).

Royal Seal.

ለሁኑ ወደ ሁሉ ገባችኋል፡ ከሁሉ ገባችኋል፡ ጥቂት ጥቂት ከሰር ልጅ መስከረ
ም፡ ሲጠጣ ስጣዜር፡ ቢወድ፡ ከመካከላችን ልዩ ልዩ ሆኖ ለ
መለክት ከሰር ልሁኑ ከዚህ ም፡ በኋላ ስጥንት፡ በኔ ከኔ በጥንት
የኪጣሊያ ዜጎች፡ በሸዋ ዜጎች የሸዋ ም፡ በኪጣሊያ ደክ በሌላ
ው ከሃዲ ሮራ ተስፋ ከሌላ ከዚህ ም፡ ሁለቱ ዜጎች በኔ ሮራ
ገራ፡ የምበርጥ ለልጅ ልጅ የሚወርድ ጥቅም ከሃዲ ገገኙ
ተስፋ ከሌላ ከሰር ልሁኑ ይሰጡት ሃገር፡ ምርጫ ስጥንት ነፃ
ከሃዲ ጠብቅ፡ ከሌላ ምርጫ ሁሉ ጋር ጋር
— በግንቦት ፲፱ በ፲፯፻፸፭፻፸፮ በክግሥት ገብርኤል ገብርኤል ገብርኤል

The second Minilik, who by the power of God is the King of Shewa, all of the Galla country and Kefa.

May it reach the honoured and beloved Minister Mancini. How are you, really? I am well, thanks be to God; and all my soldiers are well. I received, from the hands of our most beloved friend, Count Antonelli, your letter written on 4 Nehasē 1882 with much respect and joy. And I was very pleased with the words written [there]. I was pleased with the treaty that you wrote and sent to me and which brings together the citizens of Italy and the citizens of Shewa. And I received it with much pleasure, looked at it and sent it adding more to my earlier request to have the things I want brought from Italy by sending [a message] to you. And I hope that you will have it approved by the king and that you will give permission. And I hope that you will warn the governor (*shum*) of Aseb about all this matter. And may God thank you for being concerned about my matter. And I will do all I can to see that the route of Aseb is opened widely. Earlier I did all I could to see Count Antonelli come from Aseb to Shewa through the Awsa route. And my friend Count Antonelli safely reached Shewa with my servants without losing a single needle for this reason. I thanked God. And now I intend to send an encampment to Aseb before the rainy season. I intend, God willing, to send my friend Count Antonelli, after letting him take rest for a few days, with one man from my notables when Meskerem commences. And after this, I hope that we shall rest satisfied; you with me, I with you, the citizens of Italy with the citizens of Shewa and those of Shewa with those of Italy. I hope that all these citizens will find [our relation] an advantage until grandchildren because of me and King Umberto. I pray that God will fulfil the thing which I have planned and that he will preserve your life.

Written in the town of Ankober on 14t Ginbot 1875.

ASMAI 36/2-16, Amharic original and Italian translation. Printed in *AP,DD*, XV, pp. 135-136. When referring to Mancini's letter, to which this is a reply, Minilik translates the month of August into Amharic Nehasē, but keeps the Gregorian year 1882.

Yohannis IV to Demosthenes Mitzakis, 30 May 1883



ጠ ል ከ ከ ት፡ ጸ ሥ ዩ ጠ፡ ከ ግ ጸ ስ ብ ሕ ር፡ ሆ ሕ ሃ ከ፡ ሃ ጉ ሠ፡ ጽ ዩ ሃ፡ ሃ ጉ
ሠ፡ ነ ጉ ሠ ሕ ት፡ ጸ ሊ ት ዩ ጵ ደ፡ ደ ዩ ጊ ከ፡ ከ ቱ ሃ ከ ል፡ ር ማ ዩ፡
ዘ ሊ ሃ ሩ ስ ሊ ጸ፡ ስ ጁ ጉ ሃ፡ ስ ሃ ዲ ት፡ ስ ስ ህ፡ በ ስ ግ ጸ ሊ ከ ብ ሕ ር፡ ር ር
ፋ ት፡ በ ስ ጸ ስ፡ ጽ ዩ ሃ፡ ስ ማ ስ ጽ ነ ት፡ ስ ጸ ስ ክ፡ ቅ ዩ ስ ሃ፡ ደ ክ በ ር፡ ደ ጠ ስ
ጉ ሃ፡ ስ ስ፡ ከ ሠ ሩ ዩ ቲ፡ ሃ ሩ፡ ጸ ሃ ር፡ ነ ሻ፡ ክ ቡ ር፡ ደ ብ ጸ ሲ ክ ጸ፡ ከ ስ ማ ሃ
ተ ጠ፡ ደ ጊ ከ ሻ፡ ክ ደ ብ ጸ ሲ ጸ፡ በ ሃ ር ሆ ት፡ ቀ ል ጸ፡ ስ ጁ ግ፡ ደ ከ፡ ስ ስ ሻ፡
ሲ ት፡ ክ ር ስ ሕ ሕ ዩ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ቶ ሎ፡ ስ ሃ ዲ ስ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ስ ሃ ዲ ደ ተ ወ ክ ብ ሻ፡ በ ስ ሃ ሩ
ስ ሲ ጸ፡ ደ ሎ ት ሻ፡ ጠ ነ ክ ስ ት ስ ስ፡ ስ ሻ፡ ወ ል ጸ፡ ስ ማ ስ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ጠ ብ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡
ወ ደ ሕ ሕ ስ፡ ጊ ሆ ር ጊ ከ፡ ሃ ጉ ሠ፡ ር ጸ፡ ደ ጸ ሻ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ደ ብ ጸ ሲ፡ ክ ሻ፡
ወ ል ደ፡ ስ ማ ስ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ተ ቀ ብ ስ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ በ ሃ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ስ ጁ፡ ስ ሃ ዩ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ደ ሆ ሃ
ተ ጽ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ በ ስ ጸ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ ከ ተ ማ፡ ስ ጸ፡ ጽ ወ ር ስ ሻ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡ በ ር ሕ ሕ ሻ ሕ ሕ ሻ ሕ ሕ ሻ
ተ፡ ጸ ሕ ሕ ሕ ሕ ሻ፡

Seal: Yohannis kings of kings of Ethiopia; Yūhannā King of Kings of Abyssinia.

May the letter of the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the Greek (Romawi) consul in Jerusalem. How are you? I, together with my army, by the grace of God and by the intercession of our Mother Zion, praised and honoured be the God of the saints, am well. I have received your dear letter with its seal. I am very happy with the words I got in the letter. Please protect the monks in Jerusalem, *Abba Welde Sema*'it and his friends so that they can build for me the church in Jerusalem without being disturbed. Take the letter, which I had written to the new king of Greece (*Rom*) George, from *Abba Welde Sema*'it and send it back quickly to me with your hands.

Written in the town of Semera on 23rd Ginbot in the year of grace 1875.

Edward Ullendorff, "Emperor Yohannes IV of Ethiopia and the Building of the Ethiopian Church of Däbrä Gännät at Jerusalem", in Alan S. Kaye (ed.), *Semitic Studies in Honour of Wolf Leslau on Occasion of his 85th Birthday 1992*, Wiesbaden, pp. 351–354, re-print of the Amharic original.

Ullendorff identifies the addressee as the Demosthenes Mitzakis who had been Greek vice-consul of Suez and who was, thanks to his good relations with Yohannis, regarded as a powerful enemy of the British. See *Yohannes IV*, pp. 137, 150–151. *Rom* (Arabic *Rūm*) was used throughout the Middle East to refer to the Byzantine empire and subsequently to Greece.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 2 June 1883

الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده
 الى حضرة الجناب الاجل الامجد الاكرم الاكبر المكرم العزير المحترم
 الانعم المنعم اعني به جوليو بستلوسه هذه الله تعالى امين
 وان سالمنا عنا وعن بلودنا فاننا نغير وعافية ولا نزال صدره الاحرف
 من محوسس بندر سنكورة وكل علم وعافية وصلنا جوابكم الكرام وقرانا
 مياينيه وعرفنا معانيه في رب الله تعالى على صحتكم وعن احوالكم التي هي
 غايت القصد والبراد من ربه العباد فما صدره الكتاب لاجل ارتباط المحبة
 وعقد اساس المودة واعلام الحال وتعرفوا بما انتم فيه من الاحوال
 وبما وصلكم من الجواب فلا تقطعوا عنا الكتابة عن احوالكم المباررة
 واجباركم المسارة وذكركم لنا عن دعوة المصريين في سنكلو في ساكلوا
 وانتم احسن النظر في تدبيره منا عن ذلك وان شاء الله لما يصل الجواب
 اليكم من الولاية شاعرنا حالنا بالحنانق ونسظركم واما من جناب
 البسطة الذي ارسلتموها اليها مع احمد كراسوا حتى نرسلها الي شوي
 لكت اتونلي وان شاء الله نتيجها حالنا نرسلها عننا

Handwritten Arabic notes and signatures, including a circular seal, located to the right of the main text.

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

To His Honourable Excellency, the most illustrious, the bravest and most glorious, the most noble and most honoured, the beloved and respected, the most majestic and magnificent, by this I refer to Giulio Pestalozza. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and do not ask for . . .

These lines are dispatched

from the capital of Sinkara, the protected; all the information we have is [good] and favourable. Your esteemed letter has reached us; we read its contents and understood its intentions. We praise God Almighty for your health and situation, which are the ultimate aim and desire of the Lord of the faithful. No letter appeared for the sake of love and the foundation of friendship and to tell us about your well-being, to inform us about your situation and to notify us that our letter reached you. Do not deprive us of your information to us about your honourable state and your pleasant news. You have mentioned to us the war cry of the Egyptians in Sagallo. Arrange this matter at your discretion. When the letter reaches you from the government, God willing, inform us immediately of the facts and we shall wait for you.

As for the mail you sent to us with Aḥmad Kirāsū in order to forward it to Count Antonelli in Shewa, if it is the will of God, we shall send it immediately. This is what we tell you.

We also inform you that my uncle *Shaykh* Muḥammad bin *Shaykh* ‘Abdū will reach you soon after this date. This is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin [son of] Sultan Ḥanfadhē the deceased. Dated in the month of Rajab when 26 days had elapsed, on Monday, the year 13[00] of the *Hijra* of the chosen and the twenty-sixth of the mentioned month in the year 1883.

Seal illegible.

ASMAI 7/1-1, Arabic original. The scribe apparently forgot to complete the last sentence of the greetings.

Mirçha Werqē to Robert Fleming, 12 June 1883

Copy
 Abyssinia Adwa June 12. 1883 181
 To Mr. Robert Fleming
 Cairo
 Sir
 I take the liberty to write to you a letter which I hope will find you in good health. — for a long time it was my desire to give you any news about me & my country, & to thank you for your kindness, but as I did not know your direction, & as I was always with the King, I have been prevented to do so until now.
 I have been very happy when Mr Barallon had brought me your photograph, & the pretty snuff box, & I till now have been of the opinion that I myself shall be able to thank you for your kindness, having read in your letter that it is your idea to visit our Country, — I hope it will be so any day. Should you like to have any news of our Country about the King & everything which has happened here I can recommend you to Dr. Stecker Chief of a Scientific expedition of the African Society — Germany, who is returning by the route of Egypt. — He is a real & true friend of His Majesty our King, & loved by all the nation of Abyssinia.
 For my part am happy to say that I & all my family are well. — I shall be always very glad to have any news from you & should you wish it, & shall I receive your letter, I shall give you all the news which I shall get.
 Believe me Sir Yours very sincerely
 Ledj Mercher

Abyssinia Adwa June 12. 1883

To Mr. Robert Fleming
 Cairo

Sir,

I take the liberty to write to you a letter which I hope will find you in good health. For a long time it was my desire to give you any news about me and my country, and to thank you for your kindness, but as I did not know your direction, and as I was always with the king, I have been prevented from doing so until now.

I was very happy when Mr. Baraglian brought me your photograph, and the pretty snuff box, and till now I have been of the opinion that I myself shall be able to

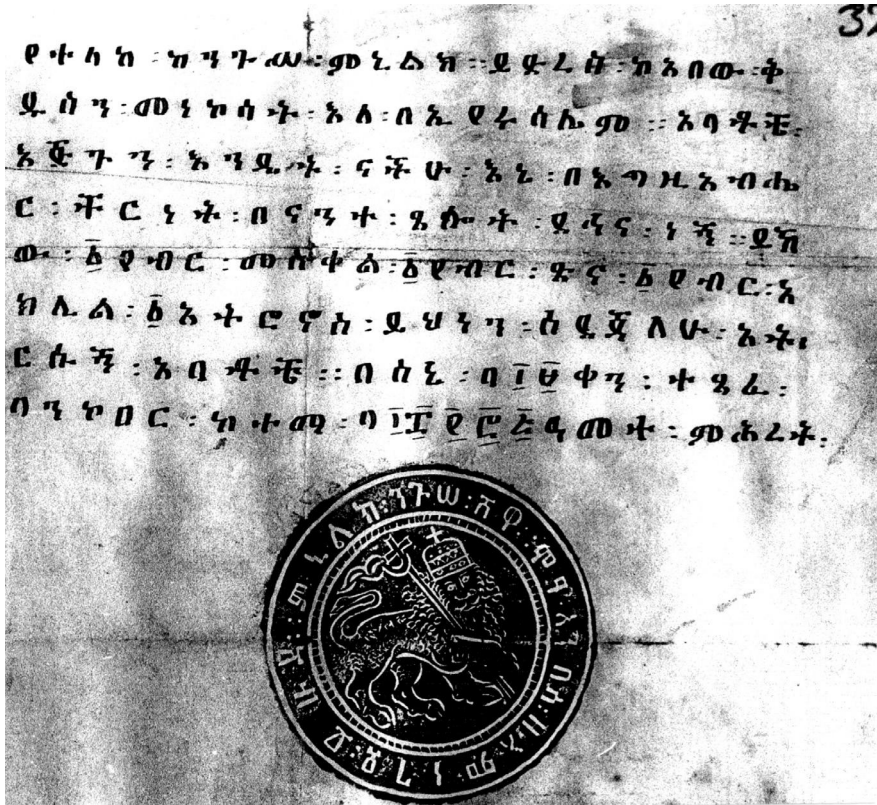
thank you for your kindness, having read in your letter that it is your idea to visit our country. I hope it will be so any day. Should you like to have any news of our country, about the king and everything which has happened here I can recommend you to Dr. Stecker, Chief of a scientific expedition of the African Society in Germany, who is returning by the route of Egypt. He is a real and true friend of His Majesty our king, and loved by all the nation of Abyssinia.

I for my part am happy to say that I and all my family are well. I shall be always very glad to have any news from you and should you wish it, and shall I receive your letter. I shall always give you all the news which I shall get.

Believe me Sir. Yours very sincerely
 Ledj Mercher (*Lij Mirçha*)

FO 1/30, p. 181, English copy. The style of the letter suggests that it was almost certainly written in English, but the fact that the signature is in another hand makes it likely that it was not penned by Mirçha Werqē himself, but rather dictated to a secretary. As Mirçha Werqē knew English and has signed the letter, we have regarded this as a letter written by an Ethiopian and therefore reproduced the text exactly as in the preserved document, rather than editing it. For Dr. Stecker see [doc. 113](#).

Minilik II to the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, 25 June 1883



May [this letter] from King Minilik reach the holy monks in Jerusalem.

My fathers, how are you, really? I am well, by the mercy of God, and your prayers. I am sending you one silver cross, one silver cup [?], one silver crown and one lectern, this I am sending. Do not forget me, my fathers.

Written in the town of Ankober on the 19th day of Senē in the year of grace 1875.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Dayr al-Sultan, no. 32, Amharic original. The seal of the letter has not to our knowledge been used earlier by King Minilik. It resembles the earlier European-style seal with the motto “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed”, but the drawing of the lion and the crown, as well as the cross in the paw of the lion, foreshadow the later seals of Minilik as well as of Hayle Sillasē.

Minilik II to Umberto I, 30 June 1883

ዲ ግ ማ ይ፡ መኒ ል ክ፡ በ ክ ግ ጊ ኢ ኩ በ ስ ህ ር ፡ ጎ ይ ል ፡ የ ሸ ዋ ፡ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ የ ከ ፋ
 ሙ ፡ የ ጋ ሳ ሙ ፡ ክ ገ ር ፡ ሆ ሎ ፡ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ ይ ይ ረ ስ ፡ ወ ዲ ፡ ከ በ ራ ፡ ወ ዲ ፡ ተ ወ ዲ ዲ ፡ ወ ገ ድ ማ ቾ
 ገ ፡ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ ያ ሙ በ ር ተ ፡ መ ጋ ር መ ር ይ ፡ የ ኪ ጣ ኪ ያ ፡ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ ስ ላ ሙ ፡ ለ ር ስ ሙ ፡ ያ ሁ ጉ ሩ
 ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ ሆ ይ ፡ ወ ዲ ዲ ቾ ገ ፡ ከ ገ ተ ፡ ክ ገ ጉ ቲ ኢ ሌ ፡ ይ ዞ ል ገ ፡ የ መ ጣ ፡ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ የ ላ ኩ
 ገ ገ ፡ በ ረ ከ ተ ፡ ከ ተ ቀ በ ል ገ ፡ በ ጎ ላ ፋ ያ ማ ረ ው ገ ፡ የ ተ ዋ በ ው ገ ፡ የ ጭ ል ፡ ዲ ብ ዲ ቤ ፡ ጫ
 ር ስ ገ ፡ ከ ተ ቀ በ ል ገ ፡ በ ጎ ላ ፡ መ ል ኩ ከ ተ ሩ ገ ፡ ለ መ ከ ዲ ድ ፡ ከ ስ በ ገ ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ ግ ገ ፡ ነ ገ ሩ ፡
 በ መ ል ከ ከ ተ ፡ የ ማ ያ ል ቅ ፡ ቢ ሆ ገ ፡ ከ ገ ተ ፡ ክ ገ ጉ ቲ ኢ ሌ ገ ፡ ከ ር ስ ፡ ራ ሱ ፡ ሓ ዲ ፡ ነ ገ ሩ ገ ፡ ክ ገ ዲ
 ጫ ር ስ ፡ ወ ዲ ዲ ጎ ፋ ፡ የ ቀ ረ ው ገ ፡ ያ ስ በ ነ ው ገ ፡ ገ ገ ዲ ዲ ፡ ከ ገ ተ ፡ ክ ገ ጉ ቲ ኢ ሌ ፡ ሲ መ ለ ስ ፡
 ከ ር ዲ ር ገ ዋ ሰ ለ ገ ፡ ከ ስ ተ ዲ ያ ው ፡ ድ ረ ከ ፡ ያ ስ በ ሁ ተ ገ ፡ ከ ስ ር ድ ገ ፡ ከ ቈ ያ ለ ሁ ሩ በ ሕ
 ዲ ር ፡ ስ ል ሩ ገ ፡ በ ሎ ሌ ያ ቾ ገ ፡ በ ገ ጉ ሆ ሌ ፡ ገ ብ ረ ፡ ሥ ላ ሌ ፡ ክ ዲ ፡ ከ ገ ስ ሲ ሰ ገ ፡ ክ ሁ ጉ ፡ ከ
 ገ ተ ፡ ክ ገ ጉ ቲ ኢ ሌ ፡ ክ ገ ዲ መ ል ከ ከ ተ ሩ ፡ ሆ ጭ ክ ገ ዲ ሓ ዲ ፡ ከ ዲ ረ ግ ገ ፡ የ ስ ራ ገ ፡ ያ ስ
 በ ነ ው ገ ፡ ከ ር ስ ፡ ይ ነ ግ ረ ያ ታ ል ፋ ነ ገ ሩ ገ ፡ ለ ማ ስ ረ ገ ገ ግ ፡ ግ ገ ፡ የ ሩ ፡ መ ል ከ ከ ተ ሩ ገ ፡
 የ ስ ዲ ድ ነ ፡ ዕ ል ተ ፡ ያ ገ ጉ ታ ል ፋ የ የ ራ ር ግ ፡ ነ ገ ሥ ታ ተ ሙ ፡ የ ሁ ለ ታ ገ ገ ገ ፡ ጥ ቀ ር ፡ ሱ ጎ
 ታ ፡ መ ሆ ጉ ገ ፡ የ ዚ ያ ገ ፡ ጊ ዜ ፡ ያ ገ ጉ ታ ል ፋ ከ ሩ ሙ ፡ የ ተ መ ገ ነ ው ገ ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ በ ገ ጉ ሥ ፡ ከ
 ገ ድ ፡ የ ተ ወ ዲ ዲ ፡ ከ ገ ዲ ሆ ገ ፡ ተ ከ ፋ ፡ ከ ስ ገ ፋ ፡ ከ ራ ሙ ፡ ያ ስ በ ሁ ተ ገ ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ ከ ስ ራ ር ር
 ስ ፡ በ ከ ገ ረ ፡ የ ተ ገ ፡ ገ ው ገ ፡ የ ሸ ዋ ፡ ዜ ገ ገ ሩ ፡ የ ኪ ጣ ኪ ያ ፡ ዜ ገ ገ ገ ፡ የ ሚ ጠ ቀ መ ባ ተ ፡ የ
 ሆ ሎ ፡ ከ ያ ነ ተ ፡ የ ገ ገ ገ ፡ ዕ ቃ ፡ ል ክ ል ያ ታ ለ ሁ ሩ ይ ህ ሙ ፡ ከ ገ ዲ ያ ፡ ላ ቀ ፡ በ ረ ከ ተ ፡ ከ
 ር ገ ው ፡ ያ ቀ በ ሎ ል ገ ፋ ፡ ያ ስ በ ሁ ተ ፡ ነ ገ ር ፡ ቀ ገ ገ ፡ ለ ል ዲ ቻ ቾ ገ ፡ ታ ገ ገ ፡ ጥ ቀ ሙ ፡ ከ
 ገ ዲ ሆ ገ ፡ ተ ስ ፋ ፡ ከ ላ ገ ፋ ፡ ስ ላ ለ ስ ገ ስ ገ ፡ ይ ስ ገ ፡ ስ ላ ስ ገ ፡ ስ ላ ስ ገ ፡ ስ ላ ስ ገ ፡ ስ ላ ስ ገ ፡
 ቀ ሙ ፡ ከ ግ ጊ ኢ ኩ በ ስ ህ ር ፡ ዕ ድ ሚ ያ ገ ፡ ከ ገ ዲ ያ ረ ከ ሙ ፡ ከ ላ ሙ ር ል ሁ ሩ በ ስ
 ኔ ፡ ፳ ፬ በ ከ ገ ገ ስ ር ፡ ከ ተ ማ ፡ በ ፳፻፱፻፷፯ ተ ዳ ል ፋ



[May this letter by] the second Minilik, by the power of God King of Shewa, Kefa and all the Galla countries, reach our brother, the honoured and beloved King Umberto I, the Italian king. May peace be with you.

O king, we have received the present of the king, which our friend Count Antonelli had brought us, and after we have accepted completely the nice and amicable letter of the agreement, we have thought of sending a messenger. However, since the matter could not be settled through a messenger, we wanted Count Antonelli himself to finish the matter. The remaining matter which we have thought about, I will settle when Count Antonelli comes back. By then I will be ready with the matter I have in mind. In the month of Hidar, we will send [information] about our camp with our servant, Nigusē Gebre Sillasē. We have sent Count Antonelli as [our] envoy and he will tell you what we have done.

However, in order to convince you about the matter you will be assured when we send our messengers. And the European monarchs will find out the truth about our friendship. We hope that what we desire will benefit the Shewan and Italian people. Please, accept this as a big favour. I hope that what I have in mind will succeed and be of benefit to our children. I pray to God, for the happiness of your people and the benefit of the people of Shewa, to prolong your life.

Written in the town of Ankober, on 24th Senē 1875.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASMAI 36/2–16, Amharic original; ASMAI 36/2–12, Italian translation. This document was earlier located in 36/6–56. The messenger here called Nigusē Gebre Sillasē is most probably Gebre Sillasē Nigusē, mentioned in several documents. See *inter alia* [doc. 78](#). Although we are not quite sure what Minilik has in mind with the word *seferun*, the general content of the letter leads us to believe that he is referring to a boundary agreement. It seems that Minilik does not want to mention it clearly in his letter.

Tamrē Abba Sebsib to Umberto I, 30 June 18[83]

ዲዩ ረ ስ፡ ከገገገ ሥ፡ ያምበርጥ፡ ል የኪጣሊያ፡ ገገገገ፡ የተላከ፡
ከተርክ፡ ገገገ፡ ታምራ፡ መደገ፡ ላለም፡ ጤና፡ ይከጥልኝ፡ ብዬ፡ ከፍ፡ ከነላለሁ፡
ገገገ፡ ሆይ፡

ለሸዋ፡ ብርሃን፡ ይሁን፡ ብለው፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ወዲዩ፡
የተላከ፡ የገገገገ፡ ይሁን፡ መልካም፡ ከብዙ፡ ይህን፡ የኪጣሊያ፡
ወገን፡ ከሌሎች፡ ከሁሉ፡ ይልቅ፡ ከመገገ፡ የለኩት፡ ገገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡
የሸዋገ፡ ሰው፡ ብዙ፡ ከገገገ፡ ከላሎ፡ ወተኝ፡ ገገገገ፡ ቀና፡ ብዬ፡ ማየት፡
የሚገገገ፡ ከክክር፡ የልቤ፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ወዲዩ፡ ገገገገ፡ መላክ፡
ከደረሰኝ፡ ያብዩ፡ ከመላክም፡ የተላከ፡ ገገገገ፡ ይህን፡ ከገገገ፡ ያህን፡ ለክገገ፡
ዬ፡ ለወደዱ፡ ለክገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ተገገገ፡ ከፍ፡ መገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ያህን፡ የተሸ
መ፡ ተርክ፡ ገገገገ፡ ብር፡ ገገገገ፡ የሚይዙት፡ ገገገገ፡ የሚገገገ፡ የገገገ፡
ሳር፡ ከደግሞ፡ ከላለሁ፡ ይህን፡ ከፍ፡ መገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ በረከት፡ ከይ
ተው፡ ይቀበሉልኝ፡ የሰው፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ የሚታይ፡
ከብ፡ ገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ በገገገ፡ ልት፡ ተር፡ ገገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡
ር፡ በሸዋ፡ ለሚሠራ፡ ገገገገ፡ ሁሉ፡ ከገገገ፡ ብቻለሁ፡ የኪጣሊያ፡ ገገገገ፡
ዲዩ፡ በሸዋ፡ የሚሰራ፡ ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ተመልካች፡ አዎ፡ ገገገገ፡ ስለ
ተወኝ፡ በተቻለኝ፡ ገገገገ፡ ሁሉ፡ በሸዋ፡ መራት፡ ከረዳለሁ፡ ከገገገ፡
ለሁ፡ የኪጣሊያ፡ ይህን፡ ወዲዩ፡ ሸዋ፡ ለሚመጡት፡ ከረዳለሁ፡
ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ያህን፡ በመልካም፡ ገገገገ፡ በሚገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ የሰው፡ ልብ
ና፡ የሚሰራ፡ የኪጣሊያ፡ ሸ፡ ሰውም፡ በመጣ፡ ከይከብዱ፡ በረከ
ችገም፡ በሆን፡ ከገገገ፡ የገገገገ፡ የገገገገ፡ ወራ፡ ከይሁ፡ ቀደ
ም፡ የሰማሁ፡ ገገገገ፡ ብዙ፡ ወገን፡ ያህን፡ ከገገገ፡ ለኝ፡ ከሁንም፡ ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡
ሊ፡ በደገ፡ ተመልሶ፡ ያህን፡ በደስታ፡ ከገገገ፡ ያህን፡ ፀደቀ፡ ወደገገ፡
ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ከላምናለሁ፡ በሰኔ፡ በገገገ፡ በክርክር፡ ወ
ሰው፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ገገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ ከገገገ፡ መገገገ፡
ካይ፡ ለሁት፡ ከብሉት፡ በደ፡ በረ፡ ብርሃን፡ ከተሞ፡ ተደረ፡ ፈ፡



May [this letter] sent by *Turk Basha* Tamrē reach King Umberto I, the King of Italy. Saying “May the Saviour of the World give you health for my sake”, I raise my hand.

