

CORRESPONDENCE AND TREATIES 1800–1854

EDITED BY SVEN RUBENSON

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Dejjazmach Wibē to Queen Victoria February 1849



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CORRESPONDENCE
AND TREATIES
1800-1854

*Samuel
Keeble*

ACTA ÆTHIOPICA VOLUME I

CORRESPONDENCE
AND TREATIES
1800–1854

EDITED BY SVEN RUBENSON

CO-EDITORS GETACHEW HAILE ETHIOPIAN LANGUAGES
JOHN HUNWICK ARABIC

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Preface

Acta Aethiopica was one of several projects presented at a conference of Ethiopian historians held in March 1970 at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Abeba under the chairmanship of Professors Donald Crummey and Harold Marcus. The proposal for a publication of this kind was favourably accepted, and I undertook to supplement my collection of documents and edit the first volume of the series. My colleagues Dr. Merid Wolde Aregay of the History Department and Dr. Getatchew Haile of the Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature at the Addis Ababa University agreed to join me as general editors of the series. Unfortunately none of us could spare much time for the project during the years that followed, and by 1977 we found ourselves in three different continents rather than on the same floor of the Arts Building of the Addis Ababa University. Dr. Merid encouraged me to go ahead on my own, and as I was granted financial support for the project from the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries and from the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, I decided to do so.

In spite of the tragedy which befell him, and his new obligations at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, St. John's University, Collegeville, Dr Getatchew consented to participate in the effort of launching the project. He has translated the Gi'iz documents and a number of the Amharic ones, checked through the translations of all the others, and worked closely with me on whatever linguistic information appears in the notes. I owe much more to his scholarship, encouragement, and friendship than these few words indicate.

Since the Arabic documents in particular posed very difficult translation problems, I asked Professor John Hunwick, Northwestern University, Evanston, to join us as co-editor for the Arabic translations in this volume, and I am tremendously grateful for his consent to do so and for the effort he and his consultant Dr. Muhammad Eissa have made to provide me with readable English for barely understandable Arabic.

Over the years I have had the generous advice and assistance of a large number of other friends and colleagues who deserve a word of thanks here. I would like to mention in particular Abraham Demoz, Amsalu Aklilu, Aster Akalu, Daniel Admase, and Ezra Gebre Medhin for their assistance with Ethiopian language documents, and Tagrid Anbar, Jan Hjärpe, Kjell Norlin, and my son Samuel for advice and help with the Arabic.

In the many cases where several translations seem possible, I have made the choice, mainly on contextual grounds. Sometimes I have, in the interest of readability, chosen a less literal translation than my co-editors have suggested. It is only fair therefore that I accept the final responsibility for all mistakes and shortcomings, linguistic as well as historical.

The materials in this volume have been selected from seventeen different archives and libraries: government, church and private. I am grateful to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, the *Conservateur en Chef* of the diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, and the head of the National Archives, Cairo, as well as to the keepers of all other archives concerned, for their kind permission to publish facsimile reproductions of the documents presented in this volume. Equally deep is my gratitude to the many archivists and librarians who have assisted me so generously over the years in my search for "the voice of the Ethiopians" of the past.

Finally, I want to thank the director of the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at Saint John's University, Dr Julian Plante, for allowing us to use the facilities of the library; Dr. Bengt Ellenberger, Lund, for editing my English; Mrs. Innes Marshall of the Addis Ababa University Press and my assistants in Lund, Mrs Ingegerd Bengtsson and Miss Ella Larsson, for all their encouragement and cooperation; and the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries and the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences for their generous financial support of this project.

S. R.

Introduction

For the Horn of Africa as for the rest of the continent the nineteenth century was a period of great change: economic, political and cultural. Many aspects of the developments are still little known. With regard to others, Euro-centered views and interpretations persist in spite of the great progress made by the many scholars devoted to the study of Africa's past during the last four decades. Much of the new work has understandably been directed towards and resulted in dissertations, articles, and books on specific themes and topics. Less has been done to publish the primary source material which is the very basis for the reconstruction and interpretation of the past. An important initiative to remedy this on a continental scale has been taken through the *Fontes Historiae Africanae* project.

As far as the Ethiopian region is concerned, the chronicles have earlier received a fair amount of attention. It is sufficient to mention—for the nineteenth-century materials—the names of Enno Littmann, Carlo Conti Rossini, Marius Chaîne, Casimir Mondon-Vidailhet, Luigi Fusella and, most recently, Bairu Tafla. It is with regard to correspondence, treaties and other agreements, financial records and other administrative documents that we stand almost empty-handed as far as published Ethiopian source materials are concerned. The comparative wealth of easily accessible documents in British archives and libraries on the reign of King Tēwodros has, however, resulted in two contributions which should be noted here, viz. Richard Pankhurst and Girma Selassie Asfaw, *Tax Records and Inventories of Emperor Tēwodros of Ethiopia (1855–1868)*, sponsored by *Fontes Historiae Africanae*, and Girma Selassie Asfaw and David L. Appleyard, *The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and Her Special Envoy*, no. II in the series *Oriental Documents of the British Academy*.¹

The purpose of *Acta Aethiopica* is to supply a chronological series of Ethiopian documents, i.e. correspondence, treaties, etc., in their original languages for the benefit of linguists, historians, and other scholars who know these languages, and provide English translations for those who do not. In the past, Ethiopian documents of this type were seldom published in the language of the Ethiopian writer, and those which have been published in one foreign language or another, mainly in the publications of European governments, are more often than not based on inaccurate and misleading contemporary translations.

Acta Aethiopica is not, however, conceived as a series of *Documents diplomatiques* in the tradition of the multi-volume publications of archival materials of European governments. It is both less and more; less in the sense that the replies to the Ethiopian letters do not appear; more in the sense that letters from private individuals of no diplomatic importance have been included. One reason for this approach is the well-known fact that the source materials, and consequently the study of African culture and history, are imbalanced. There is no lack of documentation of European intentions and initiatives. The responses of and the reports by European actors and observers—diplomats, explorers, missionaries, etc.—abound both in unpublished and increasingly in published form as well. A preserved, genuine Ethiopian diplomat-

¹ Both published in 1979, London and Oxford, respectively. A third publication of documents from Ethiopia preserved in British archives and libraries—David L. Appleyard, A. K. Irvine and Richard Pankhurst, *Letters from Ethiopian Rulers (Early and Mid-Nineteenth Century)*—has recently appeared as *Oriental Documents* no. IX, unfortunately too late to be of any help in the production of this volume of *Acta Aethiopica*.

ic dispatch from the nineteenth century may be outnumbered ten, or probably a hundred, to one by the documents it gave rise to. Any attempt to make a selection representing all the parties or viewpoints involved would therefore almost inevitably cause the African voice to be overwhelmed by the many European ones. I have no desire to perpetuate that imbalance.

A number of genuine Ethiopian documents, moreover, were either not delivered to those for whom they were intended, or never translated, or so poorly translated that the eventual reply had little to do with the matters raised in the original letter. The letters of *Dejjazmach* Subagadis (generally known as Sebagadis) to Consul General Henry Salt, Patriarch Buṭrus VII and King George IV (nos 21–23 in this volume) may be used to illustrate this point. The first two were not to my knowledge translated from their original Arabic and Amharic into any European language. The letter to Buṭrus VII, moreover, never reached him; and the English “translation” of the letter to George IV differs from the Amharic original on very substantial points. Some letters which never reached their addressees were probably preserved thanks to those who found it in their interest to prevent them from doing so. This seems to have been the case with some letters from Emperor Sahle Dingil to, among others, *Sulṭān* ‘Abd ūl-Mejīd in the 1840’s (nos 109–110, 112–114). Most of the letters were presumably read by someone at the time, but in 1972 I had the singular experience of finding and opening a letter from Minilik II to ‘Abd ūl-Hamīd II which had rested unopened in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for some seventy-five years.

In comparison with most of the official letters, which are of great historical significance, some of the private letters included in this volume, which covers the nineteenth century up to the end of 1854, may seem out of place. They are published for what they reveal about the daily life and social affairs of people of various classes and about changes in the intellectual and political climate, in the mentality of the Ethiopians in general and in their attitudes towards and knowledge about the outside world in particular. The evidence is obviously fragmentary and imbalanced. The voices that reach us in these documents belong to those Ethiopians who happened to associate with Europeans and who penned a few lines which again happen to have been preserved. For an understanding of how the Ethiopians managed to educate themselves for the confrontations with nineteenth-century colonialist Europe, they are nevertheless very important.

At the beginning of the century, *Ras* Welde Sillasē of Tigray, an educated prince who, moreover, controlled the trade with the Red Sea coast, knew of no better way of addressing the king of Great Britain than “Shepherd of the Christians” and “Shepherd of the Indians” (document no. 2). Half way through the century, Consul Plowden would still write that the Ethiopians were “vain and ignorant of the world without; but singularly acute in their appreciation of personal character”.² Long before the end of the century, however, Ethiopian rulers were fairly well aware of European affairs and used secretaries who knew several European languages.

The problem of understanding each other in the early stages of the contacts was mutual. The Reverend William Jowett, the first person to attempt the translation of some of the earliest letters in this volume, remarked to his friend Henry Salt:

To tell the truth, my little practice in Ethiopic made this task of translation much harder than I had anticipated; not that I mean to make a merit of the difficulty; on the contrary, my difficulty is my demerit . . . I cannot be sure that I have always quite hit the sense. The

² FO 1/7, fol. 207.

style is very abrupt; the idiom strange, and the syntax full of odd inversions. They write in an unfixed language; Gheez, Amharic, and Arabic mixed together, though with a very small proportion of the last-mentioned.³

The comment about the language being “unfixed” is appropriate. During the first decades of the century Ethiopic or Gi’iz, often mixed with Amharic, was the language used in the correspondence, but Amharic soon took over almost completely with the exception that Arabic was often used in letters to Egyptians. The transition was rapid. In the Salt collection, covering the years from 1810 to 1819, more than half of the letters are in Gi’iz, the remainder in a mixture of Gi’iz and Amharic. Twenty years later Gi’iz had virtually disappeared, with the exception of standard opening phrases and quotations from Holy Scripture. In the 1840’s Amharic letters outnumber the Gi’iz/Amharic ones by approximately five to one. It is interesting to note that there seems to have been no significant difference in this respect between Tigray on the one hand and Gonder and Shewa on the other. The ability of the writers to use the Amharic language, however, varied considerably. Grammatical and orthographical errors are common, and variations due to dialects often show up. The influence of Tigrīñña is unmistakable in a number of the letters, also in some coming from Shewa. One reason for this was the mobility of the members of the clerical profession, who served as secretaries to the rulers and also wrote most of the private letters to the Europeans. The traditional manner of pursuing learning and the increasing ecclesiastical strife were important factors in this mobility, which was further enhanced by the influx of foreigners and their need for guides, interpreters and servants.

* * * * *

The standard opening phrase of the Gi’iz letter was *zattī ṭomar zetefennewet imḥabe* (less frequent *zefennewa*) . . . *tibṣaḥ ḥabe* . . . This has been rendered “May this letter sent by . . . reach . . .” rather than “This letter has been sent by . . . May it reach . . .”. A less common variant was *zattī ṭomar ze* . . . *tibṣaḥ ḥabe* . . . (may this letter from . . . reach . . .). These and similar opening phrases, or a simple *yibē/tibē* (he or she says), persisted throughout the period even when the letters were otherwise written in Amharic. Opening phrases calling for God’s blessing upon the addressee seem to have been more frequent at the beginning than at the end of the period. Inquiries concerning the well-being of the addressee appear in most letters and, as all words and phrases intended to convey emotions, attitudes and assurances, they cause special problems in translation.

The Ethiopian traditionally answers “Thank God, I am well” to any question about his health, probably because he feels that he should not bother others by mentioning his eventual health problems. Face to face with his friend or acquaintance, his body language will convey the truth that there is more to say, if you really care and ask once more. Thus, people who meet may ask “How are you?” half a dozen times. To cope with this in writing, the Ethiopian adds the word *ijjiḡ* (much, very, exceedingly), which in the alternative question “Are you well?” could be disposed of by inserting “very”. That, however, does not convey the correct message, nor can it be added to the more common “How are you?”. The repeated question means: I am really, genuinely concerned about you and your health, so don’t refrain from telling me your troubles.

³ BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fols 20–22, 28 April 1820.

Thus the purpose of adding *ijjig, ijjigun* is to say: “How are you?” and I repeat and repeat again “How are you?”. Instead of adding “repeatedly”, which sounds awkward, we have translated “How are you, really [really]?” and also “Are you well, really [really]?” or “Are you really well?”. The concern or desire to manifest concern is often further emphasized by *semay yahil, midir yahil* or *yeseмай yemidrun yahil* (to the extent of heaven and earth).

Titles and expressions conveying affection are used, but not excessively as in the Arabic letters, and sometimes they are missing altogether. The use of the polite forms of address varies a lot, even in the same letter. European monarchs are as often as not addressed with *ante (anchī)*, probably because foreigners, whatever their position, were by definition excluded from the formalities of Ethiopian culture.

No standard practice for official correspondence in this and other respects had yet been established. Unfortunately, for the historian, this lack of formality applies also to dating. When provided, the dates appear at the end of the letter, but many of the official and almost all the private letters in Ethiopian languages in this volume lack dating. With the exception of treaties, where the European influence is obvious, it is only at the end of the period that a Birru Pētros notes both date and place in his letters. But then he has on the other hand lost track of the Ethiopian months and years and uses the Gregorian calendar. By then some Ethiopians, Mirçha Werqē and Mahdere Qal for instance, had opted for the foreign language altogether and wrote in English.

Abune Selama, who has been included among the Ethiopian correspondents because of his position as the metropolitan of Ethiopia, naturally used Arabic in his letters to Egyptians and mostly to Europeans as well; but several of his letters in this volume indicate that he must either have known Amharic quite well or have had bilingual secretaries. The leading Muslims at Gondar, *Shaykh Alī Musa al-Jabartī* and *Neggadras Mehammed Aman*, also wrote in Arabic and *Ras Alī* and *Dejjazmach Wibē* had access to Arabic secretaries for correspondence with Egyptians. But also *Kasa Haylu*, the future King Tēwodros, corresponded in Arabic. The bombastic style used in the opening paragraphs by those who knew Arabic well—no less than the lack of proficiency of those who did not—has led to a number of obscure passages in the Arabic documents. In fact, these show great variations in proficiency and style with considerable impact of dialect in some cases. Kasa Haylu’s first letters, for instance, illustrate what Arabic sounded like when used by non-Arabic speakers in the Ethio-Sudanese borderlands some 150 years ago.

Ethiopians did not normally sign their letters. Presumably the bearer of the letter was sufficient to authenticate the message. During the nineteenth century, however, the practice of using seals, at least for important documents, increased rapidly. In other cases, correspondents who wanted to make sure that they would not be deceived by imposters agreed on some “sign” or simply referred to some earlier personal contact. At the request of the French traveller Arnauld Michel d’Abbadie,⁴ *Dejjazmach Goshu Zewdē* of Gojjam inserted some Oromiñña sentences as a “sign” (document no. 153), and *Aleqa Fenta* referred to the fact that he had received a Gospel and paper from the Protestant missionary Samuel Gobat and had copied the alphabet for him as a “sign” when he wrote to Gobat eighteen years later (document no. 115).

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⁴ BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 54.

The first group of letters in this volume (nos 1–20) are the harvest of Henry Salt’s visit to northern Ethiopia in 1810. It has unfortunately been impossible to locate the letters written by *Ras Welde Sillasē* to George III, Marquis Wellesley and others in connection with Salt’s first visit to Ethiopia as the agent of Viscount Valentia in 1805.⁵ With the exception of no. 2, which is preserved in the Foreign Office Records at the Public Record Office, and no. 19, which is only preserved in a facsimile print in the *Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, these letters form fols 1–17 and fol. 39 of BL, Mss. Add. 19343, briefly described by William Wright as “Letters from Rās Walda Selāsē, Dabtarā ‘Astā . . . , and others, to Mr. H. Salt, A.D. 1810–1816 in Ethiopic and Amharic”.⁶ They cover the years 1810–1818. The only letter of political importance is the first one by *Ras Welde Sillasē*, the governor of Tigray, including at the time much of central Eritrea, but several of the others support and supplement information from other sources about the internal political and doctrinal conflicts in the country and the sufferings of the people due to perennial invasions and smallpox epidemics. The letters clearly show that Henry Salt, the first visitor from western Europe in the nineteenth century, must have made an extraordinary impression. Several of the “Salt letters” are in poetic form, and while they praise Salt for gifts he had brought to the country, there is not one instance of the requests, later so common, for gifts or financial support. Taken as a whole, the letters give the impression of contact sought or maintained for the sake of friendship only.

The three letters from *Dejjazmach* Subagadis (nos 21–23) written in Amharic and Arabic form the second small, but extremely interesting and important group, providing a glimpse of the ruler of Tigray and his preoccupations a decade later. The two first are also part of BL, Mss. Add. 19343; the third is a Foreign Office document. They are followed by four private letters from the archives of the Basler Mission and the Church Missionary Society, written by the first Ethiopians to establish close contact with Samuel Gobat and other Protestant missionaries who were about to open up mission work in Ethiopia at the end of the 1820’s. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to locate the originals of these letters, but they give every impression of being genuine messages and are of considerable interest as early samples of the approach and style of a Christian and a Muslim respectively who had travelled as far as Egypt but clearly knew very little about Europe. Whatever Subagadis knew or thought of the world outside Ethiopia, it did not prevent him from styling himself “king of the world”.⁷ After the death of Subagadis and Gobat’s first departure from Ethiopia in 1831, there is a gap of eight years from which no Ethiopian documents seem to have been preserved in Europe. From 1838 onwards, however, there is no year without one or more preserved letters.

It was in the late 1830’s that the penetration into Ethiopia by European explorers, missionaries and commercial adventurers began in earnest. Not only the Red Sea coast and Tigray were affected. Contacts and friendships were established in Gonder, Gojjam and Shewa. Increasingly, young Ethiopians were selected to accompany the *ferenj* back to Europe or sent to Rome, Bombay or Malta for education. Though several of the missionaries who arrived at this

⁵ Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (London, 1809), II, pp. 406, 434, 502; III, pp. 154, 276; Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (London, 1814), p. 148.

⁶ *A Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1877), pp. 325–326.

⁷ That Ethiopia and “the world” were somehow co-extensive is indicated in the royal chronicles of Gonder where *Ras Gugsu Mersu* (1803–1825) is reported to have ruled the whole world except Shewa and Tigray (H. Weld Blundell, ed., *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 484–485).

time became famous men—the Protestant Johan Ludwig Krapf and the Roman Catholics Giuseppe Sapeto and Giustino De Jacobis, for instance—the most remarkable in this group and certainly those who have made the greatest contribution to Ethiopian Studies are the two brothers Antoine and Arnauld Michel d’Abbadie.⁸ The latter chose to be known in Ethiopia by his second name, which is therefore used in this volume. Both Ethiopianized their names and appear in most cases as Inṭoniyos and Mīka’ēl, “the Frenchmen”. They corresponded with most of the leaders of Ethiopia during the closing decades of the *Zemene Mesafint*—the shadow king Yohannis III, the metropolitan *Abune* Selama, the *rases* and *dejjazmach*es of Tigray, Begēmdir and Gojjam and the rulers of Shewa—but also with a number of “ordinary people”—collaborators, servants and in the case of Michel, his Ethiopian wife. There are two large volumes of Ethiopian letters, approximately 500, in the *Fond Éthiopien-Abbadie* of the Bibliothèque Nationale (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254 and 256), some addressed to either Antoine or Michel, others written by one Ethiopian to another. Also replies in Amharic from the two brothers to their Ethiopian correspondents have been preserved. A few very important letters from Ethiopians to addressees in Europe are found copied into Antoine’s notebooks.⁹ Some of the private letters to the d’Abbadie brothers are very brief and of little or no significance, linguistically or historically. A selection of some ninety has been made for this volume, sufficient in the editor’s opinion to illustrate both the style of writing and the relationships between the two brothers and the Ethiopians with whom they were associated, in addition to the glimpses of daily life in Ethiopia which they provide.

The first two documents produced as a result of the renewed and greatly intensified contacts between Ethiopians and foreigners in the late 1830’s (nos 28 and 29) are two almost identical letters from Emperor Sahle Dingil, *Ichegē* Mahiṣente Mīka’ēl and Ras Alī to Louis Philippe and Queen Victoria respectively, included in one of Antoine d’Abbadie’s notebooks. It has proved impossible to locate any of the two originals and the circumstances raise some intriguing questions. The next document is a strange letter from a group of ecclesiastics at Adwa to Pope Gregorius XVI, preserved in the archives of the “Propaganda Fide” and important because it was cited as evidence that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had accepted the Pope as its spiritual head (no. 30). Even more strange is a letter (no. 31) from the d’Abbadie collections, reportedly written in the Oromo language and a modified “Arabic script” and addressed to *Dejjazmach* Goshu Zewdē of Gojjam, allegedly by the ruler of Limmu-Innarya, Ibsa Bofa Abba Bagibo.

In 1839 French, British and Belgian “treaty-making” began in earnest with an alleged(?) proposal by Wībē Hayle Mariam for an alliance with France, including the cession of a portion of the Red Sea coast. It continued with the visits of French and British agents (C.F.X. Rochet d’Héricourt and W. C. Harris) to King Sahle Sillasē of Shewa, the attempts of Consul Édouard Blondeel of Belgium to create the basis for a Belgian colony through negotiations with *Dejjazmach* Goshu of Gojjam, as well as various attempts to purchase ports from the local rulers on the Red Sea coast. Gradually the contacts became more formal with French consuls resident at Massawa and Walter Plowden appointed British consul to Abyssinia.

From the diplomatic point of view the most important results of this activity were the British treaties of 1841 and 1849 with Sahle Sillasē and Ras Alī respectively (nos 44 and 135) and

⁸ The manuscript collection of Antoine d’Abbadie is regarded as the most important Ethiopian collection in Europe. See A. Z. Aescoly in *Cahiers d’études africaines*, II, 5, p. 85.

⁹ M. Chaine, *Catalogue des manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection Antoine d’Abbadie* (Paris, 1912), pp. 141–143.

Rochet d'Héricourt's fraudulent but nevertheless generally accepted treaty with Sahle Sillasē in 1843 (no. 66). Less known, but equally interesting as evidence of European attempts to capture control of parts of Ethiopia, are the letter of 1845 in which Wibē is supposed to have offered France a protectorate over Ethiopia (no. 88) and the documents drawn up by Théophile Lefebvre and Wilhelm Schimper on Wibē's behalf in 1849 (nos 131–133).

Most of the documents dealing with Ethiopia's external affairs are quite naturally preserved in government archives: the Public Record Office and the India Office Library and Archives in London and the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris and Brussels. Nevertheless it does happen that official letters end up in the most unexpected places, as when Sahle Sillasē's letters to Captain Harris and Queen Victoria in 1843 (nos 63 and 64) have come to rest in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, and the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, respectively.

No less remarkable is the fact that five original letters from Sahle Dingil to the Armenian and Greek Orthodox patriarchs and bishops in Jerusalem and to the Ottoman sultan 'Abd ül-Mejīd (nos 109–110, 112–114) have ended up in the Lambeth Palace Library in London. They are evidence of the most important attempt of the Ethiopian court at Gonder to solve the problems of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem. None of the letters reached the addressees, probably because Samuel Gobat, as Anglican bishop there, wanted to arrange for the protection of the Ethiopians himself and therefore kept not only the letter addressed to him (no. 111) but appropriated all the others as well. What this may or may not have meant for the issue of the Dayr al-Sulṭān is a matter for speculation.

The least known of the official documents in the volume are no doubt those found in the National Archives of Egypt. When Egyptian armies and administration established themselves on the Ethiopian frontiers in the late 1830's, written communications between the Ethiopians and their new neighbours increased. Some of the correspondence must have stopped at Khartoum and was probably lost during the Mahdiyya. In 1844, however, seven letters (nos. 75–81) from Ras Alī, *Itēgē* Menen and others to Muḥammad 'Alī and the governor general of the Sudan, Aḥmad Maniklī, were brought to Khartoum. All were forwarded to Cairo. They provide a most interesting glimpse of Ethiopian attitudes vis-à-vis Egypt at the time. An additional five letters over the following years, four of them from Kasa Haylu, the future King Tēwodros, throw new light on the rise of this remarkable ruler.

In all likelihood there are in the National Archives of Egypt additional original letters from Ethiopia which I have failed to locate. This holds true even more for the Archives of the Coptic Patriarchate, from which I have only been able to include two letters (nos. 103 and 119) from *Abune* Selama to his superior, Patriarch Buṭrus. An additional letter from Selama to a colleague named Bākhūm (no. 125), found in a manuscript in the library of the Patriarchate, has also been included.

Every effort has been made to trace as many of the original documents as possible. Where the originals have not been found, any available drafts or copies in an Ethiopian language have been included instead. In some cases it can be established beyond all reasonable doubt that no originals ever existed. All known official documents which have been accepted as authentic or referred to as such in the historical literature have been included even if their authenticity can be disproved. In dubious cases the evidence for and against their authenticity has been evaluated to the extent possible without overburdening the reader with too extensive notes. In cases where only a European version is available but external or internal evidence indicates that it is, at least in part, a translation or a paraphrase of a genuine Ethiopian document, the text is published in

English only. The correspondence of the British mission to Shewa, for instance, passed through both Aden and Bombay, and since there was no systematic organisation for translating or recording even the Arabic correspondence at the Aden Residency till the 1920's, some of the Arabic and Amharic originals might well have been destroyed after translation.

* * * * *

Normally only "first names", Christian or customary, were used in Ethiopia during the nineteenth century. When these names, with titles where applicable, were not sufficient to identify a person, the father's name was usually added either before (particularly in the Gonder region) or after the person's own name. Here the now universally accepted practice of adding the father's name as a surname has been followed whenever it has been possible to identify him (except for the obvious cases of monarchs and ecclesiastics). Sometimes people identified themselves by adding the name of their home town or province to their own. If the name of the father is known, it has been used: thus Birru Pēṭros for Birru Welqaytē. Otherwise the geographical identification has been retained in parenthesis.

Wherever possible, *i.e.* wherever the text is clear and/or the person can be identified, personal names have the common form of the bearer's native language. Thus an Ethiopian appearing as Girgis or Gērgīs is called Welde Gīyorgīs unless it can be established that he was actually named Gīyorgīs, while British kings are called George, whether they appear as Gīyorgīs or Girgis. In the case of foreigners, the form used in the original is given in parenthesis. An exception is made on the Ethiopian side for Suba Gadis or Subagadis (rather than the more common Sebagadis) in order to conform with the orthography used in his own letters and seal.

A number of titles have been retained in their Ethiopian (or Arabic) forms: *abēto*, *ras*, *dejjazmach* (*dejj azmach*, *dejjach*), *balambaras*, *abba*, *abune*, *memhir*, *debtera*, *balgada*, *ri'ise mekwanint*, *gēta*, *ato*, *weyzero*, *mu'allim*, *shaykh*, *sidī*, etc., except when used for foreigners, in which case they are normally replaced by an appropriate European title with the Ethiopian in parenthesis: thus *Içhegē Mahişentu* and *Abune Selama*, but Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune Ya'iqob*), Father Felicissimo (*Abune Fīlikisiyos*). The reader who is unfamiliar with the vocabulary will find explanations in the glossary. For some other titles such as *nigus* and *niguse negest*, the generally accepted English equivalents "king" and "king of kings" are used also for Ethiopians. Both *muṭrān* and *pappas* are translated "metropolitan" when referring to the head of the Ethiopian church. In some cases where less known Ethiopian titles or appellations have been translated, *e.g.* *ri'ise mekwanint* into "head of the nobility", *liqe liqawint* into "eminent scholar", *tebībe tebbebt* or *tebībe tebīban* into "wisest among the wise", the Ethiopian words appear in transliteration in parenthesis. In the translations Ethiopian titles such as *dejjazmach* (*dejj azmach*) appear in the form they have in the Ethiopian originals, *i.e.* in one or two words as the case might be; in the notes, however, they will always appear in the one-word form. With regard to names, the same principle is followed, *i.e.* Suba Gadis, but also Subagadis.

Dates in the texts are retained in their original form with Ethiopian, Coptic or Arabic names of the months and with the years as indicated in the different eras. The dates in the list, at the top of the documents and in the notes are all according to the Gregorian calendar. A date with two consecutive numbers, *e.g.* 1837/38, indicates the Ethiopian year beginning in September 1837 and ending in September 1838 Greg. cal.

All the documents of which an Ethiopian language or Arabic version has been found are printed in that version in facsimile followed by a translation into English and a footnote.

Brackets are used to indicate words and phrases which do not occur in the original text but have been added in the interest of clarity or readability, whether this is due to actual omissions or to a greater economy of expression in the original text. Parentheses are used for explanations, alternatives, etc., and to exclude words or phrases in the original which are clearly superfluous and prevent readability.

With regard to the translations, it must be emphasized that the choice between a literal translation and one resulting in somewhat more readable English prose has in many cases been a difficult one. Linguists will no doubt take exception to some of the renderings of obscure passages or the handling of Oriental purple prose. In the editing process the linguistic co-editors have sometimes refrained from insisting on more literal translations with some reluctance. They are not the ones to be blamed if some of the stringency has been lost. It should be remembered, however, that the main purpose of *Acta Aethiopica* is to make the documents better known and more easily accessible to students of Ethiopian history and philology, and that the translations are intended mainly for the benefit of the former. Linguists and those historians and other social scientists who feel the need to analyse the exact vocabulary and other linguistic features of one document or another will in any case turn to the originals. Some of the translations must be regarded as tentative. Nevertheless I have decided not to encumber the texts with alternative renderings, even in cases where my linguistic advisers would have liked to do so. In a few cases where a different reading makes a substantive difference, this has been mentioned in the footnotes.

The notes state the archival collection where the original document, copy, draft, and/or eventual translation is preserved and the language or languages of the document. For the early documents which came in all shapes and sizes—"paper is a very scarce article in Abyssinia", wrote Nathaniel Pearce in 1814—and many of the later, the size of the paper or parchment is noted, width × length. One of the major problems has been to date the undated documents. This has largely been done by comparing the contents of the letters with each other and with information available in other sources such as Ethiopian chronicles, missionary correspondence and travelers accounts, including such unpublished materials as Antoine d'Abbadie's diaries. In some cases paper qualities and handwriting have helped to determine the dates. Uncertainty is indicated by a question mark in the bracketed date. Greater certainty can no doubt be gained in some cases by a more thorough study of all the still unpublished d'Abbadie materials.

Wherever possible, the historical circumstances and the persons involved are introduced, however briefly. Dates in parenthesis in the footnotes refer to the reign of a king or the period when a governor, bishop or other official held the position stated or implied. Because of the many variations involved, it has not always been possible to take note of interruptions or changes of areas of authority except when they affect the circumstances of individual documents included in the volume.

On the linguistic side, simple orthographical errors, which may be due to a slip of the pen or lack of elementary knowledge, have not led to any comment at all. To a large extent this applies also to grammatical mistakes, the omission of individual words, dialectal variations, etc. Our comments on the language are basically limited to points of some relevance for the history—or story—told, for instance the background of the author or scribe or the involvement of foreigners in the process of producing a given document. A thorough linguistic analysis of the documents will no doubt reveal further important aspects of language usage in Ethiopia in the nineteenth century. This, however, lies outside the scope of *Acta Aethiopica*.

Note on Orthography

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

The consonants or combinations of consonants have their normal English pronunciation with *g* (as in *get*) standing for ገ, *j* (as in *jam*) for ጃ, *zh* (as *s* in *pleasure*) for ጊ, 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*, *fit*, and *lord*. When the vowel is not pronounced in the sixth order, the *i* is omitted in the transliteration.

In view of the ambivalence with regard to the use of the labialized consonants, e.g. ገጃጃ and ገጃጃጃ, ገጊጊጊ and ገጊጊጊጊ, we have used the simpler forms Gojjam and Gonder, also Goshu, Gola, and Mekonnin, as well as Bekure and Qusqam.

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

Seals

Seals with as well as without legends appear on the documents in this volume. The legends are not always legible and have had to be deciphered by comparing the seals on several documents with each other. The reproductions below represent the most legible imprints available at present. The Ethio-British treaty of 1849 (document no. 135), *Ras Ali's* covering letter to Victoria (no. 136), and the ratification of the treaty (no. 141) were sealed in wax, and I have not been able to establish with absolute certainty what seals were used, but have assumed that where two seals appear, one is the imperial seal, the other *Ras Ali's*.



Lion seal, used by Sahle Dingil



Lion seal, used by Yohannis III



Lion seal, used by Ali Alula



Adam ibn Şiddiq: "Adam"



Ali Alula: "'Ali. 12 (two figures illegible)"



Ali Musa: "*al-shaykh* 'Ali ibn Mūsā al-Jabartī"



Araya Sillasē Dimşu: "*Bal Gada Araya*"



Kasa Haylu: "*al-shaykh* Kasa"



Mehammed Aman: "*Nijjādrās Muḥammad Amān*"



Menen: "Our Lady Menen. [12]58"



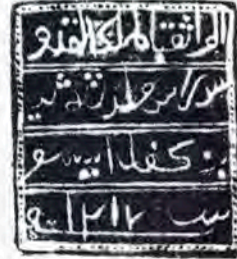
Selama: "Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"



Selama: "[1]256. Selama, *mutrān al-Habas[h]*. 1859 [sic]"



Subagadis Weldu: "Seal of *Dejj Azmach Suba Gadis*, king of the world"



Welde Sillasē Kifle İyyesus: "He who trusts in the Holy King, *Ras Welde Sillasē Kifle İyyesus*. 1217"



Wibē Hayle Maryam: "*Dejj Azmach Wibē*, the son of *Dejj Azmach Hayle*"



Wibē Hayle Maryam: "*Dejj-azmach Wibē*"



Wibē Hayle Maryam: "*Dejj-azmach Wibē*"

Glossary

<i>Abba, abbatē</i>	Father, priest, monk (also used in <i>noms de guerre</i> or horse-names)
<i>Abēto</i>	Prince, lord, master
<i>Abun, abune</i>	Our father, bishop, metropolitan of the Ethiopian Church
<i>Aleqa</i>	Chief, head, vicar of a church, superior of a monastery
<i>Amba</i>	Flat-topped mountain, mountain fortress
<i>Amīr</i>	Commander, prince
<i>Anbā</i>	Father, bishop
<i>Anjetē</i>	“My bowels”, my beloved
<i>Aṣē, aṭē</i>	Emperor
<i>Ato</i>	Master, Mr.
<i>Azzazh</i>	Chief, commander, supervisor
<i>Bahr negash</i>	“Ruler of the sea”, governor of province or district in Eritrea
<i>Balabbat</i>	Nobleman, squire
<i>Balambaras</i>	Commander of a fortress
<i>Balderas (bandiras)</i>	Groom (in charge of horses), commander of cavalry
<i>Balgada</i>	Official in charge of the salt extraction of the Ṭīṭal area
<i>Baraka</i>	Blessing
<i>Basha</i>	Customs official, artillery officer (Arabic and Ethiopian version of <i>pasha</i>)
<i>Bey, bīk</i>	Civil or military official, master, Mr.
<i>Blatta</i>	Title given for achievement in learning and literature
<i>Blattengēta</i>	More prominent title given for achievement in learning and literature
<i>Dawla</i>	Kingdom, state, title used by official at Hargīgo
<i>Debtera</i>	Chorister, scribe (unordained member of the clergy)
<i>Dejjazmach, dejjach</i>	“Commander of the Entrance”, general, governor
<i>Effendi</i>	Sir, master
<i>Faqīh</i>	Jurist, Muslim legal scholar
<i>Ferenj</i>	Foreigner, European (esp. western), (by implication Catholic)
<i>Fītawrarī</i>	Commander of the vanguard
<i>Fitha Negest</i>	“The Legislation of the Kings”, Ethiopian code
<i>Gebbar</i>	One who pays tribute, tenant, serf

<i>Gedil</i>	Saint's life
<i>Gēta, gētaw</i>	Lord, master, Mr.
<i>Gibir</i>	Tax, tribute
<i>Gibre Himamat</i>	"Acts of Suffering", lectionary for Passion Week
<i>Giṣṣiw</i> , see <i>Meṣihafe Giṣṣiw</i>	
<i>Gra gēta</i>	Choir leader of the Left (ecclesiastical title)
<i>Ḥaḍrat</i>	His (Your) Presence, Honour, Excellency
<i>Ḥājj</i>	Someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina
<i>Hamza</i>	Sign in Arabic writing indicating glottal stop
<i>Haymanote Abaw</i>	"The Faith of the Fathers", collection of confessions and testimonies of the Church Fathers
<i>Iḥhegē</i>	Head of the monastic order of Tekle Haymanot, highest administrative officer of the Ethiopian Church
<i>Iḥhegē Bēt</i>	Residence of the <i>iḥhegē</i>
<i>Igzī'īye</i>	My lord, master
<i>Imām</i>	Muslim religious leader, leader in ritual prayer
<i>Itēgē (yitēyye)</i>	Queen, consort of the ruler of Ethiopia
<i>Kāshif</i>	District governor
<i>Kentība</i>	District governor, mayor
<i>Khawāja</i>	Mr. (used in particular for Europeans; in Amharic letters <i>hawaja</i>)
<i>Kibre Negest</i>	"The Glory of the Kings", Ethiopian literary work embodying, <i>i.a.</i> , the legend of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba
<i>Koso</i>	Leaves of Ethiopian tree used as an anthelmintic medicine
<i>Lij</i>	"Child, son", honorific title, mostly used for members of the higher aristocracy and the royalty
<i>Līq, līqē (plur. līqawint)</i>	Scholar, prominent churchman
<i>Līqe kahinat</i>	Prominent ecclesiastical official, administrator of the clergy of a province
<i>Līqe līqawint</i>	Eminent scholar
<i>Līqe pappasat</i>	Patriarch
<i>Madiga</i>	Grain measurement
<i>Maqām</i>	Platform of an <i>imām</i> at the Ka'ba in Mecca
<i>Meggabī</i>	"One who feeds", steward, administrator, especially of monasteries
<i>Mekonnin (plur. mekwanint)</i>	Nobleman, governor, officer

<i>Melake ṣəhay</i>	“Angel of the sun”, Ethiopian ecclesiastical title
<i>Memhīr, memmirē</i>	Master, teacher, abbot
<i>Meridazmach</i>	“Terrorizing” commander, traditional title of the ruler of Shewa
<i>Merī gēta</i>	Choir leader in the Ethiopian Church
<i>Mesfin</i> (plur. <i>mesafint</i>)	Prince, nobleman, governor
<i>Meṣihafe Giṣṣiw</i>	A lectionary for the year or one of the parts of the Synodicon
<i>Milla</i>	Religious community, normally used about non-Muslim, semi-autonomous communities in the Ottoman empire
<i>Mislenē</i>	Deputy, district chief
<i>Miṣr</i>	Provincial city (normally Egypt)
<i>Mu'allim</i> (plur. <i>mu'allimūn</i>)	Teacher
<i>Muftī</i>	Legal counsellor
<i>Nā'ib</i>	“Deputy”, title given by the Turks to Ethiopian chiefs on the mainland opposite Massawa
<i>Neggadras</i>	“Head of traders”, prominent merchant
<i>Nibure'id</i>	Governor of Aksum
<i>Nigus</i>	King
<i>Niguse negest</i>	King of kings
<i>Ṣappas</i>	Bishop
<i>Pasha</i>	High civil or military official (honorific title)
<i>Qādī</i>	Judge
<i>Qā'im maqām</i>	District or local governor, officer
<i>Qeñ gēta</i>	Choir leader of the Right (ecclesiastical title)
<i>Qēs</i>	Priest
<i>Qēse gebez</i>	Head priest of a local church
<i>Qibat</i>	“Unction”, theological doctrine or school
<i>Ras</i>	“Head”, governor, commander
<i>Ri'ise debr</i>	Head of a monastery, abbot
<i>Ri'ise mekwanint</i>	Head of the nobility, governors or commanders
<i>Ri'ise mesafint</i>	Head of the nobility, governors or dignitaries
<i>Rist</i>	Hereditary rights to the use of land, inherited land
<i>Riyāl</i>	Silver coin (used for Maria Theresa thaler in Arabia)
<i>Sahib</i>	Companion, master, sir
<i>Ṣhafaṭe ti'izaz</i>	“Scribe of orders”, chancellor
<i>Shaleqa</i> , see <i>yeshaleqa</i>	

<i>Sharī'a</i>	Muslim law
<i>Shaykh</i> (Amharic <i>shēh</i>)	Elder, chief, Muslim religious official
<i>Shemma</i>	Ethiopian toga-like garment of cotton
<i>Shifta</i>	Rebel, outlaw
<i>Shum</i>	District or village chief
<i>Sīdī</i>	Lord, master, Mr.
<i>Sinkisar</i>	Synaxarium, compilation of lives of saints
<i>Sultān</i> (Amharic <i>siltan</i>)	Ruler, prince
<i>Tarīk</i>	History
<i>Tarīke Negest</i>	"The History of the Kings", Ethiopian chronicles
<i>Tef</i>	Millet-like, important grain crop of highland Ethiopia
<i>Tejj</i>	Mead, honey wine
<i>Tirgwamē</i>	Translation, interpretation
<i>Wakīl</i> (Amharic <i>wekīl</i>)	Agent, representative
<i>Wazīr</i>	High government official, co-ruler of the <i>nā'ib</i> of Hargīgo
<i>Weyzero</i>	Madame, lady, Mrs.
<i>Yenēta</i>	My master, teacher
<i>Ye-ṣegga lij</i>	"Son of Grace", theological doctrine or school
<i>Yeshaleqa</i>	Officer, major
<i>Yitēyye</i> , see <i>itēgē</i>	
<i>Zemed</i>	Relative, kinsman, close friend, helper
<i>Zemene Mesafint</i>	The Era of the Princes (or Regents)

Abbreviations

AE (Brussels)	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Commerce Extérieur, Brussels
AECP	Correspondance politique <i>and</i> Correspondance politique des consuls, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AED	Archives diplomatiques (<i>reserved</i>) du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
AEMD	Mémoires et Documents, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
<i>Annales</i>	<i>Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission</i>
ASCPF.SRC	Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli "de Propaganda Fide", Rome
Basler Mission	Archiv der Basler Mission, Basel
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society, London
BL	British Library, London
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
<i>BSG</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société de Géographie</i>
CML	Congrégation de la Mission, Maison Lazariste, Paris
CM/O	Original incoming letters, journals and papers, Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham
CMS	Church Missionary Society; Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham
<i>Cronaca reale</i>	Carlo Conti Rossini, ed., "La cronaca reale abissina dall'anno 1800 all'anno 1840", <i>RRAL</i> , 5, XXV (1916)
<i>Douze ans</i>	Arnauld d'Abbadie, <i>Douze ans dans la Haute-Éthiopie (Abyssinie)</i> , I (Paris, 1868); and <i>Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie (Abyssinie)</i> , II-IV (Città del Vaticano, 1980; 1983; forthcoming)
ENA	National Archives, Cairo
FO	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London
<i>Giornale</i>	Giustino De Jacobis, "Giornale Abissino", Maison Lazariste, Paris
IOR	India Office Records, London
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ethiopian Studies</i>
<i>Journal</i>	Samuel Gobat, <i>Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia</i> (New York, 1859, reprint 1969)
<i>JRGS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London</i>

LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
NAF	Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
NAS	<i>Northeast African Studies</i>
<i>Nuovi documenti</i>	Carlo Conti Rossini, ed., “Nuovi documenti per la storia d’Abissinia nel secolo XIX”, <i>RANL</i> , 8, II (1947)
RANL	Rendiconti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei
RRAL	Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei
<i>Samuel Gobat</i>	[Samuel Gobat], <i>Samuel Gobat, Bishop of Jerusalem</i> (London, 1884)
<i>Vicende</i>	Carlo Conti Rossini, ed., “Vicende dell’Etiopia e delle Missioni Cattoliche ai tempi di ras Ali, deggiàč Ubié e re Teodoro secondo un documento abissino”, <i>RRAL</i> , 5, XXV (1916).