O King!

Out of the friendship [I have] with Count Antonelli whom you sent to be a light for Shewa, and since I have heard of the kindness and goodness of the king from many of your citizens, the Italian people, and moreover since Count Antonelli, whom you have sent because you have trust in him, has told me that you like the people of Shewa much, the love of my heart overflowed and caused me, your servant who is not worthy of looking at the king straight, to write a letter to the king. And dispatching the letter, I have sent, with my friend Count Antonelli, a small present, a weapon of our country and which [persons] like me, appointed *turk basha*, carry in fighting, so that you may remember [me] when looking at it.

Please accept this gift of mine considering it a great present. It is the love and gratefulness of man that is desired; as for money it is of small importance before a king. And I, your servant, shall watch over any matter that is worked in Shewa.

Since Count Antonelli has left me to supervise Italian affairs undertaken in Shewa, I shall assist in everything I can in the land of Shewa. And I shall help Italian citizens who come to Shewa. Even if one thousand Italians, who are noted for their goodness and intelligence, like Count Antonelli, and who break the people’s heart by their good nature and desirable conduct, come, they will not be too heavy for us; we can carry [them] even on our heads. As I was very pleased when I heard before now of the news of the well-being of the king, I pray to God that Count Antonelli may come back safely and tell me of your well-being happily and that He may give you a long life.

Written in the town of Debre Birhan, on 24th Senē in the year of grace 18[83] after the birth of our Saviour.

Seal: The seal of *Turk Basha* Tamrē.

ASMAI 36/2–16, Amharic original and Italian translation. Tamrē *Abba* Sebsib was a highly placed and influential official in the court of Minilik. He was the commander of the regiments armed with rifles for which he was given the title. In addition, he was charged with the tasks of a *dej agafari*, which shows that his riflemen constituted the imperial guard. He carried these responsibilities all through the 1880s with the exception of 1886 when he was temporarily in disgrace and removed from his position, to be reinstated a short while later. He took part in all the important campaigns commanded by Minilik, including the battle of Adwa. The letter shows, like many others, the friendships that developed between Pietro Antonelli and people at Minilik’s court.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Augustus Blandy Wylde, [June (?) 1883]

Ras Alula, general of the regular troops, to the Agent of the Government of Massawa.

How are you? I am, thank God, all right. This son of *Ras Ar'aya*, Debbeb, if you do not catch him and send him to me, the country will be plundered by him. I shall not let the caravans come down till he is caught. If the farmer does not plough and the merchant does not buy and sell, then nothing prospers and there is no business. Debbeb killed a priest and he plundered the property of a bishop, henceforth what crime can he commit worse than that? Make him a prisoner and send him to me. You sent me word that you could not find him; he is in Arkīko or Imkullu. Works like these God does not like. Regarding the business of the son of Tesfa Haylu, the chief of the Gonder or Gojjam merchants, he is here, and has about 1,000 loads of ivory, musk and other things. He has arrived and camped here. If I send him at this moment, perhaps he will be plundered. If you want me to send them from Jenda I will protect them from that place to Sehatī, and then send up *Nā'ib* 'Abd al-Raḥīm of Imkullu, to take them down.

Written at 'Addi Teklay.

Sealed *Ras Alula*.

A. B. Wylde, *'83 to '87 in the Soudan*, vol. I, London 1888, pp. 58–59, English translation. Wylde was a British traveller and merchant who had become a friend of *Ras Alula* and a supporter of the Ethiopian cause in the negotiations of 1879–1884 to such an extent that he was reprimanded by the British authorities. See Haggai Erlich, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa*, Lawrenceville 1996, pp. 31–32, 44. For Debbeb Ar'aya and the context of this and the next letter, see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, pp. 39–40.

Alula Ingida Qubī to Augustus Blandy Wylde, [June (?) 1883]

From *Ras Alula*, to the Agent of the Government of Massawa.

How are you? I am, thank God, all right. The reason why I have not sent you the merchants and the caravans is that the other day I have sent to you a letter [saying] that I would send you the merchants if you catch and send me Debbeb. Now imprison him and send him to me. He is sitting with the family of the *nā'ib* of Arkīko and his children. You yourself also know it.

Written at 'Addi Teklay.

Sealed *Ras Alula*.

Wylde, *'83 to '87 in the Soudan*, vol. I, p. 59, English translation.

Gobena Dačhī to Umberto I, 3 July 1883

With all respect, how is Your Majesty? I, by the grace of God, am well.

I received the gifts which Your Majesty sent me by the hands of my friend Antonelli, and I offer you my ardent thanksgiving.

Now I ask Your Majesty to accept a lion's hide, a gazelle's hide and a leopard's hide and since the departure of Count Antonelli was unexpected, I am preparing a thoroughbred so that the Italian horses together with those of Shewa would form a single race. I was glad beyond measure to be able to conclude a treaty between my king and Your Majesty and I pray to God that this friendship will be eternal.

Cimbissi, 27th Senē 1875 (Ethiopian calendar) (3 July 1883).

Seal of *Ras* Gobena.

AP.DD, XV, p. 135. Printed Italian translation, probably from a French original, as we know Gobena Dačhī was able to write in French. *Ras* Gobena was an Oromo military commander who had already supported Minilik from the time of his escape from Tēwodros in 1868. He played a significant role in the integration of Oromo territory into the empire. See also [doc. 162](#).

May [the letter] sent by *Azzazh* Welde Şadiq reach King Umberto, the King of Italy.

I raise my hands three times saying, “May the Saviour give [you] health on my behalf.” I have received with respect and joy the gifts which you have sent me with Count Antonelli and your letter written on 29 Hamlē 1882. May God thank you on my behalf.

It does not seem to me that I did for your citizens who previously came to Shewa any good thing worth so many thanks from a king. Since they carried the little good work to the ears of the king simply because of their great kindness and gratefulness, let God thank them. In the future I shall help and assist in everything I can towards the friendship of the Italian people, the benefit of the people of Shewa and the good of the king.

And I shall work earnestly so that the route to Aseb may be cleared very well. And I hope that you the king, in your omnipotent ability, will help and straighten anything that is useful for your friend, my master. Affection overflowed and has caused me, your servant who should not look you straight in the face, to write a letter.

Now that I have dared to write a letter to a king, I have also sent ivory of an elephant that I myself killed on a hunt and a decoration, known as *addo*, which is given to hunters among the nobility in our country and which was given to me by my master for my ability as a killer. Please, accept my few presents as if they were many gifts. In the future, I shall entreat the Almighty God on my knees that He may increase my age in order that I may please the king in all my capacity, that He may increase the age of the king, and [pray] for the well-being and happiness of your people and that He may protect your government.

Although we knew that Count Antonelli came to us in the heat of the sun and [onset] of thirst, and although we were aware that the work cannot be completed without him, we decided and sent him back so that he might speed up the work which we have proposed. We hope he will come back safely. I pray to God that he may give you a long life for my sake, and a firm government for the benefit of Shewa and Italy.

Written on 4th Hamlē 1875, at Dengīya Mezgīya.

Seal of *Azzazh* Welde Şadiq.

ASMAI 36/2–16. Italian summary printed in *AP.DD*, XV, pp. 133–134. *Azzazh* Welde Şadiq was an important official at Minīlik’s court and governor of the district of Ankober. See *EAE* 4, 1106–1107.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini,
30 July 1883



الدعاء الوافر والشناء المتكاثر يهديان جناب عالي الجاه والجناب سلالة الاجلاء الاكابر
 الاجل الانجم الاكل الاشيم محمود السجايا والشميص صاحب الحكيم والدستور المكرم
 منستر سلطان تليان حرس الباري من الاكدار ذاته وحامت الاصدار صفاته ولازال
 في بارخ المجد والاجلال وشاىخ العز والقبال امين اما بعد فالباعث التحرير ذريعة
 الاخلاص هو السؤال عن صحة ذاتكم السنوية واعتدال اوقانكم الزكية اللتان هما
 الامل من حضرة عالم الاول لان الال الجناب في اكل الخير والسرور ومحكم الحقيقي
 من كرم الله تعالى في اتم الخير والسرور يسال عن حال الجناب بالغدوات واليكور
 ثم لا يخفى محترم الجناب ولدكم كنت انت نلي وصل عندنا من شوي بالسلامة ومع
 الكرامة وقد متاسف منا اليكم الجواب عند وصول كنت انت نلي من عصب لعله وسلم
 والان نحن والاطان منلك قبلنا الشروط الذي وصل من طرفكم مع كنت انت نلي حتى
 تكون المحبة داما واما نحن اكرمنا واوبناه وارفعنا بجسده ولدكم كنت انت نلي اكراما
 للسلطان تليان على حسب طاقتنا واوسلت لك هديتا منابيد ولدكم كنت انت نلي نعمتين
 تفضل بالقبول من الخليل حتى القليل جليل ويا محب اوسل لنا من احسانك السابق ولاحت
 تاخيل بلدكم مع سرجه هذا عرفناكم ختام ولولدكم كنت انت نلي اعطيناه في ارضنا محل
 بكم لاجل ارتباط المحبة وعقد اساس المودة ايضا لان شيخ عبد الرحمن بن شيخ يوسف
 الذي وافق بيتنا وبينكم تحرسوه من كل عدوه هذا عرفناكم

مستند الامام من
 عند سلطان محمد
 بن سلطان حنظلي
 تاريخ في شهر رمضان سنة 1299
 من اليوم الثالث عشر
 من الهجرة



Seal: Muḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

Abundant prayers and generous eulogy presented to His Honour, the high-standing and honoured, offspring of the illustrious and the majestic, the most illustrious and magnificent, the most perfect and most virtuous, the estimable and laudable of nature, the clement friend, the noble representative, the minister of the Italian sultan. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame, and remain in might and prosperity. Amen.

And now, the reason for writing, the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times, which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God's kindness, your true beloved is well and pleased and prays for Your Honour's well-being morning and forenoon.

As it cannot be hidden from His Honourable Highness, your son Count Antonelli has reached us from Shewa, in safety and dignity. Before Count Antonelli returned from Aseb, we had already sent you a letter which probably reached you.

And now, we and Sultan Minilik accepted the terms we received from you with Count Antonelli so that friendship lasts for ever. As for us, we have treated Count Antonelli hospitably, honoured him and privileged him as much as we could for the sake of the Sultan of the Italians. In addition, I have sent you two ostriches as a present with Count Antonelli. Please do accept them since even a humble [gift] from a friend is venerable. O beloved, given your former and further benevolence, send us one of your country's horses along with its saddle.

And this is what we tell you: we have given your son Count Antonelli a place in our land in your name for the sake of love and the foundation of friendship. Finally, since *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Yūsif was the one who coordinated between us, guard him from all his enemies. And this is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated Tuesday, the 25th of Ramaḍān, the year 1300 *Hijra*.

Seal: Muḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

**Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini,
21 Aug. 1883**

الدها الوافر والتنا المتكاثر يهديان جناب عالي الجاه والجناب سلالة الاجلا الاكابر لرجل
 الاغم المفعم الاشيم محمود السجايا والشم المراد به الصاحب الخليم منستر حرس الباري من الالذار
 ذاته وحما من الاضرار صفاته ولازال في باذخ المجد والال جلال وشامخ العز والاقبال امين
 اما بعد فالباعث التمجيد وريعة الاخلاص هو ال عن صحة ذاتكم السنية واعتدال اوقانكم الزكية اللبان
 ها الامل من حضرة عالم الازل لان الال الجناب في اكل الخير والسرو وبجكم الحقيقي من كرم الله تعالى
 في اتم الخير والسرو يسال عن حال الجناب بالخدوات والبكوس ثم لا يخفى محترم الجناب ان كتابكم
 الكوريم وصل وبه الانس والسرو حصل وقرانا مبانته وعرفنا معانيه صدرة الكتاب من محروس
 اوسه وكل علم خير وعافيه ولا نسال الا عنكم وان سالتكم عنا عن احوال شوي من سلطان
 منلك امان وضمان والحقايق تجدون بلسان كنت انتونلي وهو اصل اليكم وذكرت لنا
 في كتابك فاعلم ان الطليان ليس لهم مصلحة سوى الصلح والسلم وتقع طريق المتجربين عصب
 وشوي والال يا محب ولا يتحرك في قلبك شيئا من الالذار لان هذ الطريق فتحها لكم
 لاجل ارتباط المحبة وعقد اساس الودة وانما تمض في طريقنا بان لا يقع ضرر التجار والاطيان
 كما تضمنتم لنا من جمعة البحر لا يسنا احد ضرر لامن جمعة المصيرين ولا من غيرهم
 وارسلت لك هدية منا لاجل ارتباط وجه المحبة وعقد اساس الودة فهو نعامتين
 بيد الحب الكورم كنت انتونلي وقد ذكره لك مع صحبة كنت انتونلي بلسانه ان ترسل لنا خيلا
 جيد اطيبا مع سرجه يكن لديك معلوم ففضل ايضا من احسانك السابق والاحق بنا ديق
 طبيبات المسمى سناد وهذا عرفناكم وان بدلكم حاجة او خدمة فالاشارة بشارة
 ايضا يا محب كذلك ارسل لنا من جنابك ثابغلة بلدكم طيبا مع
 سرجهما لكن عندنا بخله وخيلا موجود الامرادنا حق بلدكم
 يكن لديكم معلوم

من محبكم الالعي لكم السلطان
 محمد بن السلطان حفزي
 ابن السلطان ايدا احس
 تاريخ في شهر شوال يوم الثلوث
 سابع عشر من سنة
 من الهجرة 1303

Abundant prayers and generous praise presented to His Honour, the high-standing and prestigious, offspring of the illustrious and eminent, the most majestic and magnificent, the most virtuous, the estimable and laudable of nature, that is the clement friend, the Minister. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm. May he live in glory and fame, and remain in might and prosperity. Amen.

And now, the reason for writing, the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times, which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God's kindness, your true beloved is well and pleased and prays for your well-being morning and forenoon.

As is not hidden from Your Honourable Highness, your esteemed letter reached us. It brought pleasure and delight. We read its contents and understood its intentions. The letter is dispatched from Awsa, the protected. All information is good and favourable, and we are not concerned about anything except you.

If you ask us about the situation of Shewa, Sultan Minīlik grants it safety and security. The facts you will find through Count Antonelli, who is coming back to you.

You mentioned to us in your letter that the Italians have no interest but conciliation and peace, and the opening of the commercial route between Aseb and Shewa. And now, o beloved, do not let your heart be troubled by any distress because we have opened this route for you for the sake of love and the foundation of friendship. I guarantee that no harm shall befall the Italian traders on our route, just like you guarantee us that no harm shall touch us from the sea, neither from the Egyptians nor from others.

For the sake of love and the foundation of friendship, I sent you a gift from us, which consists of two ostriches, with the honourable beloved Count Antonelli. Conversely, I have told Count Antonelli to ask you to send us a good horse along with its saddle. Let this be known to you. In addition, given your former and further benevolence, please send good rifles, a so-called snider (*sanādīr*). This is what we tell you. If you have any need or [desire] any favour, the request is good news.

And also, o beloved, send us from Your Honour, a good mule from your country with its saddle. Even though we have mules and horses here, we would like to have some from your country. Let this be known to you.

Greetings from your beloved who prays for you, Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē bin Sultan Īdāḥis.

Dated Tuesday, in the month of Shawwal, after 17 days have elapsed, the year 1300 *Hijra*.

Seal: illegible.

ASMAI 7/1-1, Arabic original. The letter is strangely enough missing in *L'Italia in Africa*.

Burhān Muḥammad to Giovanni Branchi, 9 Oct. 1883

After compliments . . .

I have received your letter through *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Yūsif and I am happy at your good intentions towards me. Regarding myself I will always make an effort to serve the royal government and be of use to it day and night, recognizing how much your government has protected me against my enemies. In writing to the government what I wrote to it relating to Markable I had in mind to let it know my position. I do not have a grudge against the government, whether the government makes a case or not of the act of which I have been a victim [and] which forced me to complain. It would never come to my mind to antagonize the government. I abstain from this claim and I expect the compensation or help which the government will accord me.

You can see how much I make an effort for the government’s interests. The people of my country are Bedouins who do not know the ways of government, but I instruct them with patience and teach them to recognize the government.

For the moment I have guests from the interior who ask me for money and therefore I ask for 400 thalers. If you will help me by granting me this small sum, I do not think it will do any harm to the government, since I am confident that I will receive more important values from it. I hope that when the government recognizes my good intentions it will recompense me generously.

Seal of Burhān.

ASMAI 1/5–31. Italian translation with the title: “Translation from Arabic of a letter from Burhān, Sultan of Raḥayta to the Commander (Commissario) in Aseb, dated the 7th of Hijra the year 1300 A. H. received 10th of October 1883”. The usual greetings have apparently been omitted from the translation. Printed in *L’Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 305, allegato, p. 30.

According to Giglio, *L’Italia in Africa*, p. xliii, the original Arabic text should also be kept in ASMAI 1/5–31, R. 296, but it can no longer be found.

Hamad La'ita to Giovanni Branchi, 27 Oct. 1883

تأريخ شهر الحجة بعد ماضى منه خمس وعشرين سنة الف وثلاث مائة
١٣

الى الاكرم المكرم المحترم المحب العزيز من حضرة حمر سلطان لعيتة الى عند قنصر عسب ههنا الله اعلم
اما بعد اعرفك بلغني سلامك والكلام الذي بيني وبينك ما خالفت لاكن ما امكن لي مجيبي الى
طرفكم نحن في ارض باديه وكلام البدوان ما خلا فانسير في محل بعيد والآلات عرفنا
اخباركم ومرادكم انكم تحبون كل الاصلاح ونحن معرفتنا قليله وكل الاخبار تحصلون
مع عبد الرحمان يوفى هو وكيل من طرفنا اعتمدوا على كلامه بما يتشاور معاكم ونحن
عرفنا انكم ما تحبون القنص واما الطريق على ما فهمنا من عبد الرحمان يوفى نفتح لكم
لايدخل عليكم الشك من الطريق انتم احسنوا نحن من البحر ونحن نساعدكم في برنا
الآن ابطينا منكم حتى يجمع الكباشيات حق البدوان والشرط والمكاتبه تكون بيننا
وبينكم عند السلطان منلك محض من طرفنا عبد الرحمان يوفى وهو وكيلنا وانتم تعرفوا
من طرفكم الى السلطان منلك والكلاد ولتكن ان نحن ما نكدهكم هذا عرفناكم والسلام

من السلطان حمر
بن السلطان لعيتة



Dated in the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja after 25 days had passed, the year 1300.

To the most noble and the most honoured, the beloved and respected, the dear, from His Excellency Ḥamad Sultan Laʿīta to the consul (*qunṣur*) of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

And now, I inform you that I received your greetings and that I have not breached our agreement. Yet, I could not come and visit you because I am in a desert. The disputes of the Bedouins do not leave us in peace and we are travelling in a distant land. And now, we were informed about your news and desire, and that you would like complete reconciliation. But we know little. You can get all news from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif, who is our representative. Rely on his words whenever he consults with you. We also heard that you do not like corruption. We understood from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif that you want us to open up our route for you. Do not have any doubt about it. You guard our coast, and we will help you in our land. And now, we are held back from you until we have gathered the chiefs of the Bedouins.

The negotiations and correspondence between us shall take place at King Minīlik’s court where ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif will be our representative while you assign a representative of yours there. We do not hate your government. This is what we tell you. Peace.

From Sultan Ḥamad bin Sultan Laʿīta.

Seal: Ḥamad Laʿīta.

ASMAE, AE, 2, Arabic original, ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian translation. According to the translation the letter was received in Aseb on 17 December 1882, in which case the letter must have been written in the month of al-Ḥijja 1299. Apparently either the Arabic or the Italian version has the wrong year. Unfortunately, the contents are of little help in deciding to which year the letter belongs. As the Arabic is the original, we have kept the Arabic date in spite of it being quite possible that the scribe has mistakenly written 1300 for 1299, in which case the letter should be assigned to 7 November 1882. The presence of an Italian translation, but no Arabic original, of a short and as far as content is concerned totally insignificant letter by the same Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta to Antonelli, in the same file, ASMAI 7/1–1, does not help. It is also dated in the year 1300, albeit five days earlier, and has an identical note stating that it was received on 17 December 1882.

The letter is addressed to the “Consul of Aseb”, which in the Italian is interpreted as being the Commissario Regio, i.e. Giovanni Branchi. For the titles of the Italian representatives in Aseb at the time, see [doc. 100](#).

And I discussed everything with him and did everything according to what you wrote to me. Earlier, as a Christian, I did what I could and had Mr. Cecchi released from where he had been imprisoned. And now, since you are a Christian like me, your friendship and love have reached me. As this friendship and love of yours are good things for me, I was very pleased. Mr. Gustavo Bianchi put on my neck a decoration of the Cross of the kingdom of Italy. I have received two guns for hunting elephants [and] your double-barrelled guns, four guns [in all] – and your diamond ring, your binoculars, your red silken umbrella, your revolver which can be fired seven times, your sheath tinged with gold and two crosses with diamonds – one for me and the other for my wife. I have received all these things that you sent to me through the hands of Gustavo Bianchi. May God reward you for all this. Four years have passed since my letter was written. It did not reach you because I did not give it to Mr. Bianchi at that time. But Mr. Bianchi performed everything that I wanted: he brought to me a mason and a stone-cutter. Also, he brought me many materials. Henceforth, we will build a bridge across the Abbay so that it may not be difficult to cross to the Galla [country]. In the Galla country ivory, gold, civet and coffee are found, and for this the bridge will be useful. Also, it will be useful for your intention for trading if Mr. Bianchi with the consent of *Aṣe* Yohannis ever opens the route through Tigrē from Tigrē to Aseb. Mr. Bianchi fulfilled whatever he had promised to me. And now, please send him to me again for my sake, for he is my close friend. Now he will go back quickly, for *Aṣe* Yohannis is waiting for him. I am not able to prepare presents for you because the time is too short for me.

My country is not like your country: nothing can be found quickly. I will have the gifts ready by the time Mr. Bianchi comes back. My gifts are trivial for you, but I am [sending them] for friendship's sake. Since Mr. Bianchi brought me the mason, the hewer and materials, I have promised to give a place near the bridge across the Abbay, a place which is better than Liṭ Marefiya in Shewa. And I have promised that this place, which I shall give to the workers, will be under the command of Mr. Bianchi because I have made him a *dejjazmach*. Also, when I have subdued the Galla, I shall add another place in the Galla country. If you will permit me, I shall call the site of the bridge [and] the bridge Umberto Adal. At the time when I discussed the matter concerning the bridge with Mr. Bianchi, my name was Adal. The land that I will give to them will be on this side, in Gojjam, and I will call it Korēntī Bir.

And I will call the place that I will give them in the Galla country Negri Agul. Mr. Bianchi will leave Mr. Salimbeni, the mason, to have the bridge across the Abbay built in his stead. About this matter I have written to your minister of foreign affairs and the president of the council for foreign countries. I have written to your chief of merchants [that] trading may be conducted from your territory Aseb up to my country. Also, I have written to the head of land revenue named Commander Malvano.

Written in the town of Debre Marqos on Thursday, 13th Hidar, in the year of Yohannis in the year of grace 1876.

Seal (twice): The seal of King Tekle Haymanot, King of Zion.

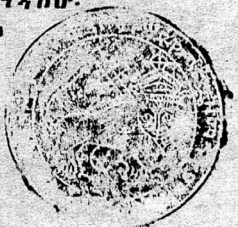
ASMAI 36/2–20, Amharic original and Italian translation. There are two versions of the Amharic text in the file, one sealed twice, the other only once. With the exception of an occasional letter missing or a misspelling, they agree perfectly. For the release of Cecchi, see [docs 15–17](#). Gustavo Bianchi was an Italian explorer travelling in Ethiopia from 1878–1882 and again from 1883. See *EAE* 1, p. 562–563. He was killed on his way from Meqelē to Aseb in October 1884. For Salimbeni see the following note.

Tekle Haymanot to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 22 Nov. 1883

የተ ሰከ፡ከንጉሥ፡ተክሉ፡ሃይማኖት፡ርቱዓ፡ሃይማኖት፡ወልዱ፡ለማርቀሱ፡ወንጌላዊ
 ሥላሴ፡ዋሕንቱ፡ገንጣሥ፡ነገሥት፡ዘኢተዮ፡ጵ፡ደድረሰ፡ሰሩት፡ሀገር፡ጉዳይ፡ራሱ፡ሰ
 ርክሰ፡መማክርቱ፡በእንግዳ፡ሀገር፡በይጣልያ፡መንግሥት፡እግዲት፡ነገሥ፡በዚህ
 እኔ፡እገዚአብሔር፡ይመስገን፡ደባሩ፡ነኝ፡

የእርሰዎን፡ገንጣሥ፡ወረቀት፡መላሹን፡ዳሩ፡ኩ፡የገንጣሥ፡ውመበርቶ፡ወረቀት፡የመጣ
 ልሻ፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ነው፡ሁሉ፡ም፡ደሰ፡አላሻ፡የእርሰዎን፡ገንጣሥ፡ወዳጅነት፡የእርሰዎ፡
 ወዳጅነት፡የአቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ወዳጅነት፡እርሱ፡የመጣልሻ፡የሰራ፡በጅሮገድ፡አቶ፡ሳ
 ልበኔን፡የደገገደ፡ሰራተኛ፡አቶ፡እንድረሆኔ፡ደግሞ፡ብዙ፡መሳሪያ፡ዓባይ፡ላይ፡ፅ
 ድልድይ፡ለመሰራት፡እኔ፡ፅሀገር፡እሰጣለሁ፡የሰራ፡በጅሮገድ፡የሚተመጥበት፡ከ
 ሰራተኛቱ፡ሁሉ፡ጋራ፡ዓባይ፡ከድልድይ፡አጠገብ፡መገድ፡ይ፡የመንሰራጋት፡ከሩ፡የ
 ድልድይ፡ደገገደ፡ለመሰራት፡በዚያም፡ሀገር፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ነው፡የሚያዝዝበት፡
 ስለ፡መን፡ደጅ፡አዝማች፡አሰሻቸዋለሁ፡ና፡የም፡ሀገር፡የሚያገለግል፡ለጅዮግራፊያ
 ተመህርት፡ነው፡እንደ፡ሸዋ፡ልጥ፡ማረፊያ፡ነገር፡ግን፡ከዚያ፡ይህ፡ይበልጣል፡ደግ
 ሞ፡ለአሳብ፡ገግድ፡የሚጠቅመው፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ፅጊዜ፡መንገድ፡የጀመረ፡እንደ፡
 ሆነ፡በትግራ፡በሸል፡አሳብ፡ድረስ፡በዓገዳ፡የሐገሱ፡ኖቅር፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ከዚህ፡የሚተ
 ወው፡አቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡ነው፡እንደ፡ራሱ፡ዓባይ፡ድልድይ፡የሚሰራ፡በአቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡በተ
 ቶ፡የደገገደውን፡ሰራተኛ፡ይተዋል፡እኔ፡ደግሞ፡እሰጣለሁ፡በአቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡በተቶ፡ከ
 አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ጋራ፡ተማክረ፡ስራ፡ሰራ፡ፅየተመነ፡መልካም፡ወተደር፡ግሪክ፡ነው፡ስ
 ሙ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ይባል፡ዛሬ፡ግን፡ባለ፡እመባራሱ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡አሰሻቸው፡ሰለ፡አገሪገሪ
 ኝ፡እገጨቶም፡ብረትም፡መልካም፡ይሰራል፡ሁሉ፡ገም፡ሰራተኛቶ፡የደገገደው
 ገም፡የእገጨቶም፡የብረትገም፡ለአቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡እሰጣለሁ፡ለዓባይ፡ድልድይ፡ከራ፡
 ሌቢቶም፡ለሁሉም፡ደግሞ፡ለሰራተኛቶ፡ሁሉ፡ብዙ፡ድርጎ፡አሰጣለሁ፡ልብሰም፡አሰ
 ጣለሁ፡ይህ፡ሁሉ፡የተረ፡እንደ፡ሆነ፡ድልድይም፡አይሰራ፡ይህም፡የኔ፡ቆጋር፡ነው፡ዳ
 ሩ፡ግን፡የሚጉድል፡ጉዳይ፡የለም፡ድልድይ፡የተሰራ፡ጊዜ፡እንደ፡ወረቀው፡እሰጣ
 ለሁ፡ለአቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡ለእንድረሆኔ፡ለአቶ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ለሁሉ፡አሁንም፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡
 እንደሰ፡እኔ፡እዝዛለሁ፡አቶ፡ሳልበኔ፡ብቻ፡ስራውን፡የሚያሳይ፡ሁሉ፡ከእርሱ፡በተቶ፡
 ነው፡የሚሆኑ፡ሀገሩን፡ለመመረጥ፡ለቢቶ፡መሰራት፡ለዓባይ፡ድልድይም፡ለሰራተኛቶ፡ለ
 ባለ፡ሀገሮች፡ለእገጨቶ፡ለብረት፡ለደገገደ፡ሰለ፡ሰራ፡ደግሞ፡ስለ፡ድርጎ፡ለዚህ፡ሁሉ፡አቶ፡
 ሳልበኔ፡ለአቶ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ይነግራል፡አቶ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ለኔ፡የነገረኝን፡ሁሉ፡አይርጋለሁ፡ያ
 ከቶ፡ሳልበኔን፡ፈቃድ፡የኔን፡ተክዛዝ፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡በጅሮገድ፡መሰሪያ፡ሰታ፡ቢጉድልክ
 መጣለሁ፡አላሻ፡አዓባይ፡ድልድይ፡መሰሪያ፡እርሱም፡በራት፡ያላሻን፡አይረስ፡ቃሉን፡አ
 ባጉደለሁ፡እኔም፡ያልሁት፡ሁሉ፡አላጉድልም፡አሰጣለሁ፡እርሱም፡አቶ፡ቢያገኪ፡ቶ
 ሉ፡ይመለሰል፡ሰለምን፡ለይጣልያገንጣሥ፡በረከት፡አሰናዳለሁ፡

ተጽሕፈ፡በደብረ፡ማርቀሱ፡ከተማ፡በ፣ወጊሮግራፊያው
 ተ፡መሰረት፡አሁን፡ገወጥሳዳር፡በዕለቱ፡ሐሙስ፡



May [the letter] sent by King Tekle Haymanot, the Orthodox, the son of the Evangelist Mark, the appointee (*siyume*) of Yohannis, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the chief counsellor for foreign lands of the Italian government.

How are you [although known to me only] by hearsay? I am well, thanks be to God. I wrote a reply to the letter of your king. It was Mr. Bianchi who brought the letter of King Umberto to me. I was satisfied with everything: the friendship of your king, your friendship and the friendship of Mr. Bianchi. He brought to me Mr. Salimbeni, the engineer in charge (*yesera bejirond*), Mr. Andreoni (*Ato Indrēwonē*), the stone hewer (*yedengiya seratenya*), and also many materials [needed] for the construction of a bridge across to Abbay. I will give a place, where the mason and his workers can live, a place where we shall establish a village near the bridge, so that [they] may prepare stones for the bridge. And in that place Mr. Bianchi gives orders for I have made him a *dejjazmach*. And that country will be useful for geographical studies [just] like Liṭ Marefiya in Shewa. However, this is better than that [Liṭ Marefiya]; also it is useful for the trade to Aseb, if Mr. Bianchi with the consent of *Aše* Yohannis, at one time, starts [to work on] the route to Aseb through Tigrē. Mr. Bianchi will leave Mr. Salimbeni here to have the bridge across the Abbay built in his stead. He will leave the stone hewer under Mr. Salimbeni. I shall also supply [a man] for the work under Mr. Salimbeni with the consultation of Mr. Bianchi. He is a trustworthy Greek soldier, Gīyorgīs by name; now I have named him *Balambaras* Gīyorgīs because he has served me. He is good at wood and metal work. I will provide all kinds of workers – those in wood, metal and stone – to Mr. Salimbeni for the work on the Abbay bridge, for the house and for everything. Also, I will grant much allowance and clothes to all of the workers. If all these [things] are denied them, let not the bridge be built; that will be my problem. But nothing will be missing. Once the bridge has been built, I will give [rewards], according to their service, to Mr. Salimbeni, Andreoni, *Ato* Gīyorgīs, [and] all others. And now, I have given orders according to what Mr. Bianchi has told [me]. It will be Mr. Salimbeni who will direct the work; all will be under him. Concerning the choice of the place and the building of the house and also concerning all allowances, Mr. Salimbeni will tell *Ato* Gīyorgīs. I will do everything that *Ato* Gīyorgīs tells me, the wishes of Mr. Salimbeni will be my orders. Mr. Bianchi, [who is] in charge of the project (*bejirond meseriya*), told me that he would bring any missing things for the construction of the Abbay bridge. He did what he had said; he did not break his word. As for me, I will not even think of breaking my word. He, Mr. Bianchi, will come back soon, for I am preparing gifts for the king of Italy.

Written in the town of Debre Marqos on Thursday, 13th Hidar in the year of grace 1876.

Seal: The seal of King Tekle Haymanot, King of Gojjam.

ASMAI 36/2–20, Amharic original and Italian translation. There are two versions of the Amharic text, both sealed. Except for the layout they are identical and have the same seal. *Balambaras* Giyorgis (Georgios Fotis) was a Greek traveller who had married in Ethiopia and had joined *Ras* Adal's army in the 1870s. See *EAE* 2, p. 811. Count Augusto Salimbeni was an Italian explorer, engineer and later diplomat engaged in the establishment of Italian trade routes into Ethiopia. He and the Italian mason Giuseppe Andreoni came to Ethiopia in early 1883 and travelled with Bianchi to Gojjam where they were received by Tekle Haymanot on 1 November. Work on the bridge began in December 1884 and was completed on 28 March 1885.

Tekle Haymanot to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 22 Nov. 1883

የተላከ፡ ከገጥሙ፡ ተክሉ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ ርቱባ፡ ሃይማኖት፡
 ት፡ ወልደ፡ ለማርቆስ፡ ወገን ላይ፡ ለላዩ መ፡ የሐዘን ስ፡ ገጥሙ፡
 ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ ይድረ ስ፡ ለሩት፡ ሀገር፡ ጉዳይ፡ ለርክ
 ስ፡ መማክር ተ፡ በአገገዳ፡ ሀገር፡ በይጣልያ፡ መንግሥት፡
 እንዲት፡ ነገ፡ በዚህ፡ እኒሙ፡ አገዛዥ ስር፡ ይመሰገን፡ ይ
 ሳና፡ ነገ፡።
 አቶ፡ ጉስጣቦ፡ ቢያንኪ፡ በይጣልያ፡ ገጥሙ፡ ትእዛዝ፡ ወይ
 ኒ፡ ተልከ፡ መጣ፡ ዜናዎን፡ ወዳጅነት ዎን፡ ነገረኝ፡።
 እኒሙ፡ ለአቶ፡ ቢያንኪ፡ ለወዳጅ፡ እንደኒ፡ መንግሥት፡ ስለማ
 ት፡ የቀዱስ፡ ማርቆስን፡ ታላቅ፡ መስተል፡ ስለ፡ እርሰዎ፡ ስድ
 ጃሐሁ፡ እርሰዎ፡ ተቀጥሎ፡ በአገገትዎ፡ ያድርጉልኝ፡
 ለኒ፡ መቻሰቢያ፡ ስለ፡ ፍትር፡ አገዛዥ ስር፡ ይጠብቅዎ፡
 አሚኛ፡።

ተጽሕፈ፡ በደብረ፡ ማርቆስ፡ ከተማ፡ በ፲፱፡ ወ፲፯፡
 ፫፡ ወ፳፡ ዓመተ፡ መሐረት፡ አመ፡ ፲፡ ወሮሳዳር፡ በዕለተ፡ ሐሙስ፡



May [the letter] sent by King Tekle Haymanot, the Orthodox, the son of the Evangelist Mark, the appointee (*siyume*) of Yohannis, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the chief counsellor for foreign affairs of the Italian government. How are you, [although known to me only] by hearsay? I am well, thank God.

Mr. Gustavo Bianchi came on a mission to me by the order of the king of Italy. He told me about your reputation and friendliness.

And I on behalf of my government, sent to you a decoration, a big cross of St. Mark, with my friend Mr. Bianchi. Please accept it and tie it around your neck for my remembrance, for the sake of friendship. May God preserve your life. Amen.

Written in the town of Debre Marqos on Thursday, 13th Hidar in the year of grace 1876.

Seal: The seal of King Tekle Haymanot, appointed by King Yohannis of Zion.

ASMAI 36/2-20, Amharic original and Italian translation.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 16 Dec. 1883

الى حضرة الأكرم المكرم العزيم المحترم جاليو ابستلوسه هده الله تعالى في كل وقت واوان وان سالتهم
عنا وعن يلودنا فاننا بخير وعافية ولا نسال الا عنكم ونعرفكم وصل الينا الجواب من حكمة وعمومهم وذكر لنا
في خطه ان لو دخلتم تحت حماية الحكومة المصرية وتظلمتم بظلمها فيكون لكم شرفا عظيم وتعيشوا مطمئنين نحبين
ذلك وجب علينا التعرير الى جهنكم للتعريف وكتاب حكمة اررسلنا اليكم مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام بن شيخ يوسف
وجهد بن لعينه ونظالعوه ما فيه وتجووا الى حكمة وعمومهم وعرفوه من طرفنا ومن طرفكم انك لا تتعرض
في امور الذي لا تحققت فيه الفساد الذي جرى علينا من طرف خدامهم ابوبكر محافظ بلع ومنع الطريق وقتل
الزادام كذلك اكتبوا له وعرفوا له ولتكم منسرا الى ارض الولاية واما نحن فلا طبع لي ولا رغبة حايتهم بل رديت
اب السكيد وعمومهم بما لم ارشبه حماية الحكومة المصرية كما ذكرت لكم في السابق لاننا في حايتهم من جهة
بلح وحماية من جهة البر الى شوي علينا ونعرفكم من جناب الجوابات الذي وصلت مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام
من سابق فمنا وعلنا ان كلام الناس يجلب الفساد وفمنا الامور الذي جرت كلها من عبد الرحمن الزمام
نحن لا تقبل لكم بعد هذي كلام المفسدين وانتم كذلك وانما من طرفنا ما يجي احد براني وانتم لاننا متوا
الزادام البراني للحيث ما شفنا الذي يدوروا اصلاح بيننا وبينكم غير شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام على ما ابتدئ يكون
كل الأشغال بيده اما مشايخ البلدان الاداعل عرفناكم حتى يساعد وفي ويساعدكم واما الواسطه الذي
بيننا وبينكم شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام المذكور لا غير نعلم بكلامه وانتم اعتمدوا بالمدكوس واما من جناب
الطريف على ما فتحنا لكم ليلا ونهارا مفتوح لكم لكن ومشيت قافلتم كثر الفساد وصار الضرر كثير وهذي انتم
شيخ عبد الرحمن المذكور تشاوروا في هذي الامور بيت شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام انه يمنع ابوبكر منكم وانتم ما
تقدروا عليه فهذي ما يلزم فيكم قوموا بهذي الدعوى عيب نخنا وعيبكم لا تمسكوا كلامنا بالاصول ارضكم
اشغالكم بارضا ونحن نشتهي لكم الاسم الطيب وهو يقدر علينا وعلى البدوان ثم عليكم ويستح انه ما حد يقدر
علي اذ اما في الدوله الذي تحكم عليه وانتم ما تقدروا عليه عرفونا نحن نخاف من عيب الدوله حتى يبلع ماهي
جهد علينا وهذي الامر لا يسهل عليكم وكل جميع الاخبار تجدون مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام سمعونا دعوة ابوبكر
وظفوا الفتنة الذي قامت لنا ولكم يكون لديكم معلوم ولو تعرفوا الى دولتم وانا نقبلتكم حتى توروا بالصدق
فتنة ابوبكر ما تخلص واذا وجدتم له حاكم الذي يردده عرفونا بالجواب حتى نقوم عليه ويرد الفتنة
لوفونا سريحا سريحا

من سلطان
محمد بن سلطان
حقيقا



من الامور
التي
لا
تجوز
ان
تكون
موضوع
للشك
في
الدين
الاسلام

To His Excellency, the most noble and honoured, the beloved and respected Giulio Pestalozza. May God Almighty lead him at all times. If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you.

We would like to inform you that we received a letter from the *Hikimdār 'Umūm* of Harer in which he wrote to us: "If you enter under the protection of the Egyptian government and remain under its auspices, you shall be given great honour and live in peace." Consequently, we had to write to you informing you of this; we have sent you the letter of the *Hikimdār* with *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin Shaykh Yūsif and Ḥamad bin La'īta*. Read it and respond to the *Hikimdār 'Umūm* of Harer and inform him on both our behalf and yours, that you will not participate in the oppressive affairs which we have suffered from their servant Abū Bakr, the governor (*muḥāfith*) of Zeyla. He has cut the route and killed good innocent people. Do respond to him like this. Let your government appoint a minister for the land of the province. As for us, we do not crave nor desire their protection. Rather, we reject the letter of the *Hikimdār 'Umūm* of Harer in that we do not desire the protection of the Egyptian government, as I told you before, because, we are under your protection from the coast while we protect the land as far as Shewa.

We inform you, in response to the letters which arrived with *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām*, and given our previous understanding and knowledge, that people's gossip brings corruption. We also understood from 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām all that happened. After this, we will not accept any corruptive talk about you, and neither should you. Do not trust any foreigner, because no foreigner will come from our side since we have not seen anyone who would work for good relations between us except *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām*, who therefore holds all affairs in his hands. And now, we inform you that the *shaykhs* of the Adal countries will help him and help you. The above mentioned *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām*, and no one else, is the intermediary between you and us. On his words we rely, and so shall you.

As for the route, we opened it for you day and night. But when your caravan travelled, corruption spread, and harm increased. Therefore, you need to discuss this matter with the above-mentioned *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān*.

The family of *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām* prevents Abū Bakr from reaching you. You do not oppose him, which is what you need to do. In fact, you should stand up to this call; it would be a shame for both of us not to keep our promises and not to stick to our original agreement. Actually, your property and your commerce are on our land, and we wish you nothing but a good reputation. Meanwhile, he despises us, the Bedouins and you. He boasts, "No one can oppose me." If there is no one in the country who can govern him, and you do not oppose him, inform us, for we fear a failure on the part of the government. Zeyla is not far from our land. This matter is not convenient for you. You can find all the news with *Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām*. Let us hear a war cry against Abū Bakr. Put an end to the disturbances which have arisen for us and for you. Let this be known to you, and please do inform your government. I accepted you, thus show us loyalty. Abū Bakr's disturbances do not come to an end. If you cannot find a ruler who can oppose him, inform us by a letter so that we can confront him and put an end to his disturbances. Do inform us as soon as possible.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Seal: Sultan Muḥammad Ḥanfārī.

Dated in the blessed month of Ṣafar after 15 days had elapsed, Sunday, 1301 *Hijra*.


ASMAE, AE 2, Arabic original. The letter is, strangely enough, missing in *L'Italia in Africa*.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 22 Dec. [1883]

الى حضرة الاكابر المكرم العزيرين المحترمين جوليو بستلوسه هده في كل وقت واوان وحين
وان سالتهم عنا وعن بلوذا بنا ما لنا بخير وعافية ولا نسل الاعكم وعن احوالكم التي هي غاية القصد والاهتمام
من ربه العباد صدره الاحرف من محروس سسكولة وكل خير وعافية وشيخ عبد الرحمن الدمام بن شيخ يوسف
قد اشقة وانخل الى جعبكم على مع الفنايلة خمسة عشرون شهر صفر الخير ومن بعدة كتبنا لك هذه الكتاب
وهو في اثناء الطريق وارسلنا اليه مبرنا حتى بلجته في الطريق واما سبب ارسال مبري اليكم رحمان
لزم من جهتنا من الاموكلام ابوكورباشه وتكتبوا من طرفنا ونصروا وبعهروا مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الدمام
فهو يحمل النفس والاربه جاتر وحمله نافع عندنا وانتم كونوا معه مساعدين ولو تكتبوا الى د ولتكم منسار
وكل الجهات مأمور ومأمون ايضا نعرف حضرتك من جناب كلام اد اعل وكلام اناكاه كتبنا له وعرفناهم
انهم يصطلعون او يتكروا ما سار بينهم كما في سابق الزمان ويتكروا البنت لا نكاهه وانكاهه تلحق جنة
ليعال السلطان برهان ويصطلعون او يتكروا عندك كما كان في السابق وانت كن لهم كما كنت من بانق
واحتشروهم وكل قبيلة تساعدكم في محلها ويكون بينكم وبينهم شيخ عبد الرحمن الدمام شيخ يوسف ويشؤون
منهم الذي مد برين بالخراب ويعرفونا وانتم عرفوا شيخ عبد الرحمن الدمام المذكور قد معناه عنكم على
كل اشغال بعلم شيخ عبد الرحمن الدمام هذا عرفناكم

تأريخ في شهر صفر
الخير واحد وعشرون
يوم السبت

محمد الدمام
من سلطان حنظل
بن سلطان حنظل



To His Honour, the most honoured and venerable, the dear and esteemed Giulio Pestalozza, may he be guided in all ages and seasons and times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you and your well-being which is the ultimate aim and desire of the Lord of the faithful. The letter is sent from Sinkara, the protected; everything is good and favourable.

Now, *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif set out and left for you with the caravan on the fifteenth of Ṣafar the blessed.

After this we write this letter to you

while he is on the route and send our seal to him so that it catches him on the route. As for the reason why I am sending my seal to you, it is that if it is needed on our side for the issue of Abū Bakr to write on our behalf, you can stamp with our seal [which is] with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhammām, since he is instead of us. His opinion and orders are valid and effective. You should help him. Please write to the minister of your government, and to all districts, officers as well as soldiers.

We also inform Your Honour concerning the controversy of the Adal and the Ankāla. We wrote to them and we informed them that they must be reconciled and leave what was between them as it was before. Now, give the girl to the Ankāla, and the Ankāla will give a deed to the family of Sultan Burhān, and they will be reconciled and they will be to you as they were before. And you, be to them like you were before and honour them, and each tribe will help you on its land. *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif will be [an intermediary] between you and them; he will see who among them is causing disturbances, and will inform us. You on the other hand, inform the above-mentioned *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Dhammām. He holds all affairs and is informed. And this we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Ḥanfadhē.

Seal: Sultan Muḥammad Hanferī.

Dated in the month of Ṣafar the blessed, the twenty-first, Saturday.

ASMAE, AE 2, Arabic original. Sultan Burhān died on 22 November 1883 as stated in a letter from the sons to Pestalozza dated 22 Muḥarram (23 November 1883) printed in *L’Italia in Africa*, II, p. 31 (writing October for November).

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 24 Dec. 1883

الى حضرة الاكرم المكرم العز بن المحترم قنصر عصب هدايه الله تعالى في كل وقت واوان وحين
وان سالم عنا وعن يلود بنا فانا بخير وعافيه ولا نزال الا عنكم وقد كنا كتبنا جميع الكتب كوكيلك بستلوسه
مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف الا ان نعرف جناب حضرتك بلقا وصوتك من العيشة الى عصب بخير
وعافية من لسان الواصلين الا وادم الذي وصلوا من طرفكم لاننا من جنابكم المكرم لاجواب ولا كتاب لعاف
الانح عسى فيه خير والجوابات الذي ارسلنا مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف وعرفنا مرادنا بالجوابات
لكوكيل حكتم بستلوسه والان كتبنا لك انك انت تقوم في اشغالنا مع شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام المذكور الذي في مرادنا
هو عارف حتى ختمنا بيده لاجل الذي ربما يحتاج قولنا من طرفي حتى يجوب منا هو بمساعدةكم ونحن
امينون وكم الطليانية بصفاء القلب الذي ما فيها خيانة ولا غش اما الفتنة والارز به حق خدام المصريين
لاجل بحرب الطريق ما وقفوا منا عن الأوية والفتنة هذا كله من سب ابوبكر باشه وانتم غافلين من هذا
والفرج الذي يشتهو الطريق ما سئنا منهم الذي يقوم بهذه الدعوى حتى بيت شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام الذي
سعى لكم بفتح الطريق منعوا بيته من كنت نلي الذي سار في موكب الحرب ولم شفنا منهم ايش الذي فعلوا له
والان ارضى سلطان رجيته الذي هو تحت حامية الطليان من لوافيه عساكوا لترك وطرحوا فيها بسدي
وهذا من افعال ابوبكر باشه حتى يقاوم علينا البعد وان ويفتن البعد وان علينا ساعدوا شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام
و نحن نساعدهم بالمحبة والصدقة وطالع كتبنا الذي كنا ارسلناه جناب بستلوسه قبلك وانت كنت غائب في العيشة
وسجونا قلنا من طرفكم ووقفوا منا العاسد فعليك بالحكمة والمساعدة للشيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف
فهو احد من اولادنا ومن عيالنا هو في يدنا وتحت طاعتنا وفي امرنا ورايه نافذ وحكمه نافذ جائر العيشة انه
ذمام بيننا وبينكم فاعتمدوا كلامه بجميع الامور كلها واذا دعيتم فادعوه شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام فهو
ذمام بيننا وبين سلطان منليك وجميع الفرخ هذا عرفناكم لا تسهوا كلام غيره يكن لديكم معلوم
لان شيخ عبد الرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف

من عند
سلطان
عبد الرحمن
الذمام



تاسخ في شهر صفر
الحير ثلاث وعشرون
يوم الاثني
١٣١١
من الهجرة

رجع اليها من نصف الطريق فلما
وصلنا كتبنا لك هذا الخط وعرفناك
احوالنا ولا تقطع عنا الكاتبة
مع كل عرض بيد وجنابكم تقضا
بحس التحريف

To His Excellency, the most noble and honourable, the beloved and respected Consul (*qunṣur*) of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him at all times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. We previously wrote all our letters to Pestalozza as a representative and sent them with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. And now, we inform Your Excellency that we have heard from travellers coming from your area that you have come back from Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) to Aseb in safety. Yet, no message or letter from Your Venerable Honour has reached us; hopefully whatever prevented it was [something] good. In the letters we sent with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, we have clarified our demands and desires to your authorized representative, Pestalozza. Now we wrote to you that you should discuss our matters with the above-mentioned *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām, who knows our demands and desires. We have even given him my seal in case he needs to certify a declaration on my behalf, and so that he could travel on our behalf with your help.

With a pure heart we trust your Italian government which neither betrays nor deceives, for strife and malevolence are really of the nature of the servants of the Egyptians who have ruined the route and have not stopped causing us harm and strife. This is all because of Abū Bakr *Pasha*, and you are negligent in this. We have not seen any response to this provocation from the *ferenj* who greatly want the route. Even the family of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām, who assisted you in opening the route, were prevented from approaching Count Antonelli, who left on the warship. And we have not seen any one of them after what they did to him.

And now they landed Turkish soldiers and raised two flags on Sultan Raḥayta’s land, which is under the Italians’ protection. These are the actions of Abū Bakr *Pasha* in order to incite and provoke the Bedouins against us. Help *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām and we will help you in the name of kinship and friendship. Please read the letters that we have previously sent to his Honour Pestalozza while you were away in Abyssinia, and reassure our hearts from your side and arrest the criminal. You must honour and assist *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif; he is one of our sons and a member of our family; he is at our disposal and under our authority and subject to our orders. His opinion and orders are valid and authoritative because he is the intermediary between us and you. Rely on his words in all the matters, and when you call him, address him as *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām, for he is the intermediary between us, King Minilik, and all the *ferenj*. This is what we tell you. Do not listen to anybody except him. Let this be known to you.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif returned to us after he had travelled half way. As soon as he reached us, we wrote you this letter informing you of our situation and health. Do not deprive us of letters whenever there is an issue that Your Honour deems could be settled through written communication.