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25. Alī Umar to David Gobat 20 June 1828
26. Alī Umar to Susanne Gobat 20 June 1828
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133.	Wibē Hayle Maryam to Eugène Rolland	2 Oct. [1849]
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156.	Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie	[Oct.? 1852]
157.	Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie	[Nov.? 1852]
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167.	Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie	[1853]
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171.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	15 Sept. 1853
172.	Fenta to Antoine d'Abbadie	21 Sept. [1853]
173.	Wibē Hayle Maryam to Walter Plowden	[Oct. 1853]
174.	Welette Rufa'ēl to Michel d'Abbadie	21 Oct. [1853]
175.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	28 Oct. 1853
176.	Fenta to Michel d'Abbadie	14 Nov. [1853]
177.	Welette Rufa'ēl to Raphael Baroni	15 Jan. 1854
178.	Welette Rufa'ēl to Michel d'Abbadie	[Jan.? 1854]
179.	Gebre Hiywet and Ingida to Michel d'Abbadie	[Jan.? 1854]
180.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	17 Jan. 1854
181.	Selama to Victoria	23 April 1854
182.	Hanna (Agamē) to Michel d'Abbadie	1 May [1854]
183.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	22 May 1854
184.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	27 June 1854
185.	Yohannis III to Napoleon III	1854
186.	Fenta to Michel d'Abbadie	[Sept.? 1854]
187.	Mahdere Qal to H. Venn	10 Oct. 1854
188.	Wesen Gebre Amlak to Michel d'Abbadie	10 Oct. [1854]
189.	Khayr to Michel d'Abbadie	11 Oct. [1854]
190.	Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie	16 Dec. 1854

THE TEXTS

Idrīs ‘Uthmān to Valentia, [July 1805]

The ship has arrived here, and you have wrote me no Letter. You have sent letters to Corrumchund (and Ras Wallad Salassa) and by the ship you have sent two people who wish to proceed to Ras Wallad Salassa. Very well. But my friend understand that I am the gate of Abyssinia and that no person either goes there or returns except through me. Notwithstanding, I am not at all offended with you. If it is your wish to send any of your friends to the Ras it is by no means requisite you should send a ship with them. It is better you should send them in a boat. And it is my business to forward them from this, which I do from friendship. The Friends you have sent are as children not understanding whether I do ill or well towards them but by the helping of God I will forward them in safety. Moreover an interpreter has arrived with them a son of the Wuzar(?) to breed disputes between them and me; but God will confine his words in his own belly.

Whenever you send me your commands from Mocha I will certainly execute them but there is no use for sending a ship about a trifle. Achmed Shamey makes them believe expressions which never issued from my mouth and those people are like children without understanding. If you had been here you would have understood everything and it is God’s will that those people shall go with me tomorrow to Gertuba(?). I acquaint you of this and refer you to Amin Mohommed who will explain every particular.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 39, English translation, possibly incomplete, of an Arabic letter from *Nā’ib* Idrīs of Hargigo to the British traveller Viscount Valentia. It was written in reply to a letter from the latter dated 4 June 1805 and was received at Mokha on 4 Aug. 1805.

In the absence of a Turkish governor at Massawa during the first years of the nineteenth century, *Nā’ib* Idrīs (c. 1800–1815) was the *de facto* ruler of the island, though his nominal position was only that of *nā’ib*, or deputy, of the Turkish government at Hargigo on the mainland. His claim to be “the gate of Abyssinia” refers of course to his control of the littoral and the routes inland.

Apparently *Nā’ib* Idrīs was displeased (probably he felt intimidated) by the arrival of Valentia’s ship at the same time as he was far from impressed by his visitors, among them Henry Salt and Nathaniel Pearce (see no. 2) whom he chose to call “children without understanding”.

This letter is reproduced with the orthography—including the Ethiopian names—and the punctuation of the preserved document. Question marks in parenthesis have, however, been added in a few places to indicate uncertainty about the text. “Wuzar” almost certainly stands for “vizier” (Arabic *wazīr*). Relations between the *nā’ib* and his brother the *wazīr* (or *dawla*) seem to have been strained at the time of Viscount Valentia’s visit to the ports of the Red Sea in 1804–05.

For the situation at Massawa and Hargigo during the first decade of the nineteenth century, see Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes* (London, 1968), pp. 5–6, and for the expedition by Salt and his companions which resulted in his visit to Ras Welde Sillāsē in July–Oct. 1805, Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London, 1976), pp. 36–42. Salt’s own account is printed in Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (London, 1809), II, pp. 451–510; III, pp. 1–241.

orthodox king. And I, on my side, have quarrelled with the one who is called Gugsä, who is not identical with us in faith. He has proclaimed a king who is not orthodox in faith. For this reason I have quarrelled [with him]. You have sent to me what is good for the soul, ecclesiastical objects (lit. ordinance of the Church). You have sent to me also what is good for the body, that with which I can gain victory over my enemies and my adversaries, [weapons] called lances, swords and cannon. In return for your good deeds, however, which you have done for me, the reward is myself. Infidels are before me, infidels are behind me, infidels are on my right hand and on my left; I am completely surrounded by infidels, and all who are on the seacoast are infidels. It would be good [therefore] if you would station one of your ships at sea for me in order that my messenger and your messenger might communicate (lit. meet) verbally. As for my faith, it is as your faith. [With regard to] my faith, I am one who says "The Son has two births, a birth from the Father before the world and a birth from the Virgin in the latter days." This is what I profess. And the matters of faith are written in the Scriptures.

Nathaniel Pearce (Natna'el Pēs), your retainer, is with me in peace.

Let us return to the main topic. They tell me to abandon this faith of mine, but I will not abandon my faith. All of them say "Be like us, and profess three births".

As for a bishop, it is in your power [to secure me one]. Get me [one] and send [him] to me. For ever and ever. Amen.

Ras Welde Sillasē.

Seal: He who trusts in the Holy King,
Ras Welde Sillasē Kifle İyyesus. 1217.

FO 1/1, fol. 73, Gi'iz original, 380×400 mm; fols 155–156, English translation. A copy of this letter with corrections, possibly a draft, but also sealed with Welde Sillasē's seal, is found in FO 95/8/1. There is also a copy in the Gilbert Elliot Papers at the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

A cross with the four Ethiopian letters Ī-YE-SU-S was often drawn at the top of letters before seals came into use in Ethiopian correspondence. Ras Welde Sillasē of Tigray (c. 1790–1816) also used a seal with Arabic text which he placed at the bottom of his letters. The year 1217 of the Muslim era engraved on the seal corresponds to 1802/03 of the Gregorian calendar. The date of the letter is based on the report of the British envoy Henry Salt to the Foreign Office, FO 1/1, fols 78–97, and on his published account *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (London, 1814), pp. 365–377. Salt provides two dates, 27 and 29 April, for the handing over of the letter but, since these dates were Good Friday and Easter Sunday respectively, and his description of the handing-over ceremony follows immediately after that of Easter Day, it is more likely that he received the letter on 30 April. It may well have been written several days earlier. The contemporary English translation made for the Foreign Office by the Semitic scholar Dr. A. Murray is correct in substance but barely comprehensible. See J. J. Halls, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt* (London, 1834), I, pp. 235–258.

Henry Salt visited Ethiopia in 1805 (see no. 1) and 1810. The second time he carried gifts and a letter from George III (1760–1820), dated December 1808, to the emperor of Ethiopia, Gwalu or Igwale Şiyon (1801–18). Salt was prevented from proceeding to Gonder, and handed the letter to Welde Sillasē who dictated the above reply or simply instructed one of his scribes to write it. The one who actually penned the letter in the established calligraphy called *qum şihfet* was *Debtera Asta* (FO 1/1, fol. 164). See nos 11 and 18 below.

The Gugsä referred to is Ras Gugsä Mersu of Begēmdir (c. 1800–25) who acted as king-maker at the time. Nathaniel Pearce had arrived in Ethiopia with Salt in 1805 and remained in the country until 1818. The theological controversy referred to—the two births of Christ versus the three births—was one of the factors in the political struggles of the first half of the nineteenth century.

The question in the second paragraph is a quotation from Psalms 115: 12. The letter ends somewhat abruptly without the benediction which one would normally expect before the phrase "for ever and ever".

The gifts, which were repeatedly referred to in later correspondence, included a "handsome small table", cut glass candlesticks, pieces of fine cloth and "a picture of the Madonna and child handsomely framed for the church" as well as two small cannons, a few muskets and some gunpowder, thus "what is good for the soul" as well as "for the body".

For further information on Ras Welde Sillasē and on the circumstances surrounding this document, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 36–54; for the ecclesiastical situation in particular, Donald Crummey, *Priests and Politicians* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 23–27.

Welde Sillasē Kifle Īyyesus to George III and Henry Salt, [29 Dec. 1810]

ሰገላም፡ሰክ፡ወሰላም፡እግዚአብሔር፤
 ላሉ፡ምሰሊካ፡እንግሊዛ፡ጊዮርጊ
 ስ፡ሰገላም፡ሰክ፡ወሰላም፡እግዚአብሔር፡
 የህጹምሰሊካ፡እመስተር፡ሰውጭቶ፡፡
 ወይሲ፡የተናኪ፡ፊር፡ሰገላም፡እንግሊዛ፡
 ነገሥት፡ጊዮርጊስ፡ሀውጉ፡በጸሐ።
 ወበሰገላም፡በጽሑ፡ወበሐላ፡፡እንግ
 ዚኤ፡ንግሊዛ፡ነገሥት፡ጊዮርጊስ፡፡
 ወካዕብ፡ይዚ፡መስተር፡ገፍ፡እውህ
 ውክ፡እግዚአብሔር፡እንግሊዛ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡፡
 ሀሰው፡በጸሐ፡ወበሰገላም፡በጽሑ፡
 ወበሰገላም፡፡
 ንግብ፡ሳብ፡ቀዳሚ፡ነገር፡እነ፤እጌ
 ት፡ዘገ፡ሐዋርያ፡በበ፩ወር፡፡ከ
 ፍ፡ፍሥሐ፡ወሰገላም፡፡
 ወእንተላ፡ክንግዚኤ፡ፊት፡ቢተ፡ዜያ
 ሐይወትክ፡ወሰገላምክ፡ወዜያ፡ፍሥሐ
 ክ፡ወሐላ፡ገኝ፡በበ፩ወር፡፡
 ወደእዚ፡እፎ፡ሀሰው፡ሰገላም፡ሐይወትክ፡
 ወእንግዚኤ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ወሰገላም፡
 ወእነላ፡ሀሰው፡በጸሐ፡ገፍ፡፡
 ወደእዚ፡ፊት፡ቢተ፡ዜያ፡ሐይወትክ፡
 ወሰገላምክ፡ወዜያ፡ሰገላም፡ሐይወትክ፡
 ክ፡ወእንግዚኤ፡ወወዋጅ፡ተክ፡ወሐላ
 ወተ፡ቤትክ፡፡
 ወሐይ፡ደረሰ፡እፎ፡ሀሰው፡እግዚኤ፡ንግ
 ሠ፡ነገሥተ፡ጊዮርጊስ፡፡
 ወእነላ፡እጳቆር፡እምነት፡ሐይወትክ፡
 ክ፡ወሰገላም፡ዜክክ፡በጽሑ፡ወበሰገላም፡
 ላሉ፡ወሰገላም፡እመ፡፡

Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you, O George (Giyorgīs), king of England. Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you, Mr. Salt (Mester Sawilt).

Nathaniel Pearce (Natna'el Pēs) greets his lord, King of Kings George, saying, "I am well and in peace, happy and cheerful, O my lord, King of Kings George." Mr. Coffin (Mester Kafin) also [sends greetings], saying, "How are you, my lord, King George? I am well and in peace, happy and in peace."

Let us return to the main topic. I, on my part, will always send you my messenger every month [with] news about [our] happiness and peace. You, too, my lord, send me each month the news of your life and peace, and the news of your happiness and joy.

And now, how are my people, my brothers, my relatives, my fathers and my mothers (lit. maidservants)? I am well. And now, send me the news of your life and peace and the news of your people, your brothers, your relatives, your servants and your body-guard (lit. the troops of your house). In particular, how are you, my lord, King of Kings George? I, on my part, desire your health and your peace more than anything else. Happiness and peace for ever and ever. Amen.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 3, Gi'iz original, 190×265 mm; fols 26–27, English translation. The full address on this document runs as follows: "Ras Walderserlassey To Henry Salt Esqr, London, England, Antarlo Decr 29. 1810." Though the letter bears no seal, it is most certainly written as from the *ras* and directed not only to Henry Salt but in the first place to King George III, Murray, who made the first translation.

believed that Pearce and William Coffin (who came to Ethiopia with Henry Salt in 1810, remained in the country and took part in Tigrean political life for three decades) may have produced the letter, not, however, without the permission of the *ras* (Halls, *Henry Salt*, I, pp. 306, 317–318). Translations accompanying this letter and most of the following seventeen were made by Rev. William Jowett at Alexandria in 1820 (BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fols 20–22). They are not entirely accurate, and some are incomplete. The actual composer of the letter would be some priest or *debtera*. The style is strongly influenced by the liturgical forms of the Gi'iz language, for instance the phrase "let us return to" which is the joining phrase used in such language. Note that Welde Sillasē calls the brothers, relatives, etc., of King George and Mr. Salt "my people", stressing the close relationship he feels with the addressees.

Welde Sillasē Kifle İyyesus to Henry Salt, [May 1811]

...
 እጽሕፍ፡ፊዎር ሂዎ፡በገገረ፡ግዕዝ፡እጭ፡፡
 ሀሎስ፡ፍ ቁርዮ፡መስተር፡ሳውልት፡፡
 እንኳ፡ደህኖ፡ገገሕ፡ሰማይ፡ደህል፡ፍዎ
 ድር፡ደህል፡እንዴት፡ክላህ፡ሂኖራይ፡ሳው
 ልት፡ሰላም፡ለክ፡ወሰላም፡እግዚአብሔር
 ር፡ዮሃሱ፡ምስሌክ፡እጅጉን፡እጅጉን፡እንደ
 ት፡ክላህ፡ወዳጄ፡ሂኖራይ፡ሳውልት፡፡
 እገሬም፡እንገገ፡በላው፡ፀሐይ፡ሁኖ
 ዋል፡፡እኔም፡ዘመቻ፡ገደ፡ገበረ፡ቀረሁ፡፡
 ክገሬም ት፡ገገ፡እንግደህ፡እገሬ፡እገር
 መላሰሁ፡፡ወይ እዚኔ፡እጭ፡ሀሎስ፡ፍ ቁ
 ር፡ሂኖራይ፡ሳውልት፡እንኳ፡ደህኖ፡፡
 ገገህ፡እጅጉን፡እጅጉን፡እንዴት፡ክላ
 ህ፡ሂኖራይ፡ሳውልት፡እገሬ፡ግኖ፡መስ
 ሬ፡ሁኖዋል፡፡እንገገ፡በላው፡፡ሰላ
 ም፡ለክ፡ወሰላም፡እግዚአብሔር፡፡
 ዮሃሱ፡ምስሌክ፡፡

I am writing my message (apostle
 [sic]) in the Gi'iz language. How are
 you, my friend Mr. Salt (Mester
 Sawilt)? I am glad you arrived safely.
 To the extent of heaven and earth,
 how are you, Henry Salt (Hīnoray
 Sawilt)? Peace be to you and may
 the peace of God be with you. How
 are you, really, really, my friend
 Henry Salt? Locusts have devoured
 my country. There is a drought. I
 had intended to make a campaign,
 but I remained. The rainy season
 began. So I will spend the rainy
 season in my country. And now,
 how are you, my friend Henry Salt?
 I am glad you arrived safely. How
 are you really, really, Henry Salt?
 In my country, however, there is
 suffering; locusts have devoured it.
 Peace be to you and may the peace
 of God be with you.

Seal: He who trusts in the
 Holy King,
 Ras Welde Sillasē
 Kifle İyyesus. 1217.



BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 2, Gi'iz/Amharic
 original, 245×190 mm with text only on the
 left half of the paper; fol. 26, English transla-
 tion. The date assigned to this letter is based
 on the fact that Nathaniel Pearce, who for-
 warded Welde Sillasē's letters, wrote a letter
 with similar content on 28 May 1811 (BL,
 Mss. Add. 19347, fol. 97). Though the

opening and closing phrases are in Gi'iz, the main part of the letter is written in simple and concise Amharic sentences with, however, some Tigrīñña forms. Less care has been given to the calligraphy. The letter was partly, and somewhat arbitrarily, translated by Murray in 1812 (Halls, *Henry Salt*, I, pp. 350–353).

Debbeb to Henry Salt, [Nov. 1812]

ደቡብ፡ፍቁረ፡እግዚአብሔር፡ጌታ፡
 ወልደ፡ሥላሴ፡ሰጠኝ፡ልዩ፡ሥላሴ፡
 ስፍቁሩ፡ሰው፡ልዩ፡ሥላሴ፡
 ሰጠኝ፡እቡዮ፡እቡዮ፡እምነት
 መ፡ተቀቀርኩ፡ምሰላሴ፡
 ሊዳክዮኒ፡ተፈላጊነት፡
 ደህመ፡ወረከተኩ፡ሢ
 መታ፡ገዛዮዳቢ፡እምነት
 ሀሳብ፡ነሱ ሰጠኝ፡እብዮቱ
 ዮ፡

Debbeb, the friend of the lord *Ras* Welde Sillasē, says to his friend Salt (Sawilt), How are you, my father, my father? Since I made friends with you, no misfortune has happened to me; on the contrary I have become happier and have received an appointment higher than [any] appointment [among] my friends.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 11, Gi'iz original, 90×150 mm; fol. 32, English translation. Debbeb was the son of a chief of Bur (east and south of the Gulf of Zula) who had grown up at the court of *Ras* Welde Sillasē and received important appointments from him. He was sent to meet Salt at Massawa on his arrival in 1810 and the *ras* actually wanted Salt to take him along to England as his envoy (FO 1/1, fols 86, 92; Salt, *Voyage*, pp. 377, 449–451). He is called “Sarlissa Debbib” on the back of the letter but the additional “name” is most likely a corruption of “Sillasē”, used in error for “Welde Sillasē” to identify the “Debbeb” referred to. For date, see no. 5.

A translation of this letter, forwarded with the letter of Pearce dated 14–16 Nov. (BL, Mss. Add. 19347, fols 99–101), runs as follows:

Joy be to you my friend from Welled Selassé. Joy be to you from Debbib beloved friend. How art thou, my father, my father. Henceforth may mutual love (or charity) exist between us. May joy spring up in our hearts. May the blessing of heaven come upon us and may all that fear the Lord have joy in heaven.

Bahriye Sillasē to Henry Salt, [Nov. 1812]

ደቅባረን፡፡እግዚአብሔር፡፡ዘወለዘሎ፡፡ወልደ፡፡ዐቦ፡፡
 ኒተ፡፡ዐብራሃም፡፡ቶሌሚ፡፡ጎ፡፡እያሕገ፡፡ዎንተ፡፡በመስከ፡፡
 ከመ፡፡ደብረ፡፡እ፡፡ወኃተ፡፡ዘለዎሎ፡፡ሮሎ፡፡ሌዕለመ፡፡ዐሳ
 ም፡፡አሚን፡፡ጠማር፡፡ዘተረ፡፡ሃውቶ፡፡እምሳብ፡፡ዓሕርዮ፡፡ሎ
 ሳሌ፡፡ሲቀ፡፡ማሳበራ፡፡ለወገል፡፡ሃዘ፡፡ለውልት፡፡ሉቀ፡፡ሐራ
 ሁ፡፡ላንጉሎ፡፡ኃያል፡፡ፈለገ፡፡ግብ፡፡ዘለሎ፡፡ዓምራ፡፡በሰል፡፡
 ወኃቀሚ፡፡አእምሮ፡፡ወፍራ፡፡ለሲራ፡፡ክ፡፡ፊል፡፡ፊሮ፡፡እፍ፡፡ሀሎክ
 ሰማየ፡፡ወምድ፡፡ረዳየአካል፡፡እሐመ፡፡ገበርክ፡፡ኅገራ፡፡ዘእይ
 ወፍታ፡፡ሳቲቶ፡፡ፀዳል፡፡ወአሠርገክ፡፡ጠቅደሰ፡፡በጽዋ፡፡ፅ፡፡
 ወርቅ፡፡ወዳዛብሩር፡፡ዓሕል፡፡ወበሎሰሰ፡፡ወርቅ፡፡ዘአሐወ፡፡
 አምሳል፡፡በመ፡፡እሠርገክ፡፡ለደብረ፡፡ምሕረት፡፡ወሳህ
 ል፡፡ከማሃ፡፡ያሎቶደሎ፡፡ለክ፡፡ወርግ፡፡አክሲል፡፡በሳብ፡፡ሰማ
 ደት፡፡አማኑኤል

Blessed be God who in his goodness gave us his Son for salvation, while he did not in the least diminish with regard to his divinity, so that he might let us enter into his eternal inheritance. For ever and ever. Amen.

A letter sent by Bahriye Sillasē, head of the community of the Gospel, to Salt (Sawilt), head of the army of the mighty king, the river of wisdom of the wealth of Solomon, the spring of knowledge, the treasure of Sirach, the fountain. How are you to the extent of heaven and earth? You have done something of which the light of its goodness will not go out: You adorned the church with a golden chalice and a silver paten, and with a golden icon that has no equal. As you have adorned Debre Mihret (*we-Sahl*), may Emmanuel prepare for you the ornament of a crown in heaven.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 15, Gi'iz original, 165×185 mm; fol. 34, English translation. Only the opening phrases of this letter were translated by Jowett: "I cannot make out the rest of this letter." On the back of the letter the writer is identified as "Alakar Barie Selassey head Priest of the Trinity Church, Chalicut"; on the back of another letter in the collection (no. 16) as "Case Govers Barey", i.e. *qēse gebez* Bahriye, which means that he must have been one of the most important ecclesiastics in close contact with Welde Sillasē's court. In that letter he styles himself *līqe līqawint*. In *Life and Adventures* (p. 324) Pearce calls him *Aleqa* "Berhé", probably because he was unable to distinguish between this common Tigrean name and "Bahriye", and describes him as an exceptionally virtuous priest who had come from Gonder. See also Salt, *Voyage*, pp. 387–390.

In the second to the last line, the writer is carried away by the phrase *mihret wesahl* (mercy and compassion) and adds *wesahl* to Debre Mihret, the name of the church. For date, see no. 5.

Gebre Maryam to Henry Salt, [Nov. 1812]

ደቤግግ ረ፡ሚርዖም፡
 ቀሲስ፡ፍቁርዖም፡ስኅ
 ፊዳ፡ወግሰ፡እፎ፡ሀሎንግ
 ሰው፡ልቅ፡ፍቁር፡ወቅር
 ቡ፡ሰገጥጥ፡ጥ፡ኑ፡ሳ፡ሃይ
 ማዖቅ፡ከሙ፡ጳውሎስ
 ስ፡ሙ፡ጽ፡ኃ፡ቲ፡ዓሰ፡ጾ፡ኃ
 ርስ፡ቶ፡ሰ፡ይዕ፡ቀ፡ብ፡ክ፡እሙ
 ከራ፡ሌ፡ገ፡ወ፡ኑ፡ሰ፡እ፡ቅ፡ሚ
 ነ፡ኑ፡ክ፡ገ፡ሚ፡ክ፡ቲ፡ክ፡ከሙ
 ቅ፡ክ፡ኑ፡ሳ፡ር፡ክ፡ከሙ፡ገ
 ስ፡ፍቁር፡ክ፡

Says the priest Gebre Maryam,
 friend of Coffin (Kofin) and Pearce (Pēs),
 How are you Salt (Sawilt), friend and confidant
 of the King,
 steadfast in faith like Paul?
 May Christ, the Saviour of the World,
 protect you from suffering in body and soul.
 I long for your coming
 so that you may be a friend to me,
 like your friend Pearce.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 8, Gi'iz original, 80×115 mm; fols
 30–31, English translation. This is the first of three letters in
 the collection from *Abba* Gebre Maryam who is identified
 on the back of this letter as “Mermery”, *i.e.* *memmirē* (my
 master, teacher). “Gabremariam, a Priest of Begandre”
 (Begēmdir). Because Gebre Maryam is such a common name,
 identification of the writer is hazardous. But it is far from
 impossible that he is the person who later became *içhegē*,
 visited Cairo repeatedly on ecclesiastical (and political)
 missions and befriended a number of foreigners. See Rubenson,
Survival, pp. 66, 132–140. For date, see no. 5.

Issēte Kīdan Pāwlos to Henry Salt, [Nov. 1812]

ትቤ፡ወሰቱ፡ሲ፡ዲ፡ጳው
 ሎስ፡ወ፡ብ፡እሲ፡ቱ፡ሰ፡ገ
 ስ፡ዕሄ፡ቲ፡ከ፡ዳ፡ኑ፡እ፡ፎ
 ሀሎን፡ሙ፡ጠ፡ኑ፡ሰ፡ሚ
 ወ፡ሙ፡ኑ፡ጽ፡እ፡ሙ፡ጳ፡ረ
 ቀ፡ር፡ክ፡እ፡ታ፡ብ፡ክ፡ኃ፡
 ሐሙ፡ሙ፡ከ፡ግ፡ሐ፡ቱ፡ቲ
 ፈ፡ወ፡ሰ፡ክ፡ሰ፡ኃ፡ደ፡ሰ፡እ፡ሙ
 ሳ፡ከ፡ሃ፡ሰ፡ፍቁር፡ፊ፡ሳሙ፡ሐ፡ቲ

Issēte Kīdan, the daughter of *Sidī* Pāwlos, the
 wife of Pearce (Pēs) says, How are you, to the
 extent of heaven and earth? After you left, I was
 very sick. But I was healed by the power of my
 God. [Sent] to my friend Salt (Sawilt).

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 12, Gi'iz original, 80×165 mm; fol.
 32, English translation. The writer Tiringo was the wife of
 Nathaniel Pearce. Her baptismal name was Issēte Kīdan and
 she was the daughter of *Sidī* Pāwlos, a well-known Greek at
 Adwa who according to Salt (*Voyage*, pp. 403–404) had spent
 50 years in Ethiopia. For date, see no. 5.

Jesus (in cross)

May this letter sent by the *Ras of Rases* Welde Sillasē reach Salt (Solt), the principal adviser of the King of Kings George (Gērgīs).

[Salt,] friend of body and soul

of the people of Ethiopia (Ītiyoppī) and Egypt (Gibṣ), [who are] poor in the extreme,
for you have given me articles [produced] with new skills.

Peace-loving people (lit. the people of the quiet sea and harbour) admire you saying,
“There is a wise man who is greater than the son of King David.”

How are you, Salt (Sawilt), [O] light of wisdom?

In your heart (lit. mind) there is love of friends—wine.

Lest my life—a homily be shortened,

because the years since we met are many,

I long to see you again eye to eye.

In return for flooding his church with the water of marvellous adornments,

O Salt, fountain of wisdom that pleases hearts,

[who] separated [yourself] from a mother, and left [behind] a father,

Welde Sillasē sends you high praise—a cluster of grapes

until your mind is satiated with its admirable taste.

I inquire about your health, George of the kingdom

and Salt of the honoured office.

May [God] give you [long] life like the oil of Elijah;

for without [long] life nothing can be attained,

since it is fire that purifies iron and penance the body (lit. fire/penance purifies iron/body).

May [God] give [long] life to you, George, as to your father.

And may the gift of His kingdom not depart from you.

For ever and ever. Amen.

Seal: He who trusts in the Holy King,
Ras Welde Sillasē Kifle Īyesus. 1217.

Again, O Salt, the pride of my country,
the land has been destroyed when the day became evil
through bitter locusts of unknown nature.

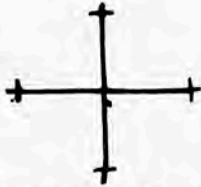
And the people have been consumed by a disease void of the mercy of God.

For smallpox and locusts are the enemies of a country.

Do not be disappointed with me, saying, “He has not sent me a letter.” For the letter of love is
in the midst of us for ever and ever. A[men].

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 1, Giʿiz original, 245×385 mm; fols 24–25, English translation. The date assigned to this letter is based on Salt’s report that he received some letters in May 1814, including one from Welde Sillasē and one from *Debertera Asta* (*Voyage*, pp. 498–499), and on a letter from Pearce to Theodore Forbes at Mokha dated 15 Feb. 1814 (IOR, Mss. Eur. D 29, pp. 156–161) in which he states that he had sent letters to Salt the month before. The letter is almost in its entirety a poem in praise of Henry Salt, written in the form called *meweddis qinē*. A few lines are addressed to George III, and the last part describes the situation in Ethiopia. There are a number of *seminna werq* (wax and gold) expressions in this piece of poetry: line 10, “friends/wine”; line 11, “life/homily”; line 17, “praise/grapes”; line 23, “fire/penance” and “iron/body”. For the phrase *zahn wemers*, translated “peace-loving people”, see A. Dillmann, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae* (Osnabrück, 1970), col. 280. The last line is an allusion to Luke 17: 21.

Asta to Henry Salt, [Jan. 1814]



ዛቲ፡ጦጣር፡ጸታ፡ፈኅወት፡አምላክ፡ደብተ፡ፎ
 አስታ፡ታብጃኤ፡ሳብ፡ፍቁሩ፡ወእግረኡ፡
 ስልታ፡ወፍቀረ፡ሰብእ፡ወዳሳዬ፡ጋዋይ፡አ
 ግሢረኡ፡ብሔር፡ይታወከ፡ደቡት፡ከመ
 እርዳታ፡በዳይነ፡ሥጋ፡አሞላ፡፡ምክጋዳተ
 ነገር፡የሐ፡አአጽሐ፡ፈኅ፡በሀገር፡መጽኦ፡አጋ
 በግ፡ወብጽብጽ፡ወወ፡ዴት፡በእግረ፡ጸግቶ
 አመ፡መልዳኒ፡ጋዳ፡ወኢረከብከ፡ሰብአ
 ኢረከውከ፡ሰከ፡ጦጣር፡ቅጽ፡መኒ፡በእግረ
 ነገር፡ጳጳስ፡ጋዋይ፡ሳብርከ፡ውሐተ፡ሳጋደር
 ወሐከጋቱ፡ደመውከ፡ይእነ፡ጋወከ፡
 ት፡ጦጣር፡የ፡በሐግም፡ሰላም፡ሰከ፡ወሰ
 ሳም፡ሰእግረኡ፡ብሔር፡የሃሱ፡ምሰሌከ፡አ
 ሞላ፡፡
 ደብተ፡ፊ፡አስታ፡፡

May this letter sent by *Debtera Asta* reach his friend and master, Salt (Solt), the friend of people and enemy (lit. hater) of money. May God accept my prayer so that I may see you in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body). Amen.

The reason that made me write is that locusts and pestilence and intrigues have befallen our country. Since I was filled with grief because of this and did not find a messenger (lit. person), I could not send you a letter. And earlier I had gone to Gonder for matters pertaining to the bishop; I laboured in vain. Now [please] accept my letter in peace. Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you. Amen.

Debtera Asta.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 5, Gi'iz original, 240x300 mm; fol. 29, English translation. On the back of a second letter (no. 18) the writer bears the additional title "Grar Gatow", i.e. *gra gēta*. Called "Dofter Esther" by Salt, he seems to have been the source of much of Salt's information about James Bruce's stay at Gonder forty years earlier (*Voyage*, pp. 333-336). For date, see no. 10.

Gebre Maryam to Henry Salt, [Jan. 1814]

ለልቲ፡ ምሥራቅ፡
 ትምክርታ፡ ለእኛ፡
 ርጋጋ፡ ከክብር፡ ለሆኑ
 ና፡ ለሰዎች፡ ከሰዎች
 አካላት፡ ታገብረክ
 ለምህራብ፡ ለሮግ፡ ሆኑ
 ትጽፉ፡ ምንጽ
 ነ፡ ለጭቆና፡ ሆኑ
 ከዲኑ፡ ወበእኛ፡ ገብረ
 ሩብ፡ ጌርጊስ፡ ተሠ
 መጋኔ፡ ጸጎ፡ ሀሎክ
 ከሆኑ፡ መሳ፡ መክራ፡
 ደሠውረህ፡

Salt (Solt), source of English pride—star,
 understanding made you its dwelling
 and knowledge compels you to teach.
 You brought [about] the adornment of Ethiopia
 and you are a friend of truth.
 For this reason you are called the confidant of George
 (Gērgīs).
 How are you?
 May [God] preserve you from tribulation to come.
 [Thus] says *Abba* Gebre Maryam, the friend of Pearce
 (Pēs).

ይህ፡ ለግ፡ ገብረ፡ ሰዓርያ
 ም፡ ጭቆና፡ ጌራ፡

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 9, Gi'iz original, 65×135 mm; fol. 31, English translation. This second letter from *Abba* Gebre Maryam (see no. 8) resembles the letter from *Ras* Welde Sillasē (no. 10) insofar as it is written mainly as a poem in honour of Salt. For date, see no. 10.

Welde Gīyorgīs to Henry Salt, [Jan. 1814]

ከጎረቤት፡ ሰዓርያ፡ ጸጎ
 ረገደኝ፡ እምነት፡
 ወልድክ፡ ወልድክ
 ጊዮርጊስ፡ ትብቅ
 ሕ፡ ገብ፡ ለሆኑ፡ ሰዓርያ
 ት፡ ለእኛ፡ ከሆኑ፡
 ለእኛ፡ ጸጎ፡ ጸጎ
 ሕር፡ ለኛ፡ ጸጎ፡ ጸጎ
 ም፡ በረቆ፡ ጸጎ፡ ጸጎ
 ለብሔር፡ ሕዲሳቱ፡
 ዳዊት፡ ጨርሰሁ፡
 ደህ፡ ወልድ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ ወልድክ፡

May this letter sent by your son Welde Gīyorgīs reach his
 father Salt (Solt). O my father, I am learning until this day,
 as you have ordered me. By the will of God, I have finished
 the New Testament and the Psalter.
 [Thus] says your son Welde Gīyorgīs.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 14, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 85×130 mm; fol. 33, English translation. The writer is in a note on the back of the letter identified as the godson of Salt. He was born a Muslim and baptized at Çheleqot in May 1810 just before Salt left the country (Salt, *Voyage*, pp. 387–389). For date, see no. 10.

The name Welde Gīyorgīs without a patronym appears very often in the sources of the 1820's and 1830's in connection with foreign travellers and missionaries in Ethiopia, Protestant as well as Catholic. I have, however, failed to identify Salt's godson with any of the authors of later letters in this volume; but see no. 55.