Dated Monday the 23rd of the month of Ṣafar, the blessed, the year 1301 of *Hijra*.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Seal: Sultan Muḥammad Ḥanfarī.

ASMAE, AE, 2. Arabic original. The letter is, like many letters, addressed to “the consul of Aseb”. The title of the Italian representative was, however, *Commissario Regio*. See [doc. 100](#) for the dates of the Italian representatives. This letter demonstrates that the term “consul” (*qunṣur*) was understood somehow differently from how Europeans defined it; a consul was not just a diplomatic representative, but acting in political issues of (land) administration and exerting his own administrative authority over political affairs or even a piece of land in the name of his government.

Minilik II to Pietro Antonelli, 24 Dec. 1883

A letter from His Majesty Minilik II, King of Shewa, Kefa and all parts of Galla to his dear friend Count Antonelli.

How are you? I am well, by the grace of God. I am very satisfied to have received your letter dated 21 September 83 and learn that you have arrived in the colony of Aseb safe and sound and also the caravan conducted by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. I have learned from your letter that the family of Abū Bakr has tried to raise some tribes so that your caravan would be assaulted. Since I know that you never say things that are not correct, I immediately wrote to Abū Bakr to detain the ‘Isa Somalis. I thought of doing this to secure the tranquillity of the route.

I am happy to know that you have succeeded in our affairs which were decided upon. I thank you for your efforts. As we have agreed I will send Gebre Sillasē Nigusē after my expedition among the Arsi Galla. If I have not sent the caravan more quickly, it is because the rainy season has been very heavy and has prevented the arrival of tributes from the Galla areas. Now, however, I act so that this delay will not repeat itself another time: I will return immediately from the expedition and send you the caravan at once. I am satisfied to hear that the colony of Aseb is definitely established to be a place for commerce between Italy and Shewa and a centre for the two countries which will never cease being friends. Gebre Sillasē will come to Aseb and when you depart to Shewa, I will write to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to help and escort you.

I have given orders to *Azzazh* Welde Ṣadiq to keep everything in order for the departure of the caravan as soon as I am back. Regarding Liṭ Marefiya you need not be anxious because I am the one who guards this station. I would be very content if an instructed doctor came with you to stay in Liṭ Marefiya.

Send me sounding clocks and solid chronometers as well as large quantities of medicine.

Royal Seal.

Inṭoṭṭo 24th December 1883.

ASMAI 1/5–41, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 312, allegato A, p. 36.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 30 Dec. 1883

الى حضرة الاكبرم الكريم العريبر المحترم قنصر عصب هداه الله تعالى في كل وقت وحين
وان سالتكم وعين بلوذا بنا فانا نتابعكم وعما فيه ولا نزال الا عنكم صدره الاحرف من محرو وسر اوسيه
وكل علم خير والتمنا نجدون لسان الواصلين اليكم كفاية ونهايه وما احوقك يا عصب وصلوا عننا
بشئلكم منك بعض عريان تيار بل مود بينه لان فنصر عصب وصل من الحشنة بالسلامة والتمناه
ولم غير الله عليه حال من الاحوال لكن بعد ما رجع من عنده كاسا بارا بربر وكسو الحجال ويجفر
البر في كل مكان فالان يا عصب لا ينبغي لك تعدي في حق غيرك وانت الومك انك ولا تاذي
العريان الذي انا كل القبايل في مملكتهم والان انت واقف في بقعك الذي اشتريت من قبايل
انك له وانت تدري قد ما اشتريت وكذلك قبايل انك له يدرون قد ما باعوك طول وعرض
لا ينبغي لك التعدي على حق الناس التعدي على حقهم فهذا افساد عظيم وضلال لا سبيل له
الحذر الحذر في حق الناس ايضا يا عصب لان سلطان منكم طلبت مني الطريف لكم فقبلنا منه
وسرنا له من عصب الى شوى والواسط بيننا وبين الكل شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام بن شيخ يوسف
قبل هذا سعي بيننا وبينكم شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام بن شيخ مع كنت انت نلى الى شوى وبين سلطان
منكم طريق من عصب الى شوى هذا عرفناكم

من عند سلطان
محمد بن سلطان
حظريا

نايخ يوم الجمعة في
شهر صفر الذي حلت فيه
سنة ١٣٠١
من الهجرة

To His Excellency, the most noble and honourable, the beloved and respected Consul of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him at all times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. These words are dispatched from Awsa, the protected; all information is good. You will find out the facts orally, sufficiently and conclusively, through the people coming from our land. I would like to inform you, o beloved, that some of the Arabs of the tribes of Modayto (Mūdīta) came to me complaining about you saying:

“The Consul of Aseb came back from Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) in safety and dignity, and God did not

change any of his condition. However, when he came back from Kasa Abba Bizbiz, he started tearing down the mountains and digging for wells everywhere.” And now, o beloved, you should not violate others’ rights. You should remain in your land abstaining from causing any harm to the caravans of the Danākil tribes on their dominions.

Now, remain in the piece of land you bought from the Ankāla tribes, and you know the boundaries of what you bought just as well as the tribes of Ankāla know what they sold you, the length and the width. You should not violate people’s rights. Violating people’s rights is a great offence and misdeed you have no excuse for. Beware of people’s rights, o beloved. Since Sultan Minīlik did not ask anything else from me but to open the route for you, we accepted his request and agreed to open the route for him from Aseb to Shewa. The intermediary between us and all others is *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. Before this, *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif worked with us and with Count Antonelli [for the route] to Shewa and with Sultan Minīlik for the route from Aseb to Shewa. This is what we tell you.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated Sunday in the month of Ṣafar the blessed after 29 days had elapsed, the year 1301 of Hijra.

ASMAE, AE, 2. Arabic original.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 28 Jan. 1884

الى حضرة الاكرم المكرم العزير المحترم قنصر عصب هداه الله تعالى امين
ان سالم عنا وعن يلوذ بنا فاننا نجير وعافيه ولا نسال الا عنكم وعن احوالكم التي هي غايه القصد
والمراد من رب العباد صدرة الاحرف من محروس سنكره وكل علم خير وعافية فاصدرة الورقة لاجل اعلام
الحال وتعرفونا بما انتم فيه من الاحوال وبما وصلكم منا الجواب وصل الينا جوابكم الكريم وفهمنا وقرانا ما بيننا
وعرفنا معانيه فحمدت الله تعالى على صحة عافيتكم وبلغنا انك وصلت من الحبشة من عند سلطان كاسا ابابوين
سلامة والكرامة ولم غير الله عليك حال من الاحوال انست بسلا متك من الغربة وادامك الله بالسروا
ايضا يا محب لان قبائل الدناكل الذي حواليتكم يكون عليكم فلا تنكروهم واحسنوا لهم بالادحسان متكم للحيث
انتم راع المواشي في اراضيهم فلا تتعدوا في حق الدناكل وارضكم يلكيكم واراض حاكم الذي اشترى بتموه مع
معلوما طولا وعرضا من كومة الى بويته ومن واما من جناب بيننا وبين قبائل عيسى ما نرغب منكم
المعاونة منه نحن نلقيه بحبنا وحال السارح جيشنا بغروية عيسى وغرا قبل وصول خطكم الينا فلله
ينصره نصرا عربيا وان بدأ لكم حاجة او خدمه نقضنا بحسب التعريف
وما اعرفك يا محب من جناب شيخ عبدالرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف فهو ذمام الكل فعلم بيننا وبينكم وكذلك من جناب سلطان
ملك ذمام واسط الجيعة فلا تقبلوا كلام الخارجين من اهل عصب ومن اهل مركب الا كلام عبدالرحمن الذمام بن شيخ يوسف
وكلنا معتمدين بقول شيخ عبدالرحمن الذمام ايضا كيف سلمت عن بيت شيخ عبدالرحمن الذمام الذي في ربيع بلا اختياره
عند ابوبكر باشه عليكم باخراج بيته عن يد الظالم الفاهر والسكوت فيكم من بيت عبدالرحمن الذمام عار ثم عار عليكم
الله الله باخراج البيت من ربيع فهو خادمكم وخادمنا والساعي من عصب الى شوي لحاجتكم فكيف يعدم بيته وانتم في الحيات
ايضا قبل ان فصل عصب من الحبشة فوفا سلطان برهان في رحته كما سمعت وخلف سلطان برهان عيال كما تعلم انت
والوزير محمد بن محمد سلطان ديني والوزير ابن سلطان برهان ابوبكر كبيره وانت قم بينهم بالصلح وانا ارسلت مع شيخ عبدالرحمن
اصلحو ايديهم وحمدت لحيته كذلك لعله واصل اليكم وانت انتظرهم بعين واحد ولا تتجمل على احد وكذلك في ارض سلا
الامير وحيته نزل فيه ابوبكر باشه عساكر الترك في آلت عيلا وانت عاونهم بما امكنت هذا عرفناك

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honoured, the beloved and respected Consul of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you and your well-being which is the ultimate aim and desire of the Lord of the faithful. These lines are dispatched from Sinkara, the protected; all the information we have is good and favourable. Not even a piece of paper appeared to tell us about your well-being, to inform us about your situation or to notify us that our letter reached you. [But now] Your esteemed letter has reached us. We read its contents and understood its intentions. So we praised the Lord for your health and well-being. We heard that you came back from Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) from Sultan Kasa *Abba Bizbiz* in safety and dignity, and God did not change any of your conditions. I was delighted that your journey was safe. May God perpetuate your happiness.

But in addition, o beloved, since the Danākil tribes who are your neighbours lament because of you, do not upset them. Treat them favourably since they are pasturing cattle on their own lands. So, do not invade the land of Danākil. Your land is sufficient for you. Your rightful land which you bought has well-known extension and boundaries from Kalūma to Būya. As for the [conflict between the] ‘Isa tribes and ourselves, we do not need your assistance because our army is sufficient [to protect us]. Recently our army attacked the ‘Isa tribes. It attacked before your letter reached us. May God favour our army with a mighty victory. Finally, if you need any favour or service, it shall be fulfilled as soon as you write to us.

And now we inform you, o beloved, that *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif is our representative as well as King Minīlik’s representative. In fact, he is the representative and mediator of us all. Therefore, do not take into account whatever the people coming from Aseb or from Markable say. Only accept the word of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. We all stick to the statements of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām. But why did you accept that the people of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām were held back in Zeyla under the rule of Abū Bakr *Pasha* without his consent? You must get his people out of the hands of this unjust tyrant. Shame, shame and shame on you for your silence about the family of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām. In the name of God, get that family out of Zeyla. He is your and our servant. He is the bearer of your demands from Aseb to Shewa. Then how do you allow that his people suffer while you are still alive?

Furthermore, before you came back to Aseb from Abyssinia, Sultan Burhān passed away in Raḥayta as you have already heard. As you know the family of Sultan Burhān will succeed him. As for the *wazīr*, Ḥamad bin Muḥammad Sultan Dīnī, do reconcile the *wazīr* and the sons of Sultan Burhān, Abū Bakr being the oldest, with one another. I sent [a message] with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān: “Reconcile them as well as Ḥamad bin La’īta!” He has probably reached you. You should treat them equally without favouring any of them. Furthermore, in the land of the sultans of Raḥayta, Abū Bakr *Pasha* has landed the soldiers of the Turks in Allat ‘Ayla. Help them as much as you can. This is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated Monday, the 29th of Rabī’ al-Awwal 1301 *Hijra*.

ASMAE, AE, 2. Arabic original. Sultan Kasa *Abba Bizbiz* refers to Emperor Yohannis IV whose name before coronation was Kasa Mirḥa, and who was nicknamed Bizbiz after his horse.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 5 Feb. 1884

الحمد والوفاء والشكر المتكاثرون بعد ما جئنا على الجاه والجناسلالة الاجل الاكابر الاجل الكرم الاكمل الاشيم
 الصاحب الخليم فنصبر عصب حرس الباري من الاكوار اودائه وحما من الاضطرار صفاته قال يا عت
 والتخبر برودة اربعة الاخلاص هو السؤال عن صحة ذاتكم السنية واعتدال او تاتم الركية اللتان هما الاصل
 من حضرة عالم الاورال لارال الجناب في اكل الخير والسرور ومحكم الحقيقي من كرم الله تعالى يسأل
 عن حال الجناب بالقرى وات والكور اسم لا يخفى محترم للجناب لان جيشنا رجع من غزو وقت قبائل
 عيسى فله نصره نصر عروبنا او قتل قتلا من الرجال نحو مائة ونعيم وحصل من الوارثي بغزو الابل
 والتم لا يحصى بالعدد ومن جيشنا مات خمس نفوس فلا تقطعوا عننا من جنابكم الكريمة عن احوالكم البارة
 واخباركم الازارة مع كل غرض بيد وحنانكم ايضا نعرفه يا محب من جناب د بكاره الذي عطاك عبد الله بن
 شحيم فقبط بيد اكد بن احمد هذا عننا

مستمد الدعاء من
 سلطان محمود بن سلطان
 حنظلة المرحوم
 تاريخ في شهر ربيع الثاني يوم الثلاثاء
 السابع عشر من سنة 1301 هـ

Abundant prayers and generous eulogy presented to His Honour, the high-standing and honoured, offspring of the illustrious and the majestic, the most illustrious, the most perfect and most virtuous, the clement friend, the consul of Aseb. May the Creator protect his person from all distress and preserve his felicity from all harm.

The reason for writing, the affirmation of our loyalty, is the inquiry about your noble health and about the harmony of your pleasant times, which are what we hope for from the Knowledgeable of eternity. May Your Honour remain in complete health and happiness. Thanks to God’s kindness, your true beloved prays for Your Honour’s well-being morning and forenoon. As is not hidden from Your Honourable Highness, our army has just come back from the war with the ‘Isa tribes. God has favoured it with a glorious victory. It killed almost 100 men and looted and collected from the cattle, cows and camels. The looting cannot be assessed in numbers. From our army five soldiers died.

Do not deprive us of letters from Your Honour about your favourable conditions and your pleasant news, whenever there is an issue that Your Honour deems important. We also inform you, o beloved, concerning the Danākīl (*Dankāra*) handed over to you by ‘Abd Allāh bin Shaḥīm, he received them from Wāka bin Aḥmad. This is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased.

Dated in the month of Rabī’ al-Thānī, Tuesday the 7th, the year 1301 *Hijra*.

ASMAE, AE, 2. Arabic original.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi [March 1884]

الى حضرة الاكرم المكرم العزيز المحترم قنصل عصب
 هذه والله تعالى في كل وقت وحين وان سالتكم عنا
 وعن يلوذ بنا فاننا بخير وعافية ولا نزال الا عنكم
 وما اعرفك يا محب واصلا الى طوفكم وحمائكم حسين
 بن سعد مع ابنه وابن ابنه وغيرهم من جماعته
 وبالجملة تسع نفر الواصلين اليكم من عندنا ومنهم
 في العصب ثلاثة نفر من غير عيالهم لان يا محب
 لان حسين بن سعد مع الموددين قد خرج
 وترك بوك احمد بن عمرو في دم القتولين من قبائل
 هذرمو ومن قبائل اقحوي في دم القتولين معد
 فعليك بحفظهم بما اؤتمروا به ولا تمنعهم اخذ
 سلاحهم لاننا نأخذ منهم الوفاء لهم هذه عن قنصلكم

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honoured, the beloved and respected, the Consul of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him at all times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. And what we tell you, o beloved, [is that] Ḥusayn bin Sa'īd along with his son and his grandson will come to you and under your protection accompanied by some of his people. In total, nine of our people will reach you among whom three individuals are going to Aseb without their families. And now, o beloved, since Ḥusayn bin Sa'īd, along with the above-mentioned, has left, and left behind the corpse of Aḥmad bin 'Umar in the blood of the murdered of the tribe of Hadermū and of the tribe of Aqarā, you are to protect them as long as they stay on your land and do not forbid them to carry their weapons, and do not make them pay the blood price. This is what we tell you. O beloved, they need to keep their weapons in Aseb since they fear on account of those killed and need to protect themselves. But grant them the authorization to carry the weapons. You are to guard them. Send our regards, our best regards, to Sa'īd 'Awīḍān 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the letter's writer also sends his best regards to Sa'īd 'Awīḍān.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original not sealed.

Yohannis IV to Muhammad Tawfiq, 14 March 1884



رسالة المريدون الله .. رحنا ملك صهيون ملك ملوك كنعان

تصل الي المحب العزيز المحترم المرم الزايد الورد الثابت بحب الصافي الصير المحبوب عند اللبير والمفيد المرتفع
القدر والثبات بطل الممالك مع زود العز والتوفيق مجازا ايد اللمم لخديري الاجل توفيق باشا وكي الديار
المريه ادامه الله بالرز والطمانيه والرفاهيه امين

بعد السلام علي عزة مروتكم مع التبرير لا خلاص محتكم فوادنا سالتنا عن سائله لجد العرف متوازنه جانبا اولانا
اليه من انعامه النافعه فالان ايها السيب نعلم صدف حبيبتنا تاريخه في حين الانبا الاسادنه
والطيران قد لنا ارسلنا محبت المرسلين من طرفنا مالا وجيزا ليشري بعض اتلحه من النادق ولم حضر
لنا الي الان ولما ان استخبرنا من ابائنا في المرسل من طرفنا سابقا فقال انه قد صله شري مطلقكم وهو
في محروسة مصر وابونا البطريرك يعلم بذلك فلان قد حزننا جرابا لابونا البطريرك ابنا ليس يعلم من قلم
بذلك ليلون منكم المحبه والاراده بارسال المطلب والان نرجوا صدف صغور صغور الكراميه وودكم العيم
ان يكدون منكم المحبه الشديه بارسال ذلك اليانا ولا نزيد امانتكم وحيه معك ذلك وريانا يدعير ما
بينا لاجل الكامل ويتم لنا ولهم كل امل لخطيهم الله بغايه التاهل في 7 من 1877
كتبه مرم توفيق

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

A letter from the Elect of God, Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Abyssinia.

May it reach the dear and beloved, the respected and honoured, the excessively amicable and steadfast in pure love, the mind admired by the elderly and the youngsters, the high-ranking and influential across all kingdoms through growing might and veneration, our beloved, the overly generous, the Khedive, the most illustrious, Tawfiq *Pasha*, the ruler of the Egyptian territories. May God keep him in might, serenity and luxury. Amen.

After greetings to Your Esteemed Loving-kindness with full respect to your loyal devotion, if you inquire about us, to God a thousand ceaseless thanks for what he has bestowed upon us of his eminent favours.

And now, o beloved, we inform your honest Loving-kindness that long ago, in the time of the fathers, the bishops and the metropolitan, we sent with the envoys on our behalf a modest sum of money to buy some rifles as weapons, and they have not arrived until now. And when we inquired from *Abba Gebre Igzi'*, previously sent on our behalf, he replied "The purchase of what you desired was made, and it is in Egypt, the protected, and our Father the Patriarch knows about it." And now, we wrote a letter to our Father the Patriarch *Anbā Kirillus* to inform Your Honour to be kind and willingly send us what was requested. And now, we ask from the honesty of your pure generous mind and from your unlimited friendship to have the rigorous resolve to send us this. And we do not request anything else from Your Trustworthiness.

May God sustain the complete friendship between us. May He fulfil all your and our hopes to enjoy the grace of God [at] the highest level.

Written on Thursday 6th Baramhāt 1876.

ENA, Soudan 5/3/3b, Arabic original. The content is the same as in the letter in Amharic dated three days later (doc. 156), but the rhetoric is much more elaborate and partly almost incomprehensible. The translation of the last sentence is rather tentative. The envoy, *Abba Gebre Igzi'*, is the author of letters 26 and 82.

Convention between Ḥamad Laʿīta and Italy, 17 March 1884

Convention between the government of H. M. the King of Italy and Ḥamad bin Laʿīta, Sultan of Gobad, of Aseb and of the land of the Adoimarā.

- Article 1. The peace and friendship will be constant and perpetual between the Italian authority of Aseb and Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta and between their dependents.
- Article 2. Each of the two parties will nominate a representative to handle their affairs.
- Article 3. Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta guarantees the Italian government and H. M. Minīlik safety on the route between Aseb, Gobad and the realm of Shewa for all Italian caravans from or to the sea.
- Article 4. Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta in mutual agreement with the other chiefs declares all Italian caravans coming from or going to Aseb exempt from fees and taxes.
- Article 5. All religions will be respected.
- Article 6. The subjects of H. M. the King of Italy will travel freely all over the land subordinate to Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta, and the latter's dependents will always be assisted by the Italian consular authorities.
- Article 7. H. M. the King of Italy's warships will by sea watch over the security of the Danākil littoral.
- Article 8. This convention will be subject to the approval of H. M. the King of Shewa and ratified in Shewa by the representative of H. M. the King of Italy's government.
- Article 9. Three copies of this convention will be made, in the Italian, Arabic and Amharic languages, the respective translations being in perfect accord with one another.

Made at Aseb 17th March 1884.

Seal of Sultan Ḥamad Laʿīta.

Seal of the royal commissary at Aseb.

G. Branchi

ASMAI 7/1–1, Italian text with the Arabic seal of Hamad Laʿīta. Printed text *Trattati*, p. 66 and *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 317, allegato, pp. 42–43. The version printed in *Trattati*, I, 20 omits “of Aseb” in the title of Ḥamad Laʿīta. Although it is stated that an Arabic and even an Amharic (!) copy of the convention were to be made, no evidence has been found for any of these, and probably they were never made. A much more detailed treaty for which we have the Arabic text was concluded in November 1884. See [doc. 194](#).

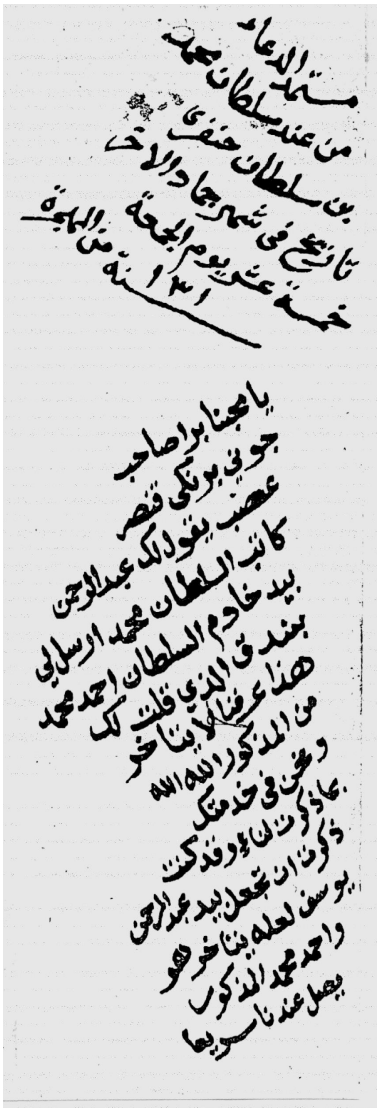
Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 12 April 1884

الى حضرة الاكرم المكرم العزير المحترم صاحبنا المعروف بواجب
 جوف بركتي هدا الله تعالى في كل وقت واوان وزن سائلنا عما ونحن بلوذا
 بناقانا بغير وطافية ولا نال الا عنكم صفة الاحرف من محروس
 سجنه وكل خير وطافية وصل بنا بركتي اكرم وقرانا ما بينه
 وعرفنا معانيه على صحة عافيتكم فحمد الله تعالى فيه وذكرنا
 بوصول عندكم في عصب المحب المعروف صاحبنا الكونت انتونيلي
 من بلدكم الولاية ولتكم انتم وتعظمت بالفرح والسرور والالت
 ب الذي ارسلتم للملك ملك وصل اليه ليلة السبت مع خاد منارا
 في شهر جماد الاول على سنة بعة عشر وارسلنا كتاب ملكه الى شوي حا
 يكن عندكم معلوم وخطكم الثاني وصلنا في غرة شهر جماد الاول
 فقرأنا ما بينه وعرفنا معانيه وقضنا ما او سئلت لنا
 الهدية من يد خاتنا ميرم محمد نيشان وحرور وفي
 فصوص سيلان فقبلنا منه يكن لذيكم معلوم وذي
 بان حمد بن لعينه وصل عندكم وتواجهتم فعليكم بالمشاوا
 لاصلاح الاوص وذكرت لنا كذا كذا سا في شيخ عبد

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honoured, the beloved and respected, the dear, our well-known friend, *Bir šāḥib* Giovanni Branchi. May God Almighty lead him at all times.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. The words are dispatched from Sinkara, the protected. All the information is good and favourable. Your esteemed letter has reached us; we read its contents and understood its information about your good health, and we praised God Almighty for that. You also informed us that our dear well-known friend Count Antonelli has arrived to you in Aseb coming from your sovereign state (*baladikum al-wilāya*) and that Your Highness was exalted with joy and happiness. In addition, the letter you sent to King Minilik has reached us on Saturday evening with our servant after 17 days had elapsed of the month of Jumād al-Awwal. We sent the letter to Minilik on to Shewa immediately. Let this be known to you. Your second letter reached us on the first day of the month of Jumād al-Awwal. We read its contents and understood its intentions. We received the gift you sent us through the hand of our servant Mīram Muḥammad, a medal and an amulet with Ceylon stones. We accepted them from him. Let this be known to you. [You also mentioned] that Ḥamad bin La'īta has reached you, and you met him in person. You have to discuss and agree in order to restore the land. You mentioned as well that Shaykh 'Abd travelled. . . .

(one line missing).



O beloved, you have to struggle with Ḥamad bin La'īta [in order to] restore the land. Likewise, the ruler of Zeyla; you have to depose him . . . the land will be ours and yours. On the other hand, we struggle . . . the 'Isa. And if it is God's will, we will know your advice through . . . when we meet him in person. This is what we tell you.

Furthermore, 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Muḥammad Turāb, Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē's secretary, asks "How are you? And how is your family and your brothers (?) from the youngest to the oldest? If it is God's will, we hope you are all well and healthy (?). Our desire, given your former and further benevolence, is that you send me one rifle of 'Abū Tīz'. . . . We would have put the seal of our Sultan Maḥammad and the seal. . . ., but it is with you. God willing, we are at your service. Should you send it, please do so with *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif and with our beloved Count Antonelli at your discretion. This is what we tell you."

O beloved, *Bir ṣāhib* Giovanni Branchi, Consul of Aseb, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Sultan Maḥammad's secretary, tells you: "Send me the rifle I have told you about with Aḥmad Muḥammad, the Sultan's servant, for we were informed that this one shall not arrive later than the above mentioned. And we swear to God that we are at your service for what you have demanded. I had asked you to send it with 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif, but he might be late whereas the above-mentioned Aḥmad Muḥammad will reach us soon."