Issēte Kīdan Pawlos to Henry Salt, [Jan. 1814]

እፎ፡ሀሎክ፡ሳው፡ፊታ
 መዝገበ፡ብዙ፡ሳ፡ጌ፡ጌ
 ት፡፡አዳተ፡ፎዘግግ፡
 ጽፎ፡ወርቅ፡ዘብእ
 ሲ፡ጓዴት፡፡አምዘታ
 ፊክ፡ብላ፡ካላ፡መጠኑ፡
 ሠለስቱ፡፡ዓመት፡፡ክ
 ግዛ፡እፊቅ፡ረከ፡፡ፋቀጸ
 ጠየቀኒ፡በእዳተ፡ም
 ግት፡፡ወእዳዘ፡የጓል
 ቱ፡አዝላ፡፡የ፡በብዙ
 ሳ፡መቅሠ፡፡፡
 ጸሐታ፡፡ከረ፡፡ላለህ፡
 በወርቅ፡፡ጸም፡፡ግዳዥ
 ከዳለሳ፡፡ሳ፡፡አዳተ
 ከሄድክ፡፡ብዙ፡፡መክ
 ፊ፡መጣ፡፡ከ፡፡፡
 ቡት፡፡ከፊ፡፡፡
 መዳት፡፡አዳለ፡፡፡
 ቤ፡፡ትር፡፡፡

How are you Salt (Sawilt),
 treasure of great generosity,
 who stores up pure gold for (lit. of) people in
 poverty?
 It is about three years since we met.
 Why did you not visit me when I love you so much
 and when my relatives are consumed by many
 calamities?
 We were happy when you were [here], eating and
 drinking together [with us] during the fasting
 season.
 But after you left, many hardships occurred:
 What they call smallpox together with fever and
 swarms of locusts.
 [Thus] says Tiringo.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 13, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 80×
 235 mm; fol. 33, English translation. This is the second letter
 from Pearce's wife. See no. 9 and for the date no. 10. Pearce
 was very ill when this letter was written and the translator,
 unable to understand what one sentence was about, simply
 substituted information which he must have had from some
 other source. His translation of this letter (with my emphasis)
 runs as follows:

How art thou, Salt, thou treasure of great goodness?
 Thou art a treasure of pure gold refined in Asia.
 Since we met, the space of three years is past. As I love
 thee greatly, inform me, how thou art?—and as my
 family is consumed by many afflictions. *We have
 made another remedy for the time of suffering; with a
 plaster of nard. Where the loins are wounded, with
 that preparation cover [the wound].* The Small Pox
 fills the country with fear; the Locust rages. Tringo
 saith it.

Bahriye Sillasē to Henry Salt, [Sept. 1815]

ዛቲ፡ መልእክት፡ ዘተገላ፡ ነገራት፡ እምነ፡
 አለቃ፡ በሕር፡ ለሌላ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ትብቅ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡

ምክንያት፡ ነገር፡ ዘአዘሎ፡ እመ፡
 አረቅ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡
 ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡ ለቃ፡

May this letter sent by *Aleqa* Bahriye Sillasē, the eminent scholar (*liqe liqawint*) reach his friend Salt (Solt), the wise among (lit. of) the wise (*tebibe tebbebt*). For ever and ever. Amen and amen.

The reason that has made me write is that I love you. If you ask me why:

Because you are a lamp for the church,
 [its] priestly vestment and curtain,
 and for the priests an adornment that ravishes the eyes,
 a weapon for kings and princes and governors,
 honestly without falsehood.
 For we long very much for you,
 come quickly in order that we may meet.
 Come, harden not your heart.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 10, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 195x295 mm; fols 31–32, English translation. Same writer as no. 7. The date is indicated on the back of the letter, where the writer is identified as *qese gebez*.

The writer seems to have wanted to balance the common title *liqe liqawint*, which he uses about himself, with an equivalent title to honour his friend Salt, and has come up with *tebibe tebbebt* (in no. 18 by another author: *tebibe tebiban*). The choice was an appropriate one for the draughtsman Salt since *tebib* means “wise”, with the connotation of “skillful”, “clever”, for instance about artisans.

Gebre Maryam to Salt, [Sept. 1815]

ዘቲ፡ ጠልእኸኝ፡ ዘተላኝ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡

ትብብር፡ ትብብር ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡

ዘደቅቅኩኸ፡ ብደ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡

May this letter sent by the meek, despised, poor and needy Gebre Maryam, the greatly beloved, beyond measure, of Pearce (Pēs), reach Salt (Solt), the one who makes the fool wise, the friend of the faithful and the enemy of the infidels.

I write to you because I have a wish in my mind: I have at all times wanted to meet you because there is no one as virtuous as you in our country, [Known to me] by hearsay, how are you, really?

BL., Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 7, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 145x235 mm; fol. 30, English translation. Same writer as nos 8 and 12; date indicated on the back of the letter.

The phrases *be-zēna* (by news) and *be-zinna* (by fame, repute) are used in correspondence to indicate that the writer is interested in the health and welfare of the addressee in spite of the fact that they have never met. The addressee is known or well-known "by hearsay", here used in its literal sense without any negative connotation of "rumour, gossip".

Asta to Henry Salt, [Sept. 1815]

ዘቲ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ዘተላኝ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡

May this letter sent by *Gra Gēta* Asta reach the wise among (lit. of) the wise (*ṭebibe ṭebiban*) Salt (Solt).

I always see you with the eyes of my mind. I also see you everywhere, wherever I am, because I love you more than my father and mother. My friend, my friend, are you well?

BL., Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 6, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 160x130 mm; fols 29-30, English translation. The note on the back of the letter identifies the writer as "Grar Gatow Dofter Astar", i.e. *Gra Gēta Debtera* Asta (same writer as no. 11), and provides the date.

ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡
ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፡

May this letter sent by Nathaniel Pearce (Pēs Natna'ēl) reach the head of the nobles and priests, Salt (Solt), saying, How are you my lord and friend, to the extent of heaven and earth? May God prolong your life! Amen and amen.

Every Ethiopian [says] that this book of the Psalms of David is very nice and very beautiful. It is, however, the custom in Ethiopia that with the Psalms of David one writes the fifteen Canticles of the Prophets; the five [parts of the] Song of Solomon and the Praises of Our Lady Mary (*Widdasē Maryam*) for the seven days along with the Gate of Light (*Anqesē Birhan*). Therefore write those listed with the Psalms of David: fifteen Canticles of the Prophets, five [parts of the] Song of Solomon, and the Praises of Mary because, although they like it, they say that the Book of the Psalms of David which you sent me before is incomplete. It has, moreover, no rubrics which beautify and adorn every book of the Old and New Testament. Also copy the four Gospels in the same manner in red and black ink so that the people of Ethiopia may fully admire [them]. That you may do this, remain (lit. exist) in the peace of God as Elijah and Enoch, for ever and ever. Amen.

The one who wrote this letter, Waka Dingil, the brother of Asta truly says, How are you, my lord, whom I love and whose return I desire? O Salt, eminent scholar, remember me in your kindness and love me—for I love you very much—as you loved my brother Asta. May God preserve you in your going out and coming in from now and for evermore. Amen.

I, Waka, pray for the lengthening of your life.

.....

[Please,] make cases for all the books, one for each, for nothing is impossible for you. You are a scholar (*liq*) who can do everything.

Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society, vol. 6, The Sixteenth Report . . . M.DCCC.XX (London, 1820), pp. 164–166, facsimile print of original Gi'iz document, reproduced in three parts which have been pieced together again for publication here. The letter itself seems to have been lost since it does not appear in the volume of Correspondence, Inwards, 1817, where an extract is found in Pearce's own hand of the covering letter from Pearce to Salt in English, dated Aksum 7 Dec. 1817. The Gi'iz letter was reportedly written on the instructions of the deposed Emperor Tekle Giyorgis (1780–99, with several interruptions) in connection with an assembly of church leaders at Aksum on 6 Dec. 1817 only five days before he died (*Reports*, vol. 6, pp. 163, 167–168).

Pearce did not himself write this letter, which is written in very good Gi'iz. Though Salt reported that Pearce knew both Tigrinña and Amharic well as early as 1810 (FO 1/1, fols 94–95), it is obvious from the way he transcribed Ethiopian names and titles that he could not write Amharic, much less Gi'iz. As stated in the letter itself, it was in effect written by *Debtera* Waka Dingil, whose brother *Debtera* Asta had been Salt's friend (see nos 11 and 18). The wording, moreover, shows quite clearly that the writer did not understand that he was dealing with printed books.

The books referred to were 220 copies of the Psalms in Gi'iz printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1815 and sent to Pearce for distribution. See William Canton, *A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London, 1904–10), I, p. 140; II, pp. 23–24; also Mss. Add. 19347, fol. 163. For the contents of the Ethiopic Psalter, or the *Dawit*, see S. Strelcyn's description of BL, Mss. 12467 in his *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the British Library, Acquired since the Year 1877* (London, 1978), pp. 22–23. The references to illuminations, adorning and beautifying refer to the custom of marking the divisions of an Ethiopic Psalter, that is the beginning of every group of ten psalms, and the other parts mentioned by Waka Dingil, with elaborate designs in red ink.

May this letter sent by Nathaniel Pearce (Pēs Natna’ēl) reach Salt (Solt), the eminent scholar. How are you, my brother Salt?

All these books which you sent me (lit. which came to me) are very nice and very beautiful; they are wonderful. Only one thing is lacking in the book. [The printing] did not receive sufficient ink and so it did not have enough and did not become dark but is rather light.

Furthermore, following the Ethiopian tradition according to the custom [of copying] the book of the Psalms of David, there are three things missing: first, the Canticles of the Prophets; second, the Song of Solomon; third, the Praises of Our Lady Mary (*Widdasē Maryam*) for the seven days and the Gate of Light (*Anqesē Birhan*). After “I am the youngest from among my brothers” these three things are written with the Psalms of David: the Canticles of the Prophets and the prayer of Moses; then, the Song of Songs of Solomon; after that, the Praises of Our Lady Mary and the Gate of Light. [The Canticles] of the Prophets are 15, [the Song of Songs] of Solomon is [in] five [parts]. The ornamentation in red ink, which makes it very beautiful, is also lacking. Nevertheless every Ethiopian says that this book is very nice. If it is possible for the printer (lit. the copyist), let him also make cases for all the books, one for each.

.....

Today, after the death of your friend Welde Sillasē, this country has become a wasteland. The people are consumed by war and famine. And I, your brother Nathaniel, live in misery because neither do I have relatives nor have I found a master who will feed me, clothe me, and protect me after the death of Welde Sillasē, the good, God-fearing master (lit. shepherd). Do not forget me in your prayers. May the Lord be with you. Amen and amen.

Waka Dingil, the brother of Asta, the writer of this letter, says, How are you Salt, the friend of my brother Asta? May God prolong your life (lit. years) like [that of] Elijah and Enoch; and may He show me your face. Amen and amen. So be it, so be it.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 16, Gi’iz original, 210×345 mm; fols 34–35, English translation. The date of this letter is based on [Pearce], *Life and Adventures*, II, p. 177.

The quotation “I am the youngest . . .” is the *incipit* of the last (and 151st) psalm of the Ethiopic Psalter and is quoted to show where the additional material should be inserted.

Dealing largely with the same issue as no. 19, this letter is slightly more personal—and less flattering and pious—probably due to Pearce’s own involvement in its composition. The added information about the sad situation in the country and for Pearce personally points in the same direction. The excellent Gi’iz, however, is *Debera Waka Dingil*’s as in no. 19.

Pearce left Ethiopia in November 1818 (*Life and Adventures*, II, p. 300).

Subagadis Weldu to Henry Salt, 22 Feb. 1827

صلاه
لحمد لله

قدوت الاداب و عدت الاعان دوى القدر والشان حضرت مجنا العزيز
مستمر صارك حفظه الله تعالى امين

بعد جريل الالام عليه وكنت الاشواق لله ان خاطبا الى عندك لتقوى
وادانك ظلمت و التزم عن افلا الجرد والاسال الاعمال التي في غايت
التصدد و لوج المراد ان وصل عننا خبرد المجران امر انك توفت الله يصورك
ان في الاول لكان لم تعرفه مع راسه ولد لاسي لكن انت جيك معك خطا و طينج
رائت الكنيسة فصرت معه صاحبوني يوم رحلت جيت في الاول عندى و تانا
الى اخذتلك و دخلت عند الارس و ارسلتك بمجل و قبل اناما صرت ظابطا ولا
انت صرت ظابطا فلما اخذ الاتنين ظبطنا فمحتا انقصت لك
ارسل الى التي الذي تحتاجه الكنيسة فارسلت لي صورة العدرى منها غمره
لا ان انا من شان المجده تدوم ولا ننسا بعضها ارسلتلك عن اللددوات
تعلم انى انا لم يقصر على شى لاكن محتا اجعلها ان تكون مثل الاول ومثلا
كنت ترسل للبر الذي يحتاجه الكنيسة ترسل الى ذالمين لاني جدرت
اربعه كنيسة فترسل الى الذي يحتاجه الكنايس من شان المصوب تكون لي
وكك وانت التي الذي يحتاجه الموجود في بلادى ترسل لي وانا ارسل القس الذي
ترسل لي معه متر كان و غلى وانك ادلوجت واحد من الذي تعرفه و انيه كوطلم
واللور حرره ٢٢ رجب ١٢٤٢



Praise be to God alone.

[To] the example of the great people and the chief of notables, the people of distinction and influence, our dear friend Mr Salt, may God Almighty protect him. Amen. After many greetings to him and abundant [expressions of] longing for him about whom we think so much: if you are so kind as to ask about us, God be praised, and we ask of nothing but your well-being, which is [our] ultimate wish and the fulfillment of our desire. News has arrived that your wife has passed away. May God grant you fortitude.

In the beginning you were not acquainted with *Ras Welde Sillasē*, but you brought with you a letter and firearms (*tabanj*) and gifts (?) for the church and thus became his friend. The day you went to him, you first came to me and it was I who introduced you to the *ras* and sent you off with a load [of gifts]. [This was] before I became an official and you [too] became an official. When we both became officials our friendship declined. I asked you to send me something the church needs. You sent me an icon of the Virgin with one eye. Nevertheless, so that our friendship would continue, and in order that we should not forget one another, I wrote to you about this. You know that I lack nothing, but let our friendship be restored to what it was before. And since you used to send to the *ras* what the church needs, send to me now because I have renovated four churches. Therefore send me what the churches need, so that you and I will be doing the correct thing. Whatever you like that exists in my land, tell me and I will send it to you. The persons through whom you [can] send to me are Mr. Coffin and Alī, or any honest person you know. May God protect you. Greetings.

Written [on] the 25th in the month of Rajab in the year 1242.

Seal: Seal of *Dejj Azmach* Suba Gadis, king of the world.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fol. 42v, Arabic original, 230×325 mm. The letter is addressed on fol. 41r to Consul General Salt, consul of the English government in Egypt. The only English “translation” of this document found in the collection is a brief note on the back of the letter (fol. 41r) stating that the document is a letter to Salt “from Subagadis, Ras of Tigre, condoling with him on account of the death of his wife and acknowledging the receipt of an Image of the Virgin, dated 25 Ragab, 1242 (A.D. 1826 [sic])”. Subagadis’s seal has Amharic text. It is reversed, however, and therefore difficult to read without a mirror.

Subagadis (also Suba Gadis and, in the literature, Sebagadis) Weldu (c. 1820–31) was the son of a *Shum* Agamē, *i.e.* governor of Agamē. He eventually became the ruler of all Tigray with the title of *dejjazmach*, but not *ras*. He compensated(!) for this by claiming in his seal the title of *niguse alem* (king of the world) which I have not found as a title in any other nineteenth-century document. An Ethiopian chronicler, however, informs us that the great *Ras* Gugsu died in 1825 after having “ruled the whole world except Shoa and Tigre” (H. Weld Blundell, ed., *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia 1769–1840* (Cambridge, 1922), pp.484–485). Subagadis’s claim that he had befriended Salt before Welde Sillasē is not without foundation. In a letter to Salt as early as 1809 Pearce writes of him as one of Salt’s “most intimate friends, when first we arrived in the country” (BL, Mss. Add. 19347, fols 67–74).

Neither the writer of this letter nor his scribe, if it was dictated, was proficient in Arabic. It is written in simple language and contains many errors of grammar and vocabulary as well as calligraphy. Assuming that *al-ṣawāb* (the correct thing) is written in error for *al-thawāb* (the reward [from God]) the clause which has been rendered “so that you and I will be doing the correct thing” would instead translate “so that the reward [from God] accrues to [both] you and me”, which undoubtedly sounds like an improvement. The writer has also had considerable difficulty describing a portrait in profile which is most certainly what he is attempting to do with the phrase “with one eye” or “one eye hollow”. The very purpose of the icon was to create a sense of communication between the worshipper and the saint and for this purpose a painting in profile was most unsatisfactory and certainly unacceptable to an Ethiopian Christian. *Tabanj* (Arabic: “pistol”), *tebenja* (Amharic: normally “rifle”) has been rendered “firearms”. It is difficult to know precisely what Subagadis was thinking of. In fact Salt had brought with him a pair of pistols but also two cannons and it would seem most likely that Subagadis was referring to the latter (Salt, *Voyage*, pp. 140–141, 207).

The letter was brought to Salt, British consul general in Egypt from 1815 to 1827, together with nos 22 and 23. The bearers were William Coffin (see no. 3) and Alī Umar, a district governor in Agamē who acted as the envoy of Subagadis. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 58–64, for the circumstances of the Alī/Coffin mission.

Subagadis Weldu to Butrus VII, [Feb. 1827]

አቡር ለባቷ ትን አቡና ጳጳሮስ

ረዳቸውን ለጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ
 ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ ለሰርዓተ ጳጳሮስ

እግሩ

ዘጳጳሮስ ት ገዕ ዘ
 ደጅ ለዝ ማቶ
 ሰባ ገደክ ን ጉ
 ሠ ለሰ ገዕ



Our honoured father *Abune* Buṭrus (Pēṭros), your disciples greet you; they take hold of your feet; they prostrate themselves. O, our pure and chosen Father, a true teacher, the fifth of the four Evangelists, the thirteenth of the Apostles, the seventy-third of the Disciples, whose name is exalted!

After we have kissed your hands and kissed your feet, nothing should be hidden. As for *Abune* Qērilos, the bishop, the bishops who came before did not do like this. They did not get drunk, but he becomes intoxicated, drinking wine, arrack, and mead. He does what people [never] did [before]. He tied a slave in a hide with his hands behind his back, and [as a result the slave] died after ten days. He says, "He who has committed manslaughter shall not be ordained a priest; if he is a priest, he shall not celebrate Mass." [Nevertheless] he himself kills people. He anathemizes without justice [and] without procedure. It was to ordain priests that you sent him; [instead] he demands money from people who came from remote [places] and had no money [because] it was a bad year. While they postponed [their departure] day after day, a heavy rain fell [and prevented them from going back home] and so hyenas devoured many people. You sent him with the intention that churches be consecrated and censured. He anathemizes so that no consecrating can take place. Instead of staying in his house, he goes down to the market place [to collect tax money]. When we ask him to live like the preceding bishops, and accept what they accepted, he anathemizes if he is not [allowed] to live as a *ras* lives. Was it because you hated Ethiopia that you sent him? Did you not know his conduct before [and] so you sent him? But what we want from you now is that you send us someone who will reestablish the nation. If you ask us to send something, we will send it. Whatever this bishop has anathemized without justice, absolve for us. Send us something that anathemizes him.

Seal of *Dejj Azmach* Suba Gadis,
king of the world.

Seal: Seal of *Dejj Azmach* Suba Gadis,
king of the world.

BL, Mss. Add. 19343, fols. 46v–47r, Amharic original, 335×490 mm. There is no English translation in the collection but a note on fol. 46r states, "Letter of the Ras Supergardis To the King of England George the 4 in 1827". The letter was in all probability brought to Egypt together with nos 21 and 23 by Subagadis's envoys Alī Umar and William Coffin in 1827. Obviously it was at one point believed to have been addressed to the king of England. This is probably the reason why it was never delivered to Patriarch Buṭrus VII (1809–1852), but ended up among Salt's other Ethiopian letters in the Aberdeen Papers at the British Museum. The mistake concerning the addressee has been corrected in the note on fol. 46r, but except for the first line it has in all probability never been translated before.

Salt died in October 1827. Alī Umar failed to obtain a new bishop, and Qērilos remained in office until his death in May 1830 (CM/O 46, Kugler, 10 July 1830). Europeans later reported that he had been poisoned (CM/O 35, Isenberg, 11 July 1836).

One might have expected that a very important letter concerning an ecclesiastical matter such as this would have been written in Gi'iz. Instead we have an ungrammatical Amharic text with Tigrīñña elements written, moreover, in poor handwriting. In other respects, however, the letter is a masterpiece with its choice opening phrases followed by the forceful condemnation of the bishop's conduct and the severe criticism of the patriarch himself, implicit in the sarcastic questions directed to him. The letter further strengthens the impression one might gather from other sources that the Church in Ethiopia was in deep trouble during the first half of the nineteenth century and indicates that part of the problem was the low level of the ecclesiastical leadership provided from Egypt. See, for instance, Carlo Conti Rossini, ed., "Vicende dell'Etiopia e delle missioni cattoliche ai tempi di Ras Ali, Deggiāc Ubié e Re Teodoro", *RRAL*, 5, XXV (1916), pp. 444–447; *idem*, *Cronaca reale*, pp. 889–893; and Crummey, *Priests*, pp. 14–27.

Subagadis Weldu to George IV, [Feb. 1827]

አባቶቻችን ድብደታ በሰጠው ሕግ ስር ስለተገኘው
በገደብ ውስጥ በሚገኘው ገንዘብ ላይ ስለተገኘው
የገንዘብ ስጦታ አመልካች ስለሆነው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ

ኃሽጃው ስለሚሰጠው ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ስለሚሰጠው የገንዘብ ስጦታ

የ ጌ ፡ ለ ዝ ማ ጎ
ሱ ገ ፡ ጋ ድ ስ ፡ ጊ
ዮ ር ጊ ጎ ጉ ጸ ል ጣ ጎ



አባ ፡ መልክ ገንዘብ ስጦታ ፡ ስጦታ
የሚሰጠውን ስጦታ ፡ ስጦታ

Your father was on friendly terms with *Ras Welde Sillasē*. I too [desire] that we be friends (with you) in the same way. I am a Christian like you. Your father used to send things for the church. Send to me also [things] like those, for I have built three churches. Send me lead. Send me one hundred cavalymen, a carpenter, a church builder who will build the way [they do] in your country.

[I have sent you] five [garments decorated with] fringes (*mergef*), three for you, two for your wife. I send you a shield, a spear, a dagger, [and] a cape (*lemd*) which has belonged to me. It is a present. Write (lit. send) to me [about] things which you want.

Dejj Azmach Suba Gadis, [to]
King George (*Siltan Gīyorgīs*).

Seal: Seal of *Dejj Azmach Suba Gadis*,
king of the world.

Ali is my envoy together with Coffin (Kofin).

FO 1/2, fol. 6, Amharic original, 190×290 mm; fol. 9, English translation by Professor Samuel Lee, whose knowledge of Amharic, however, did not suffice for the translation of ላገተ and ለምሽትሀ. The style and calligraphy of this letter indicate that it was not dictated by an educated Ethiopian nor penned by a proper scribe (cf. no. 22 with very similar if not the same handwriting). It contains one, possibly two Arabic words: *هدية* (“present”) and *رشاش* (“sprayers, guns”). It is more likely, however, that *አርሻሽ* is a misspelling of *አርሳሳ* which means “lead” as well as “bullets”. Not only does “lead” (but not “guns” or “bullets”) appear in the English translation together with “paints” and “carpenters tools”, but the first reports about the arrival of the embassy in Egypt (Archiv der Basler Mission, B.V. 39, Kugler to Blumhardt, 20 Oct. 1827) indicate very clearly that one of the main purposes of Ali’s and Coffin’s mission was to acquire roofing materials for Subagadis’s churches. Coffin, or his friends and supporters, took great liberties in translating the letter which reached the British government in the following form:

Abyssinia Adwar, April 24, 1827. By order of the Ras Suporguardias To His Britannick Majesty George The Fourth. There was about 16 years ago a servant of yours, Henry Salt Esquire came to Ras Walatanlose, and brought him many things for his Churches. I have also four Churches, and should like to have the same knowledge of Your Majesty as Your Father had formerly of the Ras Walatanlose. I have also sent one of my Servants with one of your Countrymen to confer the same. Our Country is afar off, but our religions are the same. If Your Majesty could send me one hundred of your Light Horsemen for one or two years, as we have plenty of horses, but no good and brave riders, like your Countryman who returns to your Servant Henry Salt Esquire with this Letter. If Your Majesty could send me a Doctor, Painter, and Carpenter, or any other tradesmen, some paints, Saws, Carpenters Tools and some lead to finish the Churches I have built. I hope you will take the Port Mussowen and give it up to us, or keep it in Your Majesty’s possession: as our Country is lost by it, and the Mussulmans on the Red Sea Coast. I have sent my Shield, spear, and Knife; likewise Skin and five dresses, as a token of Friendship and Christianlike feeling. I wanted to have sent some horses, Sangers (Bulls) and many other things of my country; but your Countryman told me he could not take them, as there was no shipping fit to take them to your country from the Red Sea. By order of the Ras Suporguardias William Coffin (FO 95/501, fol. 180; with slight variations in FO 1/2, fol. 1 and fol. 83).

Note the elaboration of the rather improbable request for cavalymen, the added request for a doctor and above all the invitation to take Massawa. It is this “improved” version with its false “offer” of Massawa that is commonly cited by historians. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 58–68, for a full report and analysis of the Ali/Coffin mission.

Welde Gīyorgīs to David, Susanne and David Gobat (Jr), [1827]

May this letter, sent in the name of the Lord, arrive in England, the canton of Bern, to David, the father of *Abune* Samuel, to Susanne, his mother, and to his son David, with the greetings of Gīyorgīs (Girgis). O, you who are the brothers of the apostles, the children of Christ, the beloved of the Lord, you who have hearts cleansed by the truth, without falsehood, who are occupied with the work of the Gospel, blessed are you! Do not forget me before the Lord, in the continuing prayers which proceed from your enlightened hearts. As for me, I have said to your son that I desire very much to see you after having heard about your work. May the Eternal render you perfect, you who have pity on those who have an oppressed soul, who give those who are hungry to eat, those who are naked clothes and those who are ill medicines. You who keep what the law of the Eternal commands you, you are truly the children of God in England under the rule of George (Girgis). You are blessed, you who keep the doctrine of Jesus. As for me, after I met *Abune* Samuel, I have found many things, crumbs for my body and instruction for my soul.

O you, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends of *Abune* Samuel, I greet you a thousand times after having heard news about you which equals heaven and earth, to the glory of God. A word more about Abyssinia, about the creatures of our colour. We are all blind. The Abyssinians read (the Bible in an unknown language); the English interpret (for us). The English are active in accordance with their clear conscience; the Abyssinians, in their ignorance, limit themselves to observing. The English march in the light; the Abyssinians come groping in the darkness. Therefore, you who pray unceasingly, do not forget the Abyssinians remembering that it is for the love of the Lord.

Basler Mission, Brüderverzeichnis 31, French translation by the CMS missionary Samuel Gobat in Cairo. The writer Welde Gīyorgīs (of which "Girgis" is an abbreviation) was an Ethiopian monk who had been sent to Egypt in 1826 by the rulers of the Gonder region, *Ras* Yimam Gugsä (1825–28), *Dejjazmach* Maru Aklu (c. 1800–27) and *Dejjazmach* Hayle Maryam Gebrē (1815–26), in order to find a replacement for *Abune* Qērilos who had been expelled from central Ethiopia, at least partly for doctrinal reasons (Abir, *Ethiopia*, pp. 32–34; Crummey, *Priests*, p. 26; Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 66). He had travelled in the Middle East before and had lived for three years in Jerusalem where he had been baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church and had lived at the Armenian monastery. Gobat was of the opinion that he was actually looking for an Armenian bishop for Ethiopia (CM/O 28(a), Gobat, 26 Jan. 1827). In Cairo he was befriended by Gobat and in return taught the missionary the Amharic language ([Samuel Gobat], *Samuel Gobat, Bishop of Jerusalem* (London, 1884), pp. 70–71; Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia* (Stockholm, 1978), pp. 49–50).

It has not been possible to locate the original of this letter and the three following but even in translation the styles of the Amharic and the Arabic are easy to recognize. These letters illustrate the attitudes of an Ethiopian Christian and a Muslim respectively, writing to unknown relatives of the first Protestant missionary to enter Ethiopia in the nineteenth century. As Gobat explains in a note on the letter, Bern has been located in England because the CMS missionaries were British-protected persons and as Protestants identified as Englishmen. That Welde Gīyorgīs calls Gobat *Abune* Samuel does not necessarily mean that he regards him as a bishop; *abun* (*abunā*) was in Egypt used for an ordinary priest.

With the exception of "(Girgis)", added to indicate the spelling of the French text available, the words in parenthesis appear in parenthesis also in the French text.

Alī Umar to David Gobat, 20 June 1828

Praise be to Him who is the most praiseworthy. Blessing and praise be to Him after whom there is no more any prophet.

The most perfect praise, well-being and honour (greetings more sweet than an agreeable, gentle breeze and than a fortunate chance to him who is languishing) on the part of Alī son of Umar, the ambassador of Suba Gadis, king of Abyssinia, to those whose virtues are desirable and whose words worthy of being believed; by this we want to signify in a particular way our friends and our family, who are our brothers, among whom is Mr. David Gobat. The abovementioned Alī greets you and says to you, "We are well, in good condition and in perfect health." What we want to tell you concerning your sons, Mr. Gobat and Mr. Kugler, is that they are the reason why we know you. We have seen that they are good people; they have behaved in a praiseworthy manner towards us and have shown us the highest degree of benevolence.

As for us, if it pleases Him who wills (God), we shall give them full reward, according to the circumstances and the power which we have. Feel no anxiety at all on their account if they travel with us. Fear not for them because of the difficulties of the road, nor for anything that might happen to them on the part of robbers, brigands, oppressors, swindlers, crooks or the King!!! No one will do them the least of harm except for the sting of death.

We ask the Lord of perfect peace and universal bliss that they may be able to return to you free from harm and sorrow. I have not written to you earlier because I was ill; but now I find myself well and happy. The young Malo, the servant of Alī, the Abyssinian, greets you. I greet you a thousand times and more.

In the year of 1243, in the month of the pilgrimage, on the 6th day of the month (20th June 1828).

Basler Mission, Brüderverzeichnis 31, copy of French translation. The original of this letter has not been located (see no. 24).

After the death of Henry Salt, Alī Umar stayed with the CMS missionaries in Cairo, while his companion Coffin proceeded to England. When Alī returned to Ethiopia in November 1829, Gobat and his fellow missionary Christian Kugler accompanied him. In fact, Alī was largely instrumental in bringing about the first nineteenth-century missionary effort in Ethiopia (*Samuel Gobat*, pp. 88–89, 104, 106). He remained a friend of Gobat until his death in Sept. 1832 (*Samuel Gobat, Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia* (New York, 1859, reprint 1969), pp. 386, 389, 421).

In addition to the opening lines and the dating, several phrases reveal that it is a translation from Arabic. The words in parenthesis appear in parenthesis also in the French version.

In a letter to the Church Missionary Society from Basel, 28 Jan. 1829, transmitting a copy of this letter and the following from Alī, Kugler advised that the "letters from Ali ought not to be printed as long as we are still afar from Abyssinia." Obviously Kugler was concerned with eventual problems for Alī and the missionaries on their way to Ethiopia, not after their arrival there.

Alī Umar to Susanne Gobat, 20 June 1828

Praise be to him who is truly adored. Blessing and peace be to him who has been sent to all creatures (Mohammed).

Perfect peace, salutation and honour (greetings sweeter than the agreeable breathing of fresh air and than a fortunate chance for him who is miserable) on the part of Alī, son of Umar ambassador of the king of Abyssinia, to the intelligent lady, the renowned pearl, superior to her contemporaries and her peers, the lady of her century, the wisest of her sex. By this we want to signify Madame Susanne Gobat. The above-mentioned Alī greets you.

The reason for which we remember you is that your sons Mr. Gobat and Kugler have shown us great consideration, and have loaded us with acts of kindness. We have found that they are good people, and if it pleases Him who wills (God), we shall recompensate them still more fully. Do not fear that any harm will ever happen to them. Neither men nor demons will be able to harm them.

We shall take care of them. We shall send someone with them and they shall return to you in security and in good condition. I greet you more than a thousand times.

In the year 1243, in the month of the pilgrimage, on the 6th day of the month (20th June 1828).

Basler Mission, Brüderverzeichnis 31, copy of French translation (see no. 24). On this document Samuel Gobat has made the following note:

30th July 1828

My Abyssinian Alī has obliged me to promise him that I will send you this letter which I have translated literally to give you an idea of his way of thinking and of the Arabic style. My two Abyssinians are quite gentle and dutiful and I believe that they are attached to me but they are still far from being like my dear Girgis. Alī, the Muslim, is ignorant and callous, the other has many good inclinations, but he loves weapons too much!

The words in parenthesis appear in parenthesis also in the French text, "Muḥammad", "God" and the date obviously as explanations, while the parenthesis around the typical Arabic well-wishing was more likely inserted because the Protestant missionary disliked what he regarded as empty words.

Welde Gīyorgīs to the Church Missionary Society, 1 Oct. 1830

(Oct. 1st 1830)

To the christian society, which is in England.

Your love has been much heard of by (your) fulfilling the Gospel. The four Epistles are in your hearts. Your love has much been heard of in our country. Your sons have arrived and have made us understand it. Do not forget us for the Lord's sake. We are attracted by your love, having heard your statutes and having seen your doings in your sons Mrss [*sic*] Gobat and Kugler. Your liberality is attested by your sons. He (God) has given you in this world. Of men, your king excells. Your gold is as the dust. Your love is very benevolent. I wished to see you, as you think of me in your hearts. I am at present with your sons, who told me to write to you, who are in the city London by the will of Christ, that you may think of me in your love. How do you do, how do you do as the blessing of heaven and earth!

Your son Wolda Girgis believes in Jesus, that he can do all things. Without Him the world could not be saved, and we are saved by his blood. Our Lord has given us the holy spirit that we all may praise Christ. He calls us his children till I come and take you away. No other shall take you out of my hand. I have given you my body by the cross. Our Lord was crucified on account of his love to us and he has commanded love; (now) there is none except with English people. May you not forget me till you repose (in the grave)!

You are teachers, your heart is with Christ. You are priests and your statutes are very firm. The purity of your females excells washed muslin. The understanding of your sons excells that of Solomon and I have found help with you, the Gospel of Christ, the Acts of the Apostles and the teaching of Paul. I praise always Christ, who has brought me into fellowship with Mrss [*sic*] Gobat and Kugler.

I, who have written this to you, my name is called Wolda Girgis, habeshi.

CMS, CM/O 46/238, English translation by Kugler. A slightly different copy is preserved in Basler Mission, Brüderverzeichnis 39 (also Kugler). This letter was written from Tigray after the arrival of Gobat and Kugler in Ethiopia. I have reproduced the text exactly as it is found in the CMS archives with two exceptions: I have added *sic* where applicable and have excluded one long explanation to the sentence "The four Epistles are in your hearts". Kugler explains this as follows: "The Abyssinians divide the Epistles ሐዲቲታ: according to the Apostles, whose writings we possess besides the four Gospels, as Paule, Peter, James and Jude. The three Ep. of St. John are thus joined to his Gospel. It is evident that the 4 Gospels have led them to this singular division." In the Basel copy this explanation is even more abridged and confusing. The *haddisat* are, in fact, the four major parts of the New Testament: the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Revelation of St. John.

In the middle of the sentence beginning "He calls us his children" a direct quotation begins and continues through the following two sentences (cf. John 14: 3 and 10: 28). An incorrect construction in English, it shows that Kugler attempted to stay close to the writer's Amharic original.

demanded that we become Muslims. He burnt churches [and] exterminated the Christians. But later, since the Lord does not destroy [the principle of taking] turns, a great king like you was found and [as a result] the king named Gelawdēwos destroyed Graññ. Our churches were sanctified; our faith was restored. Are your troops well? Is your country well? Are your priests well? Also, the countries which the Turks have come and occupied today, Sinnar [and] Metemma, were the dominions of our king. But now, since a conqueror recognizes no boundaries, unsatisfied with this, they demanded of us that we leave [the country in] which we reside. If a Christian of our country goes [there] to trade, they buy from him by coercion for little that which has great value. This kind of oppression has been committed against us.

Those who had this letter written are *Aleqa* Ištīfanos and *Aleqa* Šedalu.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 272, fols 17v–18r, copy of an Amharic letter (with opening phrase in Gi'iz) found in one of the French traveller and scholar Antoine d'Abbadie's notebooks. It was almost certainly copied into the notebook either by Antoine himself or by one of his Ethiopian companions after his return from his first visit to Ethiopia, as was an almost identical letter to Queen Victoria (no. 29). The spelling of some of the names, e.g. ፊሊፖስ (with **T** instead of **ፈ**) and ውክጥሬክ (in no. 29), indicate that he was closely involved in the production of the text. It is extremely unlikely that any Ethiopian hearing the name of the famous queen would arrive at that spelling. It has not been possible to trace any of the two originals but, if they ever existed (see below), they must have been written at Gonder in June 1838. The letter to Louis Philippe would naturally have been presented to the king, but neither the original, nor a copy, nor even a full French translation, could be found in the Fonds d'Orléans of the Archives Nationales or in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. There is only a letter from Antoine d'Abbadie to Soult, dated 8 July 1839, dealing with the matter (AEMD, Afrique 13, fols 7–8).

Sahle Dingil was the nominal emperor 1832–40, 1842–43, 1846–50 and 1852–55; *Ras* Alī of Begēmdir (1831–53), *Dejjazmach* Kinfu of Dembiya (c. 1830–39) and *Dejjazmach* Wibē of Simēn and Tigray (1826–55) the most powerful princes in north and central Ethiopia at the time. It is impossible to say with certainty whether Wibē and Kinfu appear as co-actors in their own right in connection with this letter or not. The Gi'iz structure dictates the hierarchy “*Ras* Alī, head of the governors *Dejj Azmach* Wibē and *Dejj Azmach* Kinfu”, but it is quite possible that the scribe has inadvertently omitted the conjunction ው- (and) after Alī in which case the “heads of the governors” Wibē and Kinfu are coactors with Alī.

If the letter or letters were written at Gonder at all, it was probably only the *ichegē*, Mahiṣente Mīka'ēl (c. 1838–48), who was involved, in addition to the two priests, Ištīfanos and Šedalu, mentioned in the last sentence of the letter. Ištīfanos had lived for many years in Jerusalem and Egypt and was described as a “Coptic Catholic” by Gobat whose close friend he became at Gonder in 1830 and with whom he reportedly pleaded for assistance from England “as a means of ameliorating the political condition of Abyssinia” (Gobat, *Journal*, pp. 182, 200–201, 304). For *ichegē* Mahiṣente Mīka'ēl, see no. 69.

An Ethiopian ecclesiastic named Welde Kīros accompanied Antoine d'Abbadie to Rome, apparently as a representative of the *ichegē*, and it cannot be excluded that the message remained verbal until written down in the notebook in Rome. It follows an entry consisting of an address by Welde Kīros, who remained in Rome, was educated and ordained a Catholic priest, to Pope Gregorius XVI. The text of the letter shows strong Gonder influence and while the question of the form and authenticity must to some extent be left open, there need be no doubt that Ethiopians composed and worded this message of “lamentation and mourning”—an allusion to Ezek. 2: 10. The passage about the great king who “was found” must refer to King John of Portugal and the Portuguese troops who came to the assistance of King Gelawdēwos in the sixteenth century.

The questions about the health and welfare of the army, country and priests of France appear completely out of context. In a normal Ethiopian letter they would have appeared at the top, possibly at the end. Here they interrupt the reasoning in a disturbing way. If the question marker -ጥ could be explained in some other way, the passage would read, “Your troops are safe. Your country is safe. Your priests are safe. [But here] also the countries . . .” This would emphasize the reference to the king of Portugal and the implied request that the king of France act likewise.

A vaguely but sympathetically worded reply from Louis Philippe to the “Roi des Rois de l'Abyssinie, Sahla Doughael” dated 18 Aug. 1839 is quoted in a lengthy Foreign Ministry report on the d'Abbadie mission (AECF, Égypte, Massouah 1, fols 56v–69r).

See Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans dans la Haute-Éthiopie (Abyssinie)*, I (Paris, 1868), pp. 44–45, 553–554; Georges Maléco, “Les voyageurs français et les relations entre la France et l'Abyssinie de 1835 à 1870”, *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-Mer*, LVIII (1971), pp. 151–154, and, for the interpretation and purpose of the letter in particular, Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 70–80.

Muḥammad ‘Alī. May the Lord protect you, and may your kingdom not be taken from (lit. come out of) your house. Alleviate our distress for us. On our part, we will pray for you. We plead with you in [the name of] your Creator not to ignore us when you hear this. We will know your power when you force the Turks to turn back. In former times, too, a Muslim called Graññ arose in our country Abyssinia and demanded that we become Muslims. He burnt churches and exterminated the Christians. But later, since the Lord does not destroy [the principle of taking] turns, a great king like you was found and [as a result] the king named Gelawdēwos destroyed Graññ. Our churches were sanctified; our faith was restored. Are your whole army and (your) country well? Also, the countries which the Turks have come and occupied today, Sinnar [and] Metemma, were the dominions of our king. But now, since a conqueror recognizes no boundaries, unsatisfied with this, they demanded of us that we leave [the country in] which we reside. If a Christian of our country goes to trade, they buy from him by coercion for little that which has great value. This kind of oppression has been committed against us.

Those who had this letter written are *Aleqa* Isṭifanos and *Aleqa* Şedalu.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 272, fols 18v–19r, copy of an Amharic letter (with opening phrases in Gi’iz) (cf. no. 28); Ethiop. Abb. 279, fols. 53–54, English translation, beginning “The voice of a tear which was written . . .”, found between entries referring to July 1838. Note that d’Abbadie has added “lion à gauche (cachet)” at the bottom of this letter, though not on the one to the French king. This would seem to indicate that at least one sealed letter was brought from Gonder. According to the Catholic priest Tekle Haymanot (*Vicende*, p. 449), who seems to have been aware of the letter to Louis Philippe only, this letter carried the seals of both the emperor and the *içhegē*, erroneously called Filippos. In the British archives I have only been able to locate the following English translation by Antoine d’Abbadie dated 18 May 1839 (FO 95/690, fol. 140):

These words of sorrow and toil go from the king Sahla Dōngöl, the Atshegay Mahatzanta Mikael master of Mount Libanos, the Ras Ali, his chiefs and conquerors the dadj azmatsh Oubi and the dadj azmatsh Kōnfou to Victoria queen who commands the English, the Indians and the islands of the Ocean. Those are all under your dominion. Anthony d’Abbadie & Michael d’Abbadie having come to visit Habash (Abyssinia) told us to send you our tribulation. The Turkish soldiers of Mouhammed Ali have fallen on our country, destroyed our churches and burnt our Gospel. They have massacred 1500 Christians, they have made 2700 prisoners to water the plantations of Egypt. Now when he says “I have not been in the land of the Christians”, it is a falsehood; do not believe him. From his camp to Gondar he has only two days journey. Great Queen, who [*sic*] do you leave the Christians in the hands of the Musulman? And now that we have acknowledged your power, act according to your strength. Write to Mouhammed Ali to bring back the Turks. The Lord will preserve you and your kingdom and take away our desolation from your house. And we stay in affliction, and now after having heard us, how can you remain silent? We will know your power by the going back of the Turks. In former times, Grañ (so styled) a Musulman arose in our country Habash (Abyssinia); he said “be Musulman”, burnt the churches and dispersed the Christians. But afterwards, the Lord does not destroy those who serve him: a king arose powerful like you, named Glawdeos, who destroyed Grañ and blessed (restored) our churches and our faith and saved your servants and all your kingdom. And in these days the Turks have come and taken the country of Sōnar (Sennaar) and have invaded Matama which belonged to our king. Now he has no frontiers to conquer. They (the Turks) told all those who remained there (in Matama) to leave the town and when our Christians go there for traffic, they seize forcibly for a trifling price that which has cost a great deal. This is the injustice they practice upon us. Alak’a Östefanos and Alak’a Tsadalo composed this letter.

Royal seal (lion facing left)

Victoria

Antoine d’Abbadie’s notes added to this document are of little importance and have been omitted.

In early June 1839, d’Abbadie wrote to a friend in Parliament asking him to approach Lord Palmerston, *i.a.* for a reply to carry with him to Ethiopia. He was asked to send the original of the letter to the Foreign Office but there is no indication in the archives that it was actually received. Palmerston nevertheless obliged with a letter to the “King of Abyssinia” in English and Arabic (FO 1/3, fols 29–45, and FO 95/690, fols 141–142).

Matēwos Apostolis *et al.* to Gregorius XVI, [28 July] 1838

To Gregorius (Gorgoriyos), the 16th vicar (*meggabī*) of Jesus Christ, who sits on the throne of St. Peter, the patriarch of the great church.

[From] Qēs Teklu, *Debtera Welde Tinsa'ē*, *Debtera Melku*, *Debtera Welde Sillasē*, *Debtera Abēsēlom* [of] the church of St. Gabriel [at] Adwa in Tigray, Ethiopia, [in] 1830 [E.C].

We are happy with Your Holiness because you have sent us a Roman priest who has knowledge. With his words and example he converts us and has brought us to the love of the head of the Church. The truth is with you because we see great love in everyone [who comes from you]. Your messenger (lit. message) and all [others] are also like that. They seek to teach us what we owe to our father and shepherd. The jealous [persons] who told us lies only have disappeared. He who taught (lit. told) us in words and deeds is Father Giuseppe Sapeto (*Abune Yosēf Sapēto*). It is meet for us to say, "The Roman Church is the Church of Jesus Christ." With this faith, we greet [you kissing] your holy feet, and kneeling we beseech the blessing of your episcopal office.

Merī Gēta Matēwos wrote this on behalf of all.

ASCPF.SRC, Ethiopia, Arabia, Socotra 1721–1840, vol. 3, fol. 716, Gi'iz original, 420×270 mm, parchment; fol. 618, Italian translation by the Lazarist missionary Giuseppe Sapeto. The date, 1830 E.C., given in the letter, corresponds to 1837/38. The translation bears the exact date of 28 July 1838. Both versions were published by Osvaldo Rainieri in his article "Il Mai, la Cultura e le Missioni d'Etiopia", *Angelo Mai e la Cultura del Primo Ottocento* (Bergamo, 1985), pp. 39–70. He points out some of the discrepancies of Sapeto's translation, the most important being the omission of the last sentence, but does not provide a retranslation.

Merī Gēta Matēwos was the son of a Greek named Apostolis who had married and lived in Ethiopia for many years. He became Father Giustino De Jacobis's first Amharic teacher (Salvatore Arata, *Abuna Yacob: Apostolo dell'Abissinia 1800–1860* (Napoli, 1934), pp. 124, 133). Before that, however, he had been engaged by Samuel Gobat to preside over the translation of the Gospel into Tigrīñña (*Journal*, p. 384), an undertaking which after many years resulted in *The Four Gospels of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ translated into the Tigre-Language by the Abyssinian Debtera Matteos and revised by the deceased Rev. Mr. Isenberg* (St. Chrischona, 1866). The other five clerics behind this letter were obviously early converts to or sympathizers with the Catholic faith. At least two were later involved in the activities of Antoine d'Abbadie, viz. Abēsēlom (no. 97) and Melku (nos 55 and 57).

The letter, which contains obscure passages, was no doubt solicited by Giuseppe Sapeto who reported in his *Viaggio e missione cattolica fra i Mensa e gli Habab* (Rome, 1857), p. 106, that he had at first celebrated mass in secret at Adwa to avoid trouble but had then been invited by *Aleqa* (*debtera* in the letter) Welde Sillasē to celebrate in his church, St. Gabriel. He goes on to say, "It was therefore easy for me to obtain from them [the clergy of St. Gabriel] a letter of explicit submission to the Holy Father, which was carried by Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie on his way back to Europe." A copy in Antoine's hand is actually found in BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 629. A French translation was published by J. B. Coulbeaux, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Abyssinie* (Paris, 1929), II, p. 403, but with St. Michael instead of St. Gabriel and with the wrong date of 1836.

The "jealous who told lies" are no doubt the Protestant missionaries C. W. Isenberg, C. H. Blumhardt and J. L. Krapf who were expelled from Adwa in early 1838 by Wibē.

For further information on this mission to Rome, see, in addition to the Catholic literature cited here, Crummey, *Priests*, pp. 59–60, and Rubenson, *Survival*, p. 77.

Sanna Ibsa to Goshu Zewdē, [1839?]



الحمد لله وحده والصلوة والسلام
 على رسول الله محمد بن لآ نسي بعد
 اما بعد سلام الاتم الي حضرت علي
 كاشوا لكذا بن زودي يا قاهر هذا الكتاب
 قل له كون ياخي في الدارين تحدث
 ليسا نك مثل لساني مثل الامطار
 البهار نكن كان ارسلني بالوجان
 وانا اخذت دخلا يد ليكن طلت
 صاحبة اريد حمرك ولكن اعطني
 يا حبيبي مثل طلتك ان كان تخني
 يا حبيبي يا قرة عيني ولكني صفتك
 ان تخني احدك فلان ترك بهذا
 الكلامي بلاد كدر ولكن
 مسافر طريق في بلاد كدر وكم
 جعل له بما جند بلاد كدر يا
 جعل بلاد كدر وبلاد وجر
 لسانك ولكن اجني وجعلني
 بيني بينك كما جعل ابي وولاي
 لكن طنتك اعطني نك لكي
 اعطني فرس الجواد وبق الجواد
 والباس الحرب جلد الاسد بلاد كثير
 ولكن كل صدي كما لك ان شئت كما
 بقلبك وان اعطيني بنتك ادركت
 بلاد يا خبير كلهم وان شئت
 مال بقلبك كم في ولوي باقا
 وانا ارسلت انا اذ كنا امت
 الطريق ولكن خفت الطريق
 لكن امسك كلامي طلت حبي
 وان قلت ~~مهم~~ مرحبا كلهم
 وان اريد وجدك كل خير لاجلك
 وهذا السلام
 ارسلت
 بيد اكتشف
 ان كرمي
 ونك عبي رجلا بخشي اماك يا ابي
 كما تخني ولكن سافرت بيني وبينك
 اجعل للليل كما جعل صاحبك في طلك
 وهذا والسلام

Praise be to God alone. May blessing and peace be upon the Messenger of God, Muḥammad, after whom there is no prophet. And now, after most perfect greetings to [His] Excellency *Dejjazmach* Goshu [Abba] Kanno, son of Zewdē (*Ḥaḍrat Wakīlā Kāshū*, 'KN *ibn* ZWDY). O reader of this letter, say to him, "O brother of mine in the two worlds (*i.e.* heaven and earth), you speak with your tongue as if it were with my tongue, like the rains and the seas. You sent me some goods (*māl*). They came and I received [them] (*lit.* took in my hand). However, I ask your friendship and desire your affection, Ask [from] me, my dear friend, just as I ask [from] you, if you have [true] affection for me, my dear friend and apple (*lit.* cooling) of my eye. I ask you to have affection for me and I shall have affection for you. Because of what I am saying, do not abandon the land of Gudru (KDR). He who travels in the land of Gudru and needs something in the land of Gudru, give it to him as if it were your country and mine, and keep your word. Show affection to me and make our relationship like that of a father and a son. I ask you to give me your daughter. I am rich in excellent horses and mules and war equipment and lion skins and many lands. All that I have is as if it were yours, if you desire it with your heart. If you give me your daughter, you will have my country with all that is good in it. If in your heart you desire money, [tell me] how much, even [if it amounts to] thousand(s), and I will send it if we are sure the route is safe. However, I am fearful about the route. Keep your

word. I have asked you for affection. If you say welcome to all [of these proposals], I desire to seek out all good things for your sake. Greetings.”

The writer of the letter (*mustamidd al-waraq*) is Sanna, son of *Amīr Jibrīl* (*Sānah ibn Amīr Jibrīl*). May it reach *Dejjazmach Goshu Zewdē* (*Kāshū ibn ZWYD [sic]*). I have sent it by the hand of *Baqusē Kormē* (*Bākshī ibn KRMĪ*). The man *Baqusē* is my friend. I love you, O my father, as you love me. However, I have made him travel between you and me [so] treat [him] as your friend [while he is] in your country. Greetings.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 249, Oromiñña(?) original in the form of a typical Ethiopian scroll, 400 mm long and 65 wide, written in red ink with the exception of a few lines at the top. The Arabic translation (?) also reproduced here was printed in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (2, XVII (1842), opposite p. 160) with the annotation that the letters (presumably the two versions) had been given to Arnauld d'Abbadie by *Dejjazmach Goshu* of Gojjam and that Arnauld had forwarded a copy from Berbera to Paris on 14 Jan. 1841. Since Arnauld had spent much of the year 1839 with Goshu, including a short campaign against the Oromo south of the Blue Nile, it may safely be assumed that the scroll was acquired at that time, though it might of course have been written earlier. To my knowledge, it is the only preserved document in “Oromiñña script”.

I have not been able to ascertain where or by whom the Arabic translation was produced. In a letter from Berbera, which was also published in *BSG* (2, XVIII (1842), pp. 120–126), Antoine d'Abbadie declares that he tried hard to decipher the original text with the help of the Arabic version. He felt fairly sure that the text ran from right to left and that the symbols represented syllables, that is, provided the language was Oromiñña and the content identical with that of the accompanying Arabic text. Informed by his interpreters, however, that the Muslim Oromo did not translate the Arabic phrase *Al-ḥamdu lillāh*, etc., into their language, and unable to identify these Arabic words behind the strange symbols, Antoine d'Abbadie gave up his attempt (see also BN, Ethiop. Abb. 272, fols 65–66, 72 v.).

The d'Abbadie brothers attributed the letter to Abba Bagibo (the horsename of Ibsa Bofo), ruler of Limmu-Innarya 1825–61. According to the Arabic version of the letter, however, the one who wrote (or sent) the letter was “*Sānah ibn Amīr Jibrīl*”. When Antoine reached the court of Abba Bagibo at Sakka in 1843, he made a new attempt to solve the mystery of the strange script, once more in vain. He was informed, however, that Abba Bagibo had not written the letter. Instead it was attributed to his son “*Sanna abba ragou*”. The emissary was identified as *Baqusē Kormē* (ባቁሤ ኮርሜ). See BN, Ethiop. Abb. 265, fol. 2v; also fol. 106v for an attempt by Antoine d'Abbadie to find a solution by translating the Arabic into Amharic.

Charles Beke, who made extensive inquiries about the lands south of the Abbay while visiting Gojjam in 1841–42 (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, XIII (1843), pp. 254–269), was also told that Abba Bagibo's eldest son and heir apparent was “*Sanna*, or *Abba Rago*”. I have not been able, however, to verify Antoine d'Abbadie's statement that Ibsa Abba Bagibo was also known as *Amīr Jibrīl*.

Dejjazmach Goshu Zewdē, here addressed *wakil* for *dejjazmach*, was the ruler of Gojjam from c. 1825 until 1852. ‘*KN*, deciphered “*Gana*” by the contemporary translator into French, no doubt refers to Goshu's horsename Abba Kanno. Through his father *Dejjazmach Zewdē Tulu*, Goshu was of Oromo descent and had spent his childhood among the Oromo. He spoke Oromiñña and used it in writing occasionally, but then with the Ethiopic script.

The petition for a marriage alliance and the request that Goshu not abandon Gudru testify to the good relations which—in the interest of the trade—normally existed between the Gojjamēs and the rulers of the Oromo principalities immediately south of the Abbay (*JRGS*, vol. XIII, p. 257). See Abir, *Ethiopia*, pp. 73–94. To my knowledge no further attempts to decipher the “Oromiñña script” have been made. The above is therefore a translation of the Arabic version. This was according to the contemporary translator in Paris “*du style le plus barbare*”, or in Antoine d'Abbadie's words “*en Arabe vulgaire de la Haute-Ethiopie*”. It is indeed very barbarous. The almost unique method of linking sentences is with *lākin* (but, however) which has largely been ignored in the translation. Unlike most of the Ethiopian letters, it does not betray the influence of Sudanese or any other known colloquial dialect. It is rather a very infelicitous attempt on the part of the translator to express himself in “classical” Arabic.

I have assumed that Antoine d'Abbadie knew what he was doing when he accepted the connection between the scroll and the letter in Arabic, but would like to emphasize that we have no internal evidence for such a connection. On the contrary, the document with its square of symbols strongly resembles an ordinary magical scroll, in which case not only the “alphabet” but also the eventual words might be unintelligible. This does not, of course, nullify the message preserved in the *Arabic* text.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Louis Philippe, [Dec. 1839]

King Wibē, chief of Hamasēn, of the province of Adwa and of Agamē, of Haramat, of Wejerat, of Simēn, of Wegera, of Welqayit, [and] of Serayē, in short, of all the trade routes of Abyssinia, exercising his influence over the island of Meroe and the Galla population, requests the alliance of France, offering as payment for the friendship which he wants to conclude a bay on the Red Sea and the monopoly of the trade of the rich country which he rules.

The offer of Wibē to France is dictated by a perfect understanding of his interests. In fact, he hopes for arms and munitions of war from a powerful country and one which does not have any establishment close by from which there is anything to fear, as would be the case with England. He wants to place the commerce in the hands of a Christian people in order to destroy the means of influence of the Arabs and the Abyssinian Muslims. In short, he wants to civilize his people and has heard about the results which Muḥammad 'Alī has obtained through his alliance with the Europeans.

France should accept the offer of Wibē under the pain of seeing other powers profit from the advantages which have been offered to her and of which the importance is as follows:

This would be to have markets for its future products, such as velvets, broadcloth, copper, printed calicoes, window-panes, glassware, arms, morocco leather, (one word illegible) garments which we will probably make better and cheaper. The exchange goods are hides in immense quantities, wax, ivory, coffee superior to mocha, gum, musk, ostrich feathers, the finest cotton which is known, medicinal herbs, gold. As a political consequence we would thwart the British and watch Egypt. By establishing a free port which would be a depot where Asia and Africa would come to supply themselves, we would be able to destroy the trade of the other ports in the neighbourhood. Aden would have the disadvantage of being obliged to fight against a population with a religion contrary to that of the British. In short, we would seize Africa from two sides, and our scholars would be on the road to very great discoveries. In making, without any means, a journey of 2,000 leagues, I did not count on the refusal of France among the risks I needed to fear. I can carry out all that I have proposed with the gift of some arms from France and a warship to transport these arms. I undertake, finally, to find commercial firms who will supply the rest.

AEMD, Afrique 13, fol. 61, French "translation". This is the only text of this crucial document to be found in the archives of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. With the exception, possibly, of the first paragraph, it is clearly *not* a translation of a letter from Wibē, but a report by the French marine officer and explorer Théophile Lefebvre of the alleged contents of a letter. According to a report made in the Ministry, however, Lefebvre had shown Wibē's letter "dont il fait faire une traduction par la Père Sapeto . . ." (AACP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 47v, 13 March 1840). In spite of the highly dubious character of this document, it has been included in the collection because of the considerable circumstantial evidence that an original document of some kind, often referred to as a "treaty", was brought from Ethiopia, allegedly stamped with "the seal of the cross-marked lion" (Giuseppe Sapeto, *Etiopia. Notizie raccolte dal Prof. Giuseppe Sapeto* (Rome, n.d.), pp. 288-289). According to Lefebvre it was drafted by one of Wibē's "chief ministers", *Aleqa Habte Sillasē* (no. 48), and countersigned "for more authenticity"(!) by the Catholic missionaries De Jacobis and Montuori at Adwa (Théophile Lefebvre, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, I (Paris, 1845), p. 108). The existence, moreover, of a treaty or other written agreement with very definite commitments by Wibē has been accepted without reservations by such scholars as Carlo Giglio (*Etiopia-Mar Rosso*, I (Rome, 1958), pp. 48, 86) and Malécot ("Les voyageurs français", pp. 159-160). Nevertheless it must be stressed that we have, in fact, no evidence of what the Amharic original contained. For further information on this letter or "treaty", see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 86-90.

Sahle Sillasē to Louis Philippe, [March 1840]

Ras Sahle Sillasē (Saculé Selaré), king of Shewa, to Louis Philippe, king of France.

I send you a message after having heard Mr. Rochet speak of your greatness, and my heart is already going out to you and desires your friendship. It is natural that, between peoples living far from each other, presents are the first pledges, and I send you some objects from my country. These objects are: a shield, a sword, a ring of silver and a warrior's bracelet, one of my dresses, a lion skin, a black panther skin, two spears, a horse, two books, one called *Sinkisar*, the other *Fitha Negest*. All this I do not consider as presents worthy of you, but as curiosities. They are products of our craftsmanship which I want to show you.

I cannot make that friendship with you which is born from seeing and speaking, but only that of writing, because we cannot meet you; but our eyes are the letters traced by the pen and our speech that of Rochet to whom I have confided my thoughts. Send him back to me soon, and when he comes, tell him what you want to have from my country and what is not found in yours. I shall make haste to satisfy your desires and to send this man back to you in my turn.

May the blessing of God, our Father, may that of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, be with you.

Certified translation.

Signed: Lefebvre.

Officer of the Royal Marine.

Alexandria, 27 October 1840.

AEMD, Afrique 13, fol. 287, copy of French "translation". The date on the document refers to the date of the translation or copy. The letter was allegedly dictated by King Sahle Sillasē of Shewa (1813–47) in the presence of the French traveller and merchant-adventurer C. F. X. Rochet d'Héricourt before the latter left Shewa for France on 3 March 1840. It has been impossible to trace any Amharic original in the archives of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères or the Fonds d'Orléans. Rochet who published the letter in his *Voyage sur la côte orientale de la Mer Rouge, dans le pays d'Adel et le royaume de Choa* (Paris, 1841), pp. 317–318, in fact states that it was the translation that was presented to Louis Philippe. The question of the authenticity of this letter has to my knowledge never been raised and cannot be answered without the original.

The wording does, however, quite clearly indicate an original message in Amharic. Note, for instance, the emphasis on the fact that the gifts were sent as samples of Ethiopian craftsmanship, a point stressed also in Sahle Sillasē's letter to Victoria in 1843 (no. 64). A comparison between the version published here and the text published by Rochet (also without reservations by Malécot, "Les voyageurs français", pp. 286–287) shows that the French traveller vacillated. He changed the *ras* of the opening phrase "Ras Saculé Selaré, Roi de Choa", but made it "Negueuste" (kings) instead of *nigus* (king), and he added "Sahlé-Sallasi, roi de Choa" by way of signature at the bottom. The appearance of Lefebvre (see no. 32) as a translator is also a bit strange. He arrived at Alexandria from France on 27 October 1840 (*Voyage*, I, p. 199) and Rochet obtained the translation, if that is what it is, the same day.

Sahle Sillasē to the East India Company, [28 June 1840]

This letter which is sent by Sahela Selassie the king of Shoa, Efat, Gurague and the Galla nation may come to the great English company in India.

Are you quite well? I am well.

About your happiness I have been informed from your Countrymen who came into my country and spoke with me about your welfare and greatness. When I was informed about your kindness towards all men I was much rejoiced and I determined to make friendship with you. As to myself, if my person is bad or good you will have been informed about it by your Countrymen, having been in my country. Well then I wish very much that you may please to make friendship with me. God has given me a good and large kingdom but arts and sciences are not yet come into my Country, as they are in yours. Therefore you may please to assist me in this respect. The thing in which you may assist me is in sending Guns, cannons and other things which are not to be got in my Country. I do not venture to fix how much you shall send to me of those things. You may (act) according to your kindness which is known everywhere.

As to me I am ready to send to you things which perhaps are not in your Country. You may please to tell me what you wish and I shall send it (to) you. That I did not send at present the things you wish for, the reason is that I did not know what you like. I have sent you two horses, having understood that you like this. You may consider it only as a sign of friendship. I did not think that it was a sufficient present to you but you may consider it as the beginning of my love towards you and of my friendship with you. Farewell farewell.

FO 78/3185, fols 163v–164v, English translation by the German missionary J. L. Krapf; copy with a few minor editorial variations in IOR, Bombay Secret Proceedings, P 159, no. 1486 C. This letter was sent with a covering letter (no. 35) to Captain Stafford Haines, the British agent at Aden. It was accompanied by a letter from Krapf, dated 1 July 1840 (FO 78/3185, fol. 166), in which the missionary explains his involvement in the matter. In his published diary (*The Journals of the Rev. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf* (London, 1843), pp. 250–251), Krapf has entered the text of the letter under 28 June, preceded by the following note: “The King spoke with me about the Letter which he intended to write to India. The Letter, which he ordered me to translate into the English Language, runs . . .” The two letters of the king were forwarded to Bombay by Haines on 25 Sept. (FO 78/3185, fols 158–159). Their arrival was registered in the *Bombay Secret Proceedings* (IOR, Z/P 3531, p. 117) as follows: “From the Political Agent at Aden handing up an original letter in the amharic character, from the King of Shoa, to the address of the Honourable the Governor of Bombay, with an English Translation of the same by the Reverend Mr. Krapf, as also copy of one to the address of Captain Haines.” Only the Krapf translation was forwarded to London and my attempts to locate the Amharic original have failed.

Though Germans by nationality, Krapf and his colleague C. W. Isenberg were not only regarded as Englishmen; Krapf was in fact deeply involved in promoting British interests and he, rather than Sahle Sillasē, was the initiator of this correspondence. For this, see also Krapf to the British consul general in Egypt, P. Campbell, 3 July 1840 (FO 1/3, fols 53–56). Krapf’s messenger to the coast was a son of Subagadis’s envoy Alī Umar (nos 23, 25 and 26) named Husayn, who as a nine-year-old became the pupil of Gobat and was mostly known as Samu’el Giyorgis after his baptism (FO 78/3185, fols 162, 168; *Samuel Gobat*, p. 144).

This letter was published by E. Ullendorff and C. F. Beckingham in “The First Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty”, *JSS*, IX, 1 (1964), pp. 187–199. See also Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 148–159, for the events which led to the writing of the letter and its consequences.

The letter is reproduced with the orthography—including the Ethiopian names—and the punctuation of the document as preserved in FO 78/3185.

Sahle Sillasē to Stafford Haines, [28 June 1840]

This letter which is sent by Sahela Selassie the king of Shoa, Efat, the Galla nation and Gurague may come to the Commander Haines at Aden.

Are you well? I am well.

I have written all my desires in a letter, which I sent to you, to forward it as quickly as possible to the great Company in India, and to send to me the reply to my letter as soon as it has arrived with you. I conjure you by our Lord Jesus Christ. Farewell, farewell.

I am very near to you and you are near to my kingdom, therefore I wish very much to be in friendship with you. In sign of friendship I have sent to you a horse and a cloth of my Country, and a mule and a Gassela hide to your wife. If you like anything let me know it. God may give you health and wealth.

John Airston, your Countryman, having arrived on the frontiers of my kingdom fell sick and died without having met with me. I was mourning very much for him. As I did not see him I mourned very much. I have written this that you may know about his death.

FO 78/3185, fol. 163, English translation by J. L. Krapf (see no. 34). Even if it was Reverend Krapf who took the initiative with regard to this correspondence, the wording of the letters seems to indicate that Sahle Sillasē was at this time eager to establish contact with Aden and Bombay. John Airston, a Scotsman (who because of the identification of the German missionaries with the British was regarded as their countryman), had apparently travelled up from the coast in company with Samu'el Giyorgis but had fallen ill and died on the very frontier of Shewa (see Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals*, pp. 228–229).

This letter is reproduced with the orthography—including the Ethiopian names—and the punctuation of the document as preserved in FO 78/3185.

Convention between Edmond Combes and Frédéric Broquant, on behalf of the Compagnie Nanto-Bordelaise, and Maḥmūd Ḥasan and Badrī 'Alī, 12 Sept. 1840

At the village of Edd, 13° 57' north latitude, 41° 40' east longitude, meridian of Greenwich, according to the new map completed by Mr Moresby.

Convention agreed upon between Messrs. Edmond Combes, chevalier of the Legion of Honour, charged by the French government with a mission to Abyssinia, [and] Frédéric Broquant, captain of the three-master Ankober, chevalier of the Legion of Honour, both acting in the name of and on behalf of the Compagnie Nanto-Bordelaise which reserves the right to take the name Compagnie française d'Abyssinie, on one side;

And Maḥmūd Ḥasan, sovereign master, [and] Badrī 'Alī, judge and religious head, who have decided, unanimously adopted and sworn to execute the conditions of the sale of which the details are to be given, in the presence of Messrs. Peluchenu (Philippe), Felix Kitchen, Alphonse Lanegrasse, Emile Chansarel, Bethlehem, Captain Hetmann, Pilot Idrīs and all the undersigned witnesses.

The above-mentioned sovereign and judge of the town of Edd, acting in concord and of their own free will [and] agreement, sell and cede in perpetuity and this without any reservation, neither for themselves nor for their families and their heirs, all the land included between the island of Kordumyat, that is to say the parallel which passes through this island whether 14° 8' north latitude [or not], and the parallel which passes through the white rock situated south east of Kaykok whether 13° 45' north latitude according to the same author [or not], inclusively. That is to say that the above-mentioned sovereign and judge sell all the land included between these two parallels up to a depth and an extension of three leagues into the interior, starting from the coast where Edd is situated.

In the sale are included the bays, anchorages, rivers, streams, lakes, springs, mines, pools, quarries and all objects whatever which might exist in the area designated and delimited above. The above-mentioned sovereign and judge declare that they renounce all rights and pretensions whatsoever to the sovereignty, authority and ownership over the lands, seas, rivers and waters, etc., situated in the area described above and they declare, on the contrary, that they have committed themselves with us to an offensive and defensive alliance.

The price of the present sale, cession and renunciation is fixed to the sum of one hundred thousand francs, which sum the above-mentioned chief and judge declare and acknowledge that they have received and they declare, moreover, that they are content and satisfied.

In consequence of these presents the above-mentioned chiefs acknowledge that all the property rights which they had to the above-mentioned land shall today appertain to the Société Nanto-Bordelaise.

The present deed [is] made in one copy and in the presence of the above-mentioned and un-

dersigned witnesses and translated verbally into the language of the country for the sovereign and judge of the country stated, to whom all explanations have been given concerning the content and the clauses which it includes, clauses which they have declared that they understand, accept and approve, and ratify, and signed with the parties and the witnesses.

Made in one copy and in good faith on the 12th of September in a house of the chief, in the year 1840.

The undersigned declaring that it does not enter into their practice to make two copies in the same language, the same treaty in Arabic has remained in their hands.

The signatures follow of

Arabic signatures	French signatures
Maḥmūd Ḥasan	Edmond Combes
Badrī ‘Alī	Frédéric Broquant
Hetmann, captain	Peluchenu
Idrīs, pilot	Bethlehem
Raga, dragoman	Felix Kitchen
etc.	etc.

AEMD, Afrique 13, fols 205–206, copy of the French version. Another copy of this French text, without the names at the bottom is found in AECF, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 4. Neither the French original nor a copy of the Arabic text could be located in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. The obvious explanation for this is of course that, since the French government refused to follow up the matter, the original would remain with the company, if not with Combes personally. Both the wording of the treaty and the circumstances surrounding it indicate that the reportedly difficult negotiations, which entailed buying the votes of the local dignitaries who opposed the sale, did lead to an agreement. Nevertheless the validity of the transaction is questionable, in spite of the strong protestations and many signatories. Edmond Combes was an adventurer with dubious credentials, and the authority of Maḥmūd Ḥasan and Badrī ‘Alī to enter into an agreement of this kind was later denied. Besides, Combes paid 10,000 and not 100,000 francs for the claim he established for his company.

The most interesting signatory from the Ethiopian viewpoint is Bethlehem, an Armenian who had settled in Ethiopia in the early 1830’s and made himself useful to many masters, including *Dejjazmach* Wibē and later *Abune Selama*. See Richard Pankhurst, “The History of Ethiopian-Armenian Relations (II)”, *Revue des études arméniennes*, Nouvelle série, XIII (1978–79), pp. 270–275. He seems to have been particularly interested in ecclesiastical affairs and to have eventually joined the priesthood, for in 1845 Bishop De Jacobis calls him *Abba Pāwlos Bethlehem* (*Giornale*, III, 4 June 1845).

A report by Captain Broquant was printed in *Annales de l’Institut d’Afrique*, no. 10 (Octobre), 1841. See also Malécot, “Les voyageurs français”, pp. 165–173, and Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 82–84, 114, 133, for the circumstances of this French initiative.

አንገላገል ጌጌ፡ ቢሰሉት፡ ያህን ግልጽ ስድቅ፡ ነገደ፡ ሲገ
 ሰው፡ ቢያውግ ልም፡ ጌጌግ፡ ደብረገሰ ጌጌ፡ ፡፡

የህ፡ ላይተኛ፡ ወረቀት፡ ነው፡ ስኬ፡ የሰጸ፡ ጌጌ፡ ወደሰ፡ ግ
 ደግሞ፡ ይህ ነገ፡ መስጸ፡ ምላሽ ግንባታ ግደተኛው ሰው
 ጉት፡ ስልጅ ረሰለም፡ እንደ፡ ምን፡ ብዬ፡ ነው፡ ያህን ጌጌ፡
 ረቱ፡ መሰላ ገጽ፡ ስልገበረ ም፡ ለኔ ም፡ ጌጌ፡ ነገር፡ ጌጌ
 ግ፡ ከብድኛ ስ፡ እጅግ፡ ታላላቅ ጌጌ፡ መገገግ ግደተኛ
 ወ፡ ምን ግልጽ ግንባታ፡ መድፍ፡ ምላሽ ሰ፡ ስው ግራ ጌጌ፡
 ዝያ፡ ወደያ፡ ደሰ፡ ግደተኛ ጌጌ፡ ከህግ ጌጌ ግደተኛ
 ያዝገግ፡ የሙሴ መድ፡ ስሊ፡ ነገር፡ ቢገደ፡ ጌጌ፡ ከግ
 አሱ፡ የሚጸገ፡ በመድ፡ አገግ ግላሁ፡ ግላ፡ ነገር፡
 ግደ፡ በረረ ሰ፡ በነገር ግደ፡ ከግንባታ ጌጌ፡ ጌጌ
 አጅ ጌጌ ግደ፡ ይህ ነገ፡ ነገር፡ የሚያደርግ ጌጌ፡ ከግደ፡
 አንድ ጌጌ፡ ወረቀት፡ ፡ ይሰጸ፡ ጌጌ፡ በከግ ጌጌ ግደ፡
 ሰግግ፡ ግራ፡ አደ ስግግ ጌጌ፡ ጌጌ ጌጌ ጌጌ፡ ስግግ፡ ቢተው
 አወደሱ ህ፡ ጌጌ ጌጌ ጌጌ ጌጌ፡ የሚግግ ጌጌ፡ ጌጌ ጌጌ
 ጌጌ ጌጌ፡ ግር፡ የግደ፡ ግደ፡ ስግግ ጌጌ፡ በኔ ጌጌ ጌጌ ጌጌ ጌጌ
 አሉ፡

ግ
 ረ
 ጸ
 ጅ
 ጉ(?)
 ከ
 ኔ
 ጂ
 እ
 ጎ
 ጎ

fol. 163v

Note that the two lines at the top of page 4 of this document (fol. 163v) fit in at the end of the third line from the bottom after the word *ferenji* where the copier has added the Ethiopian sign for an omission. This sign as well as the last letter or two of the text of some lines was covered when the documents were bound. I have added what I believe to be the missing characters in the margin.

Bekure ሻዮን was apparently a trusted agent of Wibe's. The length and tone of the letter(s), the fact that it was written to both husband and wife and the greetings to Wibe's sons Lemma and Ishetu as well as a number of his ecclesiastical and military officers, all indicate that the writer was close to Wibe's household and court.

The only Bekure ሻዮን I have met with in other sources of this period is the Bekure ሻዮን who, as one of the two administrators of the lands held in fief by Gundagundi, sold land at Gola to De Jacobis in 1844 (Kevin O'Mahoney, *The Ebuilient Phoenix* (Asmara, 1982), p. 43).

He was a cleric (*abba*) who had obviously decided to look into the contemporary theology of the Coptic church. As he tried to relate the doctrine of the other churches to the controversies of the Ethiopian church over the question of the unction of Christ and the number of his births, he found that these were futile Ethiopian preoccupations. If the identification of the writer with Bekure ሻዮን of Gola is correct, as I believe it is, he may in fact already have been a sympathizer with or even a convert to Catholicism on his way to Rome, for he was staying with the consul of Toscana and states that he was about to leave for another country, presumably *not* Jerusalem. The sentence *Beromēm ſiqit idegmallehu*, translated "In Rome I will also revise (lit. repeat) [this] a little", could possibly mean "I also read (lit. recite) a little (in) Latin." At any rate, he was sufficiently influenced by foreigners to be sarcastic about Ethiopian (and Coptic) theologians.

The main purpose of the mission he had undertaken seems, however, to have been the recruiting of a cannon-maker for Wibe. The references to Muḥammad 'Alī's plans and his reliance on artillery as well as the greetings to *Dejjazmach* Lemma who died in early 1846 indicate that the letter must have been written during the first half of the 1840's. An Italian armourer named Valieri did in fact arrive in Ethiopia not later than 1841. He was employed by Wibe for whom he repaired one of Salt's old cannon and was, apparently much against his own will, forced to accompany Wibe's army to Debre Tabor in 1842 (P. V. Ferret and J. G. Galinier, *Voyage en Abyssinie dans les provinces du Tigré, du Samen et de l'Amhara* (Paris, 1847), II, pp. 40, 461). See also no. 43.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Victoria, [May 1841]

፩ ፪

ደብገ: ደጃ: አጃ ማተ: ውቤ: ለእ ግዝእቱ: አ
 ተገ: ክብርተ: ወልዕልተ: ከመ: ስሎሞን: ማእ
 መር: አገሥ: አፈቱ: ዘለግለሞ: ከመ: ት ግበር: እ
 ግዝእቱ ሆ: ጌር: ሲ ሲሆ: ክሉ: ፍጡር: ምክንያ
 ተሆስ: በራስ: ወልደ: ሠላሴ: ጌዳ ሆ ጃጃ: ክአገ
 ጉ: ፍ ቅር: ነበር: ስውልተ: ሴሞላለስ: ራስ: ወልደ:
 ሠላሴ: ሞቱ: ደጃ: አጃ ማተ: ከገገዳ: ገዢ: ለኮ
 ፊቱ: ስደዱ: አግግዴህ: እኔ ም: ለኮ ፊቱ: ስድጃ: አለ
 ሁ: ከኔ: ነውኛ: ከፈረንሲስ: ህገር: ደመዳዝኛል: እኔ:
 ከገዛሁ: እመሞጃ: ፍቅር: ወድዢ: እኔ: ስድጃሁ: እ
 ግዳ: ራስ: ወልደ: ሠላሴ: አግዳ: ደጃ: አገር ማተ: ከገ
 ገዳ: ፍቅር: ወድዢ: ለአክ: አቡን: ሊሆመዱ: ስ
 ዱገድ: አሁኖሁኖ: አግዳ ሆ: አቅቶ ሳቸው: አገራ:
 በኛ: ጌደል: ነው: ደላሉ: ፈረንሲስ: እዲህ: ጌደ
 ል: ው: ግለሰብ: በራስ: ወልደ: ሠላሴ: እክስ: ምጻዋ
 ሰ: ደፈራ: ነበር: አግግዴህ: አግሠኤ: ጌደ ለክመር:
 ክላቸግ: ክርስቲያን: ነግ: እግዚር: ደውቃል:

፩ መርገፍ: ድርብ: ልመርገፍ: ኮረሻ: ጨፍ ማ: ዋንጫ:
 ፈረስ: በቅሎ: ወልታ: ገዢ: ገለግ: ነጋኛ: ክብተ: ት
 ራፍ: ነው: አለፎ: በኢትዮጵያ: ሆለ: እ ምተ ወዱት:
 ግዳ ሆለ:

fol. 147r



ዘቲ: ክርስቲስ: ተብላት: ግበ: ግሥ: አግግሊዝ

fol. 147v

Dejj Azmach Wibē says to his mistress, the queen, honoured and exalted as the learned Solomon. I wish that my kind mistress, the sustainer of (lit. food for) all creatures, may live forever. My reason [for writing is that] at [the time of] *Ras Welde Sillasē*, when Salt (Sawilt) was travelling back and forth, there was friendship between Ethiopia and your father. *Ras Welde Sillasē* died; *Dejj Azmach* Subagadis governed. He sent Coffin (Kofin). Now I also send Coffin, for he is with me. From France they come to me [but] since I [began to] govern, no one has come to me [from you]. Desiring friendship, I have written as *Ras Welde Sillasē* and *Dejj Azmach* Subagadis [did]. I have written because I desire friendship. Since I have sent to fetch a bishop, please facilitate [this] for them so that nothing goes wrong. “We are the powerful,” the French say. We say, “The English are powerful.” At [the time of] *Ras Welde Sillasē* they were feared as far as Massawa. So show your power. We are all Christian. God knows.