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated in the month of Jumād al-Ākhir, the 15th, Friday, the year 1301 *Hijra*.

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original. A part of the text is not clear since the edge of the paper has been cut. Thus, our translation is in some parts tentative.

Minilik II to Pietro Antonelli, 8 May 1884

358

De la part du Roi Minilik II,
Roi de Choa, de Kafa, et de tous ses alentours,
y compris les pays Galla parvienne à Monsieur le
Comte Antonelli.

Comment vous portez-vous? Moi, grâce à Dieu,
je me trouve en état de bonne santé, ainsi que toute
mon armée.

Après avoir reçu votre lettre, j'ai fait
une expédition jusque chez les Arusi, et j'en
suis revenu sain et sauf.

Il ne faut pas vous alarmer en disant
que je ne me suis pas pressé jusqu'ici, car il m'a
été impossible. Voilà maintenant que je vous envoie
Gebra-Sillasieh-Negoussieh, avec la caravane destinée
pour vous, j'ai écrit en outre au Sultan Mohamed
Hanfadh pour qu'il fasse recevoir ladite caravane,
et j'en ai écrit de votre côté.

Je vous écris, pour le reste, quand
Gebra-Sillasieh viendra, faites de la sorte seulement,
Monsieur le Comte, que vous puissiez venir vite.

J'enverrai le prix entier des fusils avec la seconde
caravane, je ferai de manière de pouvoir contenter et vous,
et le Gouvernement Italien. Ça me fait plaisir de savoir
que l'affaire du traité que vous avez emporté avec vous
cette fois-ci, soit terminée, c'est pour quoi je me presse
d'en connaître le mot final.

Je vais envoyer, quand Gebra-Sillasieh viendra,
des cadeaux à Sa Majesté le Roi Humbert I, veuillez les
faire parvenir à Sa Majesté avec tous les honneurs et tous
les

From King Minilik II, King of Shewa, Kefa, and all its dependencies, i.e. the lands of the Galla; [may it] reach Mr. Count Antonelli.

How are you? By the grace of God I find myself in a state of good health as [does] all my army.

After receiving your letter, I made an expedition as far as the Arsi, and I have returned safe and sound.

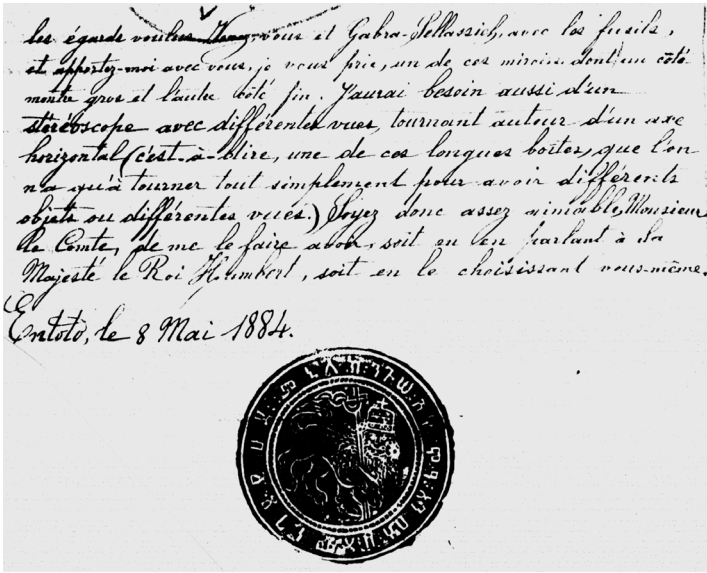
You must not be sorry saying that I have not hurried [to come] here, because it has been impossible for me. And now that I am sending you Gebre Sillasē Nigusē with the caravan destined for you, I have written also to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē (Mohamed Hanfali) in order that he may receive the said caravan. Write to him also on your part.

Besides, I will write to you when Gebre Sillasē comes, on the only condition, Monsieur le Conte, that you can come soon.

I shall send the full price of the rifles with the second caravan; I shall do it in a

manner which can satisfy both you and the Italian government. It gives me pleasure to know that the business of the treaty, which you had carried with you this time, will be completed. It is because of this that I am very anxious to know the final word.

When Gebre Sillasē comes, I will send you the gifts to His Majesty King Umberto I. Please, see to it that they reach His Majesty with all the honours and all the proper regards.



Come, you and Gebre Sillasē, with the rifles, and bring with you to me, I beg you, one of those mirrors of which one side enlarges and the other side diminishes.

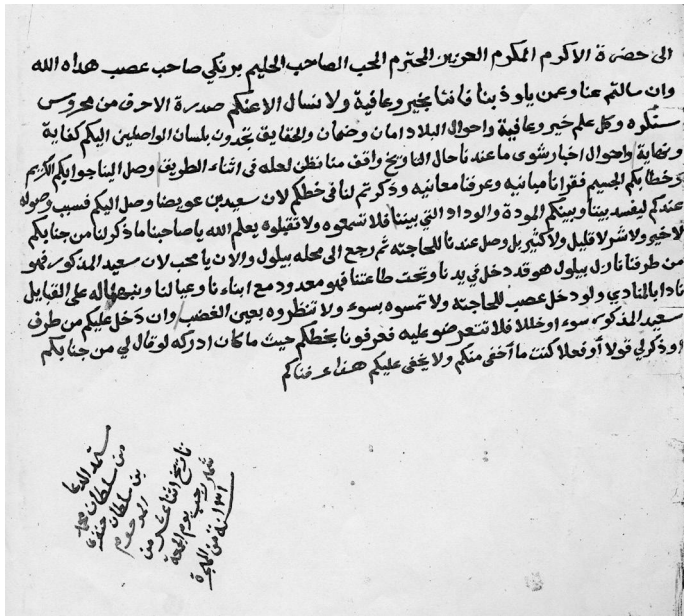
I also need a stereoscope with different views, turning around a horizontal axle (i.e. one of those long boxes which one only needs to simply turn to have different objects or different views). So please be so kind, Monsieur le Conte, to let me have it, either by talking to His Majesty King Umberto about it or by selecting it yourself.

Intotto, 8th May 1884.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASMAI 36/2-17, fol. 352, French sealed text. Italian translation printed in *AP.DD*, XV, pp. 155-156. The handwriting and the opening of the letter suggest that the letter was written by one of the Europeans at Minilik's court.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giovanni Branchi, 8 May, 1884



To His Excellency, the most noble and most honourable, the beloved and respected, the loving and clement friend, Branchi the ruler (*ṣāhib*) of Aseb. May God Almighty guide him.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. These lines are dispatched from Sinkara, the protected; all the information is good and favourable. The country's situation is safe and secure. You will find out orally the facts, sufficiently and conclusively, through those who come to you.

As to the news of the situation of Shewa, we have none for the time being; it has not reached us, we think it might be on its way. Your esteemed letter and eloquent correspondence has reached us; we read its contents and understood its intentions. You mentioned [to us] in your letter that Sa'īd bin 'Awīḏān has reached you. However, the reason of his visit to you is to ruin the love that binds us and the friendship that is between us. So do not listen to him and do not accept him. God knows, our friend, he did not tell us on Your Honour's behalf any good or evil and neither little nor much. Rather he came to us because of his needs and then returned to the area of Baylūl. And now, o beloved, as the above-mentioned Sa'īd has gone down to Baylūl from our part after he has come to be at our disposal and under our authority and under [our] obedience, thus he is now considered to be one of our children and among our family. We alerted the tribes about him through the crier's call. Even if he enters Aseb for his needs, do not harm him, and do not look upon him with anger. If any harm or dispute from the above-mentioned Sa'īd comes your way, do not confront him but inform us through a letter of yours about where he is so that I can catch him. If he told me anything on your behalf or mentioned words or actions, I would not hide it from you, and it cannot be hidden from you. This is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē, the deceased.
 Dated Friday, the twelfth of Rajab, the year 1301 of the *Hijra*.

ASMAE, AE 2. The same file contains a brief and rougher version of the same letter.

Welde Şadiq to Pietro Antonelli, 22 May [1884]

How are you? I am well, by the grace of God. I have received your letter. Gebre Sillasē Nigusē should come. So far, we have not been able to send the caravan, because the king was on an expedition. Now, there is no need to be worried about this delay. When Gebre Sillasē Nigusē comes, you will find out the reason yourself. Now, until the arrival of the caravan, prepare everything carefully. As we have ordered before, the king wants a cannon to be carried on a mule and what [is used] to carry the breech. It is necessary to acquire it because the king has ordered it. We have forgotten to write this in the letter of the king, but the king has told me to write it.

Hartuma, 22nd May.

The caravan which left from Shewa has arrived at Farrē.

Gobena Daçhī to Jules Grévy [May–June 1884]

Lettre adressée à Monsieur
 le Président de la République
 Française par le Ras
 Gobena Gouverneur des
 Pays Gallas.

Monsieur le Président,

Comment vous porter, vous et
 moi par la grâce de Dieu, je
 me porte bien ainsi que mes
 armées et ma famille.
 Votre haute réputation est connue
 depuis long temps et mon grand désir
 de voir des liaisons et amicales
 relations entre la France et le choa
 a été comblé par la venue de
 l'honorable Monsieur Long-
 Bois que nous avons tous pris

en grande estime et solide amitié.
 Je lui confie pour votre auguste
 personne, un léger présent, le sultan du
 Royaume de Keffa, de Jimma, de
 Goumma etc dont ces souverains
 m'ont fait cadeau.
 Ce n'est qu'un commencement à ce que
 je pense faire plus tard. J'en suis fort
 embarrassé d'autant plus que
 j'en ai déjà envoyé différents cadeaux au
 Gouvernement français avec la lettre ci
 jointe et je n'en ai reçu aucune nouvelle.
 Que Dieu vous ait en sa sainte garde,
 Monsieur le Président et que le vous fusi
 agréer cordialement des mi et leurs salut
 de celui qui Désire ardemment conserver
 toute l'amitié de la France puissante
 et glorieuse.

+ Souverain



Letter from Ras Gobena, governor of all Galla lands to the president of the French Republic.

How are you, Mr. President? As for me, by the grace of God, I am well, and so are my armies and my family.

Your high reputation has been known to me since long ago, and my great desire to see good and friendly relations between France and Shewa has been satisfied by the arrival of the honourable Mr. Longbois whom we all have received in great esteem and solid friendship.

I entrust to him a small present for the august person: the royal cloak of the sovereign of Kefa, Jimma, Goma, etc., which this monarch has given to me.

This is only the beginning of what I intend to do later. I was very troubled, the more so as I have already sent various gifts to the French government with letters which support them, and have not received any news.

May God keep you in his holy care, Mr. President, and make you cordially accept the best sentiments of him who eagerly wishes to preserve all the friendship of the powerful and glorious France.

Seal: Ras Gobena's seal.

AED, Protocole C 41, Ethiopie, French original. The dating of this document is based on the fact that the visit of Captain Longbois referred to in the letter took place in March–May 1884 (*L'Italia in Africa*, I.1, p. 410).

Document no. 163

Minilik II to Pietro Antonelli, 1 June 1884

Royal Seal.

Debre Birhan, 25 Ginbot [1876]

I send you the caravan with all I have put together. Altogether you will find that there is a value of around 20.000 thalers. For His Majesty the King of Italy I send gifts which I charge you to make arrive in good condition and to deliver them. I send in the same way gifts for the governor of Aseb and for the commander of the warship. I hope that all will arrive in good order. For you I send the decoration for your assiduous work and so that everyone may know that we are friends and that you work for my benefit.

Now I let you know that I expect your and Gebre Sillasē's arrival in Shewa in order to send off the other caravans. I have sent much money and many gifts to Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē so that he will be of help and work for our interests. All you need to ask him is who is in charge of providing the camels. I would myself have sent the camels, but since they die on the way I have written to Ḥanfadhē that it is more convenient to get them at the coast.

The gifts for His Majesty the King of Italy are the following: two horses with complete saddles ornamented in gold, one hide ornamented in gold, one shield and two lances ornamented in gold.

Augusto Franzoi has received my order to take the bones of Chiarini by way of Aseb, but he has not wanted to obey me. I will never abandon Aseb and I send you the declaration which I have made to signor Franzoi.

ASMAI 36/2–17, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3, no. 333, allegato 1, p. 57.

Document no. 164

Minilik II to Giulio Pestalozza, 1 June 1884

Royal Seal.

Debre Birhan, 25th Ginbot 1876

How are you? I am well, by the grace of God. I have received your letter. For the moment I have succeeded in collecting some merchandise and I send it with Gebre Sillasē Nigusē.

As a token of the friendship I have towards you I send you a shield ornamented in silver, two lances and a mule with the appropriate harness.

We ask you to protect and help all Abyssinians resident close to you and those that accompany Nigusē Gebre Sillasē; he is my special agent for my merchandise and I have entrusted everything to him as a faithful servant. I recommend him to you in a special way.

ASMAI 36/2–14 R. 415, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3, no. 334, pp. 60–61.

[May this letter from] the second Minilik, King of Shewa, and of Kefa and all the districts of the Galla country, reach the honoured [and] beloved King Umberto I, King of Italy.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God, and all my soldiers are well.

I was very satisfied when Count Antonelli wrote to me that all the business which I sent with Count Antonelli had been accomplished. And now, concerning the opening of the route to Aseb, I have sent my servant Gebre Sillasē Nigusē to Aseb with much goods and some friendly gifts to the king together with my portrait. I ask that you receive these few tokens of friendship, my presents, as if they were many.

O king! the vicinity of the Turks has not been favourable to my kingdom. It is getting worse from day to day. Earlier when the Turks took Harergē from me, I sent a protest to the European sovereigns, and now I am sending my protest to you, my brother. As if their occupation of Harergē was not enough they have come to occupy my territories Webera and Yitu.

Henceforth, if I ever fight them, you, my brother, will be my witness so that the sovereigns of Europe may not take me for an offender, for I will not abandon my hold on my territory for nothing. Waiting for your reply with much desire and expectation, I pray to God [to give] you a long life.

Written in the town of Debre Birhan on the 25th day of Ginbot 1876.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Letter of *Weyzero* Ṭaytu, wife of King Minīlik, King of Shewa and Kefa and all the territory of the country of Galla. May it reach the beloved, respected (lit. feared) Queen of Italy, the royal consort (*itegē*) Margherita, the honoured one. I send my greetings to the queen by asking “How is your health?”

After having seen the love between King Minīlik and King Umberto, and having heard of your kindness, I have sent a small gift, certainly not much, a token of love, consisting of a kind of mantle which empresses wear here in Ethiopia, and a decoration of gold which they hang around their necks, as well as a photo of myself, with the gifts sent to King Umberto by King Minīlik. My hope is that the love which prevails between King Minīlik and King Umberto and which has bestowed light upon the people of Italy and Shewa will create new love of a similar kind between you and me. If such be the case, what is important among kings is not a matter of visible money but rather love and treaties.

I would therefore plead with you to accept this small token of love, as if it were plentiful. And when our love grows strong, I hope that we will be able, by God’s power and will and by the abundance of our love, to dispel the darkness which is among our people, and to strengthen, in our time, love between the governments of Italy and Shewa, just as the honoured monarchs in the past succeeded, through their work and their faith, in protecting their people.

As I await your beloved reply, with a fervent wish and much respect, I pray that God will protect the realm of your husband and prolong your age, for the benefit of the people of Shewa and the well-being of Italy.

Written on 25th Ginbot 1876 in the town of Debre Birhan, in the 19th year of the reign of King Minīlik.

Seal: The seal of *Weyzero* Ṭaytu.

ASMAI 36/2–21 bis, Amharic original. We have not been able to find any translation or printed version.

To His Honour, the most noble and most honoured, the beloved and respected Branchi, the governor (*hākim*) of Aseb. May God lead him. Amen.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you and your well-being which is the ultimate aim and desire of the Lord of the faithful. The words are dispatched from Sinkara, the protected, and all the information is good and favourable. We have received your esteemed letter and eloquent correspondence. We read its contents and understood its intentions. Then we praised God Almighty for your good health.

As a matter of fact, the scribe ‘Aza al-Rafān arrived on Monday forenoon the 16th of the month of Rajab with the letter in his hand in which you expressed your concern about Sa’id bin ‘Awīdān. Yes indeed, he reached us, but he did neither insult nor defame you. Rather, he told us “I left the Italian foreigners’ service and business. And now, I desire and crave your protection so that I am not on non-Arab land.”

In fact, I have already informed you in a previous letter of mine what he told us. You should not mistreat him because of your misjudgement, for a misjudgement is an offence. The above-mentioned Sa’id bin ‘Awīdān has never before intervened in our correspondence, so how could he cause its interruption, while he is not our intermediary? How could you believe that I would accept that his words lead to calamity and strife? That would not be appropriate. He is only one man among the people who came to us, just like many other people do.

And now, o governor of Aseb, pardon and forgive him, do not be angry with him, harm him, mistreat him or seize his money, for he has come to us and entered under our protection and under our authority. This is what we tell you. In fact, he presented himself to us before we wrote you a letter, which might or might not have reached you and in which we mentioned using the case of Sa’id ‘Awīdān. In addition, we warned all tribes that he is counted as one of our sons and one of our family. Let this be known to you.

Furthermore, our servant Muḥammad bin Aḥmad reached us on the 12th of the month of Sha’bān, Sunday evening, with your esteemed letter in his hand. We read its contents and understood its intentions. However, news not included in your letter has reached us through the travellers indicating that you have unjustly seized and squandered the money of Sa’id ‘Awīdān after you received our letter in which we informed you that he had come under our rule and authority. Otherwise I would not have written you a letter after you were told that he had reached me. You should not have seized and squandered the money of whoever came to me. And now, o our beloved, you have to return the money you took from Sa’id ‘Awīdān, for he is reckoned as one of our sons and one of our family. And we had a herald to proclaim him so warning all the tribes from Moday to Mūdīta as well as the others. Then how could you do this to him while he is under our auspices? This is a disgrace and a shame on both of us. Yet, if you have any rightful claim upon him, send us a letter and inform us.

Regarding ‘Alī Arūma from the tribe of Beylul, you mentioned to us in his case what he witnessed, and we accepted your words. May God fulfil the desire.

From our side, the Sultan’s secretary ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Muḥammad Turāb inquires: “How are you, and how are your servants, and soldiers? I was informed of what you have written to me in the letter you sent to our Sultan. You promised to send me the rifle I had asked for. Please send it with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif. This is what we tell you.”

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated in the month of Sha’bān, on Thursday, after 17 days elapsed, the year 1301 Hijra.

The scribe ‘Aza al-Rafān has been dressed in a traitor’s (*ghīla*) dress. This is what we tell you.

Yosēf Nigusē to Pietro Antonelli, 16 June 1884

Seal.

Debre Birhan, 10th Senē 1876.

After your departure my brother and I have had many troubles and we have been in the worst conditions. The persons who wanted to hurt us wanted to hurt you as well, but after having overcome many difficulties we can assure you that we are victorious. But we have been forced to spend much money and today we are poor. Above all, however, we have your safe arrival in Shewa at heart.

We are disgusted with signor Brémond because of the Aseb affairs, now I cannot tell you everything, you will know later.

Aleqa Kīdane Maryam has been chained by orders of the king. They also wanted to chain my brother and myself, but we have been liberated from this misfortune as well. The king is very worried. On our side we have worked for you and we are all tired. Brémond has tried to do me harm in my relation to the king for no other reason than knowing that I am your friend. But since it is a question of the affairs of my king, I will never get tired. I expect you impatiently and will always work for you. I recommend you not to abandon the affairs of the king, it would on the contrary be necessary to make him content by sending him a mountain cannon which is loaded from the rear. It is absolutely necessary that you get it, [since] it is something the king has long desired.

Regarding the rest, you know it from my brother Gīyorgīs Nigusē who comes to you. From a year ago to today many changes have occurred; I have worked much, God knows how much. After God, King Mīnilik and you know all my work.

There is a complete rupture with the French. All your friends in Shewa expect you impatiently. Franzoi has given us much trouble. He has refused to take the bones of Chiarini by way of Awsa. From Aseb a written explanation was sent to you by the king. All the Abyssinians in Shewa have suggested to the king the route to Aseb, but he who is an Italian does not want to and has gone with the French in Obok.

You need to make these matters known.

ASMAI 36/2–17, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 333, allegato 2, pp. 58–59. *Grazmach* Yosēf Nigusē was one of Mīnilik's most important secretaries for his relations with the Europeans. See also [doc. 180](#) on the author. Gīyorgīs Nigusē is commonly known as Gebre Sillasē Nigusē.

In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to Him. Message from the Elect of God, Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia and all its territories. May it reach the honoured and exalted Queen Victoria, by God's grace Queen of the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland, sovereign over India and all its territories.

How have you been since I [last] wrote to you? I am well, by the mercy of God, and the mediatorship of our Mother Zion. The God of the saints be honoured and praised, I am well because his mercy is everlasting. Blessed was the moment when I received your honoured and glorious letter, a bestower of joy to the heart, written with your seal in 1884 in the forty-seventh year of your reign. I have also received the gift of love that you sent me: two cannons with ammunition, twelve used rifles and five new ones, one gun (*merbut*), two pistols, one colourful tent, and two carpets from the hands of the commander, the representative of India and your faithful servant, Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett. Thank you.

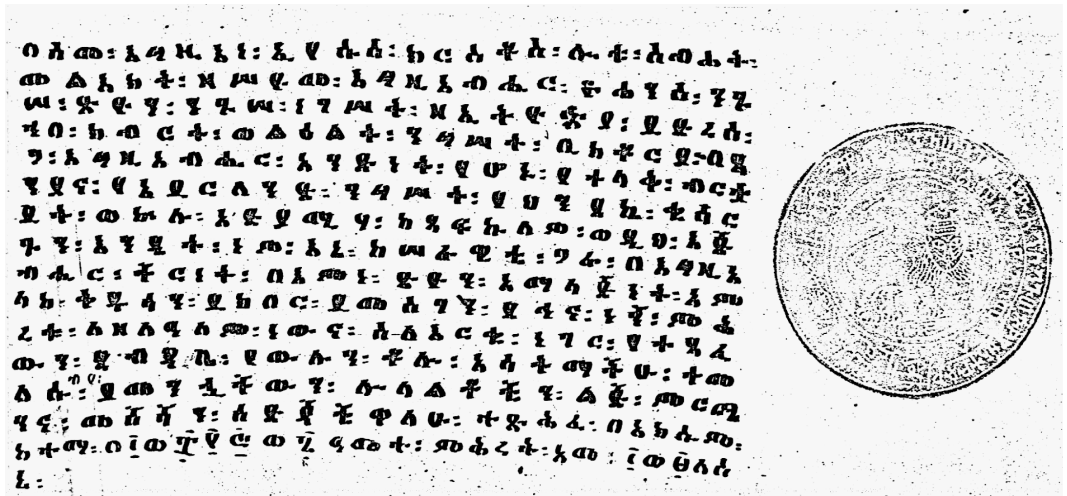
Since you have opened the gate of Massawa for me to make me happy, may Christ grant you joy by opening the everlasting gate of the kingdom of heaven to you. May God grant joy in the kingdom of heaven also to the counsellors in your government for deliberating and arriving at such a counsel to make me happy. May He also enable me to agree with you in counsel and conform to your will. After all, I attained the status of emperor by God's will through the cannon, guns and ammunition that you gave me.

And now complete my joy. In the past, you have not ceased to show concern for my realm, just as a mother shows concern for her children. Though neglected for some time now, it was common knowledge with you and all the kings of Europe that the gate of Massawa belonged to our fathers, the kings of Ethiopia. Since the realm cannot succeed without a gate, I entreat you to help me secure the gate of Massawa under your mandate. Though other matters have been resolved, this one has not. Your appointed representative, Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, told me to keep half of the revenue of Massawa. I asked him to affix his seal to such an agreement. He has come and replied that he could not affix the seal before consulting the Queen.

Written in the town of Aksum on 14th Senē 1876.

FO 95/744, no. 174, Amharic original and English translation. The English translation, done by Mirçha Werqē, skates over the point about Massawa (see *Yohannis IV*, p. 152). The letter together with copies of the signed treaty was sent with Mirçha Werqē and Meshesha Werqē who went to England with Admiral Hewett to receive the Queen's seal on the treaty. Note that Yohannis here repeats the suggestion that the revenues from trade through Aseb should be divided and he receive half, a suggestion, originally by Mason *Bey*, that Hewett claims he had turned down in Adwa.

Yohannis IV to Victoria, 25 June 1884



In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, praise be to him.

May [this letter] from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach the honoured and exalted Queen Victoria, by the grace of God [queen of] the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, empress of India, and all their dependencies.

How have you been, really, since I wrote to you? I, together with my army, am well, by the mercy of God and the intercessions of Our Lady Zion. Honour and praise be to the Lord of the Holy. His mercy lasts forever.

I have said, “Seal the letter you have written about the reconciliation matter and return it.” I have sent you my trustworthy servants *Lij* Mirçha Werqē and Meshesha.

Written at the city of Aksum on the 19th of Senē in the year of grace 1876.

Seal: King of Kings Yohannis, King of Zion in Ethiopia. The cross has defeated the tribe of Isma’ēl. Yūhannā, King of Kings of Zion in Abyssinia. The cross has defeated the people of Ismā’īl. 1864.

FO 95/744, no. 173, Amharic original and English translation. In this second letter sent with Mirçha and Meshesha Werqē, Yohannis points out that he expects the treaty to be signed by the Queen, as promised by Hewett, and sent back to Ethiopia. This was never done, however.

Minilik II to Giacomo Malvano, 9 Aug. 1884

*Lettre de Sa Majesté le Roi Menilik II,
 Roi du Choa, de Kaffa, et de tous les pays Gallas,
 adressée à Son honorable ami, Monsieur
 Malvano, Président de la Société de Géographie
 Italienne, à Rome, rue du Collège Romain, n° 26.*

*Comment vous portez-vous? Avec grâce
 à Dieu, je me porte très bien, et toutes mes
 armées aussi.*

*J'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir votre
 estimable lettre datée de 6 janvier 1884, n° 12.
 J'ai été très touché de tous vos nobles sentiments
 de gratitude exprimés par la dite lettre,
 car ces sentiments montrent votre bon et
 excellent cœur. Quant à moi, je n'ai pas
 fait autre chose que celle qui convient
 à notre amitié.*

*J'ai reçu également votre char-
 mante lettre datée de Rome du 15 Août
 1882, n° 633, et attachée à la présente
 lettre. J'y ai remarqué de même que l'in-
 teressante Société de Géographie a ^{toujours} manifesté
 à mon égard les nobles sentiments de grati-
 tude dont il a été question plus haut, et
 qui l'honorent indubitablement.*

*Si j'ai pris les dispositions
 voulues pour la conservation des objets
 laissés à la station de Lit-Marefiya
 par le regretté feu Marquis Antinori,
 c'est aussi pour un titre. Si je me charge,*
en f.

Letter from His Majesty King Minilik II, King of Shewa, Kefa, and all the lands of the Galla, addressed to his honourable friend Mr. Malvano, president of the Italian Geographical Society, Rome, rue du Collège Romain no. 26.

How are you? I am very well, thank God, and so are all my armies.

I was pleased to receive your esteemed letter dated the 6th of January 1884, no. 12. I was very touched by your noble feelings of gratitude expressed in the [said] letter because these sentiments show your good and excellent heart. As for me, I have done nothing except what is appropriate to our friendship. I have likewise received your charming letter written from Rome on the 15th of August 1882, no. 633, and attached to the present letter. There I have also noticed that the attractive Italian Geographical Society has always manifested towards me the same noble sentiments of gratitude as mentioned above.

If I have made adequate arrangements for the preserva-

tion of the objects left at the station Lit Marefiya by the regrettably deceased Marquis Antinori, it has also been for friendship's sake.

en outre de faire transporter vos collections de Shoa à Cassab, c'est également par pure amitié, et ça ne mérite par conséquent pas aucune récompense. C'est à moi, au contraire, de vous en rendre grès, puisque vous me procurez ainsi l'occasion de pouvoir m'associer aux loüables efforts que vous faites pour le progrès du genre humain.

Mes chaleureux remerciements à la Société géographique pour ce qu'elle a bien voulu écrire dans ses livres et ses journaux, en réponse des calomnies qui ont pu être écrites par les autres à mon égard. Quant aux journaux qui ont pu parler mal de moi, je n'ai rien à leur dire, d'abord, parce que nous vivons dans une époque de liberté, et ensuite, parce que ce ne sont point leurs calomnies qui puissent tourner mes habitudes et mon caractère en mal.

La Société a très-bien agi en donnant toutes les instructions nécessaires à son digne Représentant Monsieur le Comte Antonelli, pour ce qui concerne l'établissement d'une station à Kéfa.

J'ai appris avec une extrême satisfaction, que votre Société a pris la décision d'envoyer au Shoa un médecin Italien savant et habile. Moi aussi je n'oublierai jamais l'amitié et la gratitude que je dois à cet effet
à J.

If I also undertake to have your collections transported from Shewa to Aseb, it is also purely out of friendship and thus nothing that merits recompense. On the contrary, it is I who owe gratitude to you, since in this way you give me an opportunity to associate myself with the laudable efforts you make for the progress of mankind.

My warm gratitude to the Society for Geography for what it has been kind enough to write in its books and papers in answer to the calumnies that might have been written by others about me. As for the papers that might have spoken ill of me, I have nothing to say to them, first because we live in an era of freedom, and secondly because their calumnies are unable to change my habits and character into something bad.

It was very well done by the Society to give all the necessary instructions to its worthy representative Count Antonelli concerning the establishment of a station in Kefa.

I have learnt with extreme satisfaction that your Society has taken the decision to send a

learned and skilful Italian physician to Shewa. I shall never forget the friendship and gratitude I owe to the Society for this.

à la Société, j'ai trouvé indiqué dans
votre lettre tout ce dont devra s'occuper le
médecin dont il s'agit, et je l'approuve.
Que ledit médecin puisse venir seulement
en état de bonne santé, en faisant une
heureuse traversée.

Quant aux liens d'amitié qui unissent
de si étroitement l'Italie et la Choa, ils
se font, comme vous le dites vous-même, que
devenir plus solides de jour en jour; c'est
tout ce que nous désirons et nous désirons
sans cesse.

Veuillez faire parvenir, Monsieur
le Président, mes compliments de sincère amitié
à Monsieur G. Dalla Vedova, Secrétaire Général,
ainsi qu'à tous les autres membres de votre
Société.

Que le Tout-Puissant daigne vous
accorder une longue et heureuse vie, et bénisse
tous ses louables efforts de la Société!

Boru Mēda,
le 9 Août 1884.



I have found indicated in your letter everything that the physician in question shall busy himself with, and I approve of it. May this physician only come here in good health and have a fortunate passage.

As for the bonds of friendship that already unite Italy and Shewa so closely, they only become, as you say yourself, more and more solid every day. This is all that we wish, and we wish it constantly.

Please, Mr. President, send my compliments of sincere friendship to Mr. G. Dalla Vedova, Secretary-General, as well as to all the other members of your Society.

May the Almighty deign to grant you a long and happy life and to bless all the laudable efforts of the Society.

Boru Mēda, 9th August 1884.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

Minilik II to Giovanni Branchi, 9 Aug. 1884

625-
num. 10 28 août 84-

Lettre de Sa Majesté le Roi Minilik II
Roi du Choa, de Kalla et de tous les pays
Galla, adressée à son honorable ami Monsieur
G. Bianchi, Commissaire Royal, Consul de
Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie dans la mer
Rouge, à Assab.

Comment vous portez-vous? Moi, grâce à Dieu, je me porte bien et salue mes armées aussi.

Le courrier de Monsieur le Comte Antonelli m'a remis votre aimable lettre datée du 29 Juin 1884. J'ai été très content en lisant toutes les charmantes paroles que vous m'avez écrites pour me souhaiter bon et heureuse année à l'occasion du prochain changement de celle qui court. Que le Seigneur daigne accorder à vous aussi une longue et heureuse vie, et vous fasse voir en bon et parfaite santé, plusieurs années abondantes.

Tout ce que Monsieur le Comte Antonelli vous a fait savoir, relativement à la caravane et aux cadeaux, est vrai. Cette caravane n'aurait pas tardé jusqu'à ce jour, si, au moment où la nouvelle de l'arrivée à Assab de Monsieur le Comte Antonelli et des marchandises fut parvenue au Choa, je n'aurais pas été en expédition. Je suis en train de faire préparer effectivement la seconde caravane pour vous faire plaisir comme vous autres
me.

Letter from His Majesty King Minilik II, King of Shewa, of Kefa, and all the lands of the Galla, addressed to his honoured friend Monsieur G. Bianchi (*sic*), royal commissioner, consul of His Majesty the King of Italy at Aseb in the Red Sea.

How are you? As for me, thank God, I am well, and so is all my army. The messenger of Monsieur Count Antonelli has transmitted your friendly letter dated the 29th of June 1884. I am very satisfied reading all the delightful words which you have written to me to wish me a nice and happy year on the occasion of the near turn of that which ends. May the Lord deign to grant you a long and happy life and make you experience many plentiful years in good and perfect health.

Everything which M. Count Antonelli has informed you of with regard to the caravan and the gifts is true. This caravan would not have been delayed until now if I had not been on an expedition, at the moment when the news of the arrival of M. Count Antonelli and the goods at Massawa reached Shewa.

me l'avez faite. J'ai été très content aussi
en apprenant qu'un de vos grands navires
de guerre a été jusqu'à Zeyla, et a terminé
l'affaire d'intérêt que mon ami Abderrahman
Youssef avait avec Abou Bakr-Pacha. Je
vous prie, Monsieur le Commissaire Royal,
de vouloir bien faire parvenir à cet effet
mes sincères remerciements, tant au Gouverne-
ment Italien, qu'à l'honorable Commandant
du dit navire, car ils ont agi en amis, en
terminant l'affaire de mon serviteur Abderrah-
man. J'ai trouvé très intéressant aussi, ce que
vous m'avez écrit pour m'informer qu'Abou
Bakr-Pacha a promis solennellement de ne plus
attaquer ou déranger la route entre Assab
et le Choa.

Que Dieu vous conserve, mon hono-
rable ami, et vous préserve de tout mal.

Boru-Mieda,
le 9 Août 1884.



I am now about to prepare the second caravan to give you the same pleasure that you have granted me. I am also very satisfied by learning that one of your large warships has remained until now at Zeyla and has completed the business of interest which my friend 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif had with Abū Bakr Pasha. I beg you, Monsieur Royal Commissioner, to be so kind as to convey to this effect my sincere gratitude both to the Italian government and to the honoured commander of the said ships, because they have acted as friends in terminating the business of my servant 'Abd al-Raḥmān. I have also found very interesting what you have written in order to inform me that Abū Bakr Pasha has solemnly promised not to attack or disturb the route between Aseb and Shewa.

May God keep you, my honoured friend, and preserve you from all evil.

Boru Mēda, 9th August 1884.

Seal: Minīlik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASMAE, AE, French original in the handwriting of Gebri'el Welde Gobena (see his own letter, [doc. 177](#)). Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 335, allegato 1, pp. 61–62. Although the text has G. Bianchi, the letter is clearly written to the civil administrator of Aseb, Giovanni Branchi, as also observed by Giglio, *L'Italia in Africa*.

Gebri'el Welde Gobena to Giacomo Malvano, 9 Aug. 1884

Boru-Mēda (Vill. Galla) le 9th août 1884.

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BIBLIO. SEGRE.

Monsieur le Président

Boru Mēda (Galla village),
the 9th of August 1884.

Mr. President,

Quoiqua je n'ai pas eu jusqu'ici
l'honneur de faire votre désirable connais-
sance, mais, l'utilité de l'œuvre humanitaire
et essentiellement civilisatrice que votre
honorable Société poursuit avec tant de
succès, le penchant que j'ai pour la branche
de la science que vous occupez principale-
ment et dont même les souverains du monde
s'honorent de devenir des membres, et en
un mot, l'amour que j'ai moi-même
pour le progrès de tous les pays en général
et de ma patrie en particulier, toutes ces raisons
dis-je, m'encouragent à vous adresser ces
pauvres quelques lignes.

Although I have not yet had
the honour of making your
desirable acquaintance, the
utility of the humanitarian
and essentially civilizing
work that your honourable
Society pursues with such
success, the inclination I have
for that branch of science that
is your principal concern and
of which even the sovereigns
of the world are honoured to
become members, and in one
word, the love that I myself
have for the progress of all
countries in general and my
own in particular, all these
reasons, I say, encourage me
to respectfully address these
few lines to you.

Natif des pays Galla, le hasard ou plutôt
l'impenetrable volonté de la Divine Providence
m'a fait sortir dans mon bas âge de mon
pays natal, et j'ai eu arriver à un certain
degré d'instruction ; j'étais six langues et j'en
parle couramment et j'ai fait mes études
au Caire (Égypte) et à Jérusalem. J'ai servi
le Gouvernement Égyptien pendant environ quatre
ans, étant attaché, en qualité de sous-secrétaire
au Ministère de la Justice, sous la Direction
paternelle de Monsieur le Commandeur J.
Haimann, qui est, le Chef de Division.
L'honorable Monsieur Haimann, M^r le Com. Ara,
le sympathique Monsieur le Consul C^{te} Gloria,

A native of the Galla
country, chance, or rather the
impenetrable will of Divine
Providence, made me at an
early age leave my native
country and I was able to
attain a certain degree of edu-
cation. I write six languages

Monsieur Malvano
Président de la Société
S. M. ...

ainsi

and speak seven fluently, having studied in Cairo (Egypt) and in Jerusalem. I have served the Egyptian government for about four years, attached as under-secretary at the Ministry of Justice under the paternal direction of the commander Mr. J. Haimann, who was head of the department there. The honourable Mr. Haimann, the commander Mr. Ara, the likeable consul Count Gloria, as well as all the other Italians who knew me in Egypt, will be able to tell you more about me.

avec que vous ses excellentes Historiens qui ont
connu en double pourront être d'avantage
sur ma gratitude.

Enfin, ayant eu des nouvelles de Sa Majesté
le Roi Ménélik II qui est plus tôt un Souverain
Européen qu'un Monarque africain, j'ai donné
ma démission au Ministère, j'ai brisé volontaire-
ment mon avenir, et je suis revenu dans mon
pays natal afin de travailler à Dieu, mes parents
ignorants qui vivaient dans mes pays depuis environ
vingt deux ans, et pour être utile de plus près à
mes compatriotes, car mon avenir à moi ne s'est voulu
que le progrès et le bien être de mon pays; et
j'ai eu l'incomparable bonheur de me trouver
depuis bientôt deux ans avec un Souverain
qui est à même de me comprendre, d'avoir animé
Ses vœux du même sentiment, un Souverain qui
est plus qu'une exception pour l'Ethiopie et
qui conduira son pays, son peuple à Dieu et
claire, dans la voie de la civilisation qui convient
au XIX^e siècle et qui permettra à l'Abyssinie
d'occuper le rang qui est dû à son passé et à
son intelligence.

Si je me suis permis de vous écrire lon-
guement tout cela, ce n'est point, Monsieur le
Président, pour me vanter moi-même loin de là,
c'est simplement pour vous dire qu'un jeune
homme qui se trouve dans de telles conditions,
qui a eu tant d'aventures, pourrait vous être
utile dans les limites du possible, pour les louables
efforts que vous faites avec tant d'énergie pour
le progrès universel.

Si je souffre ici d'une chose, c'est de ne
pas avoir de journaux à lire afin de pouvoir
m'instruire et de savoir ce qui se
passe en Europe et dans les autres parties du
monde. Je me permets donc à vous en remercier.

length, it is not, Mr. President, to boast about myself, far from it, it is simply to tell you that a young man who finds himself in such circumstances, who has experienced so many adventures, could be useful to you within the limits of the possible for the laudable efforts you make with such energy for universal progress.

If I am pained by anything here, it is by not having any papers or journals to read in order to instruct myself further and know what is happening in Europe and in other parts of the world. I therefore permit myself to ask you (for you are the only person who can exactly understand the sentiments that guide me) to be so kind as to make a subscription in my name for a serious journal and to extend your kindness to sending me some issues with the courier that will be possible for you, if you wish to honour my humble letter with an answer.

Lastly, having received news from His Majesty King Minilik II, who is more of a European sovereign than an African monarch, I resigned from the ministry and broke voluntarily my future . . . and returned to my native country in order to find, if God wishes, my ignorant parents (who will have deplored the loss of me since about twenty-two years) and to be of use more closely to my compatriots, for my own future is none other than the progress and welfare of my country, and I had the incomparable luck of finding myself since almost two years together with a sovereign who is able to understand me, being animated himself by the same feelings, a sovereign who is more than exceptional for Ethiopia and who, I am sure, will with God's help lead his country on the road of civilization that is appropriate for the nineteenth century and allows Abyssinia to occupy the rank that befits its past and its intelligence.

If I have permitted myself to write all this to you at

n'y a que Vous qui puissiez comprendre exactement
le sentiment qui me guide, de vouloir bien prendre,
en mon nom, en l'honneur d'un journal sérieux,
et d'avoir l'estime toute de bien envoyer quel-
ques numéros avec le courrier qu'il vous sera
possible, dans le cas que Vous voudriez honorer
d'une réponse, mon humble lettre. Le journal
peut être en Italien ou en français. Je Vous ferai
parvenir le prix d'abonnement d'une année à la
voix, par l'intermédiaire de la personne que
Vous aurez le bon plaisir de m'indiquer. J'aurais
préféré, si c'est possible, un journal hebdomadaire
grand format, qui puisse contenir quelques
gravures intéressantes.

Votre Société pourra disposer de moi,
pour tout ce qui peut être dans l'intérêt
de la noble Sicile, de ma chère patrie et
du progrès en général.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Président,
avec mes remerciements anticipés, l'expression
de mon profond respect et de mon sincère
dévouement.

Votre humble serviteur,
Gabriel W. Gobena

Secrétaire-Interprète
de S. M. le Roi
Minilik II

The journal may be in Italian or in French. I will send you the subscription fee for a year in advance through the intermediary of the person that you will have the goodness to indicate. I would prefer, if this is possible, a large-sized weekly journal that might contain some interesting engravings.

Your Society will be able to have me at its disposal for anything that might be in the interest of noble Italy, of my beloved country and of progress in general. Please accept, Mr. President, together with my thanks in advance, the expression of my profound respect and sincere devotion.

Your humble servant
Gebri'el W. Gobena, sec-
retary-interpreter to His
Majesty King Minilik II

ASSGI, 20, 5, fols 23-24, French text. Gebri'el Welde Gobena had, according to his own testimony, left Ethiopia ca. 1862, studied in Cairo and Jerusalem, learned to write six languages and speak seven, and worked as an under-secretary for the ministry of justice in Cairo before returning to his own country in 1882. He then became one of Minilik's secretaries. The two previous letters of the same date are both in his handwriting.

Minilik II to Pietro Antonelli, 9 Aug. 1884

How are you? I, thank God, am well and so is all my army.

It is with great pleasure that I have received your letter dated in Aseb 29 June 1884. I am very happy to hear that you have brought everything I wanted from Italy to Aseb. When you come to Shewa with Gebre Sillasē Nigusē and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif bringing me all the merchandise, I will tell orally all the gratitude which I feel in my heart for you and for the Italian government.

I shall do what is due because of your friendship and what can make you content, because my word is one only. The caravan would not have been delayed from its descent to Aseb until now, if I had not been on an expedition when the news of your return arrived from Aseb. As for the caravan, which I have just sent with Gebre Sillasē, I have taken all the actions necessary in order that no interference stops it on the way, and in order that it will not take some other direction; so be patient. As you have said yourself, as soon as Gebre Sillasē arrives, come quickly with the merchandise, so that we may speak together about all our affairs. You have done well in not entrusting [to somebody else] the letter and the gifts which are addressed to me; it is better that you bring them with you.

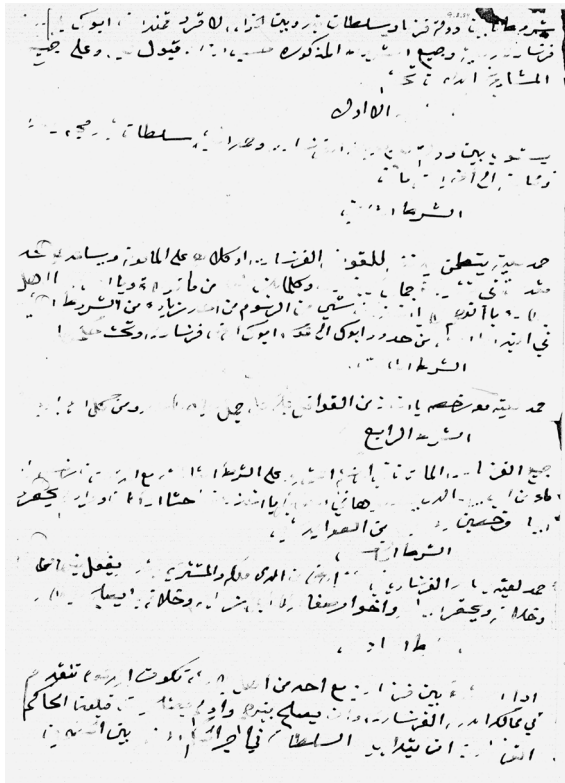
Oh my friend, while I wait for your arrival, I will prepare a second caravan which will compensate you for what you have expended to satisfy me; only come quickly with all the merchandise.

In case it might be possible for you to return here at the time of the feast of the Cross, or even before the end of the month of Meskerem, which coincides with the beginning of the month of October, bring the merchandise to Boru Mēda by the route of Gerfa. But send me, in advance, a fast messenger so that I know about your arrival in order to send a person to meet you. Otherwise, if you cannot arrive [here] at the time indicated, follow the route to Shewa and come straight to Ankober, since I expect to leave Boru Mēda at the end of the month of Meskerem.

As for the camel issue, or the fact that every time I send camels from here a number of them die, I have written to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē asking them to find there as many as will be needed, and promising to reimburse them for their expenses for renting the camels as soon as the camels arrive here with the merchandise. I shall forget neither Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē nor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān; if the merchandise arrives soon and in good condition, I shall do everything to satisfy them. It was right of you also to write to the Sultan about the caravan. As for the station of Liṭ Marefīya, do not worry, because I am always there to protect it. My sincere thanks to the Italian government, to you and to the Italian Society of Geography for the decision taken by this Society to send a learned and skilful Italian physician to Shewa.

ASMAI 36/2–14, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 335, allegato 2, pp. 62–63. As is often the case in *L'Italia in Africa*, the opening phrases have been omitted.

Treaty between Ḥamad La'īta and France, 9 Aug. 1884



Between Mr. Lagarde, Commander of Obok, acting in the name of the French government, and Ḥamad La'īta, acting in his own name and in the name of the officials under his orders, has been concluded the following treaty:

Article 1: There shall be between the government of the French Republic and Ḥamad La'īta, Sultan of Gobad, constant peace and eternal friendship.

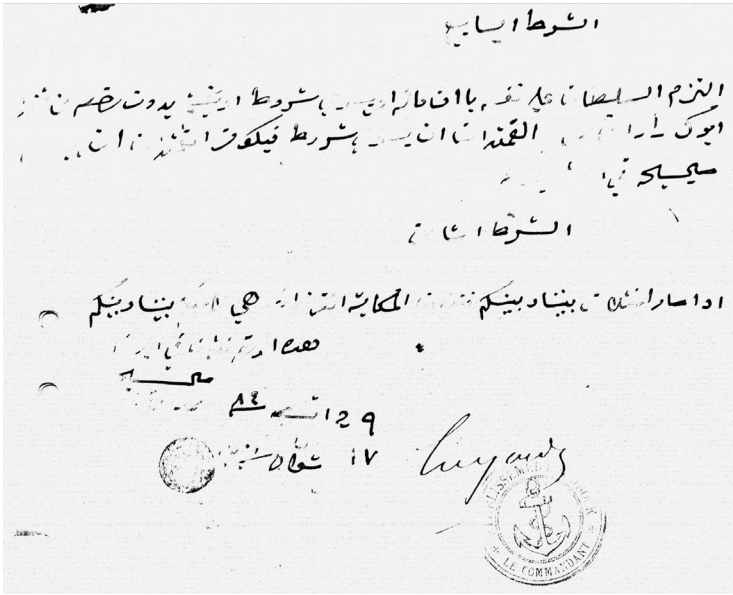
Article 2: Ḥamad La'īta undertakes to protect the French and the caravans of the French and their merchants, and to open the most convenient route and to offer them, by the means in his power, the best opportunities for the purchase of camels, mules and provisions of all sorts, and to prohibit their becoming subject to any fee other than that set by article 3, from the borders of the colony of Obok until those of Awsa itself, as the colony of Obok is a French territory directly subject to French laws.

Article 3: Ḥamad La'īta has the right to collect a caravan fee of one thaler per camel and per European individual.

Article 4: In return for the fee provided by Article 3, the French caravans and travellers have the right to get fresh supplies of water from all wells they will come across or from wells they deem right to dig for that purpose and shall be exempt from all additional fees.

Article 5: Ḥamad La'īta undertakes to grant the French all rights to acquire property with full ownership on his territory, to build constructions of all sorts, to dig wells and canals, and undertake other works that will be considered beneficial to aid the transportation of respective possessions of the contracting parties and promote common prosperity.

Article 6: In case of a dispute between a French person and a subject of the Sultan, it shall be brought before the chief of the French colony who will strive to reach an amicable settlement. Should this not happen, the chief of the French colony will agree with the Sultan to jointly examine the matter and rule on the basis of equity.



Article 7: The Sultan promises not to conclude any agreement nor to sign any treaty without the agreement of the chief of Obok, who should countersign every act of such a nature.

Article 8: In case of disagreement, the French text will prevail.

Written in Obok on 9th August 1884.

Seal of Hamad La'ita

LAGARDE

Seal of Lagarde

(Etablissement d'Obok * Le commandant *)

ANOM.OI, Arabic and French originals. French text printed in *Trattati*, pp. 67–68. Although we present the Arabic text, the translation has been made from the French since this is stated to be the only valid text and since the Arabic copy is unfortunately barely legible. The French and Arabic have identical seals and signatures and are both dated 9 August 1884 as well as 17 Shawwal 1301. The reference to 9 April in the heading in *Trattati* and in Hertslet, no. 70, is evidently a mistake.

Document no. 180

Gīyorgīs Gebre Sillasē Nigusē to Pietro Antonelli, 11 Aug. 1884

Awsa, 6 Nehasē 1876
Greetings.

We are well and have happily arrived in Awsa. I have with me the caravan destined for Aseb and the one destined for Obok. When I was in Shewa, as soon as I received your first letter I asked His Majesty to send me at once to Aseb, but I was detained till today. I will begin by bringing you the camels, and if their number is not sufficient, I will try to find other ones. With these few, however, I have arrived in Awsa, and here I have not found any camels, because water is lacking along the route.

I had to leave the hides and the coffee in Awsa, but Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē has undertaken to send everything himself to Aseb. The ivory, the musk and so on I have brought with me. I have some gifts for His Majesty the King of Italy, for the Royal Commissioner of Aseb and for the commander stationed here, which I shall deliver to you from my king.

It is only that my king has ordered me to go first to Obok and then to come to Aseb. I cannot do otherwise, because this is the order I received from the king. Do not think I am a friend of Brémond's; indeed we have completely broken with each other.

I send Goshu to you, so that you will get to know that the caravan is near. I wish you all the best.

ASMAI 36/2–17, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 333, allegato 3, p. 58. For the author, often simply referred to as Gebre Sillasē Nigusē or Gīyorgīs Nigusē, see [doc. 78](#).

Document no. 181

Yosēf Nigusē to Pietro Antonelli [Aug. 1884]

Seal.

Greetings!

After I had received your three envoys, I immediately went to the king four times to remind him of the affairs of Aseb. The king always answered me: "I will send the caravan to Aseb at once, yes, yes." But afterwards he received the Europeans and they always succeeded in changing his mind. Signor Brémond has more than others intrigued with the king, giving much money to the interpreters whose name I do not say, so that the caravan destined for Aseb should not depart before him and before the caravan to Obok. Signor Brémond is in agreement with signor Ilg and signor Franzoi who always says he is an Italian author. For my part I find that this man is nothing but a slanderer of people. All three of them are against me because of the question of the bones of the deceased engineer Chiarini.

The king had decided that the remains of Chiarini should remain in his house in order to be sent to Italy later together with those of Marquis Antinori, but one day Brémond, Ilg and Franzoi went

to the king and insisted that His Majesty should send the remains of Chiarini by way of Obok and not by way of Aseb. The king made Franzoi aware that having a treaty with His Majesty the King of Italy, it would be appropriate for all Italian subjects to use the route to Aseb. Franzoi replied to him that he was not a slave to anybody and that he was free to choose the route which pleased him most. Then the king finished, saying to him: “Then go wherever you like with the body of Chiarini, but first write a declaration through which it is clear that you yourself have refused the route of Aseb.” The king then gave Franzoi 50 thaler and three camels for his journey to the coast.

The cause of all this is signor Brémond, who by having credit in Italy is in fact said to be planning to start a commercial company with Franzoi. Doctor Alfieri has received some gifts from Brémond and is reconciled with Franzoi, having given him a certificate on the authenticity of the skeleton of poor Chiarini. I have always said that it was not the intention of the Geographical Society to let the remains of the deceased leave, at least for the moment, and that we should wait for an order from the coast. I think I know that signor Franzoi will slander you in the journals and write against the Geographical Society and against me.