We decided to send [you] five [garments with] double fringes, [one with] a single fringe, a saddle, shoes, a horn cup, a horse, a mule, and a shield. We have animals to spare. Of what we have in Ethiopia we will send whatever you want.

Seal: *Dejj Azmach* Wibē, the son of *Dejj Azmach* Hayle.

May this paper reach the king of England.

FO 1/3, fol. 147r and v, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 180×285 mm; fols. 149–150, English translation by Reverend C. W. Isenberg. The seal and the last line of the text appear upside down on the back of the document, but are printed here below the main body of the text. The date of this letter is based on a letter from the British agent at Aden in FO 1/3, fol. 135.

The language, and orthography in particular, of this document are poor. Note, for instance, “*dejj ajmat*” in the first line, “*dejj admat*” or “*admach*” in the 7th and “*dejj azhmat*” in the 11th, and “*Ityopeya*” with **ጸ** in the fifth line but “*Itiopya*” with **ፒ** in the second to last line. The spelling of Wibē’s predecessor has changed from Suba Gadis to Sibagad (*sic*). The influence of Tigrīñña is apparent in the use of **ለ-** instead of **-ፖ** as object marker with “Kofin”.

The letter was brought to Cairo in July 1841 by William Coffin (see no. 3 above), and a first attempt to translate the letter was made there. The result in Arabic and English is preserved in the CMS archives, CM/O 45/91. While it does seem unlikely that an Ethiopian would use **ፒ** for **ጸ** in **ኢ.ፕ.ጸ.ጸ.ፆ**, it is equally unlikely that Coffin, if he actually dictated or penned the letter himself, would have written to Queen Victoria as *itēgē* in the letter itself but *nigus* in the “address” on the back of the letter. By this time Coffin had problems using the English language, but the British consul general in Egypt saw him as “a modest intelligent man” (FO 1/3, fols 122–126).

Of greater importance is the change made in the substance of the passage dealing with the power of the British. In the original it is simply an argument as to who are the most powerful (and therefore best suited to help Ethiopia get a new bishop): the French or the British. Of the versions produced in Cairo, the Arabic runs: “During the time of *Ras Welde Sillasē* you had asked for Massawa and its vicinity. But he did not agree. Now take it, as befits your might, since God knows we are all Christians.” The English has: “And as in the time of Walda Sellasē you desired to have Massowa and its environs, but he would not, you may, however, now take it according to your power. And God knows . . .” This “offer” of Massawa to the British is a repetition of the falsification introduced into Subagadis’s letter to George IV in 1827, of which William Coffin was also the bearer! See no. 23.

The bishop, *Abune Selama* (1841–67), had already been elected. Coffin was instructed to wait for an answer in Cairo, but no answer was sent on the grounds that it would be better to await the outcome of the mission to Shewa and that it was not likely that any intercourse with Ethiopia would repay the expenses. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 91–93, for further information on the circumstances of this mission by Coffin.

Goshu Zewdē to Leopold I, [Sept. 1841]

I have learned with pleasure through your consul general, Blondeel, that you interest yourself in the fate of Abyssinia and that you deplore the state of anarchy and of contempt in which many nations live. This is proof that your heart is great and noble. To bring a remedy for the afflictions which overwhelm my countrymen is a very great undertaking but it is not above your power and I write this letter to you in order to let you know that I understand the misery of my country just as I understand the well-being and the wealth which it could gain with your help, and I declare to you that I am disposed to shed my blood for such a beautiful cause. Our misfortunes have two causes: the first is our contempt and our civil wars, the second comes from the Muslim nations who constitute a barbarity all around Abyssinia preventing our communications and our commerce with our brothers in Europe. The first cause of our misfortunes I can stop in a little time; the second must be decided at sea where I can [do] nothing. Make it your business to chase the Turks from Massawa; as for me, I will re-establish the kingdom of Tekle Gīyorgīs. If you send me a consul, he will be received and protected as a friend.

AE (Brussels), 2024/II, no. 105, French translation. The text of this letter exists only copied into a dispatch in French from the Belgian consul general in Egypt, Édouard Blondeel van Cuelebroeck, to Minister of Foreign Affairs Lebeau, 20 Sept. 1841. It is impossible to state with certainty whether this “letter from Goshu” is a very free translation of an Amharic document or possibly a dictated message or speech. No Amharic documents exist among the Blondeel papers. The former consul stated many years later that he had lost documents in a shipwreck in 1857 (FO 401/2, pp. 836–838, Blondeel to Scarlett, 12 Oct. 1867), but it seems unlikely that he should have kept original letters to his sovereign for fifteen years.

Goshu Zewdē (see no. 31) befriended the foreigners who came to his province and was well spoken of by them. Blondeel visited Ethiopia 1841–42 with the aim of acquiring a Belgian colony on the Red Sea Coast and spent several months in Gojjam. He reported great success in all negotiations and spoke of treaties concluded with both Goshu and his son *Dejjazmach* Birru, but beyond the eventual promises of the chiefs of Gojjam to accept a consul and a few missionaries, Blondeel does not seem to have achieved anything. For further information, see Albert Duchesne, *Le consul Blondeel en Abyssinie (1840–1842)* (Brussels, 1953), pp. 1–179, and Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 99–102.

Goshu Zewdē to Édouard Blondeel van Cuelebroeck, [Sept. 1841]

This letter is addressed by Goshu to E. Blondeel van Cuelebroeck, the consul general of Belgium. May God give him a long life.

Convinced like you that instruction is the principle of the wealth and well-being of nations, I desire, for love of my country, to give it the means of instructing itself and I ask you to send me two or three priests from your country. I promise to give them some inviolable land where they can build their house, their school and their church without fear of being disturbed by the people in case of war. I will also give two *madiga tef* (one *madiga* contains about 20 litres of grain) per month; if the priests are two, four *madiga*; if they are three, six. If the priests come, they shall be obliged to teach fifteen young men whom I will send them two hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon. If among the children there are those whose parents are dead or far away, the teachers shall be obliged to house and feed them, each one for two *madiga* per month which I will pay for their upkeep. These children shall not be compelled to [do] any work except their studies which should include Amharic, Gi'iz and French. If these conditions are accepted by two or three priests from your country, they can come with the certainty that they will be received and protected like friends.

AE (Brussels), 2024/II, no. 106, French translation. This letter was copied into another dispatch of Blondeel's, dated 24 Sept. 1841 (see no. 39).

Tef was the main crop in the Ethiopian highlands. Ethiopian grain measurements varied from province to province. At Adwa and Aksum the *madiga* at this time measured c. 35 litres, but it was known to be smaller in Gojjam than in Tigray (Richard Pankhurst, "A preliminary history of Ethiopian measures, weights & values", *JES*, VII, 2 (1969), pp. 115, 118).

This "contract" with its particular stipulations of salary and teaching hours sounds somewhat incongruous in Ethiopia of the mid-nineteenth century, and there is every reason to believe that the matter was raised in these terms by Blondeel and not by Goshu. In fact, since the amount of grain to be provided monthly was the same for teacher and student, it is quite obvious that Goshu (or Blondeel) was thinking in terms of maintenance and not salary.

Sahle Sillasē to Victoria, [6 Oct. 1841]

May this letter of His Majesty Sahela Selassie, the King of Shoa, Efat, and the Galla, come to my friend, Her most Illustrious Majesty, Victoria, the Queen of Great Britain, Ireland, and India.

Are you well? Are you quite well? I am well.

I have received the letter and valuable presents sent by the hand of your Ambassador, Captain Harris, and I thank you. By my messenger, Samuel Georgis, I formerly despatched some tokens of esteem, together with a letter, wherein I sought your friendship. Now since you are also of the same mind, and have evinced the good will entertained towards myself by a return of tokens I am beyond all things rejoiced. Our mutual friendship having thus auspiciously commenced, I will foster it to the utmost of my power, and will, on my part, evince it in all ways that I can.

My regard is strong and lasting. Hereof you may be assured.

Your representative has made known your desire to form with me a commercial treaty such being completely to the mutual advantage of both our Countries. This is an excellent proposition, and I approve it highly; but before concluding the agreement, I will confer yet further with your ambassador and he shall speedily acquaint you how and upon what terms I have settled the affair. The articles will be of a nature to realize the object which we have both in view.

Captain Harris has further informed me of your wish that I should afford protection to those who shall come from your Country to mine, and that I should assist them during their sojourn, as well as in their movements both within and beyond my dominions. This I have done always, and will continue so to do, but I wish that you may also shew similar favor to those of my subjects who may visit your land.

A very few only of my people have seen your Country, because they do not travel as yours do, but should any come, may you protect them.

Furthermore I have understood that other rulers of Ethiopia have sent to seek your friendship. It rejoices me much to find that you have preferred alliance with me before all others; and I can best return your consideration in this respect by establishing a friendly understanding with yourself, in preference to all other rulers beyond Ethiopia.

Now I am preparing presents for you in return for those which you have sent me. My Country is not so rich as your own but I will send you whatever it produces. My friendship is sincere and will be esteemed by you above worldly substance. Be assured that I care for the wants of your representative and of his people, and that I will continue to care for them so long as they tarry with me; because I know that they are the messengers of you, my friend, whom I greatly value.

(A True Translation)

/signed/ W. C. Harris.

Captain Engineer on special duty.

Sahle Sillasē to the Governor of Bombay, [6 Oct. 1841]

May this letter of Sahela Selassie, King of Shoa, Efat, and the Galla, come to my friend, the Great Governor of Bombay.

Are you well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well?

I have received by the hands of Captain Harris, the presents sent by your Queen, together with your letter, and your friendship has delighted me. You commended to my care, Captain Harris, the representative of your sovereign. Know that I have dealt well by him, and have taken care of him and of his people, as though they had been mine own children, and have shewn them all my Country. So long as he tarries with me, my love shall never be withdrawn.

I have now written a letter to your Queen and having learned that it should pass through your hands, send it in order that it may be forwarded.

It will always afford me the greatest pleasure to receive tidings of your happiness. I have become throughly [*sic*] aware of the extent of your friendship from the expressions contained in your letter; and my sincere desire is, that encreasing more and more, it may endure for ever.

Do not forget me.

(A true Translation)

/signed/ W. C. Harris.

Captain Engineer on special duty.

IOR, Bombay Secret Proceedings, P 175, no. 3970/14, English translation signed and forwarded from Shewa by the British envoy W. C. Harris. For date and other circumstances, see nos 34 and 41.

IOR, Bombay Secret Proceedings, P 175, no. 3970/15, English translation signed and forwarded to Aden by the British envoy to Shewa in 1841, Captain W. C. Harris. A copy which differs only with regard to punctuation is found in L/P&S/5/400. In the "Proceedings" this letter is preceded by a short note dating the letter "Ankober 27th of the Month Maskarem 1834 of the Abyssinian Era corresponding with the 2nd October, A.D. 1841". In fact, 27 Meskerem 1834 was 6 October. The note also states that the following is a "translation of the accompanying original Amharic letter". In his covering letter to Captain Haines, dated 8 Oct., Harris explicitly states that he is transmitting both Amharic originals and translations of this letter and one to the governor of Bombay (L/S&P/5/311, no. 29, and L/P&S/5/400, no. 106). Forwarding Harris's dispatches to Bombay on 26 Nov., Haines, however, states that Sahle Sillasē's letters had not reached him (Z/P/3534, p. 181), and on 30 Dec. the government of Bombay passed on the information to London: "The originals have not yet reached this government" (L/S&P/5/311). If they ever did, I have at any rate failed to locate them.

The text is reproduced as preserved in IOR, including the spelling of Ethiopian names. For context see no. 34.

Deres Welde Mīka'ēl to Wibē Hayle Maryam, [Nov.? 1841]

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May this letter sent by Abeto Deres reach Dejjazmach Wibē, the head of the governors (ri'ise mekwanint), and having reached [its destination] may it convey [its content]. As for the matter of this Egyptian, when he came, the goods were transported with your mules from Massawa to Digsa. From Digsa to Adwa he came under your authority. Now, let alone in three days, he should not leave [even] in three months. It was by your authority and your money that he came. So he should not leave because of 100 thalers. Now, be reconciled with him. Do not think it is a trivial matter when it is said that there is a cannon maker at Wibē's court. It is a very big [matter]. We think it is a trivial

matter because he is staying here with us, but the news has spread to Begēmdir, Gojjam and Lasta. He has agreed. Please be reconciled. Since he has come to you with the attitude of doing as you say, please agree. Even if he is to leave, give him ample time (lit. many days). He will go (there) to his country and defame you, saying, "When I went to make cannon, they kept all my tools away from me." Without taking anything with him, he picked up his stick and prepared to leave. But I stopped him and sent him to you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 513, Amharic original. 165×220 mm. The writer was known as Wibē's commercial agent Agew Deres (Ferret and Galinier, *Voyage*, I, p. 376; II, pp. 440, 449). This connects him with Wibē's brother-in-law Agew Welde Mīka'ēl who died in Wibē's service in 1843 (Lefebvre, *Voyage*, II, pp. 318–320; *Vicende*, p. 465) and the two brothers Nigusē and Tesemma who led a rebellion against King Tēwodros during the late 1850's (Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 174, 189–206). By using *abeto* as his title Deres claimed princely or noble descent, and he was apparently close enough to his uncle to offer unsolicited advice. He was anxious, however, that no one except Wibē should read his letter and wrote on the back, "This letter is to be read by no one but yourself."

Assuming that the armorer referred to was the Italian Valieri (see no. 37), the letter can be dated between 31 Aug. 1841 when Valieri was in trouble with other Europeans but still protected by Wibē (BN, NAF 22430, fols 370–71) and Oct.–Nov. 1841 when he wrote to the French consul at Massawa (9 Nov.) and complained that he had been arrested by Wibē—because he had refused to serve as an artilleryman—and told to leave the country within three days without having received any payment for his work (BN, NAF 22431, fol. 214). That he was called a *giby* (Egyptian) rather than a *ferenj* is of no significance. *Giby* was often used for Europeans as well.



Treaty between Shewa and Great Britain, 18 Nov. 1841

Agreement of friendship and commerce.

Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa, Yifat and the Galla, and Captain Harris (Harīs) on behalf (lit. who is under the authority) of the governor of Bombay (Bombē) who speaks in the name of Victoria (Wīktorīya), queen of Great Britain (Talaq Bṛitanīya), Ireland (Írland) and India (Hindakē), have by this document made an agreement of commerce and friendship and have mutually concurred and consented as follows (lit. like this):

Since commerce is a source of great wealth and well-being to all people mutually united in friendship and love, and since they already desired [it], convinced that everlasting friendship and commercial cooperation (lit. agreement) between Shewa and Britain would be useful to both; and since tokens of friendship, good-will and love had already earlier been exchanged between the king of Shewa and the queen of Britain, and since it is now desirable to know in what way two rulers agree on a commercial treaty, therefore, they desire to make the matter known, concluded and agreed upon by this document, stating as follows:

1. May there be strong, sincere and lasting friendship between Sahle Sillasē, the king of Shewa, and his lineal successors, and Victoria, the queen of Britain, and her lineal successors.
2. In order that the friendship, which they have agreed upon between themselves, shall be mutually preserved and strengthened, the king of Shewa and his successors shall receive and befriend the representative or envoy whom the queen of Britain or England (Ingiltar) and her successors will send, according to the rank and with the honour due to him.
3. Likewise, the queen of Britain and her successors shall properly receive and befriend the representative or envoy whom the king of Shewa and his successors will send, according to the rank and with the honour due to him.
4. The commercial agreement between Shewa and Britain shall be as follows:
5. The king of Shewa and his successors shall levy and receive five per cent duty on the merchandize (lit. property) which the British merchants import to Shewa and from everything they sell in Shewa.
6. This duty of five per cent shall be estimated according to the price of the merchandize (lit. property) at Aliyu Amba and be paid in accordance with what the merchants desire, either in money or in kind as preferred by the merchants.
7. When the trader has paid this regulated duty on the merchandize, he can sell his merchandize either in Shewa or beyond Shewa without anyone making difficulties for him and without anyone preventing those who buy his goods [from doing so].
8. If the merchants of Britain want anything that is found either in Shewa or beyond Shewa, they can buy and take it to their country without paying duty.
9. Likewise, the merchants of Shewa who come to Britain shall not pay any duty, other than what British subjects (lit. the people of Britain) pay at the time.
10. In order that the commercial cooperation (lit. agreement) which has now been established between Shewa and Britain shall prosper, increase and be strengthened, the king of Shewa and his successors shall recommend and encourage (lit. remind) all the mer-

chants to bring (their) merchandize out of Africa across Shewa, but above all (that they) interest themselves in conducting trade in the goods which merchants of the markets of England want and like.

11. Likewise, the queen of Britain shall encourage (lit. remind) her merchants to bring what is desired and wanted at the markets of Shewa.
12. In order, however, that the merchants be able to travel without anything harming them on their way, the king of Shewa and the queen of Britain and her successors shall make great efforts, using all their power in order to open up, build and guard the road which leads from the coast to Ethiopia and the entry to the country.
13. The travellers coming from Britain to Shewa shall not be prevented from working and moving about, neither in Shewa nor if they travel beyond Shewa to some other country.
14. These travellers shall not pay duty for (their) belongings which they did not bring for sale. Since they are not regarded as merchants, the goods belong to them with no one [having the right] to touch them.
15. Likewise, if a Shewan traveller comes to the domains of the queen of Britain, he can either settle as he likes there or travel beyond Britain.

Finally, the king of Shewa and his successors and the queen of Britain and her successors mutually guarantee by their names and by their words that they will always mightily (lit. much) protect this agreement of (their) friendship without giving any cause for enmity [but] on the contrary for love and friendship.

Thus it has been done, written in this document, and concluded at the town of Angolela in Shewa in the month of Hidar, on the 10th day, 1834, in the 29th year of Sahle Sillasē's reign.

By signature (lit. hand) and by seal.

Seal: Jesus (in cross).

Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa,
Yifat and the Galla.

FO 93/94/1, Amharic/English original. Sized 700×1270 mm and elaborately adorned, this document is one of the most impressive in the Public Record Office. Over the Amharic text we find the Trinity and the symbols of the four Evangelists (the Four Living Creatures: man, eagle, lion, ox) depicted; over the English text the British coat of arms with the mottoes "Honi soit qui mal y pense" and "Dieu et mon droit". The Amharic text is written in black, blue, red and yellow; the English in black and red. All the names and titles are in red except a few in the Amharic text for which yellow has been used.

Of the fourth line of the Amharic text, which is very difficult to read due to a fold in the paper, the following can be deciphered: [በቀደ]ም፡የሁለት፡አገር፡ገዢ፡. . . ያጠቅማል፡ብለው፡ፈልገዋልና፡. The document was sealed in red shellac but the practice in Shewa seems to have been to use ordinary seals only for letters in Arabic. A drawing of a cross with the letters Ī-YE-SU-S (similar to the one on no. 10) is substituted for a personal seal under the Amharic text.

The treaty was drafted in English. The English text is even dated two days before the Amharic. The translation of the legal English has caused Rev. Krapf, who was no doubt involved in the work, many problems, but the substance of the treaty has not suffered. The retranslation into English here is just as awkward but the desire to reflect the Amharic version as closely as possible has in this case been allowed to overrule considerations of readability.

A copy of the treaty was forwarded in January 1842. The original was carried by Harris himself via Bombay to London the following year (see no. 64). The treaty was ratified in August 1843 and printed in the *Correspondence* laid before Parliament in 1844 and in the *State Papers*, vol. 29. The Amharic version was first printed by *Blattēngēta* Hiruy Welde Sillasē in his *Tarika Negest* (Addis Abeba, [1936]), pp. 33-34. In their article "The First Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty" Ullendorff and Beckingham published both the Amharic and the English text with linguistic notes and a historical background. For further background, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 144-159.

Birru Goshu to Édouard Blondeel van Cuelebroeck, [21–24 Nov. 1841]

This letter has [been] sent from the vice-roy to Consul General Blondeel.

Your country is of the truth. I know a man of much learning and he is a great man and he shall be a friend of our country which he loves and whose friend he is. If you love, everyone loves you for friendship.

Send two or three monks to my country where they may live. If these [men] come, I will give [land] for the Church [and] for their residence; if war comes, or anything bad, no harm shall befall them. For those who come, [my] people will provide; if [only] one [comes], two *madiga*; if two, four *madiga*; if three, six *madiga*. When these [men] come, I will send fifteen boys, two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, and they shall [learn to] write; concerning a boy, whose (lit. if his) country is far away, he shall live with a monk and his maintenance shall be two *madiga*. All these boys shall not do anything else than learn the Amharic language and the Ethiopian characters and the French language; therefore, if the monk of your country comes, he will live well; he will do nothing else.

ASCPF.SRC, Africa Centrale, Etiopia . . . 1841–1847, vol. 4, fol. 251, Italian translation. The dating is based on Blondeel's reports to his government (AE(Brussels) 2024/II). By May 1843 this letter had arrived at the office of the Sacra Congregazione "de Propaganda Fide" where it was annotated: "Traduzione di una lettera Etiopica. Lettera del Vice Rè Bru al Console Generale Blondeel nel Belgio, onde gli mandà due o tre missionarii".

Fitawrari, later *Dejjazmach*, Birru Goshu had defeated his father in a battle in October, and Blondeel presumably thought he had better carry a request for missionaries from the younger chief as well. The letter is clearly patterned on the one from Goshu to Blondeel two months earlier (no. 40).

Although we have no Amharic version of this text, there is every reason to believe that an Amharic original has existed. If Blondeel had written the letter himself, it would presumably have been in French, and no Italian translation would have been needed at the "Propaganda Fide". Secondly, it is not difficult to imagine the Amharic wording behind the Italian text and, thirdly, Blondeel did carry one letter in Amharic for the "Propaganda Fide" with a similar though far from identical request (no. 46). Considered in connection with Dejjazmach Goshu's letter to Pope Gregorius three years later (no. 85), these letters indicate that the attitude of the leadership in Gojjam was quite open-minded.

Birru Goshu to the Superior of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, [21–24 Nov. 1841]

ኢሉተ ጅ ናራል፡ ቶድ ጊሉ፡ መዳፊቱ፡ ነገሎ ጾም፡ ንጉ
 ሠ፡ ከጸጂ ገዛማቸ፡ ብኑ፡ የመዳቸ፡ ናቶ፡ ጾንተን፡ ኢ
 ገር፡ ለራ፡ ለኔ፡ አገር፡ ለው፡ የሚጾሉት ምር፡ ለው፡ ኢ
 ዳተ ለድል ጃ፡ ደግሞ፡ ጾንተን፡ አገር፡ ለው፡ ለቶ ለ
 ደው፡ ተቀብዬ፡ ወንድም፡ አድርጎ፡ ከገዳም፡ አለቀም
 ጩ፡ ጋላ፡ ኢሄዳሁ፡ ቢል፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ኢነሳሁ፡ ብሎ፡
 ከለው፡ ጋራ፡ ኢለጾዋሁ፡

May this letter reach the [Superior] General [of the Propaganda Fide]. It comes from *Dejjazmach* Birru, the king of Gojjam.

Send me a person who can teach the crafts of your country to the people of my country. And when you send your countryman, I will receive him, make him my brother and settle him in a monastery and if he wants to go to the Galla with the intention of Christianizing [them], I will send him there with an escort.

ASCPF.SRC, Africa Centrale, Etiopia . . . 1841–1847, vol. 4, fol. 254, Amharic original; fol. 253, Italian translation. This is the only letter brought out from Ethiopia by Blondeel, of which we can be sure that it is authentic. The likely date is 21–24 November as for no. 45. It contains a number of features which betray its Gojjam origin, such as the retention of “ṣ” for “ṫ” (*yemeṣṣach*) and “j” for “g” (*adirjje*). On the other hand, we find “*iste*” instead of the expected “*iske*” for “to”.

The Italian translation is correct in substance except that the words *yanten ager sira lenē ager sew*, that is, “the crafts of your country to the people of my country” have been omitted. This is probably not without significance. Though both Goshu’s and Birru’s letters to Blondeel speak of priests or monks, mainly to teach languages, this letter directed to the great missionary organisation asks for a teacher of handicrafts. By omitting this from the translation and forwarding an Italian version of the other letter he had—perhaps it is fair to add “allegedly”—received from Birru, Blondeel reveals that his aims were different from Birru’s.

Qwerençh to Araya Sillasē Dimṣu, [April 1842]

ማቲ፡ ጠባብ፡ ስተረሃው፡ ህኒባ፡ ቀረ
 ጭ፡ ትብጃስ፡ ሀብ፡ በኢል፡ ገዳ፡ ኦርኦ፡
 ዕድታ፡ ከላህ፡ ከጅጉ፡ በዚኛ፡ በመሰ
 ካረ፡ ም፡ ከኢየሩሳሌም፡ ተሃሳኝ፡ ሆነ
 ምን፡ የከገራጅ፡ ጭመላ፡ ጠብቶ፡
 ሞተ፡፡ ቀረ፡ ከሆነ፡ ከገራጅ፡ ይረዳ፡
 ን፡ ከልጋ፡ የሚሰጥ፡ ለጭረ
 ረኝሳዊ፡ መልካም፡ ክድር፡ ተቀብ
 ለኝ፡ መርግ፡ ገዳኝ፡ ሰደደኝ፡ ገ
 ከግጦ፡ የሰጠ፡ ዘግዶ፡ ይደብደብ፡
 ከሰደደ፡ ሰደደኝ፡ ምጽዋ፡ ስደር፡
 ጭቆና፡ ለሰጠ፡ ከገዳኝ፡ ወረቀ
 ት፡ ይደብደብ፡ ወሰደኝ፡ ሰጠ፡ ህጻ፡
 ጠደቆ፡ ሰሰጡኝ፡ ከቤ፡ በለ፡ ግዜ፡
 ገዳኝ፡ ከላህ፡ ከህል፡ ም፡ ወህ
 ም፡ ከደብጠ፡ ሰደኝ፡ ገንሰ፡ ከደ
 ገዳኝ፡ ሰደኝ፡ ወገ፡ ወገ፡ ወገ፡
 ገ፡ ከመ፡ ኦርየሱ፡፡

May this letter sent by *Abba* Qwerençh reach *Balgada* Araya. How are you, really, [though I know you only] by hearsay? I set out from Jerusalem in Meskerem. Fifty-eight monks from our country died. I reached the country of Kossayr. A Frenchman called Elie (Ēlyas) received me very well. He hired a boat and sent me off. He dismissed me, charging me with a letter for Antoine (Inṭoniyos). When I reached Massawa, Théophile (Tēwoflos) met me and took away from me paper[s and] letter[s]. Now inquire about this and make him give them to me. If he refuses, I hereby anathemize. Give him neither food nor water. Do not associate with him. Anathema, anathema, anathema, as Arius.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 491, Amharic original(?), 135×150 mm. This letter was dispatched from Adwa on 6 April 1842 after *Abba* Qwerençh (Qwerençho) had met Antoine d’Abbadie and told him how Lefebvre had robbed him of a large package of letters and papers addressed to Antoine (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 24–28, Antoine to Michel, 4 and 9 April 1842). Lefebvre, known to the Ethiopians by his Christian name Théophile, only admitted that he had received three letters from Qwerençho when the latter passed Massawa, two for Consul Degoutin and one for himself, all written by Consul Elie at Kossayr (BN, NAF 22430, fol. 313, Lefebvre to d’Abbadie, 12 April 1842).

Abba Qwerençh was reportedly a close friend of Ras Alī (fol. 24r). He appears to have been a fearless man for on this same occasion he challenged the *nibure'id* by forcing his way into the latter’s house at Aksum and liberating *Balderas* Gomeddin who had been arrested, apparently on some business related to Antoine (fol. 25v). In Antoine’s report to his brother the 58 (or 56) monks who died in Jerusalem were part of a community of 80. For the addressee, *Balgada* (or *be’al geda* as in this document) Araya Sillasē Dimṣu, see no. 50, and for Lefebvre no. 32.

Gomeddīn to Michel d'Abbadie, [June? 1842]

ዘ ጉጉጉ ጠ ማር፡ ዘተፈነው ት፡
 ኦሚ ሳብ፡ ገንድራኩ፡ ጌግግግ
 መደ፡ ግ፡ ትብደሳ፡ ሳብ፡ ማ፡
 ካሊል፡ አጃጉ፡ ግ፡ አንኳ፡ ደ፡
 ና፡ ገቡ፡ ደሳኛ፡ ነዎን፡ መልካ
 ም፡ ወራ፡ አንድ፡ ስማኒ፡ ዓይ
 ነዎን፡ ደሞ፡ በመልካም፡ ያ
 ታደዩን፡ ደሞ፡ አርሰም፡ አገ
 ኩልኛ፡ ብዬ፡ ገልቀረሁም
 ነበረ፡ መቅረቲ፡ አሸከር፡ ገጣ
 ብቻ፡ ነው፡ የተጣወቅነው
 ም፡ ጣወታም፡ አለከቀረሁ
 ም፡ ወደ፡ አንድ ርታም፡ አል
 ፊ፡ ነበርሁ፡ ጡጥታ፡ ገብቻ
 ጣታ፡ ማታ፡ ገብቻ፡ ጡጥታ
 አልክልህ፡ ብሎኛ፡ ነበሩ፡
 ይህን፡ አርሰም፡ አፈረኩ፡ አ
 ሁንም፡ ደሞ፡ ክደሚንገ፡ አ
 ስንፊ፡ ስድጅ፡ አለሁ፡ ቀደ
 ሞ፡ ሞቱ፡ ብሎ፡ ሲወራ፡ ወ
 ረቀቅ፡ አስገራ፡ ክግብግግ
 ን፡ ከወደጀም፡ ስደድሁ፡ ጠ
 ዩቅልኛ፡ ብዬ፡

May this letter sent by *Bandiras* Gomeddīn reach Michel (Mika'el). I am very glad that you arrived safely. Are you well? As we have heard good news, may we also see each other (lit. your eyes) in safety.

Moreover, I would not have remained behind on the pretext that you had not sent for me. I stayed behind only because I could not find a servant. I did not disregard the matter we discussed. I also went to Inderta. You said to me that if you arrived in the morning, you would send in the evening and if you arrived in the evening, you would send the [next] morning. This [word of yours] you broke. And now I have arranged to have [a letter] written and sent to Domingo. When it was rumoured before that you were dead, I arranged to have a letter sent to your friend the captain, asking him to inquire.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 488, Amharic original, 85x185 mm. A note on the back of this letter informs us that it was received at Qwerata on 20 June 1842. *Balderas* (or *bandiras* as in this document and no. 62) Gomeddīn was associated with the activities of the d'Abbadie brothers at least as early as 1841. He apparently remained behind in Tigray when Michel proceeded to Gonder in January 1842 but was expected to follow with Michel's goods (see no. 62). Domingo Lorda came to Ethiopia as Antoine d'Abbadie's servant in 1838. He was sent home but returned to trade on his own and died at Gonder in January 1845 (*Douze ans*, III, pp. 75-77).

Araya Sillasē Dimṣu to Alexandre Degoutin, 20 July 1842

à Monsieur
 M. de Goutin, Consul Général de France
 à Massawa

To Mr. De Goutin, consular agent of France at Massawa.

Sir,

I have the pleasure of informing you that I have taken possession of the kingdom of Tigray in succession to Ras Welde Sillasē. As he, I like and seek friendly relations with foreign Powers, and it is to invite you, Sir, to use my services in all matters which the kingdom of France or individuals of your nation may have in my kingdom that I announce to you my accession to the [position as] head of the government of Tigray. The war can probably be regarded as finished for this year. The Tekkeze, augmented by the rains, separates the kingdom of Amhara from my kingdom and prevents communications. The troops of Prince Wibē are in the province of Welqayit where they have been concentrated to fight the prince of that country named Ṣedalu Haylu and Prince Merseo. The latter, a brother of Wibē, has reconciled himself with Ras Alī [and] has withdrawn to

Je prends possession de mon Royaume que j'ai pris possession de le Royaume de Tigre en succession de Ras Welde Sillasē comme lui j'aime et je cherche à établir de bonnes relations avec les Princes étrangers et je suis prêt à employer tous les moyens de s'acquiescer sur moi en toute affaire que le Royaume de France ou des particuliers de votre nation pourrions avoir dans mon Royaume que si vous avez besoin de moi arrivez à la ville de Massawa au Tigre.

La guerre pour cette année est probablement regardée comme terminée. Le Tekkeze augmenté par les pluies sépare le Royaume d'Amhara de mon Royaume et empêche les communications. Les troupes du Prince Wibē se trouvent dans la province de Welqayit où ils se sont concentrés pour combattre le Prince de ce pays nommé Ṣedalu Haylu et le Prince Merseo. Le dernier un frère de Wibē, s'est reconcilié avec Ras Alī. Ce Prince a quitté son royaume et s'est retiré à Gonder.

Depuis plus de deux mois je suis ici près d'Adwa sans que j'aie eu le plaisir de recevoir de vous aucune nouvelle, mais j'espère qu'après votre retour vous m'en enverrez.



Araya

*Adwa
 le 20^e Juillet 1842.
 A. M. de Goutin Consul
 (1842)*



*Pour lui
 Schimper*

Gonder where another appointment awaits him. Since more than one month I am here near Adwa without having had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, Sir, but I hope that now you will favour me with news about you.

Adwa the 20th of July 1842, the 14th of the month of Hamlē (in Abyssinian).

Araya.
Seal: *Bal Gada* Araya.

For him
Schimper.

BN, Ethiop. 184, fol. 64, French original, 225×305 mm, written on Araya Sillasē's behalf by the German scientist and longtime resident of Ethiopia Wilhelm Schimper and stamped with a lion seal bearing the title *balgada* (comptroller of the salt trade through Tigray) and the name Araya (abbreviation for Araya Sillasē). No translation is mentioned, and it is unlikely that an Amharic version existed. Style and content betray the foreigner, but there is no reason to doubt that the letter was written on Araya's instructions. *Balgada* (later *dejjazmach* and *ras*) Araya Sillasē Dimṣu (c. 1840–89) was the grandson of Ras Welde Sillasē's brother Debbeb. In the eyes of the Tigreans he was a much more legitimate ruler of the province than the non-Tigrean Wibē. When the latter marched against Ras Alī in an attempt to overthrow the Yeju dynasty of *rases* in January 1842, Araya tried to rally the population behind himself and, as this letter shows, also sought recognition from abroad. Though Wibē was defeated and captured in the famous "battle of wonders" at Debre Tabor on 13 February and replaced by his half-brother *Dejjazmach* Merseo Hayle Maryam, he managed to have this appointment withdrawn and followed Merseo to Simēn and Welqayit where Haylu Ṣedalu had joined the latter against his former overlord Wibē (see d'Abbadie, *Douze ans*, II, pp. 43–70; Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 93–95).

Aṣqu to Goshu Zewdē, [July 1842]

141

ዛቲ፡ ጠማር፡ ዘተፈነወት፡
 ኣምላብ፡ ቢቲ፡ ኣፅቶ፡ ትብ
 ጻሕ፡ ጎበ፡ ደጃዝማች፡ ጎሹ፡
 ሥርወ፡ መኳንንት፡ ዘኣፈቀ
 ሮ፡ ኣመ፡ ጎረባባ፡ ሆርዮምን
 ሮ፡ ጎረባባ፡ ወፍሪ፡ ጎረባባ፡
 ጎረባባ፡ ዘሥ፡ ጎረባባ፡ ጎረባባ
 ደላሁምን፡ ኣነፍሲ፡ ሆርዮ
 ጎረባባ፡ ኣኒ፡ መላኢ፡ ነወ፡
 ኣርከዎ፡ ወደኒ፡ ቢመጡን።
 ኣኒ፡ ወደርዮምን፡ ጎረባባ
 ና፡ ልዩቲን፡ ኣደራ፡ ዘመደ፡
 ሁኑኣቶው፡ በኢሳይያስ፡ በወ
 ሆርዮ፡

ዛቲ፡ ጠማር፡ ዘተፈነወት፡
 ጻሕ፡ ጎበ፡ ደጃዝማች፡ ጎሹ፡
 ሥርወ፡ መኳንንት፡ ኣመኸ
 ወፍሪ፡ ጎረባባ፡ ጎረባባ፡
 ነ፡ ጎረባባ፡ ቢቲ፡ ኣፅቶ፡ ትብ
 ደም፡ ወካህውም፡ ኣከ፡ ተፈ
 ሆርዮ፡

May this letter sent by *Liqē* Aṣqu reach *Dejjazmach* Goshu, the foundation (lit. root) of the nobility, whom I love as myself. You know the friendship between you and me. What I told you to do for my body, do for my soul. I am going. You will be coming to me and not I to you. Please be a relative to my children for Jesus' sake who loves you.

◆◆◆◆

May this letter of sorrow reach *Dejjach* Goshu, the foundation of the nobility. On the 21st of *Hamlē* the light of the world, *Liqē* Aṣqu, passed away. Weep for him and mourn him, you who love him.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 619, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 70×210 mm, parchment. The first part of this letter was apparently dictated by the famous scholar *Liqē* Aṣqu of Gonder on his deathbed. He died on 27 July (21 *Hamlē*) 1842 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 265, p. 123) and the person who wrote down his message added the news of his death in the form of a second short letter. *Liqē* Aṣqu's erudition was proverbial and impressed people as different as Samuel Gobat and Michel d'Abbadie (see *Journal* and *Douze ans*, I, respectively). He apparently taught Antoine d'Abbadie and provided him with several valuable manuscripts. See Antoine d'Abbadie, *Catalogue raisonné de manuscrits Ethiopiens* (Paris, 1859), for evidence of this.

Aṣqu to Michel d'Abbadie, [July 1842]

620 742

ዛቲ፡ጠመር፡ዘተፈነዎን፡
 ምገብ፡ሲቂ፡አፀቁ፡ትገብን፡
 ጎበ፡ሐዋጃ፡ሚካኤል፡አገሩ፡
 አንተ፡አልተገናኝም፡መሃደ፡
 ሆኒ፡አንተ፡ወደኒ፡ብትወጡ፡
 ጅ፡ኔ፡ወደ፡አንተ፡አልመጣ
 ም፡የተናገርኸውን፡ነገር፡አገሩ
 ፍርከብኝ፡ለነፍሴ፡አድርግልኛል
 ኝ፡ደህን፡ብተፈርከ፡አገዛክብ
 ሐር፡ደፈርከብህል፡ሲቂ
 ገዛብ፡አንደ፡ሲከኝ፡ከቤት
 አንደ፡ጠፋ፡ታውቀዋለህ፡ለ
 ልጆቻችሁ፡ዘመድ፡ሁናቸው፡
 በጽዕቀን፡በሐምሴ፡አረጉ፡ጌ
 ታው፡ሲቂ፡አፀቁ፡

ከደጃዝማቻ፡ጎሹ፡ደብዳቤ
 ደናልና፡ባት፡፡አጅ፡ሁጥ
 ልግ፡ገንዘብም፡ቢገኝ፡አደጃገ
 ማቻ፡ደንተን፡ሰው፡ጨምረህ፡
 ዘደድልኝ፡፡ዘመድ፡የከነም
 ና፡፡

sic Michel

May this letter sent by *Liqē* Aṣqu reach Mr. Michel (*Hawaja Mīka'ēl*). You and I will not meet [again]. I am destined to leave [this world]. You will be coming to me and not I to you. Do not fail to do what we agreed upon. Do it for [the sake of] my soul. If you fail to do this, God will fail you. You know that I do not have any other money and that there is nothing in the house. Be also a relative to my children.



On Hamle 21 the master *Liqē* Aṣqu went to his rest.

We have sent a letter to *Dejjazmach* Goshu through you (lit. by your hand); [please] deliver it for me. If you have some money, send it with the *dejjazmach*, and your own servant (lit. man) as well, because we do not have any helpers (lit. relatives).

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 620, Amharic original, 80×155 mm, parchment. Written in the same hand and apparently on the same day as the preceding letter to *Dejjazmach* Goshu (no. 51), this letter contains Aṣqu's and his household's appeal for financial aid at a difficult time. The house of the famous scholar had caught fire and he had lost almost all his possessions not long before. See d'Abbadie, *Douze ans*, II, pp. 71–74, for a description of the situation and relationship between Aṣqu and Michel at the time of their last meeting not long before Aṣqu's death.

Document no. 53

Sahle Sillasē to C. F. X. Rochet d'Héricourt, [Aug.? 1842]

My dear Rochet, my love for you has only increased during your absence. Come quickly to me; I will love you as [I love] my sons. The route of Tajura is open for you; if anyone closes it to you, the *sultān* and its inhabitants will become my enemies. Leave as soon as you have received my letter, and come to embrace me.

Sahle Sillasē.

C. F. X. Rochet d'Héricourt, *Second voyage sur les deux rives de la mer Rouge, dans le pays des Adals et le Royaume de Choa* (Paris, 1846), p. 55. I have not been able to trace the original of this or the following letter, and it is not likely that they have been preserved. In his narrative Rochet reported that arriving at Tajura on his way back to Shewa (approx. 1 June 1842) he was prevented from proceeding inland by the *sultān* who acted on British orders from Aden. He then wrote to Sahle Sillasē and in response received the above and a letter from the queen, both in Arabic and sealed by the king, which was the custom with letters written in Arabic. Rochet received the letters in the first week of September and it can therefore be assumed that they were written in August 1842 (*Second voyage*, pp. 37–54).

The published French text, which certainly does not sound like an Ethiopian letter, least of all one from Sahle Sillasē, is in all probability only a summary of the original Arabic.

Document no. 54

Bezzabbish to C. F. X. Rochet d'Héricourt, [Aug.? 1842]

My dear Rochet, I did not count on seeing you again, since we had been told that you were dead; but God has heard my prayers and those of Sahle Sillasē. I hope that you have with you the things which I had charged you to bring me from your country; come quickly to let me see them.

Bezzabbish.

Rochet d'Héricourt, *Second voyage*, p. 56. See note on no. 53.

The writer was the most prominent of Sahle Sillasē's wives and the mother of his immediate successor Hayle Melekot.

It is just now that I [started to] go out. Since then I have recorded one thousand place names. One thousand means ten hundred. I have recorded 100 stories. The place names recorded are [those] of Šira'i, Geralta, Tembēn, Bora, Selewa, Inda Abba Gerīma, Addi Abun, Ahsi'a, Na'idēr, Addēt [and] Zana Inda Maryam. All these have been recorded. I have also started to record other places. They told me that the Çheleqot book of Ras Welde Sillasē is not [to be found]. The *bandiras* had found one *Haymanote Abaw* for three thalers, but being uncertain, I did not buy it, preferring to buy a Pentateuch so that you, master, will not be angry with me. I could not find paper to write place names on. Order for me. I say this so that the parchment will not be wasted. The letter in the small book which was with *Debtera Baryaw* is with Bishop De Jacobis since Remha has given it to him. I did not receive it. When I asked them to bring it to me, they said that it is in the midst of [many] books. I am going to write every place name. Théophile (Tēwoflos), however, tried to find [the letter] among the master's belongings (lit. things) because Bishop De Jacobis has stored the master's belongings in the storeroom of [the] Medhane Alem [Church]. Remha told me that now it is with *Hājj Rizq* (Ruz). I did not write you because I was ill at the time. He told me that the jackal is well; only he has finished his supplies. There has been a severe famine for some time and [also] there has not been enough to buy. I have supplies for [the month of] Meskerem but I do not have for Ṭiqimt. If you tell me to come I will come. If you, master, tell me to record place names, [fine], as you wish [and] as you tell me. I have not gone against (lit. out of) your wishes; it is only that the famine has caught up with me. I have succeeded in writing place names. May God make us see each other eye to eye, my master, my beloved. Amen.

I am going to Ša'ida Amba for I have heard that there are valuable books [there]. Remha has received the horn; I did not get it.

.

Remha and Tisbi'itu [say], "How are you, my master, my beloved? Are you well?" Remha says, "Shall I come? What shall I do? The jackal has continued to cause me trouble. It is in misery that I have spent the rainy season. Write me concerning everything—[also] if I should come."

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 507, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 200×150 mm, folded. *Debtera Welde Giyorgīs*, who contrary to custom did not bother to use any title for himself, was one of Antoine d'Abbadie's early informants and collaborators. He remained behind in Tigray when Antoine proceeded to Gonder in June 1842 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 265, fols 119r and 122r). Though Welde Giyorgīs provides only day and month, it is sufficient to compare the contents of this and his following two letters with Antoine's notebook (Abb. 265) to establish that they must have been written in 1842. The manuscripts and people referred to and the emphasis on collecting place names all match with the content of the notebook. Not too long after the third of Welde Giyorgīs's letters published here (no. 58), he followed Antoine to Gonder and Gojjam, accompanied Michel on an unforeseen campaign in Wello in May–June 1843 and lost parchment, paper and clothes crossing the Blue Nile (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 211–212, Michel to Antoine, 23 Feb. 1844). He continued to be associated with the d'Abbadies, though Michel eventually became disenchanted with him (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 237–238, Michel to Antoine, 14 Feb. 1847).

The name Welde Giyorgīs appears in several of the letters of this volume, as well as in other source materials. It has been impossible for me to establish whether the writer of this and the following letters is identical with the Welde Giyorgīs of nos 24 and 27 (or 13), but the very fact that he dated his letters—and at the top besides—indicates that he had in all probability associated with Europeans for quite some time. Besides Aksum, Maryam Shewīto between Adwa and Intiçho and Gundagundī are mentioned repeatedly as sources of manuscripts. Apparently the clergy of these places with their early attachment to the Catholic cause were more willing to collaborate than others. *Aleqa Melku* of Gundagundī is most likely the *Debtera Melku* of no. 30. The *balderas* referred to is almost certainly Gomeddīn (nos 49 and 62). For Baryaw see no. 58 and for Remha no. 71. For the identification of Tēwoflos with Théophile (Lefebvre), see no. 47.

Birru Goshu to Selama, 30 Aug. 1842

Gubba, Tuesday, 30 August 1840 [sic]

Dejjach Birru respectfully greets the *abun* of Ethiopia.

When the month of Meskerem ends, *i. e.* in Ṭiqimt, I shall send a messenger. Since you invited me to make peace, I am doing what I can to love the *ras* and *Itēgē* Menen. Now, if they trample on our agreement, support me, and also if I on my side happen to forget the agreement, support the *ras*.

As far as I am concerned, however, I shall respect the accords and shall love the *ras* and the *itēgē*. I and my father and overlord Goshu have nothing but benevolent intentions towards them. So please give me absolution for all my sins which I have committed since our separation until this day and please declare that all I have been able to give will be counted as proper alms, thereby opening the gates of heaven for me. And now, send and ask from me whatever may be acceptable to you in my country. As for myself, I beg you to send me an umbrella covered with silk and a written reply by which you mightily bless me.

We are on the march and I do not have any scribe within reach. I therefore have recourse to the foreign pen of my brother and friend Michel, whom you also love. Please give him your blessing, too.

For *Dejjazmach* Birru.

Arnauld d'Abbadie.

The 25th day of Nehasē.

BN, NAF 23848/II, fol. 143, French translation in Michel d'Abbadie's handwriting. It is quite clear from the wording that this letter—except the first line—was dictated by Birru and only penned by Michel. Though it is now impossible to know whether the preserved version reflects the exact wording of the original or not, there is no reason whatsoever to doubt the authenticity of the message.

The dating "1840" must be a slip of the pen. A note on the back of the letter states "lettre du dedjadj Bōrrou 30 Aout 1842". In a covering letter to his brother, also dated 30 August 1840 but with a note that it was received on 11 and answered on 13 September 1842 (BN, NAF 23848/II, fol. 144), Michel writes that he was too short of time to copy the letter, and the first line is probably his way of dealing with the customary lengthy complimentary phrases.

The contents reflect the situation after the battle of Debre Tabor, when *Ras* Ali had made peace with *Dejjazmach* Wibē but Birru had good reason to fear that his conduct in connection with the battle, especially the fact that he had violated the sanctuary of Mahdere Maryam and carried away Ali's wife to Gojjam, would not be so easily forgiven and forgotten (see *Nuovi documenti*, pp. 381–382).

Sahlu Aşqu to Michel d'Abbadie, [Jan. 1843]

ዘቲ ጠማር ዘተሏ ወት ጸገግጎ ሄህሎ ት
 ብጸሕ ብጎ ጊታ ማገሕል ገንደት እሱ ይሰማ
 ይደግፎ ረገ ይህል አኅመድ ወራጠይተሕ ላ
 ክብቶ ብለውሀል ብሉ ቢገግረኝ ደጀች ፋሬሹ
 ደጀች መርሱ ደጀች ሊበገ ታላቅ ጸላቶች እሊ
 ህገብሩ ተጻዕኑ አሁን ግን ጎጂ ምእንገር ምእ
 ለሁ ማዳኝ ጎገሩ ቶሎ ገሚ ስገራ ናቶው እኛ
 ይሰማነው ይህንው ይብደሁ ሰድጁ አሁን ይሉቱ
 ከወንድ ምዎ አልሆነልንም ያለርሰዎ አመድ
 ያለንም ና አመድ ይሁኑን እግረክብሎር አመድ
 ይሁንዎ ጊታ ገንጦንዮ ሰምኖ ከልደት ስጉን ስቲ
 ር ጎንደር ትገሡ ላሊበላ እሱ ደ አሁን ብለው
 አሁን አልተመለሱም ወረም አልሰማነም።



May this letter sent by Sahlu reach Mr. Michel (*Gēta Mīka'ēl*). How are you to the extent of heaven and earth? Ahmed has informed me that you have told him to tell me that I should inquire about news and write (lit. send) to you. *Dejjach Farīs*, *Dejjach Merso* and *Dejjach Līben*, these were powerful enemies, [but] they have been imprisoned. And now [Alī] issued a proclamation that he would spend some time in Gojjam. He will cross over soon. This is what we have heard.

What you said, [namely] that you have sent a letter to your brother, was of no use to us. Since we do not have a friend (*zemed*) other than you, remain [lit. be] a friend for us. May God be a friend for you.

As for Mr. Antoine (*Gēta Inṭonyos*), he left Gonder 10 days before Christmas, intending to go to Lalībela. He has not returned yet; nor have we heard any news.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 598, Amharic original, 100x105 mm. This letter must have been written towards the end of Antoine d'Abbadie's brief visit to Lalībela for Christmas January 1843, recorded in Ethiop. Abb. 265, fol. 153v. He left Gonder 25 Dec. 1842 and returned 16 Jan. 1843. A note in Michel's hand on the back of this document provides the name "Sahalo Atkou" and the date "9 fevrier" which is quite clearly the date of receipt. Whether he was actually the son of Aşqu or not, Sahlu obviously belonged to the household of the famous scholar and regarded himself as his son (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 565).

The fighting between Farīs Alīgaz, Merso Hayle Maryam and Līben Amedē referred to in this letter took place after and partly as a consequence of the outcome of the battle of Debre Tabor in February 1842. It seems to have been all over by the end of the year. See Lefebvre, *Voyage*, II, pp. 120-131; Abir, *Ethiopia*, pp. 119, 123; Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 93-95.

Zeray Zegīyorgīs to Michel d'Abbadie, [Jan. 1843]

ዛቴ ጠዕገር ዘተፈነወት ጉምታ።
 ዛሬዮት ብጻሲ ብገብገብገብ ገብገብ
 ልጅ እንደት ለሉ ደገና ለሉን ለሁን
 ወሬውን ብክብት ብለው ብረዮሉ
 ከተፈ፣ ገር ለአቡን ገርሁ ለቡን ገ
 ን፣ እንተ እንደው ቀህ፣ እድር ገህ፣ ባጸ
 ለሉ ለሁን ገም፣ ገ፣ ሠላሳተ፣ እድር ለሉ
 ቶሎ ደምጠ፣ ገሽ፣ መልካም ገሽ ቀ
 ድም አምቶተውት ገንደና ለሉ፣ ያሉ
 ገሽ፣ ፈረሰ፣ ያምጠልኝ ብሩን ከዚ
 ገ፣ ለሰጥ፣ ለሉ ገንደ ለብተ፣ እን
 ደህቴ ገም፣ ገታ፣ እንጠንዮሰ ገም
 ከልደት ፣ ቀን ስተር ሂዳ፣ ለሁ
 ን፣ ለልተ መለሰ ገም ስተር ከጸም
 ሩተ ተዘል ያሉኝ ገሽ ለልተ ቀበ
 ልም ለሁን ገም መልካም ገሽ ደ
 ዮሰድዳ ገታው

fol. 297r

የትግራይ ወሬም ከገልጋይ አረአዶና
 ከደጃት ጌደነጉል ጋራ ሁገው ደጃ
 ቶው ቤደል ሰሠ ይሉና ሌሎች እርግ
 ጠን ገን ለልሰማን ገም ለትሎ የሰ
 ደድልኝን ለሌም አመሠገንሁ ሰ
 ወም አመሰግን ለንደት ለገታሁ
 ታላቁም ተናሹም የወንድ ማፍ
 ማግኛል ለሽ ከሮት

fol. 297v

May this letter sent by Zeray reach
 Mr. Michel (*Gēta Mīka'ēl*). How are
 you? Are you well? I have told the
abun the news you told me to forward
 for you. However, the *abun* told me to
 write (lit. send) any way I felt. Now
 don't delay (lit. don't say tomorrow
 and the day after tomorrow). Come at
 once. Bring me a shield, a fine shield,
 like the shield you brought me before,
 [and] a horse. I will give [you] the money
 here. You are like my father and my
 mother.

As for Mr. Antoine (*Gēta Inṭoniyos*),
 he left 10 days before Christmas. He is
 not back yet. You have asked me to
 take one thaler from Şemru. He has not
 received any shield, so send him a very
 good one.

News from Tigray: They tell us that
Dejjach Wībē was defeated fighting (lit.
 being) with *Balgada Araya* and *Dejjach*
Gwangul. However, we do not know
 for sure. I appreciate the mule you
 have sent me. Others also praise it.
 How are you, old and young, the ser-
 vants of my brother Michel (*Mīka'ēl*)?

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 597r and v, Amharic
 original, 110×120 mm. *Shaleqa* or *Abēto* Zeray
 was the son and successor of *Bahr Negash Ze-*

gīyorgīs at Dīgsa in Akele Guzay. Michel notes that Zeray was of his own age and that they became close friends (*Doutze ans*, I, pp. 521–522, 532–537). Zeray accompanied Wībē's army to Debre Tabor in 1842, reported the outcome to Michel at Gonder (*ibid.*, II, pp. 48, 62–63), and remained in contact with the d'Abbadie brothers. Apparently he wrote this letter from Gonder in early 1843. It is annotated Gudara 9 Feb. 1843, *i.e.* the same date as no. 60. Of the additional preserved letters of Zeray (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fols 472, 505, 530, 534, 578 and 587), there are only two (nos 100–101) which in my opinion present information of interest.

Taken literally, the sentence about the fighting implies that Wībē, Araya and Gwangul (*Subagadis?*) were allies at war with someone else. In reality Wībē was campaigning against Araya and Gwangul and, ultimately, he was the victor. See nos 50 and 62.

Gomeddīn to Michel d'Abbadie, [Jan. 1843?]

ሳኑ፡ መልእክት፡ ዘተረፈውታ፡ እምኅበ፡ በገድረሰ፡ ገሙሀ
 ደፍ፡ ተብዳሉ፡ ሃበ፡ የኔታ፡ መካኔ፡ እገደታሉ፡ እጅጉ፡ ገ፡
 እጅጉ፡ የሰማይ፡ የመድረግ፡ የሚያህል፡ ደግሞ፡ የሰማይ፡
 ክኔ፡ የተወሰኑ፡ ሰዎች፡ እሌዎ፡ እገደ፡ ተወሰኑ፡ ሰጥቼ፡ እ
 ለሁ፡ ክኔ፡ የቀረ፡ የለም፡ ተሳሳቺ፡ እገደ፡ ሆኖ፡ እርሰም፡ ያ
 ውቃሉ፡ ደጅያት፡ ውጤ፡ ሳይቀጥ፡ ክበዳል፡ ገደ፡ ህጂ፡ ነበርሁ፡
 ጌሳ፡ ድል፡ ከሆኑ፡ ደጅ፡ አዝማች፡ ስለ፡ ሰቃ፡ መጠበቅ፡ ገሰገሰ
 ሁሻ፡ ከመገገድ፡ ሳይ፡ ገፈፈሻ፡ ጸሐላ፡ ታላቅ፡ ቀገድ፡ ብዬ፡ ገ
 ገደ፡ ጌ፡ ገር፡ ወሰኛ፡ ነበርሁ፡ ያም፡ ወሰኞቹ፡ እሁንም፡
 ግ፡ ሁሉ፡ በያለገሩ፡ ሸፍታ፡ ሲሆን፡ እጥብቄ፡ ፈርቼ፡
 ነበርሁ፡ በርሰም፡ እምሰክ፡ ደግሞ፡ ወጣልሻ፡ እሁንም፡
 ደግሞ፡ እግዚእን፡ በሰላም፡ ክሰቃም፡ ገራ፡ ያገና
 ገም፡ በፈታም፡ ወረቀት፡ ሰድጄ፡ ክፍረ፡ ምናጠሱ፡ ወ
 ረቀት፡ ያልሰደድህልሻ፡ ያሉሻን፡ እገኙ፡ በደግሞ፡ ገዙ፡ በደ፡
 ሰድጄ፡ የገቡረ፡ እድ፡ ሰዎች፡ መጡ፡ ክሌቴ፡ ለያሱሩሻ፡ ሰ
 ቃወሻ፡ እገደ፡ ይወሰዱት፡ ብዬ፡ ክሌቴ፡ ወጥቼ፡ ታሠርሁ
 ሻ፡ እሁንም፡ ደግሞ፡ ምናው፡ እኒያን፡ ሰዎች፡ ያልጠየቅሱ
 ሹው፡ ያሉሻን፡ ለመገኘት፡ እጠይቃቸው፡ እሁራሻ፡ ያገና፡ ገ
 ሩድ፡ ወቅጠህ፡ ለደድልሻ፡ ጸሎሻን፡ እገደርሱም፡ በሰላም፡ ሁክ
 ት፡ ሆኖ፡ ደግሞ፡ ገሩድ፡ ይወቅጣል፡ እገደ፡ ይሁራሻ፡ ብዬ፡
 ፈርቼ፡ ተውሁት፡ የሰጡሻ፡ ገራ፡ ገደ፡ ገደ፡ ወሳድት፡
 ታላቅ፡ እገር፡ እሰጠህሉ፡ በሰላም፡ እሁንም፡ መልክም፡ ሰዎድ፡ እ
 ፈልገሁ፡ እይገታም፡ ደግሞ፡ ስለገ፡ የፈታ፡ እሰች፡ እኔም፡ መል
 ካም፡ ሆኖሁሻ፡ ተሎ፡ ይመጡልሻ፡ በገ፡ እሰች፡

May this letter sent by *Bandiras* Gomeddīn reach Master Michel (*Yenēta Mīka'ēl*). How are you, really, really, to the extent of heaven and earth? Are you well? I have delivered the goods which you left with me, packed as you left them. Nothing remains with me. You know if I am wrong. I went to the *balgada* before *Dejjach* *Wibē* fought [with him]. After the *dejjazmach* had been defeated, I hurried to guard the goods. I was robbed on the road. I had taken [with me] my money, five thalers, for a big horn. They took also that. Besides, I was very afraid since everyone everywhere had become a *shifta*. By [the help of] your God I escaped unhurt (lit. it passed well for me). And now may God deliver your goods in peace to you (lit. make you meet your goods in peace). Earlier I sent a letter, and as to what you say about my not sending a letter through Frē Minaṭos, I wrote (lit. sent) to you, saying I was pleased with your arriving safely. *Nibure'id* *Welde Sillasē's* men came to my house to arrest me. In order that they should not take the goods, I left my house and was arrested. And now you ask me why I did not visit those people. I am always visiting them. I did not find time to do what you told me, to grind and send that gunpowder, because there was violence [abroad]. Moreover, I refrained because of fear, so that they would not say, "He is grinding gunpowder." The *Balgada* took the

sword you gave me and told me he would give me a large territory. Now I want a nice silk cape (*lemd*). *Ayṭitu* says, "Are you well, master?" She says, "I am well, come quickly."

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 549, Amharic original, 180×235 mm. There is no note with the date when this letter was received. The confrontation between *Balgada* Araya and *Wibē* referred to took place either late 1842 or early 1843. *Nebure'id* *Welde Sillasē* had joined Araya's rebellion some six months earlier and was captured by *Wibē* only in June 1843. For these events, see Lefebvre, *Voyage*, II, pp. 39–40, 79–113, 313–321; *Vicende*, p. 465. For *Balderas* (*bandiras* in the documents) Gomeddīn and Domingo, see the former's earlier letter (no. 49). Frē Minaṭos (mentioned also in no. 101) was the Catholic missionary Luigi Montuori (*Vicende*, p. 500).

Sahle Sillasē to Victoria, 16 Jan. 1843



This letter [is] from Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa, to the queen of England. As for you, are you well? I am well. Your subjects (lit. children), who came and stayed with me, brought me several good things, things I had not seen [before]. They stayed in my country and saw everything, the good and the bad, and now they want to leave this country. When I heard about their leaving, I had some things from my country which they wanted made [for them] and gave to them. What I made is [but] a few things for the sake of love and friendship. [The reason for] my sending off your subjects (lit. children) [is] that I want them to show you this work. Do not think [otherwise] in your heart; doubt not. This is the decorative art of our country. This is what we can [make] in our country. This is for love and friendship. My desire (lit. heart) is for friendship and love for you and your country. [The reason is] my hope that you will help me and my subjects in case misfortune befalls us. My country and your country are far [apart]. We may not be able to see each other, but my sending of a letter and your sending of a letter is instead of meeting (lit. seeing). When I hear news of you, I rejoice. Your people who have come to me, have become like my children. When they said they would leave me, I was very sad. I said to God and to him whom I and you worship, to Jesus Christ, “May God bring them [home] safely.” May he himself protect you. Amen, amen.

Sealed in the city of Ankoberr, in the year of Luke, on the 4th of the month of Tīrr (on the 8th night), in the year of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1735 [sic].

Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa, Guragē, Galla, Shanqilla, Adal, Kereyu, Yittu, Wello, of the infidels and the Christians, king of all.

Debtera Welde Zēna Marqos wrote [and] illustrated.

Captions: The Archangel (lit. Saint) Michael, the Archangel (lit. Saint) Gabriel
 Father, Son, Holy Ghost
 Image of man, image of eagle, image of lion, image of ox
 The chariot of Solomon
 St. George [and] the dragon, St. Theodore [and] the buffalo
 Lion, lion

Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. orient. Ag 9, Amharic original, 480×555 mm, parchment. A rather free English translation is found in IOR, Bombay Secret Proceedings, P/204, no. 1149. The text (except the captions for the illustrations) was published with a German translation by Franz Praetorius (*Die Amharische Sprache* (Halle, 1879), pp. 492–493). The four lines in yellow, which are barely legible, run as follows:

1. አቺ ደሀና ነገደ፣ እኔም ደሀና ነኝ፣ ያሮ ልጆች እኔም ዘገድ፣
2. ድ እታ አሰርቼ ሰጠኝቸው እኔ የሰራሁት ጥሬት ነገር ነገር፣
3. ወዳጅነት ለፍቅር ነው ላገኝም ላገሽም እኛም ከፋት ያገ
4. ን፣ ወራ በሰግሁ ጊዜ ደስ ይለኛል ያንቺ ሰዎቹ እኔ ዘገድ ቢ

This letter closes the correspondence related to the mission of Captain Harris to Shewa (see nos 34–35, 41–42, 44 and 63 above). It was carried via Bombay to London by Harris himself together with the original of the 1841 treaty (IOR, L/P&S/5/420). The Government of Bombay recommended that Harris after reporting to the East India Company with the treaty, letter and presents “be gratified by being permitted to present these Articles to Her most Gracious Majesty in person” (L/P&S/5/339, pp. 480–481). The letter was presented to the Gotha library by Queen Victoria herself.

The increasing attention to formality as compared to Sahle Sillasē’s earlier letters—for instance the dating, the sealing and signing of the letter and even the secretary’s name—is no doubt due to the influence of the British mission. Perhaps the elaboration of the king’s domains—the addition of Shanqilla, Kereyu, Yittu and Wello to Shewa, Guragē and the Galla enumerated in the treaty 18 months earlier and the replacement of Yifat with the better known Adal—also reflects a growing desire (the king’s and/or Harris’s) to impress London. The beautiful illuminations with their far-reaching symbolism as well as the reference to the lunar cycle (the 8th night) indicate that the scribe *Debtera Welde Zēna Marqos* was a learned man with a desire to produce an impressive document to go with the king’s presents.

Selama to Goshu Zewdē, [Feb.? 1843]

ዛቴ፡መልክት፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ት፡ኣብ፡ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ራ፡ኣብ፡ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ራ፡ኣብ፡ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡
 ጳጳሳዊት፡ጳጳስ፡ዘጳጳሳዊት፡

May this letter sent by *Abune Abba Selama*, metropolitan (*pappas*), of the country of Ethiopia, reach my dear son, *Dejj Azmach Goshu* of the Orthodox faith. God bless you. God absolve you. God protect you. Amen.

However, it is like this. Now, it should not be [so]. Do not fast. But let no man see you. One maidservant and one manservant is sufficient for you. If people see you, it is bad. Later, when you have recovered, you shall give alms. And now I am going to send *Abune Barsum* (*Bersum*) to the patriarch. If you want something from Jerusalem or if you want water from Jordan or if you want to send some gift to the patriarch or to Jerusalem, let me know (lit. send to me) at once. I will send it for you with *Abune Barsum*. If man sees, he condemns; if God sees, he is merciful, he forgives.

In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. Glory be to God on high.

God is my helper. I will not fear.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 47, Amharic original, 80x325 mm. This letter by *Abune Selama* (1841-67) was written in response to a letter from Michel to Antoine, dated 12 Feb. 1843 (BN, NAF 23848/II, fol. 203), in which Michel writes about *Dejjazmach Goshu's* poor health and strict fasting habits and asks for a dispensation in view of the impending fasting season.

Though *Abune Selama* is sometimes called *Abba Selama*, this is the only case I have seen of *Abune Abba Selama*. Whether it is just an oversight by the scribe or it is the "Abba Selama", i.e. Ethiopia's first bishop *Fruementius*, that has intruded into the mind of the secretary is impossible to know. At any rate the nineteenth-century bishop officially called himself "Selama (*Hirēnē*), metropolitan (*pappas*) of Abyssinia" as his seal shows. In the seal one reads the well-known words sung by the angels at the birth of Christ (Luke 2: 14). The year 1557, Coptic era, corresponds to 10 Sept. 1840-9 Sept. 1841, that is the year of Selama's consecration.

Of the two designs composed of Arabic letters which appear at the bottom of this letter and on several others from *Abune Selama*, the first is almost identical with the common Muslim invocation of God, "the compassionate and merciful"; the first adjective *rahman* has, however, been replaced by *ra'uf*, no doubt to indicate the difference in faith. The second is a quotation from Hebrews 13: 6 (or from Psalms 117: 6 in the Septuagint version).

Barsum was an Egyptian ecclesiastic who had accompanied Selama to Ethiopia in 1841 as his father confessor and who represented the bishop on a peace-making mission to Goshu in early 1843 (*d'Abbadie, Douze ans*, II, p. 167). Later Barsum accompanied *Dā'ūd*, the future Patriarch *Qērilos* (1854-61), on his visit to Ethiopia in 1851-52 (*Iris Habib el Masri, The Story of the Copts* (Cairo, 1976), pp. 514-515). For *Abune Selama*, see in particular *Crummey, Priests, passim*, where a more balanced view of the often maligned bishop is provided.

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Traité politique et
commercial entre le
Roi Louis Philippe
Roi de France et Saïle, Sultan
Roi de Choa et ses
successeurs

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De la liberté de commerce
qui existent entre le
Roi Louis Philippe
Roi de France et Saïle, Sultan
Roi de Choa, sur les
échanges de caduc, qui ont
eu lieu entre ces deux
pays, conformément
à l'article 1er de
l'édit de Saïle, et
indignes de grand
le Roi de Choa, et
et commerce avec la France.

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De la conformité de religion
qui existe entre les deux nations,
le Roi de Choa, et espérant, que
cas de guerre avec les musulmans
ou autres étrangers, la France
regardera ses ennemis comme
les siens propres.

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Le Roi Louis Philippe,
Roi de France, protecteur de
Jerusalem, Sion, et de
sujets, tous les habitants du
Choa qui vont au pèlerinage et
à la défense de la ville de Jérusalem,
représentés sur toutes les routes,
contre les avanies des infidèles.

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Tous les Français résidant au
Choa, seront considérés comme les
sujets les plus favorisés et à ce
titre, auront tous les droits, et
jouiront de tous les privilèges,
qui pourraient être accordés
aux autres étrangers.

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Toutes les marchandises françaises
introduites dans le Choa, seront
soumises à un droit de trois pour
cent (une fois payé), et ce droit
sera prélevé en nature (ou en
toute discussion, Darbiba) sur
la valeur des dites marchandises.

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Tous les Français, pourront
commerce dans tout le
Royaume de Choa.

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Tous les Français, résidant
dans le Choa, pourront acheter des
maisons et des terres dont
l'acquisition sera garantie
par le Roi de Choa; les Français
pourront revendre ou disposer
de ces mêmes propriétés.

Rochebelle
1843

Rochebelle
1843

Treaty between Shewa and France



Treaty between Shewa and France, 7 June 1843

May the agreement (lit. letter), the work and the commerce between (lit. for) the great Louis Philippe (Līwī Felipp), king of France, [and] Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa and the kingdom of Abyssinia, be carried out [also] during the reigns of their sons and their grandsons.

Sahle Sillasē, the king of Shewa, has entered into friendship with the great Louis Philippe (Lēwī Filipp), the king of France, having exchanged presents through Mr. Rochet d'Héricourt (*Ato Roshī Dīrekur*). Now, in order that friendship be strengthened, they want a treaty to establish trade [contacts] between the king of Shewa and the king of France. The one who has told us this message is Mr. Rochet. The king has decorated him as [he decorates] commanders (*shaleqoch*).

1. The people of France and the people of Shewa are on the verge of unifying their religions. If (other) enemies, be it European or Muslim, should arise against the king of Shewa, the king of France shall fight against them. At that time the king of Shewa will rejoice.
2. Jerusalem is protected by the shield of France. If Shewans (lit. children of Shewa) should desire to go to Jerusalem, the officials of the king of France, who are in every country, shall protect them like Frenchmen (lit. children of France).
3. The king of Shewa shall favour (lit. make) Frenchmen (lit. children of France) above the foreigners of other countries. If he gives concessions to other foreigners, he shall give superior concessions to us.
4. If French goods are imported to Shewa for trade [the merchant] having paid three per cent to the king, he is to protect him, saying, "sell to your heart's content".
5. French merchants may trade in all the lands of the king of Shewa as they like.
6. If persons from France buy houses or land in Shewa, the king shall protect them so that they will not be wronged. Let them do as they like, whether they sell or give away.

Two [copies] have been written. One has remained with me, one I have sent to the king of France.

Written at Angolela in Ginbot, on the day of John, (written) in the year 1843.

By [order of] Sahle Sillasē, king of Shewa.

Rochet d'Héricourt,

AED, *Traités, Éthiopie, Traité politique et commercial* . . . 7 June 1843, Amharic/French original, text in columns on a scroll of parchment, 710 mm long and 155–175 mm wide.

Both versions of this treaty were published by C. F. X. Rochet d'Héricourt in his *Second voyage*, pp. 375–378, and the French text was printed in *Recueil des Traités de la France 1713–1906* (Paris, 1861–1919), XV, pp. 340–341, an indication that the agreement was regarded by the French government as a valid international treaty. In Hiruy Welde Sillasē's *Tarīke Negest* the Amharic text is included on p. 34. Neither Rochet nor Hiruy has reproduced the text correctly. In Rochet's book the orthography is unbelievably messed up and, more important, the subscription from "Two [copies] have been written" with the date and the signatures is omitted altogether. Hiruy, who was probably working on the basis of a late copy received from France, edited the Amharic and stated that the treaty was sealed. In fact, the form of the signing raises grave doubts as to the authenticity of Sahle Sillasē's "signature". Under both the Amharic and the French text Sahle Sillasē's name appears with a preposition in front of it: *be-* and either *be-* or *le-*, respectively. This excludes the possibility that Sahle Sillasē has *signed* the treaty. On the other hand a *ti'izaz* (order) or *feqad* (permission) following the name would have completed the phrase, and it is not impossible that Rochet intended to have the king's *ṣehafe ti'izaz* or some other court official place his signature on the document on the king's behalf. The signature that follows is, however, Rochet d'Héricourt's own. The other possibility is that Rochet wrote Sahle Sillasē's name himself believing that the preposition was part of the name. My suspicion that this is the case is strengthened by the fact that the two lines with Sahle Sillasē's name are written in a different style and a much weaker hand as if with a European steel pen. This has led me to conclude that Sahle Sillasē refused to sign and that Rochet committed a fraud. See Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 159–163. There are several "days of John" in Ginbot and it is impossible to say with absolute certainty which one is meant. I have therefore maintained the date when Rochet signed the treaty, *i.e.* 7 June, since in my opinion he was anyway the only one who signed it. The Amharic of this document is plainly an attempt to translate the French text by someone who was not up to the task.

Selama to C. W. Isenberg, [June 1843]

To our beloved, the respected, the honourable and Reverend Mr. Isenberg. May God the most high protect him.

After full greeting to you, the question turns on the importance of your request. Scarcely had your letter reached us, when we thoroughly understood your address. Also the watch reached us and the books. All that you have said in your letter is known to us; but the people of Abyssinia are people who are not desirous after knowledge, nor do they love learning; nor do they understand that you wish to do them good. They want you only to give them property, nothing else. If you have lived ever so long or so short a time in Abyssinia, and still believe the Abyssinians to be like other people who like and covet learning—this cannot be. For I myself know very well that if they loved learning, and were desirous after progress and civilisation, they would listen to our teaching. For there are some among them, who believe in three births (of Jesus Christ), and some that believe in the unction (his being anointed with the Holy Spirit which the Copts are saying that he had anointed himself); and we want to convert them with all our power, but they will never be converted.

As for your stay at Adoa, if I could, I would settle you in your house; but the people of Adoa have sent to us, and told us that you had spoken publicly before all people, telling them that Aboona Salama was one of your scholars. (I had said, that the Aboona was our friend, and had been instructed by our friends in Egypt) But where do you prove that I am your scholar and friend? And how can I speak in your favour? And even if I had spoken for you, there is Jacob the Catholic who is of the Pope's party, he is our enemy; and I wished especially to turn him out of our country—but why should we speak much on the Subject? You have arrived, and it happens so, that we speak to you on reverence lest people should speak evil of us—as for the rest, this Catholic has sent to Massowa intending to bind all those that had set their faces towards his capital town; and we on our part pray you to send our best respects to your Society informing them, that they should send us a Consul to Massowa, first on account of the people of Abyssinia; secondly, it would be very convenient for us in forwarding letters which we want from Egypt, and yourself, if you have power to turn out Jacobis, and you remain in quietness, all will be well, but if you cannot, then neither will I allow him to remain in our country. But if I turn him out, I am hated, and they will say that I am a friend to the English. And if you would say to me, "Turn him out", we will turn him out; and you afterwards will go from Adoa, and return from (or to?) Shoa. And, if it be so your destiny, you will understand it; or if your destiny should be otherwise, you will know it. But at all events we pray you to present our respects to the Society, and tell them of sending the Consul speedily. Farewell in happiness! Amen.

P.S. We also inform you, that we send a messenger on our part to the Alaka Kiddana Maryam and the clergy of Madhana Alam, to tell them that if they do not like you to stay, they must also turn out Jacobis; and this is what we want to tell you. And if you hear this, you will not think that I am not your friend, but I am your great friend. Salaam.

Last P.S. If Dadjazmatch Oobê allows you to dwell, all is right, but if he should not please to settle you, tell him also concerning Jacob the Catholic, who is of the Pope's party. I wanted also to have sent you some presents on account of love, but we better keep them for the future, when you will come to meet us, then we shall speak together about what is necessary. And if you do not come, we pray you to send the Consul to Massowa, and give us information, and Farewell. Amen.

P.S. Hereafter it will be more convenient for us, if you write to us in Arabic. Farewell!

Sahlu Aşqu to Michel d'Abbadie, [1843?]

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 ኣቢቶ፡ ዛህኡ፡ ተብኣኡ፡ ኅብ፡ ሓዋ
 ጂ፡ ሚካኢል፡ ኣንድ፡ ት፡ ኅም፡ ኣጅጉ
 ን፡ ስጣዩ፡ ምድሩን፡ ያህል፡ ዩወ
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 ጩንቆኝ፡ ክረምሁ፡ ኣንደወንድ
 ሞቶ፡ ወተደር፡ ኣንዳልሆን፡ ጌ
 ረሲ፡ ሞተ፡ በኅሉ፡ ዩንም፡ ሺጩ
 በላሁ፡ ኣካንተን፡ ኣየጠብሁ፡ ወ
 ንድምዖ፡ በተሉ፡ ወን፡ ንዝተወ
 ልኝ፡ ኣንደሆን፡ ደስደዱልኝ፡ ስ
 ምችሎ፡ ሁሉ፡ ደህና፡ ናቸውን፡
 ኣባቶችን፡ ኣብዚኣብሓር፡ ደላ
 ና፡ ደምጣልኝ፡ ተዝካውም፡ ዓ
 ጎና፡ ኣከ፡ ክኒ፡፡

May this letter sent by *Abēto* Sahlu reach Mr. Michel (*Hawaja Mīka'ēl*). How are you, really, to the extent of heaven and earth?

Do you hear news about your brother? As for me, since I have no friend except you, I have long been worried because I hear nothing from you (lit. you are lost to me). I cannot become a soldier like my brothers because my horse died. And my mule I have sold to have something to live on.

I am waiting for you. If your brother has bought a mule for me, send [it] to me. Are all your people well? May God bring [you], our father, to me in safety. The jackal is well [and] with me.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 520, Amharic original, 95×165, parchment. This letter is impossible to date with certainty. It would seem to fit best in 1843 after Antoine had left Gojjām on his first trip to Innarya May 1843–March 1844, but before the theft at Gonder described in the following documents (nos 69–72) had taken place. In a letter to Antoine where he reminds him that he had been promised a mule, he mentions the theft (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 585).

For Sahlu's relationship to *Liqē* Aşqu see no. 60. Apparently the life of a soldier was the obvious choice for a young man in Sahlu's situation—provided of course that he had a horse of his own.

CMS, CA 5/013 (no fol. numbers), English translation copied into letter from C. W. Isenberg to D. Coates, 28 July 1843, pp. 10–11 of this letter. That this is a translation from an Arabic original is quite evident already from the first sentences. There is no reason to suspect that the letter is not complete though the seal and "mottoes" typical of many of Selama's letters (see no. 65) have been omitted. As with some of his other letters, Selama has obviously had problems bringing this communication to an end.