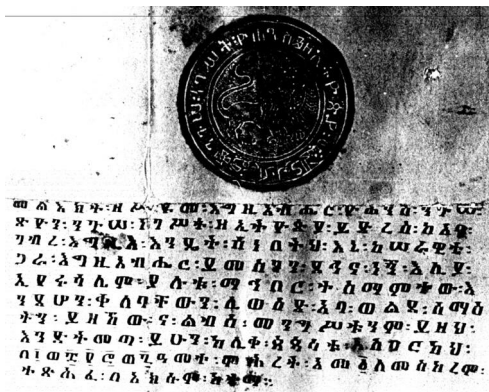
The king has reunited Gīyorgīs Gebre Sillasē with Brémond. Gīyorgīs will go with the caravan first to Obok and then to Aseb. This is what the French have tried to obtain.

An envoy of the French government stays here in Shewa. He does not do anything but speaks ill of Italy and says that the Italians want to take Shewa from the king.

ASMAI 36/2–17, Amharic original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed Italian text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 333, allegato 4, pp. 58–59. The printed Italian text introduces the author as “L’interprete di Let-Marefia”. *Grazmach* Yosēf Nigusē had studied at the French school in Massawa and thus knew French. As the heading of this letter shows, he was well known as the interpreter of the Italian explorers at Liṭ Marefīya. Gīyorgīs Gebre Sillasē was his brother and is in most letters known as Gebre Sillasē Nigusē.

Document no. 182

Yohannis IV to Gebre Igzi’, 10 Sept. 1884



Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūhannā, King of Kings of Abyssinia.

May this message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, reach *Abba* Gebre Igzi’.

I am well together with my army, thank God. If the community in Jerusalem have agreed, bring with you *Abba* Welde Sema’it in order that he may take their provisions. Bring also the royal dress after having it blessed by the patriarch.

Written in the year of grace 1877 on 1st Meskerem at the town of Aksum.

Dayr al-Sultan, no 10, Gi’iz/Amharic original. Printed with English translation in *Chronicle*, no. 22, pp. 184–187.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 16 Sept. 1884

بندر سنجور الى بندر عصب في تاريخ ١٨٨٤ الموافقة ٢٠ شهر ذ القعدة سنة ١٣٠٤ من الهجرة

هيا له الله

الى حضرة الجناب الاكرم المكرم العزيز المحترم الامجد الاله الامجد العجب المحبوب غايته كل طالب ومطلوب جو ليونستالوسه
 بعد السؤال عن حببكم انشاء الله ان تكونون في خير وعافيه وان سالم عنا فنعين بخير مع تمام وسرور وبلغنا كتابكم الكرام
 بهج ولد ناسجيد وقران ما نبيده وعرفنا معانيه وقبضنا ما ارسل لنا دولة ايتليا باغلة والخيل تاخري في انشاء الطريق
 او لعله نظن انه مات وكذا لك قبضنا من بيد الولد سجد كوسيه واثنين وثلاثين بندر وق حسب مرغوبنا فجزاكم
 الله وكذا لك لبس لاجلنا جزاكم الله ودكوت لنا من جناب عينا كنت انت نلى متوجه الى طرفكم مع صحبت شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام
 بندري ما خرم لعله المانع عسى فيه خير ومن جناب خصوصي سجد عويضان ذكوتم لنا في خطكم ما صدقنا عليه
 فنشوف عاقبة الحكم منكم ومن جناب الخيل الذي ارسل لي دولة ايتليا مات كما بلغكم خبره ولكن يلزم ان
 تعرفوه لدولة ايتليا بما مات في انشاء الطريق والان نرغب من الدولة المذكورة ترسا خيلا جيدا والخيل
 موجبة لا معدوم وانما مرادنا بالخيل واصل من بعيد لا لغرض آخر وانك عرفنا دولة ايتليا نيا به عنا وبلغنا
 ان الخيل الذي مات كان مقطوع الزنب وان ارسل لي لا مقطوع زنب سالما في كل عضوه هذا عرفناك

مستد الدعاء
 من عند سلطان
 محمد بن سلطان حنفري
 كاتب سلطان حنفري
 ورئيس الفقير عبد الرحمن بن شيخ محمد تراب
 يسأل عن حال المحب المكرم الاكرم جو ليونستالوسه
 نرغب منكم الجبة والمعرفة هذا عرفناكم
 ويسأل عن حاله عسكر سجد مع اولاد امك

From Sinkara, the capital, to the port of Aseb in the year 1884 which falls on the 25th of the month of Dhū al-Qa'da in the year 1301 of *Hijra*.

To His Honour, the most noble and honourable, the beloved and respected, the bravest and most glorious, the loving and dear, the aim of every aspirant and aspiration, Giulio Pestalozza. May God lead him.

After inquiring about Your Loving-kindness, God willing you are well and healthy. If you inquire about us, we are perfectly well and happy. Your esteemed letter has reached us with our son Sa'īd, we read its contents and understood its intentions. We also received the female mule the Italian government sent us. However, the horse was delayed on the way, and we think it probably died. In addition, we received from our son Sa'īd a small drum (?) (*kūsiyya*) and 32 rifles, just as we had requested – may God reward you – and also clothes for ourselves. May God reward you.

Furthermore, you mentioned to us that our beloved Count Antonelli accompanied by *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām is heading towards you; we do not know what kept them late, but perhaps whatever prevented them was [something] good. As for Sa'īd 'Awīdān, we have not issued . . . [a verdict?] on him. We will see the consequence of your verdict.

And the horse that the Italian government sent, it died as you were informed. It is necessary that you inform the Italian government that it died on its way here. We would like from the mentioned government a horse, a very good mare. Not that we do not have any horses, but we would like to have a horse coming from such a distant country and not for any other reason. Do inform the Italian government on our behalf that the horse that died had its tail cut, and if they desire to send me a horse, please tell them not to cut its tail, but to send one with all of its body parts. This is what we tell you.

The sender of the message is Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē's secretary, poor 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Muḥammad Turāb, prays for the well-being of the honourable and most noble Giulio Pestalozza saying: "We desire friendship and news from you. This is what we tell you." He prays for your well-being, the happiness of [your] soldiers and your servants.

ASMAE, AE (650), Arabic original. Pestalozza actually left his post in August 1884.

Between Mr. Lagarde Commandant of Obok, in the name of the French government, and Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad, Sultan of Tajura, who governs from Rayshālī (Raysālī) to Qubbat al-Kharāb, and in the interior until ‘Assal, and Ibrāhīm bin Ḥamad, the Sultan, the *wazīr* of Sultan Ḥamad, the articles included here, have been agreed upon.

First article

There will be eternal friendship and kinship between Sultan Ḥamad and his successors and the French government.

Second article

Sultan Ḥamad gives his country to the French to protect so that no one may enter it.

Third article

The French government will not change anything in the laws which are established in the lands of Sultan Ḥamad.

Fourth article

Sultan Ḥamad in his name, and in the name of his successors, promises to aid the French in the construction of houses and buying land.

Fifth article

Sultan Ḥamad promises not to sign a treaty with any other country without the agreement of the Commander of Obok.

Sixth article

The French government promises a monthly payment of 100 Riyāl to Sultan Ḥamad and 80 Riyāl to *Wazīr* Ibrāhīm.

Seventh article

In case of disagreement, only the French text is the ultimate witness.

Written at Obok 21st September 1884.

Seal illegible

Signatures:

Ibrāhīm *Wazīr* Ḥamad (two words illegible)

Lagarde

ANOM.OI; Arabic and French originals. French text printed in *Trattati*, p. 77. The Arabic seems to be a rather poor translation of the French, which is stated to be the only valid version in the last article. The Arabic is even dated with the European month and year: 21 September (*ṣibat mibīr*) 1884. The inclusion of Ibrāhīm, the *wazīr* in the prologue, is, however, missing in the French, and in article 3 the French erroneously and in contrast to the Arabic writes Muḥammad for Ḥamad. Owing to the nature of the Arabic text and the stipulation that the French version is the only valid one, the translation above is based on the French text, taking the Arabic version into consideration. An English summarizing translation is printed in Hertslet, no. 71, with a map and a comparison with the treaty between Great Britain and the Sultan of Tajura on 18 August 1840. The treaty, which makes the sultanate of Tajura into a French protectorate, was followed by a so-called donation some weeks later; see [doc. 190](#).

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 5 Oct. 1884

١٨٨٤

من سلطان مصر
بن سلطان حنفي
تاريخ في شهر ذ الحجة يوم السبت
على الرابع عشر منه سنة
من الهجرة



الى حضرة الاكبر المكرم العزيم المحترم والده سنوس الكرم وزير امور الخارجية حضرة سلطان المعظم
احترطوا اول ما نك ابطاليا المكند انور مستر ما يجيني وفقده انباري نغالي بجمال خيراته وان سالتهم عنا وعن
يلود بنا منا غير وعافية ولا ضلال الا عنكم فما صيدرة الكتاب لاجل اعلام الحال وتعرفونا بما انتم من الاحوال
وبما وصلكم منا الجواب وكيف حالكم واحوالكم وعسا كركم انشاء الله ان تكونوا بخير وعافية وحمل اليسا كتابكم
جوابكم العزيم وقوانا ميا نبيجه وعرفنا معا فيه وكذلك وحمل اليسا صرنا لكم كتبت اني وواحد حكيم ركاسي
والشيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام ابن شيخ يوسف وصلوا عندنا بالسلامة ولم نكرامة ولم غير الله عليهم من حال من الاحوال
وسر حناهم وادناهم على حسب طاقنا لاجل اننا صرنا لهجة وعقد اساس المودة وحناهم بخير و
في حناهم والمصدا من سعاده منكم الخليل والخليل بفضنا عنهم والخليل قبل ما يصل النامات في انشاء الطريف
والخليل وصل عندنا وجهنا له بحيث جعل الذي ما يجبه يظهرنا فرحنا فيه فرحنا شديد والاشغال الذي
صيرتموه اصبح شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام ابن شيخ يوسف تمام هي لنا والمساودة الذي ساعدتموه والمركبة
الذي يترجمه العزيم كسلفيه اردوا وشغلنا وجدنا شغلا لها وكذلك وجدنا في خطكم اشغال من كبله
عنا ملتم لنا بما يعلب خا حنا ونبيجه في ادنا وما نجار ليكم الا بخير والصادقة والنجية والمودة والوداد
والله سبحانه يعلب مقام دوتكم من كل القرائات ونجابت احسانكم جعلنا لسانا مع كل الذي ناكل وعلينا
تخو نجانكم بجمع الصلة العزيم وحناهم الى شوي في ارضينا من طرفنا لا يتخص شيئا منهم ماد منا
في ثبات لا نغتموه اولد لغتموه الينا واحنا ب عصب نسا عدهم ونحمتنا معهم مع الذي ناكل ما عده هم
تتاليه مع الذي ناكل وذكرتم لنا مع كفت انت نخل وحمل عندنا ونقلنا منه بالخير مع العزيم ومع الاء فتتار
وهو يقول في نيشان الذي ارسلتموه لاجل العزيم والناموس على فتح الطريف وعلنا وشغنا انكم كستم كسبتم
فوقه اسري على نيشان العزيم فله يتم مرادكم ومواظكم ومقتصدكم اما من جناب الطريف الذي في نيشانكم فهو
مفتوح لكم بالصحة والصحة الذي من العزيم والذي يترجم من شوي جميع الذين يترجموا ما حده يترجم عليهم واما
شيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام ابن شيخ يوسف الموصول من طرفنا سمعنا انكم قبلتموه بالخير والناموس وقضية له
جميع حاجته ولد يترجم له بيته ويحيا له نعيه اظنه من نيشان حناهم ومساعدتنا نرجو الله مساعدتنا والنجية
الى دارم اولد وام والكلام الذي يتكلم مع ابو بكر ما نشا كذلك سمعنا وفرحنا فرحا عظيما وكذلك نطلب
سلام واحد الذين ما هو يصل عندنا انتم كذلك لا تتكلموه وهو الكلام بغيركم وعرفنا كفت اني فو يترجم
في خطه وحوايه وعنه الذي يترجمنا ويترجم اودم حنكم في الطريف كسب ابو بكر ما نشا اننا الى عندنا لاجل اننا
واولادنا لاجل عصب كلام النسا والكتاب الذي ارسل الينا ما طرح فيه حنكم بناسه واعمال الذي كسب له معروف
حناهم من نيشان الطريف وعنه الكلام بغيركم وايضا ابي بكر ما نشا ليرجم بغيركم عن النسا ومن
بعضنا ما في النيشان الذي يترجمه ويحيا له على شغلنا لا نغتموه الا بغير حنكم من الكلام حناهم من

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honourable, the beloved and respected, the venerable official, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of His Excellency the exalted Sultan, the first emperor, the King of Italy, the Commander, Minister Mancini. May God Almighty bless him and bless all his

treasures. If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. The [reason for] sending this letter is news about the situation and to inform us about your well-being and to know if our letter reached you. So, how are you, how is your situation and your soldiers? God willing you are well and healthy. Your esteemed letter has reached us. We read its contents and understood its intentions. In addition, your envoy Count Antonelli, with a physician, Ragazzi, and *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, have reached us in safety and dignity. God did not change any of their conditions. For the binding of love and foundation of friendship we welcomed them, honoured them, and settled them as much as we could. You will find out the facts in their letter.

We received from them the female mule and the horse that were sent from Your Eminence. However, the horse died on the way before reaching us. We liked the female mule that we have received since we do not have one of such a race in our area. We were exceedingly happy with it.

And the arrangements you made with *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif suit us perfectly. We heard about the assistance you gave him and the ship you equipped, which is called Castalfidardo. Furthermore, we were informed in your letter about the arrangements of Markable. What you have done for us delighted our minds and made our hearts rejoice. We shall not reward you but with good deeds, honesty, friendship, love and friendliness. May God Almighty make your government superior to all its rivals. Your benevolence reached its peak when you assisted the people of the Danākil. In return, we shall protect and guard the travellers on our land as far as Shewa and make sure they have all they need as long as we live; you are neither to worry nor grieve. We also offer assistance to the people of Aseb who are collaborating with the Danākil people since they have no discord with the Danākil people. You informed us through Count Antonelli, who reached us, and from whom we happily accepted it with honour and pride, that the medallion you sent to me is for honour and tribute for opening the route. It reached us and we saw that you engraved my name on it for glory. O God, may your desire, aim and intent be fulfilled.

As for the route, we have opened it for you, so it is open for you, with honesty and truthfulness. Whoever comes from the side of the sea or from Shewa shall not be bothered or disturbed.

As for *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin *Shaykh* Yūsif, whom we sent on our behalf, we have heard that you received him in honour and dignity, and that you have fulfilled all his needs and have protected his tribe and family, all this because you love us and want to help us. We ask God for assistance and love for ever and ever. In addition, we heard the word you gave Abū Bakr *Pasha* and rejoiced greatly. Also, we ask one thing from you, which will not be convenient for us and will not be convenient for you either. What this thing is we will tell you and we have told Count Antonelli and he will let you know in his own handwriting and in his letter. What harms us and harms your people on the route is what Abū Bakr *Pasha* wrote to me in a letter, and that was not to open the route for Aseb. This is a vicious matter. Furthermore, the letter he sent did not have his seal, but the person who wrote for him is known and cannot deny the accusation. You judge this matter at your discretion. On the other hand, Abū Bakr *Pasha* and his sons will not cease their mischief among us as long as he is in this life. And you should not ignore him. So do not take this matter for granted. This is what we tell you.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated in the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja on Saturday after 14 days had elapsed, the year 1301 of Hijra.

Seal: Muḥammad Ḥanfadhē.

ASMAI 7/1–1. Arabic original and Italian translation. Ragazzi was a medical officer who had arrived with Antonelli in February 1884. He later replaced Antonelli as director of the station at Liṭ Marefīya.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 5 Oct. 1884

من سلطان محمد
بن سلطان حنفي
تاريخ في شهر المحجة يوم السبت
خلى منه اربعة عشر سنة
من الهجرة



الى حضرة الأكرم المكرم العزير المحترم المحب المحبوب عايت كل طالب ومطلوب وزير امور
الخارجية للحضرة سلطان العظم امير طو الاول مالك ايطاليا المكبر اوتور منستر ما تجيى
وفقه الباري تعالى بكامل خيراته وان سالتكم عنا وعن يلود بنا فانا بخير وعافيه ولا نسال الا
عنكم ومما عرفكم نخبركم في ما حصل لنا في المدة الاولى سنة اثنين وتسعين بعد الف ومائتين
من الهجرة لان دولة مصر يون غزوا علينا بجيشهم وتقاتلنا با اشترقتت من الطرفين ونحن
كنا غافلين عن غزوتهم ونصرنا الله عليهم نصر عظيم واخذوا منا جزيرة واقاموا في بلدة
تسمى جزيرة بطرف البحر ملكوا منافعها وغيصبا وجلسوا فيها وانامتت نفسي من الحرب وكا
تبت ايهم مرارا لان همد الامر ما يلبث في الوصول اليه ولم حصل لنا رد الجواب منهم
لان نصح اخبار من الجانب يقولون الاء تكبير ناوي يدخل بلدة تجرة للملك وهو من طرف
المصريون اخذوا الان فعلمكم انا مالك أرض الد ناطل ما أحد غيري الذي ساكنين
بطرف البحر انا و سلطان تجرة من ثم واحد كجسد واحد و عيال اعمام و نالم أتعرض في ملك
غيري وانتم يا اصحابي انظرو لي في حقوقي وبلدة حمتا تجرة حقا عرفوا لنا ههنا
الجواب عند الله ول وثانيا نصح او ادم من طرف دولة فرنسا ويون اشترت و امينة البحر من
وه ناكل وانالم علمت وبعد ما علمنا ما كرهنا مجاورت الار بابا ويون قتلنا وعو لهم
ومجاور علم الان نصح منهم طالين أرض كبير الذي ما أحد باع عليهم فطلب منهم
مشاهدة الذي اشتر واقيه والا يستنحو امن مطالبه زياده عن حقوقي فانا
انا و دولة ايطاليا الان لم و د انتم ما نرضوا تصيح حقوقنا ونحن ما نرضوا بطرفنا
بتصيح حقوقكم هذا عرفناكم خير ختام

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honourable, the beloved and respected, the loving and dear, the aim of every aspirant and aspiration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of His Excellency the exalted Sultan Umberto I, the King of Italy, the Commander Minister Mancini. May God Almighty bless him and bless all his treasures.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. What I would like to tell you is: we tell you what befell us in the first period of the year ninety-two after one thousand and two hundred of the Hijra when the Egyptian government invaded us with their army, and we fought the fiercest battles on both sides. We had no knowledge of their attacks, but Allah vindicated us with a mighty victory. Then, they retreated to Tajura and settled in the town of Tajura, which is by the coast. They took it from us by force and by extortion and settled in it. I restrained myself from [going to] war, and I wrote to them many times because this [thing] does not befit the principles of governments, but we did not receive a response from them.

And now, we hear news from abroad saying that the English plan to invade the city of Tajura to appropriate it, and it is said that they took the side of the Egyptians.

And now, we inform you that I am the possessor of the land of Danākil, and not any other person among those who live by the coast. The Sultan of Tajura and I are from the same blood and flesh and are cousins. I did not violate any possession of others. And you, my friends, behold my rights; and the town of Tajura is our right. Present these words to the governments.

Then, we heard [the words of] people from [the side of] the French government that they bought a port from the Danākil, but I was not informed about this. After we were informed, we did not despise the neighbourliness of the Europeans (*irabbāwīyūn*); we accepted their arrival and neighbourliness.

Now, we hear from them that they are claiming a vast land that no one sold them. We request the certificate that they bought the land, otherwise they are to cease claiming more of our rights. The government of Italy and I are hence [the same] flesh and blood: you do not accept that our rights be lost, and we, on our part, do not accept that your rights be lost. This is what we tell you. Concluding greetings.

From Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Hanfadhē.

Seal.

Dated in the month of Hijja, Saturday after fourteen days have elapsed in the year 1301 of Hijra.

'Abd al-Rahmān Yūsif to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 5 Oct. 1884

الي حضرة سعادة الامجد الابد والبر ملكة طليبا مستر من طيبته رعااه المولي
من كل سوء وافات فان سالت عناقيت على جناح السلام ولا نسل الا عن صحتكم ان
شا الله ان تكونوا بعافيه تحت خر جنا من بندر عصب مع الكنت استونلي و دكتور
ر كاسي وصلنا عند سعادة السلطان محمد حنري بالسلامه و اكرم نحنا و راجعهم
وعزاهم معزاي كبير و كان الوادي هو اشرا مليون من المويه و خرجنا الي الحبته
من طريق كرفه و هذي لا اجل اكرامكم و انا احدثه له جميع ما فعلتو معيا و
مع الله ناكل واليه الصالحه الذي اتم عندكم لا الله ناكل انكم اتم قايمين و
جتهد بين سحمايتكم مع الله ناكل بكل همته و فرحناه من طرفكم غاية الفرح
و مجد و ن كل اخبار في جواب كنت استونلي و دكتور ر كاسي اما انا ما نسافضل
و لنكم ديماما نعدر سحمايتكم الا نخدم دولة طليبا بالصدافه ديماما و ان شا
الله تشوفوا متادايما كل طيب و السلام و سلم لنا على عيالكم الله الذي سلام

من شيخ عبد الرحمن النور
مام ابي شيخ يوسف
يار شيخ شهاد
الحجه يوم
١٤



To His Excellency, the bravest and most glorious, the Minister of the King of Italy, Minister Mancini. May God Almighty protect him from all harm and illnesses.

If you inquire about us, we are well. We are not concerned about anything except your well-being. God willing, may you be healthy.

We left the port of Aseb with Count Antonelli and Dr. Ragazzi; we safely reached His Excellency Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē, who treated us hospitably, welcomed them and honoured them greatly, and the [river in the] Awash valley was full flowing. We left for Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) taking the Gerfa route. This was in your honour. I told him all that you have done for me and for the Danākil and of the good intention you have, but not the Danākil, and that you are settled and working hard under his protection with the Danākil in full ardour. We made him rejoice greatly on your behalf. You will find all the news in the letter of Count Antonelli and Dr. Ragazzi. On the other hand, I shall never forget the favour of your government. We cannot reward it, except by serving the government of Italy with friendship forever. God willing, you will always witness our good deeds. Greetings. Send our greetings a thousandfold to the members of your family.

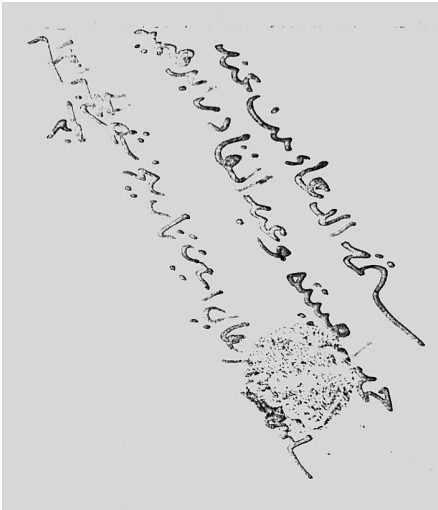
Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām bin Shaykh Yūsif

Seal.

Dated in the month of Ḥijja the day 14, the year 1301.

Ḥamad La'īta and 'Abd al-Qādir Ibrāhīm to Giulio Pestalozza,
11 Oct. 1884

الحمد لله وحده الصداقة والامر
 علي من الانبي بعد . اريد في حضرة الجناب . الاكرم المكرم العزير اعين به قنصا طليق
 للذو سنان في عصب هذه ادم تقاير امين فادت سالنت عنا ومن بلود بنا القير غير
 وعاقبه ونعده منقذ . جعلكم الله في بل احسن من ذلك كما جاء في حيا امين
 وبعد الذي تعرفه من جناب كد الجبال الذي طلبتم منها ما حصلنا بالسهل
 وشفقت فيه تعبه كبير ولطيفة كبير والجمال السند اعلينا خالي بسبب قلة
 الامطار والغيث ولكن خرجنا الجمال بعد التعب الذي يروا ان شاء الله تعالى بعد
 اخر الحج نتوصل الي طرفاكم مع الجمال هذه تخفيف مني وايضا من جناب
 البنديره علام الذي ارسلتموا ثم وعبد الرحمن وصلني وقلبت الاعلام
 واعرفه من جناب الكد في الجمال في عصب اليد وان قانير مره ما يرصوننا وان
 مرادكم بالتحمل الطيب من ارضا الذي فيه مصلحة السفر وقرب ابني
 عليل حمل الالح قريب ساكنو والحمد في ما اذ طيب حال اسم الحمل
 ذلك ان اصلح منه في هذه اطرف ما فييش وان كان انتم مرادكم في شغل
 الشو بنا دق حقا فليس منكم اقرب من هك الحمل واسهل من هك الحمل ما فييش
 في برناهك وانتم الله الله او صلوا في البابور الي طرفنا لمان يوصلكم عبد القادر
 وانتم لمان يوصل مع الجمال طلوعكم في الوراير وهو يجيبكم ورن صبركم في حشر
 بة الطليات هك اصلح لكم واما الفرانج فرضاوي مرادهم يا حاك ووت وكه
 غنا ما شني نعطيههم وان كان امكن لكم انتم اصلح وان كان ما بقوت انتم
 حنا بصر في ارضا والامر



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

To His Excellency, the venerable and most noble, the most honourable and beloved, with this I refer to the Consul of the Italians, who resides in Aseb. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, everyone is well and healthy, and [enjoying] constant blessings. May God keep you likewise and even better by God's and Muḥammad's Glory. Amen.

As for the trouble with the camels you requested, we inform you that it was not easy for us since we faced a lot of hardship and toil to obtain them. In addition, the camels cost us a lot due to the scarcity of rain and grass.

However, after great effort, we were able to obtain the camels. If it is the will of God the Almighty, we will reach you after the end of al-Ḥijja with the camels.

This would be an achievement on my part. And as for the pennon you and 'Abd al-Raḥmān sent as a sign, I received it and accepted the sign.

Furthermore, we inform you concerning the trouble with the camels in Aseb, the Bedouins Qānīr Murra do not accept it. If you desire a good location on our land, where there are good opportunities for travel and which is close to 'Assal, the salt place, and close to Saklawa as well, a place where there is good water in the area, that would be Dābbukan. There is no better place in this area. Furthermore, if you desire dealing in rifles in Shewa for King (*nikus*) Minīlik, there is on our land neither a closer nor an easier place than this. And you (O) God (O) God (O) God, come to us on a steamship (*bābūr*). And when 'Abd al-Qādir bin Ibrāhīm reaches you with the camels, board him on your steamship. He will bring you while I wait for you in Tajura. When 'Abd al-Qādir reaches you, all of you are to discuss my rights in relation to the Italian government. This would be the best for you. As for the French foreigners, they are taking what they desire, but we do not wish to give them what they want. If it is possible for you, you are more suitable. However, if you do not wish so, we are more insightful as to our land.