When the road to Shewa was closed, Isenberg made an attempt to reestablish the CMS mission in northern Ethiopia but was rejected. This letter is in reply to his appeal for the support of *Abune* Selama (no. 65) who, as a former pupil of the CMS school in Cairo, was expected to open the doors of Ethiopia to the Protestant missionaries. As this letter shows, Selama who had sufficient problems of his own, resented Isenberg's attempt to use his name and background and appealed for understanding. How could he actively support the entry of one missionary at the same time as he was trying to have another, the more popular De Jacobis, expelled? If Isenberg was unable to gain acceptance from *Wibē* and the local authorities at Adwa on his own, he would have to begin by bringing a British consul to Massawa to assist him. For the time being, the best he could do would be to support Selama's argument of equal treatment and have De Jacobis share his own fate. Selama deals with the issue of Isenberg's failure to gain acceptance in two further letters (nos 74 and 83). For Isenberg's own version, see CMS, CA 5/013, letters to D. Coates, 9 May, 5 June and 28 July 1843, and for a dramatic pro-French if not pro-Catholic account, Lefebvre, *Voyage*, II, pp. 325–327.

Kidane Maryam, the influential *aleqa* of Medhane Alem Church at Adwa, was far more sympathetic to the Catholics than the Protestants and quite capable of handling the matter his own way (see Crumme, *Priests*, pp. 56, 76).

This letter is reproduced with the orthography and punctuation of the document in the archives, including the spelling of Ethiopian names and Isenberg's insertions in parentheses.

Mahişente Mika'el to Antoine and Michel d'Abbadie, [1843]



May this letter sent by *İçhegē* Mahişentu, the servant of the community, reach the two brothers, Antoine (Inṭoniyos) and Michel (Mika'el). How are you, really? When I told you not to go, you refused and left. And now the rainy season has started. Come [both of you] at once. Concerning the lost money, I have arraigned [the culprits].

May the peace of God protect you. Amen.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 498, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 55×110 mm. This letter with its reference to the involvement of the *içhegē* as judge in a case of theft committed against the d'Abbadie brothers at Gonder was in all probability written during the rainy season of 1843 (cf. nos 70–72). Note that the *içhegē* does not bother about any titles or polite forms for the two Frenchmen. He wavers, moreover, between singular and plural as if only one of the two was really in his mind.

In the Ethiopian *içhegē*-lists Mahişente Mīka'el from Nejja (or Yenejja) is placed between Gebre Maryam of Shewa and Gebre Maryam of Gundagundī (Hiruy Welde Sillasē, *Wazēma* (Addis Abeba, 1921 E.C.), p. 113; Aklile Birhan Welde Qirqos, *Meshēt* (Addis Abeba, 1946 E.C.), p. 104). Cerulli places him between Zewelde Maryam and Gebre Maryam of Shewa ("Gli abbatì di Dabra Libanos", *Orientalia*, Nova Series XIV (1945), pp. 158–160). The confusion is probably due to the fact that he was *içhegē* for two periods, first in the late 1830's (see no. 28) and a second time from 1842 to 1848. He was an adherent of the *Yeşegga-lij* doctrine and, if not a convert, at least a close friend of the Catholic missionaries. In 1848 he was brought as a prisoner to Gojjam where he died in 1850 or possibly 1851 (*Vicende*, p. 480).

Tesfaye to Antoine d'Abbadie, [1843]

ዘኑ፡ ጠማር፡ ዛኑ፡ ልገ
 ወኑ፡ አምኑ፡ ተሰቶ፡
 ትገዳሕ፡ ትገ፡ አግረ፡
 አንጠንዮ፡ ስፈረን፡ ስዊ፡
 የኔታ፡ አንጃ፡ ~~አንጃ~~
 አንዲት፡ ስሉ፡ ደኅኖ፡ አሉ
 ን፡ ያሰማዮን፡ የምድረ
 ን፡ ያክል፡ አኔ፡ ግን፡ ወደ፡
 አርሰዎ፡ ምምዳት፡ አ
 ምሮች፡ ነበር፡ ደረ፡ ግን፡
 ስሁን፡ አንጃ፡ ስመጣ፡ መ
 ንገ፡ ድ፡ አማልኝ፡ ስሆን
 ሁ፡ ደኅኖ፡ አኖ፡ ብሎ፡ ትም
 ማ፡ ~~አንጃ~~ ስሆ፡ ስሆ፡ ሁ
 ስ፡ ጸጣቡ፡ አኔን፡ ግን፡ ወደ
 ህ፡ ~~አንጃ~~ ረኅገ፡ ወደህ፡ ስ
 ማም፡ ወደህ፡ ራቁ፡ ኔን፡
 ሁኔ፡ ልብሱ፡ አልቆጠን፡
 ባለመክራ፡ ሁኔ፡ ባደሁ፡
 የኔታ፡ አንጃ፡ ለሁንም
 ሰአርሰዎ፡ ጤኖ፡ ያሰላ፡
 ጃ፡ አንጃ፡ አሰዎ፡ ቢመጡ
 ልኝ፡ ያልቆ፡ ልኝ፡ ስአር
 ሰዎም፡ ሌት፡ ጉንደር፡ ት
 ገቡ፡ አሰተደ፡ ድረ፡ ስ
 ያልሆነ፡ ነገር፡ ሆነ፡ ጉታ
 ምን፡ አምኖ፡ ካሮሩ፡ በቱ
 ሌት፡ ሳሩ፡ ብር፡ በቶ፡ ብ
 ሰው፡ አን፡ ረምኅ፡ ባለ፡ መ
 ክራ፡ ሁንዋል፡ ስሁን፡ ግን
 በዩ፡ ጩኔ፡ ዳኛ፡ ነለቃ፡ አ
 ጤሜ፡ ሌክ፡ ልኛ፡ ጋራ፡ ተ
 ደዩ፡ አኖ፡ ስራ፡ ሰ፡ ነው፡
 የወሰደ፡ ብለን፡

May this letter sent by Tesfaye reach my lord Antoine (Inጥጥኑ), the Frenchman. How are you, my master (*yenēta*), my beloved (*anjētē*)? Are you well to the extent of heaven and earth? I had desired to come to you. But now I cannot come because I am unable to travel. I have been very, very ill for a long time. When everyone else has sufficient to eat, I am both hungry and sick and naked. My clothes are worn out and I have been in misery for a long time. And now, my master, my beloved, may God give you health, because, if you come to me, [the trouble] will pass.

In your house something has happened which never happened [before] from [the day] you came to Gonder until today. Remha and the others are in trouble because 53 thalers were lost from the house where you left your things in trust. But now, accusing him of having taken [them] we are litigating with *Aleqa* Abēmēlēk's son with the *içhegē* as judge.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 521, Amharic original. 50×195 mm. This letter from Antoine d'Abbadie's servant or collaborator *Debtera* Tesfaye is annotated "jeudi 9 novembre Mota 1843". Since Antoine was then in Innārya, this must be the date when Michel received it. The letter may well have been written several months earlier.

Remha to Antoine d'Abbadie, [1843]

ያቲ ጠማር ዘተፈወት፡ እምነብኩህ ረምሐ፡ ትብያ
 ሕ፡ ገበ፡ ሐዋጃ፡ እንጠንቀቅ፡ ልረንጎ፡ ከንደት፡ ስሑ፡ ደ
 ሳቶ፡ ገደን፡ እጅጉን፡ እምነዉ፡ የተወጠ፡ ገደቀዉ፡
 ስፍራ፡ ገብቶ፡ ያቢሚሊክ፡ ልጅ፡ ጽጌ፡ ከነኩህ ረጃዉ፡
 አምስ፡ ሠስት፡ ብር፡ ወስደ፡ ነዋቲ፡ ደረሰልኝ፡ ብሰዉ፡
 እንጂ፡ አል፡ እሁንም፡ ተወልደ፡ ሕፃን፡ ኪዳነ፡ ማር
 ያምን፡ አውስኖል፡ አርቡንም፡ እስውስኖል፡ በርራ፡
 ደኝነት፡ እሁንም፡ አርሰዎ፡ የሚያደርጉት፡ ያደርጉ፡
 የኛም፡ ቀሰብ፡ የለን፡ ስራ፡ የሚጻፍ፡ አሽከርም፡ በስ
 ስት፡ ወር፡ ብሰ፡ እግብተኛል፡
 አህመድ፡ ያመጣውም፡ ፎጠንጃ፡ ከነሰ፡ ፍራ፡ አንድ፡ ያ
 ንበሳ፡ ለምድ፡ አንድ፡ የደጅ፡ ቀንድ፡ አንድ፡ ሰል፡ አንድ፡
 በቅሶ፡ አንድ፡ ሙሉ፡ ር፡
 ነአህመድ፡ ገራ፡ ጭምጣዉ፡ አንድ፡ አይኑ፡ ጌታሁን፡ አንድ፡
 ስያድ፡ ምንጃ፡ ሠጠሁት፡
 ዐነገራ፡ ቢሆን፡ እንኳን፡ ገንዘቤን፡ የሰው፡ ገንዘብ፡ ገሰ
 መስሰሁ፡ የሰው፡ አገር፡ ቢሆን፡ ብኝ፡ ነው፡ አንድ፡

May this letter sent by Remha reach Mr. Antoine (*Hawaja Inṭoniyos*), the Frenchman. How are you? Are you well, really? Abēmēlēk's son Šigē broke into [the place] where you left [your goods] in trust through a way he knew and took 53 thalers together with the satchel. When I told him [this information] had reached me from someone who knew, he denied [that he had done it]. Now we have obliged him to make *Tewelde Hiṣan Kīdane Maryam* his guarantor. And we have presented him as guarantor before the *iḥegē* as judge. Now do whatever you want to do.

We have no supplies. We have employed a servant to cut grass for three months for one thaler.

Ahmedo has brought two rifles with their cases, one lion's skin, one *tejj* horn, one plate, one mule [and] a [pair of] field glasses.

I gave the one-eyed Gētahun who arrived with Ahmedo a *siyada* rug. If it was in my own country, leave alone my own money, I could have retrieved the money of others. [The reason I cannot do more] is that it is in other people's country.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 522. Amharic original, 115×140 mm. Remha was one of the more important agents of the d'Abbadie brothers. He followed them to Gonder with goods entrusted to him at Aksum in June 1842 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 265, fol. 122v), and seems to have been the person primarily responsible for their affairs at Gonder in 1843. This letter was received at Moṭa in Gojjam on 9 Nov. (see no. 70). As for Ahmedo, he had also been in the service of the d'Abbadies for at least two years; he was referred to as Michel's "spy" at Massawa 1841 (*Douze ans*, III, p. 253). Later he accompanied them to Innarya and was on Antoine's return from Innarya and Kefa baptized in Gojjam (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 267, fol. 166v). The guarantor *Tewelde Hiṣan Kīdane Maryam*, or rather *Kīdane Maryam Tewelde Hiṣan*, was no doubt the famous *Neggadras Kīdane Maryam* (BN, NAF 21301, paragraph 159) who was known to most European travellers of his time. In 1830 Samuel Gobat acquired a very high opinion of him, "the most intelligent Abyssinian with whom I have hitherto become acquainted; he appears to have a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and literature" (*Journal*, p. 272) and by the time of his death in 1857 he had earned the epithet "the *amba* of Gonder" (J. M. Flad, *Notes from the Journal of F. [sic] M. Flad* (London, 1860), p. 59). The *iḥegē* referred to was *Mahiṣente Mika'el* (see no. 69).

Se'an has been read as *sahin* (plate) and *menesṣer* translated "field glasses" rather than "eyeglasses" because the former were a common and much valued import article in the nineteenth century. *Siyada* (Arabic *sijada*?) probably indicates that the rug was of an imported kind.

Gebre Mesih to Michel d'Abbadie, [1843]

ዛቲ፡ ጠ ማር፡ ዘተ ፈ ነወ ት፡ ኦሚኒብ-ብላታ
 ገብረ፡ መሢሕ ሕ፡ ትብ ጻሕ፡ ጎብ፡ ኦግ ዚ እየ፡ ሚ
 ካኤል፡ ኦግ ጻሕ፡ ሰነብቱ፡ ደላ፡ ሰንብተ ዋል
 ን፡ ደ፡ የላኩኝ፡ ረከቶ፡ ኦግ ስለ ሰ፡ መቅረቱ፡
 ገንዘብ፡ ማጣቲ፡ ነው፡ ኦግ ጽ፡ በጠፋው፡ ብር፡ ከ
 ሳኩኝ፡ ሰ፡ ስሙ፡ ~~ወሰን ክፍ~~፡ ይጨገ፡ ከኦቶ፡ ኪ
 ዳ፡ ማር ደሙ፡ ብመካከር፡ ደለመሐላ፡ ደለግ
 ዝተ፡ ኦግ ሆንልክ ሰ፡ ኦሎኝ፡ ዝሙ፡ ብዮ፡ ተቀም
 ጨ፡ ኦለሁ፡ ቤቱንም፡ ኦለቀቅሁም፡ ቸገረኝ፡ የኦ
 ቡንም፡ ነገር፡ ኦግ ጻሕ፡ ሆነ፡ የሰጡኝ፡ ጠ ማር፡
 ወስጂ፡ ሰጠሁ፡ ኦግ ተው፡ ተቀብሰው፡ ሰንብት፡
 ኦሎኝ፡ ጌሳ፡ ደርሰው፡ ኦልሰጥም፡ ኦሎ፡ ከወደደ
 ስምቸ፡ መቀበላቸውን፡ ሰምቸ፡ ኦሰጣሁኝ፡
 ደሰዝደ፡ ኦግ ሆንም፡ ብለው፡ ኦግ ገን፡ ሰንብት
 ጻሕ፡ ኦግ ረገ፡ ከገደም፡ ገብተው፡ በመክራ፡ ተ
 ቀመጠው፡ ~~ወሰን ክፍ~~፡ ብዮ፡ ብልክ፡ መልሰው፡
 ሰምቸ፡ ሲመጡ፡ ጠይቱ፡ ኦሰጣሁኝ፡ ኦሎ፡ ጌሳ፡
 ግን፡ በገደ፡ ሳይኖሩ፡ ብር፡ ሰጡ፡ የጠፋውን፡ ይ
 ከነዮ፡ ኦግ ጻሕ፡ ኦግ ጻሕ፡ መቸ፡ ስሙ፡ ኦግ ሰላሁ
 ኦሎ፡ ወልደ፡ ገብር ኤል፡ ደሙ፡ ተጻልተ
 ው፡ ተማቱ፡ ስኔ፡ ማንቅ፡ ሆነብኝ፡ ኦሎን፡ ግን፡
 ኦሰጣሁኝ፡ ኦግ ጻሕ፡ ደርገው፡ ደሙ፡ ሰ፡
 በጎ፡ መሆን፡ ይመጡኛል፡



May this letter sent by *Blatta* Gebre Mesih reach my lord Michel (Mika'el). How have you been? Have you been well? Do not think that I have forgotten what you sent to me about. The reason it has not been taken care of is that I do not have money. About the lost money, when I discussed with the *ichegē* and *Ato* Kidane Maryam, to whom you sent me, they said that it is impossible for you [to solve the problem] without [taking] an oath and swearing solemnly. I have kept quiet without doing anything. I have not left the house. I am in difficulty.

As for the matter of the *abun*, it is like this. The letter you gave me I took and gave [to him]. He looked at it, took it and said, "Wait for a few days." Later on he suddenly said he would not give [anything] to me. He said, "I will give [you] when I have heard that people have received [something] from there(?). Otherwise it is impossible." But when I sent and asked, "Why did you do that? He is living in distress in a monastery and cannot communicate with me," he replied, "I will inquire when people come and give [you the money]." Under pressure, however, he handed over 45 thalers. He said, "Adding what was lost and this, I have expended one hundred

[thalers]." Welde Gebri'el and Dimṭu quarrelled and hit each other. It became difficult for me. But now do [with them] whatever you think is best. Dimṭu has begun to recover.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 594, Amharic original, 120x210 mm. *Blatta* Gebre Mesih from Tigray (Adwa) was one of Michel d'Abbadie's closest friends and collaborators in Ethiopia, introduced in *Douze ans*, III, p. 76, as "the most senior in my service". He had accompanied Michel in Gojjam and had participated in the campaign in Wello in May-June 1843. Because of the unrest and civil war in Gojjam which forced Michel to seek asylum in Mertule Maryam and Moṭa, Gebre Mesih had been unable to proceed to Gonder after the campaign as planned. It was only in mid-November that he left Moṭa, apparently after the news from Tesfaye and Remha about the burglary had arrived (nos 70 and 71). Michel reports these events to Antoine in a letter from Moṭa dated 23 Feb. 1844 (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 211-212). See nos 95 and 97 for further financial matters entrusted to Gebre Mesih. Apparently he showed himself trustworthy throughout the years, and when Michel returned to Ethiopia in 1852 it was with Gebre Mesih that he made his temporary home (*Douze ans*, IV (Citta del Vaticano, forthcoming), *passim*).

Gebre Mesih to Michel d'Abbadie, [Feb.? 1844]

ዘቲ፡ ጠማር፡ ዘተፈነወት፡ እምነ
 በ፡ ብላታ፡ ገብረ፡ መሢሕ፡ ትብዳሕ፡
 ጎበ፡ ራከ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ፈረንሳይ፡ እን
 ዲት፡ ነሥ፡ ደኅኖ፡ ነሥን፡ እግዚር፡ ይተ
 ካለዎ፡ አይዘኑ፡ ፈረከ፡ ቢሞት፡ ፈ
 ረከ፡ ይተካልኖ፡ ሰው፡ ቢሞት፡ ሰው፡
 አይተካም፡ ስር ሰዎም፡ ጤኖ፡ ይከ
 ጠዎ፡ የወጣ፡ ገንዘብም፡ ለበኑሰው፡
 ይብር፡ ይሰበርሌ፡ ሰደድሁ፡ ጌብር፡ ስ
 ኔ፡ ሰከት፡ የቀኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኪየሱስ፡
 ራብር፡ ስብረኖ፡ ሰጠሁ፡ አይበቃም፡
 ራብር፡ ስልብ፡ አልፏል፡ ጥልፍ፡ ይብር፡
 የጌኖ፡ የረመን፡ ልብከ፡ ደብተርት፡
 አንድ፡ ስራ፡ አንዲት፡ ልገረድ፡ አግ
 ብተው፡ አራት፡ የቸው፡ አከከ፡ የካ
 ቴት፡ ድረከ፡ ሆስቱ፡ ብቻ፡ ነበሩ፡ አኔ
 ስድስት፡ ነፍሴን፡ ተኮላ፡ ጌተኖ፡ ስ
 ኔ፡ ግን፡ ከርሰዎ፡ ጋራ፡ ይሻለኝ፡ ነበረ፡
 ስቀቀኑ፡ ግሰኝ፡ ደመወዝ፡ የሰጋሚ፡
 በቅሱ፡ ይቸፍን፡ ስከት፡ ብር፡ አምጣ፡
 አሰኝ፡ ይላኩ፡ ለእኔም፡ የበቀሱ፡ የኖ፡
 የፈረሴ፡ ነገር፡ ችግረኝ፡ ስበቅ ሎይ
 ቱ፡ ግን፡ ወይዘሮ፡ ወሰተ፡ ፍቅር፡
 የርሰዎን፡ ወዳጅ፡ ነት፡ አገኛ፡ ብላ
 ወ፡ አሳር፡ ሰጡ፡ የሚታጩድ፡
 እመቤቱ፡ ደኅኖ፡ ነሥን፡ የቤቱ፡ ስ
 ወ፡ ሆሱ፡ ደኅኖ፡ ለመጽሐፈ ሰዎ
 አንድ፡ ብር፡ ጨምት፡ ብሎ
 ወ፡ አስቸግረው፡ ነበር፡
 እኔ፡ ብላኛል፡ ይላኩ፡

May this letter sent by *Blatta* Gebre Mesih reach *Ras* Michel (Mika'el), the Frenchman. How are you? Are you well?

May God replace [it] for you. Do not grieve, because if a horse dies, a horse can be replaced. If a man dies, a man cannot be replaced. May God grant you health. Money spent: two thalers to Beggo Sew; two thalers (I sent) to Birrilē; six thalers for myself; three to *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre Īyyesus; one thaler (I gave) for the parchment [and] it is not enough; one thaler for [a pair of] embroidered ladies trousers(?); two thalers for mine and Remha's clothes. The *debteras* have employed a servant and a maidservant so they are four. Until Yekkatit they were only two. I am [responsible for] six persons, including myself; the jackal being the seventh. I would, however have preferred to be with you. The misery is too much for me. The groom for the mule asks for a salary of three thalers. Let me know [what to do] (lit. send). The question of my own horse and mule also troubles me. As for the mule, in order to get your friendship, *Weyzero* Welette Fiqr has given [me] grass to mow.

Is the mistress well? Is the household well? Since they have been pestering me for one thaler more for the book and we have agreed, let me know [what to do] (lit. send).

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 576, Amharic original, 65x175 mm, parchment. The reference to the horse that had died makes it possible to date this letter to early 1844. See d'Abbadie, *Douze ans*, II, pp. 277-278, where the death of Michel's horse is described as an important affair. The accounting for money spent provides excellent information about the cost of goods and services as well as about the activities and problems of "Ras Mika'el's" household. They were probably not much different from those of the Ethiopian nobility at the time.

Weyzero Welette Fiqr was a relative of *Dejjazmach* Goshu (BN, Mss. NAF 23848/II, fol. 36). The "mistress" referred to is most likely Michel's Ethiopian wife Welette Rufa'el (see nos 144 and 183). The *tekula* mentioned is not a person but Michel's jackal (see also nos 55 and 68). Gebre Mesih was apparently somewhat impatient about having to feed the animal in addition to six people. A lot of attention is paid to this jackal in the correspondence between the d'Abbadie brothers. Antoine also described it in his diary (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 265, fol. 100v).

Yilaku at the end of the letter as well as in connection with the salary of the groom is ambiguous. The context, however, requires the inference that Gebre Mesih is asking for directives on how to carry on and not for cash (see no. 72).

Selama to Stafford Haines, 12 May 1844

Gonder 12th May 1844

Sir,

I hope to reach you safely my Bearer Mr. Rusg and Mr. Bethlehem, and I have sent with them presents to you the prove of a Friendship. I so much wished to receive your friends travellers in Abyssinia, and I am ready to forward your wishes in every way.

For Mr. Ezembark I was trusted that after his arriving in Mussowah he send me a letter to send him a guide to pass through the dominions of dayjas Mach Obay for the purpose he is well known that I am a good friend of Mr. Cruze and Mr. Leader but after his arriving in Adoa he sends me a letter but it was to let because he had not only one friend in the Chiefs or Officers of dajas Obay for Mr. Jacopies and others learn them the great presents.

I hope if you send any of your friends let them send me there letter from Mussowa, and they will get there guide from me.

I shall be very glad to know the news of my friend Captain Harris.

I shall be very glad if is able to be a assistend Counsel for British Government for Mussowah because the french has one, and it will be great assistance to the Merchants and the pore Christens of Abyssinian which is stold and sold by Mohamadian.

I am Sir
your affectionate
Lord Arch Bishop Patrearch Athoepea

Seal

/True Copies/ Signed: S. Haines

Captain I. Navy
Political Agent at Aden

IOR, L/P&S/9/28, pp. 155–156, copy of English original. In a covering letter Captain Haines reports that *Abune* Selama's letter was written in English and impressed with his official seal. It was also accompanied by a gift of a horse, three mules, a shield and a spear. No attempt to translate the seal was apparently made.

Whether the letter was originally composed in English, and in that case by Selama himself, is impossible to say with certainty. The complete absence of introductory greetings and blessings so prevalent in Selama's Arabic letters; the grammatical and orthographical solecisms, which are rather too grave to be those of a translator and thus indicate that the letter was composed by someone who had a very poor knowledge of the language; and the form of Selama's title lead me to believe that Selama wrote or dictated this letter in English and not Arabic. I have reproduced the text without making any corrections in order to provide the reader with this remarkable specimen of English.

Rizq (also Ruzk, Ruz, Reshí, Rích in other sources), who arrived in Ethiopia with Selama, was the brother (or alleged brother) of the bishop (Lefebvre, *Voyage*, I, p. 312; Arata, *Abuna Yakob*, p. 220). He was generally known as *Hājī* Rusg, though the title must be regarded as purely complimentary since it is highly unlikely that Selama's brother had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He allegedly bought a position for himself at the Medhane Alem Church at Adwa (Lefebvre, *Voyage*, II, pp. 48–49) and seems to have stayed there to take care of Selama's business while the bishop lived at Gonder. For the other bearer of the letter (and gifts), Mr. Bethlehem, see no. 36.

Ezembark stands for Isenberg, Cruze for Kruse and Leader for Lieder (both in Cairo) and Jacopies for De Jacobis. The request for a consul at Massawa was made also in the letter from Selama to Isenberg written during Isenberg's visit in Tigray in 1843 (no. 67).

Alī Musa to Aḥmad Maniklī, 2? June 1844

أحمدنا منكم

للمؤمنين وحده والصلاة والسلام على النبي محمد

الى جناب شمس الامراء و بدر الوزراء و صدر النظر اعين الاعيان و زرين الاديان
قامع الكفرة و الفجرة و كاسر البغاة و الحيابرة ايده الله بصولته القاهرة و احسن
اليه في الدنيا و الاخرة اعني بذلك افندنا
الذي اكتسبت الفضة

و حاة من حوة و ميمه من محمد و داله من قدرة الاحدية طوق الله عمركم
و عمر قلوبكم بالايمان و جعل مجلسكم في حضرة الاعيان يختص به من يشاء و الله
ذو الفضل العظيم و سلمكم من بلاء الدنيا و و بايتها و من عذاب الآخرة و وبالها بجاه
سيد المرسلين و الدامين اما بعد نرفتم يبيدي قد وصلنا هديتكم بيد فقه
علي جوخ قصيص و قميانز للقضية و شال الكشميري اعطاكم الله في الدارين
و نحن ارسلنا لكم خاتما تختموا بها لان الفقير يهدي على قدره المحبوبه
ولا يستحي عن الحق الا بما يليق به وهو يقول انما كنتم و هو معكم وان كانت اجسادنا
متباخرة و ارواحنا اليكم مشناهدة قد جعلها العطا بارك الله كما بارك في الاول
واصله كان من لا و لا و لكت من فصاحة اما لا اعظم ابو حنيفة دعاء بها و نامركم
بهذه الدعاء صباحا و مساء اللهم اجعل ما اشاء مؤقفا لئلا يشاء كئيل يصير ما اشاء
مخالف لئلا يشاء فمت انا حتى انا خلاف ما يلائمنا شال لو جاهد القيد و شال ما كان
ولا ما تشاء ان له بغير ما تشاء فالطف بنا فيما كسنا تشاكما قلت و ما تشاء ان لا ان
بشأ الله رب العالمين و اللهم اوقات في اخير شأ محذوفه لاجل الوقت و السلام
٢٤٦ في شهر جماد الاول هـ ١٢٦٥

مستتر بهديا
من الشيخ
علي
الحجيرة



واذا وصل اليكم معلم بزر نكو العسوي كونوا
له مبيرا لاجل خاطرنا لان نهارنا للشيا
قالت له ان النبي عليه يكتب لك ال الشرك كما
الذي بعث لكناهم هـ

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

To His Honour, the sun of princes, the moon of ministers, the pre-eminent among equals, the most distinguished of notables, the ornament of religions, subduer of the infidels and the dissolute, exterminator of the unjust and the tyrants—may God with his conquering might uphold him and be charitable to him in this life and the Hereafter—that is to say our *effendi* [Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī] (blank in the original), whose *alif* and *hā* are derived from Ḥawwā' (Eve), his *mīm* from Muḥammad and his *dāl* from *qudrat al-aḥadiyya* (the power of the Oneness). May God lengthen your life and fill your heart with faith and cause your council (*majlis*) [to be] in the presence of notables—"He favours with his mercy whom he wills. For God is possessed of tremendous bounty"—and may He protect you from trial and tribulation in this world and from torment and affliction in the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you, my master, that your gift reached us by the hand of *Faqīh* 'Alī: a tunic of broad-cloth, a brocaded garment (*qumbāz*—for *qunbāz*—*al-muqaṣṣaba*) and a Kashmir shawl. May God be generous to you in both worlds. We send you a signet ring to seal with since a poor man gives a present to his beloved according to his ability and is not ashamed of the truth except when [shame] is deserved. [God] says: Wherever you are, He will be with you. Although our bodies are far apart, our spirits are ever present [together], having a natural disposition for generosity. May God bless [you] as He blessed *lā wa-lā* (no and no). Its origin (*i.e.* the origin of *baraka*) was in [the phrase] *Lā [hawla] wa-lā [quwwata illā bi'llāh]* (there is no might and no strength save in God). It was the eloquence of the pre-eminent *imām* Abū Ḥanīfa which made of it(?) a prayer(?), and we exhort you [to utter] this prayer morning and evening. This is what you say: O God, let what I desire be in accordance with what You will, lest what I desire conflict with what You will. Who am I to desire that which conflicts with what God wills? If the servant [of God] struggles and desires [something], nothing occurs except what You will. If what we desire is not beneficial [to us], favour us [O Lord] with what You will. You have said: You do not desire anything but what God, the Lord of the worlds, wills.

The *hamzas* at the end of [the word] *sha'* (will/desire) are omitted because of the pausal form. Greetings, [In] the year 1260, in the month of Jumād al-Awwal [*sic*] on the 15th(?) day.

If *Mu'allim* Burunkū al-'Isawī comes to you, give him a kind welcome for our sake because the Christians of Abyssinia told him, "*Shaykh* Alī writes to the Turks for you." This is the reason for the letter. The writer of the letter (*mustamidd al-du'ā'*) is *Shaykh* Alī al-Jabartī.

Seal: *Shaykh* Alī Musa al-Jabartī (*al-shaykh* 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Jabartī).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 42. Arabic original, 160×320 mm. This letter is one of seven brought to Khartoum by *Faqīh* 'Alī ibn Muḥammad in 1844 and all forwarded to Cairo by Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī, governor general of the Sudan 1844–45 (see no. 76 with note and 77–81). *Shaykh* Alī Musa was, as the addition *al-Jabartī* to his name indicates, a merchant. He was also a politically very influential person in the capital Gonder where he is known to have built a large mosque. This letter and—even more—a letter to Muḥammad 'Alī at about the same time (no. 81) show that he was strongly influenced by sufism. More than once, *Shaykh* Alī was called upon to help safeguard peace and order. In 1852 after Kasa Haylu's victory over Goshu, he was sent together with representatives of the clergy at Gonder to *Ras* Alī to try to make peace between Kasa and the *ras*. When this attempt failed and *Ras* Alī had been eliminated from the power struggle, the situation for the Muslims worsened and *Shaykh* Alī's mosque at Gonder was destroyed (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 383, 406; *Vicende*, pp. 506, 514). Among those who had friendly contacts with *Shaykh* Alī were Antoine and Michel d'Abbadie (BN, NAF 23848/II, fol. 45; *Douze Ans*, II, pp. 63–64; III, pp. 15, 49, 63, 89). Both the addition to his name, *al-Jabartī*, and the fact that he identified himself in a letter to Muḥammad 'Alī (no. 81) as one of "the holymen of Abyssinia" indicate that he was most likely an Ethiopian. I have, moreover, found nothing in the sources that points towards a foreign origin.

In the letter there are three quotations from the *Qur'an*, 3: 74, 57: 4 and 76: 30, the latter two being slightly adapted by the writer. The letter shows that *Shaykh* Alī's command of the Arabic language sometimes fell short of his literary ambitions. Some passages are unfortunately so obscure that the translation presented must be regarded as tentative. I have not been able to identify Burunkū al-'Isawī but he was obviously someone for whose welfare *Shaykh* Alī felt some responsibility.

Ali Alula to Muhammad 'Ali, 7 June 1844



عافيت لوسعادت لوعنايت لوفندي بزم عزت لومحبت لوفندم

للدلالة على الصلاة والسلام على من لا ينبي بعده

أت أهني ادعية مكنم وأعني تحية مكنم وأبؤد ندية مكنم على ذات شمس الامراء ويدر المعتم أسيد الله الحادير وسيد الله البادر العاقل الماهر والذير
 الفاجر والامر القاهر القوي القاهر قارع الكفرة والفجرة وكاسر العقارب واليابرة وناصر دين الانصار والمهاجرة وعصه بالتحية الاسنى ونطلب
 له السلامة المباركة مني مني ونهرد هاعليه من اسماء الله الحسنى ونكون له نائيل بالعبزة والتمكين وتأييد مع الرفعة والخصميت وتوحيد
 من العصمة والناسمين اعني من اخجلت عطاهه وسجدة السماء واسجلت تحفظاه القدام
 بل بلاد الدنيا وديارها ومن عذاب الامة وديارها بما هو سيد المرسلين واله امين اما بعد فعلم ان منة الله ما استأنت احد ما ضا المحرمات لبدعتنا
 رطلت وقلوبنا قطت واخرنا في كتابه انكم ارسلتم لنا هدية معدودة ثلاث سروح مذهبات وكارخ اثنين ذهابين وفناجين مذهبات اسلام
 بولية مع ظرو فانها وفسر شين وعذات قطيفة اربعة من الخمر وجوخ السلطان وكل هذه اراهم لخدمنا وقال لهم هذا السيد لراسر على
 ولكم انتم اليوم امشوا عند راس علي اخبروه يرسل من عساکر من يساخي ياخذ هذه الهدايا ويودها الى راس ورا خبروني فلما اخبروني
 ارسلت اليه من روادنا في وجوده انه توفي قبل الابقاء مثل هذه الهدايا لا يهدى بها احد من العرب ولا من العجم غيركم وانتم وقتي بعهدكم
 وانما جعلت نفسي مثل ولدكم ابراهيم باشا ومثل طوس باشا بل اتر يد منها بالحبية قلت في نفسي ان جاني عدو عساکر تموت معي وان جاكم
 عدو كذلك عساکر عساکر تموت معكم وأنا كذلك ورحوت الله تعالى ان يجعل محتسما مؤابرا مع الفرح والسرور ولقد كان احد باشا
 المرحوم ارسل لنا فقه علي ابن محمد المحبوب الطرقي وصرار نحو اربعة سنة وفتحنا لخدمنا حتى صيرنا اخوانا ولكن هو توفي قال ان احد باشا
 منكم في كل مكانه قد فرحنا بذلك وارسلنا اليه واحد طواشي من عندنا وبغلة ونحن مع خيلنا لان مثل هذه الهدية لا يلبق لنا بل هو
 ولت ان الاب اذا هدى اليه ولده يفرح تفضلوا بقبوله وفتح سلططين الحشيشة لمرساوي هدايا ناقدر واحد الذي خدامكم
 بيطبها لاجل القطور ليطيب خاطرنا بكم وهذا مما نعرفكم والهدايا التي ارسلتم لنا وصلت الينا وقت في حطوم سلام الله عليكم
 وبركاته ما طاعت شمس وما صليت خمس في كل الحيا قبل ونحن لله الحمد والمنة بعد ما علينا دجا زماج وبني صلحت لنا الحشيشة فزها
 ومشرقها اطاعت لنا وصارت تمشي تحت امرنا ببركة الصالحين ويعوت الله تعالى ببركته نفيتم والسلام تحية لوالده
 ودينت ارسلنا اليكم خدامنا ليوا جهموا معكم ليس الخبر كالبيان وهذا لاجل محبتكم صيرناه اليكم ادام الله دولتم



Healthy, prosperous, gracious *effendi*! Our respectable, affectionate *effendi*!
 The Supreme Commander (*Şadr al-A'zam*) Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha.
 Praise be to God alone and blessing and peace be upon him after whom there is no prophet.
 The most propitious of prayers is what is concealed [in the heart]; the most copious of greetings is what is sealed [for presentation to you]; the coolest freshness (?) is what is decreed [for your ease]. Such is [what we have] for the sun of princes, the moon that shines in the darkness, God's rampant lion, His resplendent nobleman, the wise, the clever, the splendid pearl, the conquering prince, the powerful conqueror, subduer of the infidels and the dissolute, exterminator of the demons and the tyrants and champion of the religion of the "Helpers" (*ansār*) and the "Emigrants" (*muhājirūn*). We direct to him the most exalted greetings,

and we ask for him [a state of] blessed well-being doubled and redoubled. This we bring to him through the [blessing of] the most beautiful names of God to support his power and might and to give [him] support with eminence and protection and with immunity and security conjoined, that is to say him whose generosity has shamed the clouds in the sky, and who has overwhelmed those who have long envied him [*Sadr al-A'zam* Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha*] (blank in the original). May he remain for ever, and may he be forever protected. May God Almighty protect you from trial and tribulation in this world and from torment and affliction in the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you, O our *effendi* and father, that the late Aḥmad *Pasha* spoke with our tongue and dwelt in our hearts. He told us in his letter that you had sent us a present: to wit, three gilt saddles, two gilt tea pots, gilt cups from Istanbul with their holders, two sets of bedding and pillows, four [pieces of] red velvet and broadcloth of [the quality of] *sultāns*. He showed our servants all this and said to them, "This is for your master *Ras* Alī. Now go to *Ras* Alī and ask him to send an officer from his army to take these presents and deliver them to the *ras*." They came and told me. When they told me, I sent [some] of my officers. They found that he had died before handing them over. Such gifts are not given by any Arab or non-Arab except you. You are one who keeps his promise. And I have made myself like your son Ibrāhīm *Pasha* and like Ṭūsūn (Ṭūsūm) *Pasha*, and even more so as regards love [for you]. I said to myself, "If an enemy should come to me, your soldiers would die with me, and also if an enemy should come to you, my soldiers are your soldiers; they would die with you, and I too." I asked God Almighty to maintain our love for ever in joy and pleasure. The late Aḥmad *Pasha* had sent us *Faqīh* 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Maḥbūb al-Ṭirayfī(?). He stayed about four years and put us at our ease and we became [like] brothers.

But he (Aḥmad *Pasha*) died. Now Aḥmad *Pasha* Maniklī has replaced him. We were happy about this and we sent you a eunuch of ours and a mule. We are ashamed because such a present is not suitable for Your Highness, but if the father receives a present from his son, he rejoices. Be gracious enough to accept it so that we shall be on good terms with you, though the gifts which we *sultāns* of Abyssinia give do not equal the value of what one of your servants may give [you] for breakfast.

This is what we inform you of. The presents you sent us did not reach us but remained in Khartoum. May the peace of God and his blessings be with you as long as the sun shall rise and the five prayers be offered in all assemblies.

After we had defeated *Dejjazmach* Wibē, Abyssinia came under our control, praise and thanks be to God. It is obedient to us, east as well as west, and it is now under our command through the blessing of the righteous and through the help of God Almighty and through the blessing of your favours. Greetings.

Now we send you our servants to meet with you face to face. Telling is not like seeing. [We do this] because of our love for you which we have directed to you. May God prolong your reign.

[In] the year *Hijra* 1260, in the month of Jumād al-Awwal [*sic*] on the 20th day.

Seal: Alī, 12 (two figures illegible).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 43. Arabic original except for the first line which is in Turkish, 305×430 mm. The opening phrase of this letter is typically Muslim; only the name Muḥammad is absent. The so-called Yejju dynasty of *rases*, to which *Ras* Alī belonged, had a Muslim background, and Alī was often accused of being a Muslim at heart, but there is no hard evidence for this.

From the content of the letter it is obvious that earlier communications had passed between *Ras* Alī and the governor general of the Sudan, Aḥmad abū Widān (1838–43), and that the Egyptian government had been represented at Alī's court from c. 1840 by *Faqīh* 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Maḥbūb al-Ṭirayfī(?). If the reading "Ṭirayfī" is correct, *Faqīh* 'Alī belonged to a holy clan of traders who were prominent in the Eastern Sudan. Two months after the date of this letter, the new governor general Aḥmad *Pasha* Maniklī reported to Muḥammad 'Alī (ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 52) that he had found a delegation from *Ras* Alī and Menen at Khartoum on his arrival there after the death of Aḥmad abū Widān (Oct. 1843). He had sent them back to Ethiopia with *Faqīh* 'Alī, who had now returned with new messengers carrying three letters for Muḥammad 'Alī (nos 79 and 81 in addition to this one) and four for the governor general himself (nos 75, 77, 78 and 80). The "gift for breakfast" probably refers to the practice of bringing gifts to a ruler when invited to break the fast with him during Ramadan. The defeat of *Dejjazmach* Wibē refers to the famous battle of Debre Tabor in February 1842. See no. 50. For further information on *Ras* Alī and relations with Egypt in the 1840's, see Abir, *Ethiopia*, pp. 111–118, and Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 90–99.