Greetings.

The sender of the message is Ḥamad La'īta and 'Abd al-Qādir Ibrāhīm.

May God Almighty protect them. Amen

Dated in the month of al-Ḥijja 20, 13[01]

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original. Italian translation printed in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 342, allegato 1, p. 68. The year is not fully written, but an Italian marginal note says 1301.

you will find out the facts orally, sufficiently and conclusively through the people who come to you. And since we met the people who are heading towards you, we had to write these lines to inform you, for the best letter is the pleasant one. Our hope is that you do not deprive us of your letters informing us about your honourable state and your pleasant news, and whenever there is an issue that Your Honour deems could be settled through written communication.

Your scribe Kuddalī bin Kāmil, the carrier of the mail, has reached us. We read its contents and understood its intentions. We praised God for your good health. As for what you mentioned to us about the character of the slaves who stayed at your place for a short period of time to learn how to use a rifle, yes you are right; they have bad manners. However, despite their ill-behaviour, you trained and educated them on how to use a rifle: may God reward you with good things.

And now, o beloved, we have bidden *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām and Count Antonelli farewell. And while they were still on their way out of Gerfa (Kafrā), their letter reached us and they mentioned to us that they heard that the *ferenj* people from Kasa Bizbiz were killed beneath Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) at a distance of one day’s journey. When the news reached us, we informed you. As is not hidden from you, not all of the land is under our authority. The people who live beneath Abyssinia are neither reliable nor trustworthy since they have no business and no transactions on our land.

We also sent you nine of our slaves that are to join our army with Dummū ‘Alī and the scribe [Kuddalī] bin ‘Ablā Kāmil. We would like you to train them on how to use a rifle, just like you have done with our slaves before. As a matter of fact, our dear Count Antonelli . . . (two words missing) that the slaves have arrived to Aseb. You are to guard them and . . . (one word missing) as long as they are with you. As for their expenses and their provisions, . . . (two words missing) Count Antonelli, and they lacked nothing, so you . . . (two words missing) to satisfy their needs.

In addition, do discipline them, . . . (one word missing) and warn them, and confine them in accordance with your training, for . . . (words missing) the one who is present is better-sighted than the one absent. Furthermore, I sent seven men to Obok to be trained on how to use a rifle. However . . . (words missing), news has reached me that Ḥamad bin La’īta had to send the above-mentioned . . . to Aseb. Maybe there was no . . . (one word missing) for them. So if he sent them, and they reached you, you have to accept them . . . (two lines missing) . . . our desire to use a rifle. Also discipline and confine them in accordance with your training. In addition, o beloved, if they learn and grasp how to use a rifle, you are to send them back, and you have to give each one of them a rifle with its provisions. And be kind, for kindness among great men is a synonym of elegance and sublimity.

And also, o beloved, Mehammad Ḥanfadhē’s secretary, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin *Shaykh* Muḥammad Turāb, prays for your Honour’s well-being and that of your soldiers morning and forenoon. As is not hidden from your respectable Honour, I desire that you send us a good rifle, Abū Tīz with its provisions in accordance with your former and further benevolence. May God reward you with the best things for ever and ever. We shall always be at your service. We read your letters to the most illustrious Sultan Mehammad word by word. Previously we sent a letter and asked the ruler of Aseb, Branchi, to send us a rifle, and he replied in his letter that he accepted sending the rifle with its provisions. He mentioned [this] in three letters and he promised us to send [it], yet he did not send it to us. Then he left without sending any letter. I wanted to write a separate letter, another than this one, but I obtained the permission from Sultan Maḥammad [to include my words]. So please do not deprive me of my wish, and my wish is an Abū Tīz rifle with its provisions and good clothes, a loincloth, and a prayer carpet for correct prayer. Send them to us through the hand of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām Yūsif or else through the hand of your scribe Kuddalī bin Kāmil, for he is a member of our tribes and our cousin, so be kind to him for he is at your service and has never let you down, by God, by God, by God. This is what we tell you.



Count Antonelli, the physician and *Shaykh* ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām wrote in their letter that the Danākil on the Kafīrā route honoured them greatly and protected them and butchered many animals in honour of Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē. Let this be known to you. Also, please send us the letter envelopes through the hands of Kuddalī bin Kāmel. Furthermore, Sultan Moḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē says: “I sent to you our own slave named Amān to be treated and cured by the physician of Aseb. Let him cure him”. This is what we tell you. As for the mail that Kuddalī bin Kāmel brought, we sent it to Kafīrā. Let this be known to you.

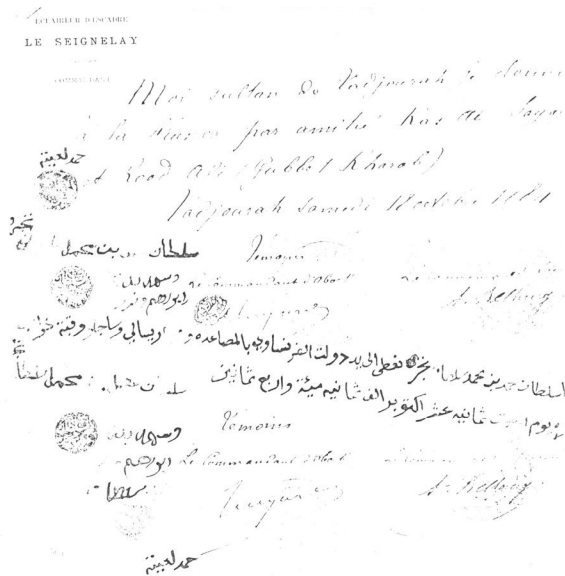
From Sultan Maḥammad bin [son of] Sultan Ḥanfadhē the deceased.

Seal: illegible.

Dated in the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjā, Thursday afternoon, after 26 days have elapsed, the year 13[0]1 of Hijrā.

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original. The Arabic text is unfortunately partly destroyed and thus the translation at times somewhat tentative. Note the reference to Emperor Yohannis as Kasa Bizbiz.

Donation by Ḥamad Muḥammad et al. of territory to France, 18 Oct. 1884



Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad. Sultan of Tajura, present to the French government for friendship's sake Raysālī (Raysālī), Sagallo and Qubbat al-Kharāb.

Tajura, Saturday 18th October 1884.

Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad, Sultan of Tajura.

Ḥamad La'īta; Seal: Ḥamad La'īta.

Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad, Sultan of Tajura; Seal: Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad.

Certified by Ibrāhīm, *wazīr*; Seal: Ibrāhīm, sultan.

Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad, Sultan of Tajura; Seal: Sultan Ḥamad bin Muḥammad.

Certified by Ibrāhīm, *wazīr* of Ḥamad, the sultan; Seal: Ibrāhīm, sultan.

Ḥamad La'īta; Seal: Ḥamad La'īta.

Witnesses:

The commander of Obok, Lagarde; Seal: Établissement d'Obock. Le Commandant.

The commander of the "Seignelay", A. Bellanger; Seal: illegible.

ANOM.OI, French/Arabic original. French text printed in *Trattati*, p. 78. The printed French text erroneously identifies Qubbat al-Kharāb as Rood Ali. The Arabic text seems to be written across an already finished French document written on the paper of the French vessel "Le Seignelay". Even in the Arabic text the date is given as 18 October (Aktūbir). The "donation" was preceded by a treaty only a few weeks earlier; see [doc. 184](#).

Minilik II to Giulio Pestalozza, 4 Nov. 1884

Seal.

Boru Mēda, 26th Ṭiqimt 1877

Letter from His Majesty Minilik II, King of Shewa, Kefa and all the lands of the Galla, to the honourable Cavaliere Giulio Pestalozza, head of the civil administration of His Majesty the King of Italy in Aseb.

How are you? We are well, by the grace of God, and so are our armies. It is with great pleasure that we have received your letter dated 23rd August 1884 which Count Pietro Antonelli has delivered to us. He has arrived to us safe and sound, as has his travel companion Doctor Ragazzi. We have received them with much joy and honour. We have talked with the count about all our affairs, which we have concluded. Regarding the day of departure of our envoys, we will decide and let you know as soon as the affairs related to this are finished.

We will also send a letter to Sultan Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē together with thirty (30) elephant tusks so that he supervises the safety of the route and provides the necessary camels. We will also send ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to the coast again.

We hope, royal governor, that you will take care of Gebre Sillasē Nigusē and all those accompanying him and support them with what they might need.

May the Almighty be with you, Royal Governor, and preserve you from all evil.

ASMAI 36/2–17, Amharic or probably French original that has been lost or misplaced and could not be found. Printed French text in *L'Italia in Africa*, I.3 no. 372, allegato 2, p. 92.

Maḥammad Ḥanfadhē to Giulio Pestalozza, 11 Nov. 1884

*Lettera dell'arabo del 11 novembre - 1884 - Firenze - che conferma
 l'averanno della spedizione italiana in favore della causa abissina - Ma
 dello spirito che le volge sue con gli indizi di un appianamento
 l'aspetto di chi non si può dire il vostro cuore per il vostro*

الى حضرة الاكرم المكرم العزيز المحترم الحاكم المعتبر المحب
 الاكبر صاحبنا ومحبنا جوليو بستولو لسه حاكم عصب
 هداه الله تعالى امين وان سالم عنا وعن يلود بنا فاننا
 بخير وعافية ولا نسال الا عنكم وصل الينا جوابكم الكريم
 وقرانا مبانيه وعرفنا معانيه فحمدن الله تعالى على صحة عافيتكم
 صدور العروف من محروس سكره وكل علم خير وسرور
 وانتم كذلك على كمال العافية انشاء الله وذو كرتم لنا من جناب
 الفرح المقتولين تحت الجبهة قد عرفناكم كما بلغنا خبرهم
 في خط الشيخ عبد الرحمن الزمام بن شيخ يوسف والمحب كنت انت لنا
 مع صحة المكتب كدي بن كامل والحقايق تجدون في بسطة
 عبد الرحمن الزمام وصاحبنا كنت انت نلى والبسطة واصل اليك
 مع خطنا هذا بيد مكتبكم فهو محب كما بلغكم في السابق والمحل الذي
 قتلوه ما هي حكمتنا ليس لهم الا استعمال في اراضينا ومن جناب
 ما ذكرتم لنا من عبيدنا لعساكر وصولهم عندهم وموعدونا تعليم
 ضرب البندق كما عرفناكم حيث ما دامو عندهم ربهوم وعرفوهم وعلو
 وفي ظننا لم تقصروا بالتعليم فلا تقطعوا عنا الكاتبة عن احوالكم
 واخباركم مع كل غرض يبد والجنا بكم تقضا بحر التعريف

Handwritten marginal notes in Arabic script, including dates like 11/11/84 and other illegible text.

To His Excellency, the most noble and most honourable, the beloved and respected, the esteemed ruler (*hākīm*), the dearest, our friend and our dear Giulio Pestalozza, the ruler (*hākīm*) of Aseb. May God Almighty lead him. Amen.

If you ask about us and those who take refuge with us, we are well and healthy, and we are not concerned about anything except you. Your esteemed letter has reached us; we read its contents and understood its intentions. So we praised the Lord for your good health. These lines are dispatched from Sinkara the protected; all information is good and favourable. May you be likewise in complete health if it is God's will.

You mentioned to us the case of the foreigners killed beneath Abyssinia. We informed you about them as soon as the news reached us in the letter of *Shaykh* 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām and the beloved Count Antonelli accompanied by the scribe Kuddalī bin Kāmil. The facts are to be found in the mail of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dhammām and our friend Count Antonelli. The mail will reach you along with this letter of ours through the hand of your scribe, who is Muḥammad. As you were previously informed, the place where they were killed is not under our authority and they had no business on our land. As for what you mentioned about our slave soldiers when they reached you, our desire is that you train them on how to use the rifle as we informed you. As long as they are staying at your place, discipline them and train them, for we believe that you have never failed in training. Do not deprive us of your letters whenever there is an issue that your honour deems could be settled through written communication.

The sender of the message is Sultan Mehammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē.

Dated on Tuesday in the month of Muḥarram after 22 days had elapsed, the year 1302 of Hijra.

Also Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē asks you to send him bullets for the Filī rifles, a sample of which was sent through the hands of your scribe Muḥammad; collect it from him and send [them] fast.

Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē's secretary, Muḥammad Turāb, inquires about your well-being and tells you "We were informed of what you wrote to us in the letter. May God reward you with good things. And you informed us of what you have written for our sake. This is the right affection. May you live long in peace."

ASMAE, AE 2. Arabic original. No seal. The foreigners referred to as killed beneath Ethiopia were Gustavo Bianchi and his associates. In spite of being warned and asked to take another route, he went from Meqelē to Aseb and was killed in the Danākil in October 1884. See further [doc. 174](#).

Treaty between Ḥamad La'īta and Italy, Nov. 1884

١٨٨٤
١٨٨٤

المجد لله وحده
بيان الشروط ومعااهدة الامان والحماية بين السلطان حمد
ابن السلطان لعينه للمصوم ودولة ايتاليا الفخيمة على يد وكيلها
في عسكسب
الشروط الاول

الحمية والسلام تكون ذممه بين السلطان حمد لعينه وجميع دعيته وبين سلطان ودولة
ايتاليا وجميع دعيتهم ولا دخل تشيخ ذلك السلطان حمد يطلب حماية دولة ايتاليا لنفسه
وذرعيته ولجميع الارض التابعة له
المشروط الثاني

دولة ايتاليا بنتاً على سلطان السلطان حمد لعينه وعلى مرشديه ان يترك كل قوتك وتضعف
تحت حمايتها السلطان حمد لعينه ودعيته وجميع الارض التابعة له وبيان سدد رعا من
داخل لاس بحر قبه الخاراب الشرقى جنوباً الى بحر عسل او بحر الملح وجميع بحر قبه الخراب
وشطوطها من جميع الاطراف وايضا خارج بحر القبه غنط البحر الاذبح لارض ايتاليا كل من
طرف لليه ومن بحر عسل ارض اسقطه تنصل الى ارض ارض وجميع ذلك يكون تحت
حمايه دولة ايتاليا

المشروط الثالث
السلطان حمد لعينه يبقى في حكمه الخاصه وحقوقه السلطانية على الونا كل في جميع
الارض المذكوره

المشروط الرابع
السلطان حمد لعينه يطي لدولة ايتاليا دلك على شط قبه الخراب ومرسه ثانيه خارج
البحر المذكور لامل ان الدولة تشي اذا اشتمت في تلك الموضعين مدينتين او محلات للقوافل
وتنصح ضمها بنذيرة شعقها من حكمها
المشروط الخامس

السلطان حمد يعهد ان يبيع ويحيل شيئاً من املاكه ومن ارضه بدون تصريح من
حكومة ايتاليا وبالخصوص بحر عسل والمثلج الخارج منه يكون خاصاً الى حمد لعينه وجمته

Praise be to God

List of clauses of the treaty of peace and protection between Sultan Ḥamad bin Sultan La'īta, the deceased, and the illustrious Italian government represented by its Consul in Aseb:

Article 1

There will be constant friendship and peace between Sultan Ḥamad La'īta and his dependents and the Italian governments and all its dependents. In order to affirm that, Sultan Ḥamad La'īta demands that the Italian government protects him, his dependents and all the lands under his reign.

Article 2

The Italian government, at the request of Sultan Ḥamad La'īta and the desire of the Danākil, has accepted and placed under their protection Sultan Ḥamad La'īta, his dependents and all the lands under his reign. The borders are from the eastern cape of the gulf of Qubbat al-Khārāb until the lake of 'Assal or the Salt lake, and all the gulf of Qubbat al-Kharāb and its shore from all sides, and also, outside the gulf of Qubbat, the coast of Baḥr al-Ladḥaq (?) until the lands of the Danākil on the side of the 'Isa; and from the lake of 'Assal the lands of the sultan stretches to the lands of Arar (?). All of the above lands will be under the protection of the Italian government.

Article 3

Sultan Ḥamad La'īta keeps his exclusive rule and his sovereign rights over the Danākil in all the lands enlisted.

Article 4

Sultan Ḥamad La'īta grants the government of Italy Dabbakan, situated on the beach of Qubbat al-Kharāb, and another place outside the gulf mentioned, so that the government can according to its wish in these places build two towns or stations for its caravans and raise its flag and exercise its jurisdiction.

Article 5

Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta undertakes neither to sell, nor to break up, any of his possessions or his lands without the approval of the Italian government, especially the 'Assal lake; furthermore, the salt extracted from it will exclusively be for Ḥamad bin La'īta and his people, and for Sultan Maḥammad

وإلى السلطان محمد حنفرى وإلى السلطان شينكين ملك بخرخنة ويكون ممنوع خروج تلك الملح إلى
البحر الأحمر والبلد الأجنبي

المشروط السادس

السلطان حمد بن حماد أن يعطي لكل رعيا ملكن ايتاليا الحرية التامة بالوقاه والتحرر بلجامل مساكين
السلطنة سون كان بسبب الخمر وغيره بدون ان يلتزم ان يدفع أى عوالمو سريره او اقامة

المشروط السابع

السلطان حمد لعنه يتعهد بان يدافع على حقوق النيان ويحمي مراكزهم من طرف البحر جميعاً سواء كان
دناكل وغيرهم من قبائل العبه وجميع القوافل المتوجهة من أو إلى مراكز النيان تكون تحت
حمايته وحمايته حصته والضرر له ما عدا ذلك من دولة ايتاليا وقها رنا والجزر ماوه وساعدته تكون
خاصاً لجزر ايتاليا المسالمة والتجار من مراكز النيان جميعاً وملك الهيب السنية الملكن مسلكين
وارض الحبش جميعاً

المشروط الثامن

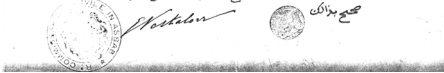
بمقابلته ذلك دولة ايتاليا تحمي من طرف البحر السلطان حمد لعنه وجميع ارضه حمايه صحيحه
دائمة ودعيتها في بلاد الرجبية تكون بحجه عند قناصل دولة ايتاليا

المشروط التاسع

وايضاً دولة ايتاليا تعهد بمساعدة حمراء ودومه لسلطان حمد لعنه ودعمها يكون في عصب
أولى وغير الأركان الدولة فيها

المشروط العاشر

الشروط السابقه الذي كتبت بين السلطان حمد لعنه وملك دولة ايتاليا في حجب الفرنجه في
تسعة عشر صموى الأول سنة الموافق لخمسة عشر مرسى سنة تسعاً على حقيقتها مقبوله ودوميه
على الطرفين - هذه المعاهدة تقدم لادولة ايتاليا القويه لإلاستدراة وايضاً يسير بينها لادولة الملك
شديك ملك طوعه في المقام الذي السلطان حمد لعنه السلطان حنفرى والكتبة على اثنين من بلاد
ايتاليا والقابيه في يد السلطان حمد لعنه في تاريخ يومئذى سنة الموافق لخمسة عشر مرسى سنة تسعاً على حقيقتها مقبوله
محمد بركات



Hanfadhē, and for Sultan Minīlik, the King of Shewa, and it will be forbidden to export this salt by sea in the interest of foreign nations.

Article 6

Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta commits himself to granting all dependents of the king of Italy the total freedom to reside and travel in all places of his sultanate whether it be for commercial or other purposes without having to pay any taxes for travel or residence.

Article 7

Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta commits himself to defending the rights of Italy and protects its stations on all parts of the land, whether they are Danākil or others, from the 'Isa tribes; all caravans heading from or to the Italian stations will be under his protection and the protection of his dependents. The sultan has to determine what is best for the nation of Italy and its merchants. His efforts and assistance shall in particular be for the increase of business and for the merchants of all the Italian stations and the kingdom of the dear and respected King Minīlik and all the lands of Abyssinia.

Article 8

In exchange for this the Italian government will protect Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta and all his land from the coast by a proper perpetual protection while his dependents in foreign lands are protected by the consuls of the Italian government.

Article 9

Furthermore, the Italian government will assign in writing a permanent monthly payment for Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta to be paid in Aseb or in Dabbakan (*Dabbākan*) when the government settles there.

Article 10

The previous articles that have been agreed upon between Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta and the Italian government representatives in Aseb and dated on the 19th of Jumād al-Awwal 1301, corresponding to 17 March 1884, in his essence accepted and compelling for both parties.

This treaty is to be presented to the illustrious Italian government to ratify it, and its articles will be communicated to His Majesty King Minīlik, King of Shewa, and to His High Honour, Sultan Maḥammad bin Sultan Ḥanfadhē. This treaty has two copies: one is given to the Italian government, and the second is given to Sultan Ḥamad bin La'īta.

Dated in November 1884, which corresponds to the month of Ṣafar in the year 1302.

Verified like this.

Seals: Ḥamad La'īta
R. Commissario Civile in Aseb.
Signed: Pestalozza

ASMAE, AE 2, Arabic original. Printed Italian text in *Trattati*, pp. 79–81 where it refers back to the convention of 17 March 1884 and a note states that it was ratified by the Italian government in November 1884.

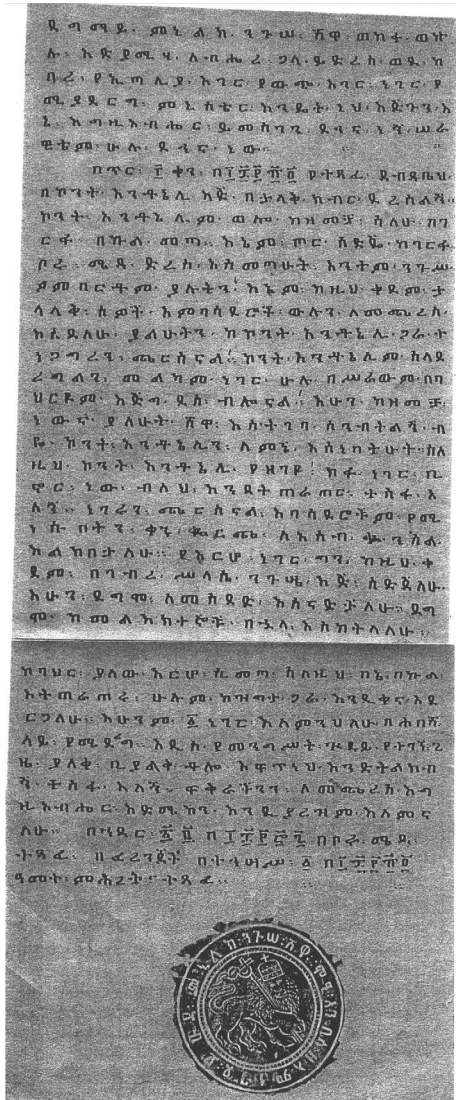
Seal: King of Kings Yohannis of Ethiopia; Yūḥannā, King of Kings of Abyssinia.

Message from the Elect of God Yohannis, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia, to our father *memhir* Welde Sema'it, teacher of the Ethiopians who are in Jerusalem at *Dayr al-Sultan*.

How are you since I wrote to you? I am well with my army, praise be to God. I had given an order that 500 thalers should be allotted to you from the money that was sent for the purchase of the royal dress, assuming that the dress had not been bought yet. But now, it has been found that [the sum] has been used for the purchase. And now, borrow 500 thalers for your provisions and go. I shall repay the money. I sent you not because I lack people, but rather because you know the language and the secrets.

Written on the 14th of Hidar in the year of grace 1877 in the camp of Gura.

Minilik II to Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 2 Dec. 1884



[May the letter from] the second Minilik, King of Shewa and Kefa and all the districts of the Galla country, reach the honoured foreign minister of Italy.

How are you, really? I am well, thank God, and my soldiers are well. Your letter, written on the 3rd of Tirr 1884, has reached me with great honour through the hand of Count Antonelli. Count Antonelli came through Gerfa while I was on an expedition in Wello. I had him brought from Gerfa to Boru Mēda by sending an army.

[I] and Count Antonelli have discussed and have come to a final conclusion on what you and King Umberto said and about which I had earlier said that I would send important people as ambassadors to conclude the treaty. We are very pleased with all the good things that Count Antonelli has done for us, by his work and his conduct. Now that I am on an expedition, I have asked Count Antonelli saying “Stay with me until I enter Shewa”, and have kept him. For this reason, I hope that you will not suspect that Count Antonelli has tarried because something bad has happened. We have completed the matter. And having determined the day on which the ambassador will leave, I shall inform the consul at Aseb.

As for the salt, I sent [some] earlier with Gebre Sillasē Nigusē, and now I have prepared some [more] to be sent. Also, I will send some after the messengers, when the caravan comes from the sea. For this reason do not have any doubt about my part; I shall make everything straight in due time. And now let me ask you for one thing. I hope that you will write to me immediately whenever a new governmental affair about Abyssinia comes up, even if the decisions remain as taken. I ask God that he may prolong your life so that we may fulfil our friendship.

Written at Boru Mēda on 24 Hidar 1877; by the [calendar] of the *ferenj* on 1 Tahsas 1884 in the year of grage.

Seal: Minilik, King of Shewa. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.

ASMAI 36/2–21bis, Amharic original. 24 Hidar 1877 was 2 December 1884, not the 1st, as in the Amharic text.

Donation by Ḥamad of Tajura and Ḥamad La'īta, 14 Dec. 1884

Ḥamad, Sultan of Tajura, has donated his lands to the French government as far as Adaéli, and I, Ḥamad La'īta do the same and give to the said government from Adéli to Ambado.

Obok, the 14 December 1884.

Signatures and seals of Ḥamad, Sultan of Tajura and Ibrāhīm, *wazīr* of the same which testify to the authenticity of the declaration.

Signatures and seal of Ḥamad La'īta who verifies the authenticity of this statement.

Ogslager, military interpreter.

Lagarde
Commandant of Obok.

Trattati, p. 84, French text. Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate any original of this document. It can be doubted that there ever was an Arabic original. Since we have not been able to identify with certainty the places named as Adaéli and Ambado, we have preserved the spelling of the French printed version of these.

This document is published by Hertslet no. 186, as follows: "Hamed, Sultan of Tajurah, having given to the French government his territory as far as the place called Adaeli. I, Hamed-Laita, do the same thing, and I give to the said government from Adaeli to Ambado. Obok, 14th December, 1884 (Signature and Seal of Hamed, Sultan of Tajurah and of Brahim, Vizir of the same place, who bear witness to the authenticity of the said declaration.) (Signature and Seal of Hamed-Laita, who certifies to the authenticity of what he has said.)"

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