Alī Alula to Aḥmad Maniklī, 7 June 1844

مشيخ
احمد باشا

عنابت لوسعادت لوه عزت لومحبت لوافندوم جانم قاردمش

لورسم وسته والصلوة والسلام على من نبهله

الجناب المرحوم الطاهر والدتر الفخر والعاقل الماهر والقوي القاهر صدر الاء مراد والوزراء و بدر السفره والشمراء
 قاع الكفرة والفجرة وداع المنة فقيهي والفقيرة اعني بذلك
 ومن عذاب الاخرة ووبالها بجاه سيد المرسلين واله امين اما بعد تعرفكم يا اخينا ان احمد باشا المرحوم كان لسانه
 سخنا ومحبتنا لدينا الا انه ربط معنا جواريا ما وفاها الذي ارسل لنا ملكنا علمنا بها بالهدايا التي ارسل لنا باشا بعددها
 وكتب لنا وكتابه ان محمد علي باشا افندنا ارسل لكم ثلاثه مذهبات وبكم حرم فدهقنا اثناث ومع فنا جينها والقائم
 مع ظروفتها وقراشين اثنيين ومخدرات وقطيفة حمراء اربعة وجوخ السلطان وكل هذا اراهم لخداد مي
 وقال لهم هذا لسيكم ابر علي كذلك اخبرهم وجاءوا اخبروني فلما ارسلت اليه قالوا اتوني وصحبي
 معه نحو اربعة سنة كانت موكدة ومثل الهلا يا ما يهلكها ملك العرب ولا ملوك العجم الا محمد علي باشا
 ودلحي يا اخينا يا احمد باشا واستمر اخونا لاشك ولكن انتم عسكركم عسكري وعسكري عسكركم وأنا اعد
 ل محمد علي باشا ولذو طوشم او ابراهيم وذكرا بالخبر اقول اليوم عدوي وعدوكم وعدوكم عدوي وعدوكم وأنا اعد
 الله ان يجعل بيني وبينكم محبة كاملة ولكنت كنت اردت اكتب الى مصر من جهة سواكين وبعد ذلك سمعنا
 بقدمكم الرخطوم ووعظكم معنا معرفا قلنا لهم نوفي محبتنا معكم وكتبنا لكم هذا الخط ليدرككم ببيعة الهواء
 فان شاء الله محبتكم انزيد من محبتنا وهذا ما نعرفكم وانتم ارسلوا الي باشا بعني محمد علي باشا قولوا له راس
 علي صحته طيبة وقولوا له يا افندي الى افندنا محمد علي باشا ما نقول من جهة العدة وأنا قادر بيته وكلامه احسن
 من العدة الفامرة وانتم كذلك تتركوا في مكانكم اليا اكتبولنا الذي تحتاجونه والسلام
 واقاخذ السروج عندنا الحمد لله ولكن طلبنا به للتفرج والنتزه اتفق
 اليوم قد جات خدام راس علي مع طواشي والبغليين وبغلة واحدة لكم والثاني لباشا الكبير
 ويحتمون لهم مركبا في بحر النيل في اربابهم و ذهابهم لاجل محبتنا لكم وادامشوا في ابر لم يقدر

١٢٤٠
١٢ شهر جمادى
١٢٤٠

My gracious, prosperous, respectable, affectionate *effendi*! My dear brother!

Aḥmad Maniklī *Pasha*

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

To His Honour, the high-born, the pure, the splendid pearl, the wise, the clever, the powerful conqueror, the first among princes and ministers, the moon of ambassadors and men of action (*al-shumarā'*), subduer of the infidels and the dissolute, destroyer of the hypocrites (*al-munāfiqūn*) and the pagan (*qujara*), that is to say [Aḥmad Maniklī *Pasha*] (blank in the original). May God Almighty protect you from trial and tribulation in this world and from torment and affliction in the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you, O our brother, that the late Aḥmad *Pasha* spoke with our tongue and his love was [present] with us. However, he sent us [word in] a letter which he did not fulfill. He informed us in it about the presents which the *pasha* had sent for us and which he enumerated. He wrote to us in his letter, "Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha*, our *effendi*, sent you three gilt saddles, two gilt tea-pots with their cups and the cups with their holders, two sets of bedding and pillows and four [pieces of] red velvet and broadcloth of [the quality of] *sultāns*." He showed my servants all this and said to them, "This is for your master *Ras Alī*." So he told them. They came and told me. When I sent [messengers] to him, they said that he had died. My friendship with him lasted for about four years. It was firm. Such gifts are not given by the kings of the Arabs or the kings of the non-Arabs, only by Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha*. Now my brother Aḥmad *Pasha*—surely you are my brother—indeed, your soldiers are my soldiers, and my soldiers are your soldiers. I consider myself the son of Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha* [like] Tūsūn (Tūsum) and Ibrāhīm and that is known; I say, "Today my enemy is your enemy and your enemy is my enemy." I pray to God Almighty to establish perfect friendship between me and you. I wanted to write to Egypt through Sawākin. [But] then we heard of your arrival in Khartoum. You did us a favour, so we said to them, "We shall be true to our friendship for you," and we wrote you these lines to inform [you] about the rest of the circumstances. God willing, your affection for us shall be [even] greater than ours for you. We inform you of this. [Please] send word to the *pasha*, that is to say Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha*, and tell him that the friendship with *Ras Alī* is sound. "O *effendi*," say to him, that is to our *effendi*, Muḥammad 'Alī *Pasha*, "what do you say [should be done] about the goods? I know (lit. have seen) him and his word is a thousand times better than the goods." You should also let us know what you think in your letters to us(?). Write to us [and tell us] what you need. Greetings.

[In] the year 1260, in the month of Jumād [sic], on the 20th day.

Seal: Alī (figures illegible).

As for the saddles, we have such, thank God. But we asked for them to look at and to enjoy. Finished.

Today the servants of *Ras Alī* have come with a eunuch and two mules, one for you and the other for the great *pasha*. For the sake of our affection for you, [please] assign them a boat on the river Nile for going and returning because, if they go overland, they will not survive (lit. manage).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 44, Arabic original except the first line which is in Turkish, 305×420 mm. The passage containing the message to Muḥammad 'Alī is obscure but somehow related to the gift. The end of this letter is altogether confusing. It seems first to have been dated and sealed. Then the sentence about the saddles and the word "finished" has been added. Finally the last two lines have been added in another hand(?), probably by *Faqīh* 'Alī or someone at Khartoum who felt concern for the Ethiopian envoys.

It is the phrase "Today my enemy is your enemy and your enemy is my enemy" that has been cited as evidence that *Ras Alī* had entered into an alliance with Egypt against his rivals in Ethiopia (see no. 76).

In an attempt to write high-sounding rhyming prose in his address to Aḥmad Maniklī, the writer uses obscure and even invented words, e.g. *qujara*, perhaps conceived of as a plural of the Sudanese dialectal word *kujūr* (medicine-man), hence the translation "pagans"

Mehammed Aman to Aḥmad Maniklī, 7 June 1844

Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī

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

To His Honour, the victorious prince, the splendid pearl, the pure in lineage, God's rampant lion, subduer of the infidels and the dissolute, champion of the community of Islam and of the neophytes (lit. emigrants) (*muhājira*). May God perpetuate his conquering might and preserve him in this world and the Hereafter, that is to say [Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī] (blank in the original). May God protect him from the trials of this world and the torment of the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you, O our master, that a tunic of broadcloth, a brocaded garment (*qumbāz*—for *qunbāz*—*al-muqaṣṣaba*) and a Kashmir shawl have arrived to us by the hand of *Faqih* 'Alī Walad Maḥbūb. May God bless you. And now, we send to you a garment (*thawb*), embellished with silk which is called *mergef dirrib* (*markaf dirrib*) in our language. Please accept it. However, O our *effendī*, things like these are not appropriate for Your Honour for you are mightier than this world and what

الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده
 الى جناب الامير القاهر والدين الفاضل والنسل الطاهر اسد الله الكاسر
 قاصع الغرور والفجيرة وناصر الملة الاسلام والمهاجرة ادام الله
 صولته القاهرة وحفظه في الدنيا والاخرة امين
 عن من بلاد الدنيا وعذاب الاخرة بحاجه يد المرسلين واله امين
 اما بعد فكم يارب يدب قد وصل لنا جوخ فنيص وقباز مقصد
 وشال كشميري في يد فقي علي ولد محبوب بارك الله فيكم والان
 امر سلنا لكم ثوبا وشية بالحري المسمى في لغتنا مزكف دريب
 تفضلوا لقبوله ولكن يا افندنا لا يلبق لجنابكم مثل هذا وانتم
 اعزتم الدنيا وما فيها ولكن الصحة لا تلوم تقديم الهدية
 لمواجزة الاحبة والاصدقاهكذا اجرت من اسلافنا وما يكون هذا
 لالا لذكر المحبة والمودة جعلكم الله مع من يطول عمره وايدكم
 بالنصر والفتوح ادام الله بقاءكم مع الصلاح والقلاح والسلام
 محمد بن احمد بن القاسم بن احمد
 محمد بن احمد بن القاسم بن احمد
 محمد بن احمد بن القاسم بن احمد

is in it. Nevertheless, friendship should not go unaccompanied by the sending of the gift when approaching loved ones and friends. This has been the custom of our ancestors. This is for no other purpose than to recall friendship and affection. May God Almighty number you among those whose life He prolongs and support you with triumph and conquests. May God prolong your existence accompanying it with soundness and prosperity. Greetings.

[In] the year 1260, in the month of Jumād al-Awwal [sic] on the 20th day.

The writer of the letter (*mustamidd al-du'ā'*) is *Neggadras* Mehammed Aman (*Nijjādrās* Muḥammad Amān), the son of the *qāḍī* Hājj Aman.

Seal: *Neggadras* Mehammed Aman (*Nijjādrās* Muḥammad Amān).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 45, Arabic original, 150×315 mm. With *Shaykh* Alī Musa, *Neggadras* Mehammed Aman, also known as Mehammed Zekkarya, appears to have been the most prominent member of the Muslim trading community at Gonder. As the letters show (cf no. 75), they were treated with exactly the same presents by Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī. At about the time of this letter *Neggadras* Mehammed was apparently on good terms with both *Menen* and *Abune Selama* and assisted the queen in the attempts to prevent the increasing conflict between the bishop and *İçegē* Maḥişentu (*Nuovi documenti*, p. 383). Later he was regarded, by the Catholics at least, as *Selama*'s agent (*Vicende*, p. 489).

Adam ibn Şiddiq to Muhammad ‘Alī, [June] 1844


 الخليفة محمد علي باشا

الخیر۔ رحمة وصالہ والسلام علیہ من بعدہ
 ان جناب شہنشاہ الامراء و ہر ر نور کذا و بختیم القمہ و قاصع الکعبہ و الفخیرة و کاسر العز عینة و الجبابرة محبہ المومنین و المعاجز
 اعلى الذکر صبراً و اعتصم ملاک المستحویة القاهرة البیاضة
 ستمکم اللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ من بلاد العرب و عجم و الاخر
 بحیاة کبریا و تسلیح و الامین اما بعد شعرکم بکسرنا ارسلنا لکریخیل یفنی حطابک تفضلو بقبولہ لعل اللہ
 یجعل بہ الملاقات بالوا سسطة التي بیننا و بینکم بلینہ التوحید اذ عوالہ لنا بالخیر ان یختم لنا به و ین سلامہ الدار
 و یخت الأ جینا بیت الکفار لندکرش علینا لیسر نعوذ بالله من حاسدا اذا حسد و احتفاء و اقتضا
 فاذا و ین کتبا ساهذ و شتمتم شعر لملقا کتم بتحریر الافلام تمنس المحبة فی اللیل و الزیام والسلام سئلت
 طینتہ برما ان یختم
 کما یختم علی یان منارہ
 آدم ابن شیدق

دام اللہ و لیسکم و دمر حسادکم
 و یصور عمرکم و یختم لنا و ین علی حسد لنا
 و یجعل لکم مودة بیننا و بینکم و ین اللہ المؤمنون العزیز

Our *effendi* Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha

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

To His Honour, the sun of princes, the moon of ministers, the star of the holymen (*al-fuqarā*'), subduer of the infidels and the dissolute, exterminator of the oppressors (*farā'ina*) and the tyrants, friend of the men of the Religion and of the neophytes (*muhājira*), that is to say the Supreme Commander (*Şadr al-A'zam*), king of Egypt the Protected and Cairo the Dazzling [our *effendi* Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha] (blank in the original). May God Almighty protect you from the trials of this world and the torment of the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you, Sir, that we have sent you a horse, to wit, a stallion. Please accept it; haply God may create friendship (*mulāqāt*) through the common bond which exists between you and us, [namely] the affirmation of God's unity. Pray God to give us what is good and bring us to a goodly end, for through this [good] comes well-being in both worlds. Now we are living among unbelievers. We are besieged by envy and take refuge with God from the envious one when he envies [us] and when he commits misdeeds and when he makes mischief. If this letter of ours arrives, [I say] yes and yes to your friendship. Through the writing of the pens, affection endures through nights and days. Greetings.

[In] the year 1260.

The writer of the letter (*mustamid al-du'ā*) is the paternal uncle of Ras Alī, *Balambaras* Adam ibn Şiddiq.

Seal: Adam.

May God prolong your reign and destroy those who envy you; [may He] prolong your life and ensure for us both a goodly end and make friendship between us and you and with God who binds hearts together.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 57, Arabic original, 290x425 mm. This letter most certainly belongs to the same batch as the five preceding ones (see no. 76). Adam ibn Şiddiq is unknown in the sources I have consulted. Alī's politically important uncles were Mariyyē, Yimam and Dorī on his father's side and Amedē and Beshīr on his mother's, but it is quite possible, even probable, that further uncles existed. That *Balambaras* Adam was a Muslim seems obvious.

Menen to Aḥmad Maniklī, [June] 1844

الشيخ
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الفاضل

احمد

للمرسله محمد والعلوه والسلام على من لا ينالها

الى جناب ستمس الامراء ويدر الوزاره الدر الفخر والامير القاهر واسد الله لك
 قام مع الكفرة والنجرة ادام الله دولته القاهرة اعين بذلك سلم الله
 من بلاد الدنيا وبالها ومن عذاب الاضحة ووبالها جاه سيد المرسلين والاه
 امين اصاب بعد نعرفكم من جهة الهدايا التي ارسلتموها لي ولولدي راس علي
 قد وصلت ولي وصلت لي مقصبة قطيفة وجوخ ٩ وليراس علي عشرة اجز ع جوخ
 ومقصبة وهذه كلها وصلت لنا ادام الله لكم ملككم ونرفكم يا سيدي
 بظلم كاشف حقكم فقل الامان اولوا وفضل الحياثة نانيا واخذ النصارى حقنا
 الذي كانوا دخلوا في متما منهم ساقهم جوع وظلوا ومنها للبيع والشراء
 وكاشف مسك كلهم ارسلهم الى السنتار والى غيرها وهذا الخير ما وصل له
 الى احمد باشا المرصوم ونحن كنا نريد نرسل له قد توفي وفضل عليه الامر
 وبعد ما اخذ الكاشف صار نهمة في كتجار وذلك ما هو مني والذي يحرب البلاد
 كنجار كنه عياله الذي مشى والآن ٩ نانا منع ولكنهم مختلفي تحت الشجرة
 هذا الفعل وانما منعت اليوم واذا ارتم يعمر المكان والبلاد والقرا
 كلها ارسلونا كلهم نحو قدر سبهاية الذي اخذهم كاشف وكذل
 اجتمعت علي الفقراء والعلماء من المسلمين والقسبي والرهبان
 من النصارى اصاحت بيني وبين كيتي كوانقل وكنتف وجماعتها
 ارسلوها الي ودجا زمايج ابراهيم ارسلوه فانه يصلح البلاد
 ادخلوه في متما وانا قبل هذا امرته لاحمد وقلت له لا ترسل كيتي كوانقل
 وكنتف ولحين علامة المحبة بيننا وبينكم ارسلونا النصارى
 راجعهم ودجا زمايج ابراهيم هذا والسلام
 فاذا كان كذلك تعمر البلاد والمكان كلها
 واما عطون عنده خيال ارسله للاحمد باشا اولافلما راه اسد
 قطعوا الجبال واخذت اوصافه ووجدت عنده الاشين باعهم واحمد حق راس علي ونده

من سيد المرسلين



Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī

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

To His Honour, the sun of princes, the moon of ministers, the splendid pearl, the conquering prince, God's rampant lion, subduer of the infidels and the dissolute—may God prolong his victorious reign—that is to say [Aḥmad Pasha Maniklī] (blank in the original). May God Almighty protect you from trial and tribulation in this world and from torment and affliction in the Hereafter through the intercessory influence of the Master of the messengers and his family. Amen.

And now we inform you that the presents which you sent to me and to my son *Ras Alī* have arrived. As for me, I received a [piece of] brocaded velvet (*muqaṣṣaba qaṭīfa*) and a nine cubit [long] broadcloth. *Ras Alī* received ten cubits of broadcloth and a [piece of] brocaded [velvet]. All of this has reached us, may God prolong your reign.

We inform you, Sir, about the misdeeds of your district chief (*kāshif*). At first he acted trustworthily; then he acted treacherously and seized our Christians who had gone to Metemma. Some of them had gone there driven by hunger and others for trade. The district chief arrested all of them and sent them to Sinnar and elsewhere. This news did not reach the late Aḥmad Pasha. We intended to write to him but he died and met his destiny. After the district chief had seized [the Christians], looting occurred in Ginjar (Kinjār). This is not my doing. Those who destroyed the land of Ginjar are all his people who went [there]. Now I forbade [this] but they hid in the bush (lit. under the tree). This activity I have [again] forbidden today. If you want the area, the lands and all the villages to prosper again, send us all [the people], about 700, whom the district chief seized. The Muslim holymen (*al-fuqarā'*) and scholars and the Christian priests and monks gathered around me and reconciled me and Keḃtē Gwangul and Kinfu and their followers. Send both of them to me. And send *Dejjazmach İbrahim* to establish order in the land and let him enter Metemma. Earlier I had instructed Aḥmad Pasha and said to him, "Do not send Keḃtē Gwangul and Kinfu." And now the sign of love between us and you will be that you send to us all the Christians and the man called *Dejjazmach İbrahim*. Greetings.

[In] the year 1260.

The writer of the letter (*mustamidd al-khaṭṭ*) is the *itēgē*.

Seal: Our Lady Menen, [12]58.

And if this happens, the land and all the places will prosper. As for 'Aḥrūn, he has the horses of *Ras Alī* which were sent earlier to Aḥmad Pasha. When they saw a lion, they broke their ropes and he seized hold of three of the horses and kept them with him. He sold two. One, the property of *Ras Alī*, is [still] in his hands.

Our Lady Menen sent you a white horse, to wit, a stallion.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 56, Arabic original, 180×345 mm. The similarities between this letter and Alī Alula's letters dated 7 June 1844 (nos 76, 77) are so great that one can safely conclude that they were written at the same time and probably by the same secretary or scribe. Though only the last figures are legible, the year indicated in the seal is almost certainly 1258, i.e. Jan. 1842–Jan. 1843, Greg. cal. The sentence about the stallion is in a different hand and obviously an addition.

Itēgē Menen, daughter of *Imam* Liben and mother of *Ras Alī*, was the ruler at Gonder rather than her royal husband *Aṣṣ* Yohannis (nos 145, 158, 185). She was more immediately involved than *Ras Alī* with the governors on the frontier and must have had problems with Keḃtē Gwangul (or Gwangul Keḃtē) and Kinfu (not the famous Kinfu Haylu, who died 1839). She apparently favoured *Dejjazmach İbrahim*. Both he and Kinfu are mentioned as *shaykhs* by Theodor von Heuglin in *Reisen in Nord-Ost-Afrika* (Gotha, 1857), pp. 18, 23 and 29.

By foreign observers and Ethiopians alike Menen has been described as a very ambitious and ruthless woman, whose role in the political life of the late *Zemene Mesafint* may well have contributed to the revival of the Tēwodros legend, in which the rule of imposters and women is singled out as one of the signs of the evil days preceding the appearance of Tēwodros. See René Basset, ed., *Les apocryphes Éthiopiens, XI, Fekkaré İyasous* (Paris, 1909), p. 25–26; Chris P. Rosenfeld, "Eight Ethiopian Women of the *Zemene Mesafint* (c. 1769–1855)", *NAS*, I, 2 (1979), pp. 72–79.

Alī Musa to Muḥammad ‘Alī, [June] 1844

المهد لله الذي جعل القلم والمداد نياحة عن الفناء والوداد
والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده من العباد اليوم المعاد

محمد علي باشا

الى جناب افندنا العظيم صدر الاعظم فسلام الله الاتم من الرحمن الرحيم تفيض عليكم من فيضه العميم
تعمر من في حضرتم لكل قلب سليم اعني بذلك صدر الاعظم سير ملوك العرب والعجم
يوم الذي يخشى لا يخشى وحفظكم يوم ياخذ الخلائق بالبطشا امين ثم امين بحمة المنزل عليه ولا تقربوا الى الفحشا
محمد المصطفى المحيط عليه فغشاها عاشا وعاشا له وصحة سلام الله عليهم تغشا اما بعد اقول بكم مدح الاقدحا

الافرحام شريك عظيم لا يساوي ملطحة عزيرك الوراء ولا ملوك الاعاجم
حليم كريم لا يزال بحلمه وان خانته الدهر باهل الجاحم
مدى له الاول الى ذروة الاخرى وروح له تهدي سلام السواجم
مد دليل الى مصر الانام مصيره مدا الدهر والايام فوق المناجم
عليكم سلام الله ما طاف طائف وما خان خائف يحث ويمدح
د لرويتكم ارجو حياتي بلا سرا لقد كنت عندكم لديكم افصح
ديرا حمي حبيب افندي يوصلي من الروم قاصدا لمكة اسرح
د بركنكم عمت واحيت لمداف لباكم اليرحمي يرحم ويرحم
امين وما مون ولولاه لم تعد بركة مقام الائمة قائم
شهاد ولا تشد عن الناس لا يري لقدرة منزلا وذاكرنا بيم
اياديه تنجز المساجد جودها وبها محيطا فلوها تنلاطم
عليكم شجتي وما طلعت شمس لا حمل الثرى يوما ويوما تجرد
وبهات في اخره جالعيت وختمته بل لمداد وذلك امر دث به علوم

الافرحام شريك عظيم لا يساوي ملطحة عزيرك الوراء ولا ملوك الاعاجم
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اياديه تنجز المساجد جودها وبها محيطا فلوها تنلاطم
عليكم شجتي وما طلعت شمس لا حمل الثرى يوما ويوما تجرد
وبهات في اخره جالعيت وختمته بل لمداد وذلك امر دث به علوم

واذا ارسلتم لنا احيا علوم الدين ندعوا الله لكم ونقول احياكم الله
حيث شئت حياة القلوب وبه فكم لنظرة علام الغيوب يا افندنا
فانج سائل هذا الكتاب واما السائل فلما تشرف وما تقدموا لانفسكم من خير خلوه من الله
ومر اسد على سيدنا محمد وعالاه وصحبه



Praise be to God who has made pen and ink to deputize for meeting and [expressing] affection. Blessing and peace be upon him after whom there is no prophet from [the time of] the [first] worshippers until the day of Resurrection.

To His Honour, our great *effendi*, the Supreme Commander (*Şadr al-A'zam*). May the perfect peace of God, of the Compassionate and Merciful pour forth upon you from His universal abundance, encompassing all those who dwell with you, [and reaching] every upright heart, that is to say, the Supreme Commander, the lord of the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs [Muhammad 'Alī Pasha] (blank in the original). May God Almighty save you [on] the day when even the fearless is afraid, and keep you on the day when He snatches up mankind by force. Amen, and again amen, through the inviolability (*ḥurma*) of him to whom was revealed "Do not come close to fornication and indecency", Muhammad the chosen, the one who was encompassed [by the verse] "and there covered him that which covered", and upon his family and companions be the peace of God radiating forth.

And now, I shall speak of you with praise, not defaming, but only [expressing] joy.

Poetry:

A mighty monarch whose kingdom is unequalled by the Arabs
or by the kings of the non-Arabs.

Clement and generous, he is ever forbearing,
even when Time treacherously carries him off to join its victims.

My praise for him [from] the first to the summit of the last
and my soul [too] bestows on him the peace of the flowing [streams].

A guide to the *mişr* of mankind,
his destiny throughout the days and years lies beyond the stars.

The peace of God be upon you so long as men walk round [the Ka'ba at Mecca]
and stand in fear, yearning and praising.

I have been hoping sincerely to see you all my life;
when in your presence I was [even] more eloquent.

Ḥabīb *Effendi* favoured me with companionship
as I was on my way from Istanbul making for Mecca.

Your blessings have encompassed those
who come to your portal which comforts and enriches.

Trustworthy and dependable, were it not for him
the *maqām* of the *imāms* at Mecca would not be thronged.

[He is] a martyr, so ask not of [other] folk.

None can match his status which is unassailable.

The generosity of his hands puts to shame the clouds
or a mighty ocean [whose waves] break upon one another.

My greetings to you so long as the sun shall rise upon men,
day after day renewing [itself].

I began the last [line] of it (*i.e.* the poetry) with [the letter] ‘*ayn* and finished it with [the letter] *dāl*, meaning by this ‘*ulūm al-dīn*, that is “The Revivification of the Sciences of the Religion” (*Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*) by the *imām* al-Ghazālī. We holymen (*fuqarā’*) of Abyssinia have arranged classes on it on Thursdays, Fridays, Wednesdays and Mondays. We always read this book, but what we have is a short version of it, the full version being unavailable. This is why I have asked you to send [it] to me, for it is available where you are. This is [the reason for] my letter to you. Before this I was acquainted with you, and [the news of (?)] your benevolence had reached me during the lifetime of our *effendi* the *Sultān* Maḥmūd, God’s mercy be upon him. He sent me to you by way of al-Aḏāla‘a(?) with the *qāḏī* of Egypt Muḥammad *Effendi*.

If you send us “The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion”, we shall pray to God for you, saying: “After you die, may God revivify you spiritually and grant you to see Him, who knows the signs of the unseen.”

O our *effendi*, I am asking you for this book. “As for the supplicant, rebuff him not,” and “Whatever of good you send before [you] for your souls, you will find it with God.” What you did previously was very good. May God bless our master Muḥammad and his family and his companions and grant them peace.

You restored the shrine(?) of the prophet of God Daniel and of Luqman the Sage, peace be upon them both, and the mosque. Likewise you ordered the removal of the pillar of Alexander the Great (*dhū-l-qarnayn*) and the construction of your palace on the site of the palace of Alexander the Great.

I came to you with a letter (*firmān*) from the *sulṭān* and you treated me with generosity. And I said to you, “O, our *effendi*, send me on a visit to the [shrines of the] saints, to wit, *Sīdī* Ibrāhīm al-Dusūqī and *Sīdī* Aḥmad al-Badawī.” You instructed Ḥabīb *Effendi* concerning me that I should be sent in *al-BWT* (boat ?). With me were two books which you instructed me that he should send to *Mu’allim* Yūsuf at Bulaq. I will not forget your benevolence until the day of Resurrection.

Seal: *Shaykh* Alī Musa al-Jabartī (*al-shaykh* ‘Alī Mūsā al-Jabartī).

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 58, Arabic original, 275×435 mm. This letter is undated and the contents give no clue as to its date. There need be no doubt, however, that it was written at the same time as nos 75–80, *i.e.* in early June 1844, and was brought to Khartoum with the others. While the other six letters were most likely written by the official Arab secretary of Alī’s court (*Faqīh* ‘Alī ?), this letter is written in another hand and a more personal style. It testifies to the religious freedom existing at Gonder as well as to the fact that *Shaykh* Alī Musa had broader interests and connections than one might have expected of a Gonder merchant in the first half of the 19th century. His interest in the promotion of sufism in Ethiopia is unmistakable (see also no. 75). For the seemingly strange constellation of the prophet Daniel, Luqman the Sage and Alexander the Great, see G. Vajda, “Dāniyāl”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, pp. 112–113. The four quotations in the letter are from the *Qur’ān*, 17: 32, 53: 54, 93: 10 and 2: 110. As with no. 75, the translation of passages in this letter is tentative due to the obscurity of the Arabic text.

The expression “*miṣr* of mankind” in the poem is a pun, the word *miṣr* meaning both Egypt and “provincial city”. The reference to the “*maqām* of the *imāms* at Mecca” being thronged is an allusion to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s role as protector of the Holy Places of Islam.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Giustino De Jacobis and
Wilhelm Schimper, [June 1844]

ዘቲ፡ ለወል እኅዳ፡ ዘተፈ ነወ
 እም ነበ፡ ጀጅ ዝላላቶ፡ ው
 ቤ፡ ቶብዳ ሕ፡ ነበ፡ እቡ፡ ነ፡
 ደ ሰቆብ፡ ኸ ምብር፡ ቀደ
 ሞ ሞ፡ ግብ ኦ፡ ደላወጠ ልኛ፡
 ደ ወል፡ ከወደደ፡ ነበ ረኛ፡
 ለቤተ፡ ክር ስቲደን፡ ስጠሁ
 ቀ፡ ወደቆ፡ ተሰበ ረ፡ ካገ
 ራቶ ሁ፡ ልክቶ ሁ፡ ደ ወል፡
 እክላላ፡ ልኛ፡

May this letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē reach Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune* Ya'iqob) and Schimper (Shimbir). Earlier I had a bell which an Egyptian (*gibt*) brought me from overseas (lit. over there). I gave it to a church. It fell down and broke. Send to your country and bring me a bell.

ASCPF.SRC, Africa Centrale, Etiopia . . . 1841–1847, vol. 4, fol. 396, Amharic original. The date is based on a covering letter dated Adwa 24 June 1844 forwarding Wibē's request to Rome. It met with no immediate success, for one year later De Jacobis urgently appealed for action on the long overdue bell for Wibē (*Giornale*, III, pp. 520–537). He seems to have been particularly concerned because a bell acquired through other channels was expected to arrive soon from Egypt for a new church built by *Itēgē* Menen in Gonder. Ultimately the bell for Wibē did arrive and was carried to Simēn in October 1846 (*Giornale*, IV, p. 32).

This letter is a good example of how brief and to the point Ethiopian correspondents could be when they wanted to.

Selama to J. R. Th. Lieder, 10 June 1844



محبتنا الروحاني الاعز الاكرم العلي القداسة الجزيل القبطة المواجه ليدر دام بقاءه امين

اما بعد احدا جزيل السلام الروحاني مع السؤل عن الجناب العاظم الفاخر ثم اذا سألتم عن حقارتنا فنحن الحمد لله ببركة دعائكم الصالح بكل صحة وعافية لازمت بدوامها مشمولين اصنافا ثم انه في ابرك الاوقات المعية وردت علينا المكاتبة الكريمة الصادرة عن المجلس الروحاني لازت تشج صدر الصدور وتتميز سطورها على ما عداها من لسطور وتخصب قلب الخصاب السرور والحبور ولا برحت سعادته تهم بقول الشمس والبدور فقلها القبل المسيحية واستنشق منها رياح لطاؤها المهتبه وترد بها نيران اشواقه المنظره وسال الله ان يمتعه بقا المنعم بها تمتع الاحياء بحياة النفوس والجنان بالتصاق الاعناق بما والرواقس والقواطس الافتخار بواقع اناملها والظروس واما ما نذكر به القواطس الكريمة من قبل المواجه ايزنبرك فانه كلم حضرتكم بما قاله عنا الى الحبش وانتم جاؤتموه بكل حق مستقيم فاننا فرحنا بذلك كثيرا كوننا كما ظنينا ان جنابكم تلومونا في ذلك وتقولون كيف انه فرط في عظم محبتنا ولكن حيكم يشهد لنا بذلك انه لو كان ما تكلم هكذا فانا كنت ابدل جعدك في اكرامه وحلوسه في بيته بالراحة والسرور ولكن بسبب هذه جز ما تش اوبيه حزن كثيرا وقال كيف اني امر في سبعة الاف فراسا وهذا الانكليزي يجعل نبي ابلد فنحن كنهنا حب معرفتنا وصار الامر خيرا فارجوكم ان لا يكون خاطرهم الكريم تشوش من محبتنا في شئ البتة واما من جهة يعقوب الكاثوليكي فانا محبكم اريكم فيه عن قرب لاني تحاصمت بسببه كثيرا مع جيبنا اوبيه فاجبرني بكل قول مستقيم وقال لنا هكذا اصبر قليلا الى ان يجلس جمع مالد ويعرفه علينا وعلى المساكين واخيرا لما لم يجد لانا كنيسة ولا غيره يتوجه عيرانا فهذا الكلام حقيقة لا ريب فيه ولكن انا احرمت في سوق عدوى ان كل من دخل في بيته وسبح تعليمه ينفي من الكنيسة واذا مات فلا يدفن بالكنيسة فلهذا السبب كثير من الذين كانوا يدخلون امتنعوا واما من جهة محبتنا لهم لديم فهو معلوم ان جيبنا قبطان هاريس لما كان في شواعلنا معه على قدر قوتنا وارسلنا ناس مخصوصين بمصنوع فريطهم سهل اسلاسي فاخرمناه وغضبنا عليه الى ان لم اصطلحنا ووقت تاريخه ارسلنا جيبنا المواجه بيت لحم الى مدينة اذن ببعض هدايا الى محبتنا القبطان هنس وهوانا ارسلنا لداشين اقبال ودرقه فضه وذهب وبعض شيا كثيرة من كدر هذا فعلناه لاجل الاصلاح محبتنا لهذه الطائفة الكاثوليكية بالاسم ليس فعلا لان هذا يعقوب اخبر وجز ما تش اوبيه محبتنا لخيركم وفي شئ خطابي عمل كلام المواجه ايزنبرك شاهدا فاما اوبيه فقال له هكذا اذا كنت انت عدوا للمطران واما تكلم بكلامه فلم تدخل عندنا ليلتا تجلب علينا غضب المطران فخاف ولم ذكر اسمنا دفعة اخرى فنحن لاجل ان يعرفنا جيد ارسلنا الهدية الى اذن لاجل ان نعلم ما ذا يفعل هذا مع قفصله الذي بمصوع ولكن انا منجك كثير نذك حضرتكم لم تكلم قفصلا في مصوع لانه لو كان فيه قفصل في مصوع فكنتم حضرتكم تصيرون مهايون في بلاد حبش ولكن نحن ارسلنا الى القبطان هنس على كيفية القفصل فارجوكم المساعدة بذلك وارسلوا لنا واحد نظاره كبير وما مزيدا لسلامه لئلا على جميع انعمين والتلاميذ جميعا ودمت سالمين بحرس رب العالمين امين ١٥ يونيو ١٨٤٤

وما لزم لظنكم ايدونا عنه ونحن نفوز بفضاه وبعهدنا تعرف محبتكم لنا واما من جهة اخبار بلاد الحبش فان دجزماتش مخلوقات
الذي كان حكم بلاد لسته فانه مات مربوط بيد ام راس عالي وفي هذه السنة تخارب دجزماتش قوشواحكم الداموت مع اتيقه
منن ومع حكم الداموت الذي كان اولاده الراس فانكسر وانربط ايضا بيد الست منن ام الراس واما ولده الذي هو بعزاتش
بزوواحكم فانه تخارب ايضا مع دجزماتش مرسوا الذي كان اولاده الراس في قوجام واخيرا انكسر واتربط بيد
بزو والى ان مربوطين الاتنين اعني دجزماتش قوشوا ابو بزوا ودجزماتش مرسوا ابن عمه الراس هو واولاده وكلت
الان اتا ان بلاد الحبشة نصيركلها صلحا وسلامه واما نصيرجروبا كثيرة واسه اعلم بالصواب

مطران سلامة
ديوت الحبش

وايضا وحبنا بخطاب سيادتكم ان حبيبنا الخوجه ايزنبرك حضلدينا واخبرنا بجمع الحاصل فانه لم حضر عندنا جملة
كافية ولا شاهدنا ولو كان حضر عندنا فلم كنا نتركه هكذا غير مسرور الخاط، ولو كانت جمع رعيتنا يجتمعون عندنا لآبته ما
كنا نقدر نتجاوز بما نقدر عليه ونعمل له طريقة ويرجع بيته مسرورا بل اننا ارسلنا الساعة مع احد المخلصين واخبرنا
بجميع كلامه تفصيلي يكون في شرف علمكم ودمتم

God is my helper. I will not fear.

Selama (Hirēnē). Selama the wretched.

In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. Glory be to God on high.

The metropolitan of Abyssinia at Gonder.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Our spiritual friend, the dearest, the most honoured, the consummate [and] saintly, the generous [and] blessed Mr. Lieder (*al-khawāja Līdir*). May his life be prolonged. Amen.

And now, after presenting abundant spiritual greetings and inquiries about Your resplendent (lit. proud) and illustrious (lit. perfumed) Honour, if you inquire about our humble self, praise be to God, we are, thanks to the blessing of your devout prayers, in full health and strength; may you [also] continue to be similarly endowed with it double measure.

In the most blessed of happy seasons your honourable letter, which was sent from the spiritual council, reached us; may it not cease to give comfort to the most noble of hearts (lit. breast of breasts), and may its lines glory above other lines. May it dye the palm of the heart with the colour of happiness and joy and may bliss continually dazzle (lit. conquer) the eyes of the suns and moons. He kissed it with Christian kisses and smelled from it the scent of its wafting perfumes, and with it he cooled the flaming fires of his longings. He asked God to make him enjoy the continuing existence of him who favoured [him] with it, as bodies enjoy the life of souls, as torsos [enjoy] the connection of necks and heads to them, and as pieces and sheets of paper [enjoy] the honour of the touch of his fingers on them.

Now what we wish to mention are the noble sentiments expressed with regard to Mr. Isenberg (*al-khawāja Īzinbirk*), [namely] that he spoke with Your Honour of what he had said about us to the Abyssinians, and [that] you answered him with complete, straightforward truth. And so we rejoiced greatly at this since we had thought that Your Honour would blame us in this matter and say, "How is it that he was so negligent in regard to our great love!" Your love, however, bears witness in our favour in this [matter]. Had he not spoken in the manner he did, I would have made an effort to welcome him and settle him in his house in peace and happiness. But because of this, *Dejjazmach* *Wibē* was very upset and said, "How is it that I have spent seven thousand thalers (*firānsan*), and this Englishman makes all my effort worthless!" We informed him according to our knowledge and the situation was saved. I beg you under no circumstances to let your noble mind be disturbed by anything on account of us.

As for De Jacobis (Ya'qūb) the Catholic, I, your friend, will soon show you [my power] concerning him, for because of him I have argued much with our beloved *Wibē*. He informed us speaking with complete frankness and said to us as follows: "Be patient a little while until he has finished all his money, spending it on us and on the poor, and finally when he can neither achieve the building of a church nor anything else,

he will depart empty-handed (lit. naked).” And these words are the truth; there is nothing dubious about them. Nevertheless I issued a ban at the market of Adwa that every one who enters into his house and listens to his doctrine shall be expelled from the church and, when he dies, shall not be buried in the church. For this reason many of those who used to enter withdrew. As to our love for you, it is well-known that we did what was in our power for our friend Captain Harris (*Qubṭān Hārīs*) when he was in Shewa. We sent [some] selected people to accompany him but Sahle Sillasē seized them, and so we excommunicated him and were so furious with him that we are not reconciled until now. At the time when it occurred, we sent our friend Mr. Bethlehem (*al-khawāja Bayt Laḥm*) to the city of Aden with some presents for our friend Captain Haines (*Qubṭān Hans*); that is, we sent him two mules, a shield [adorned with] silver and gold and quite a few [other] things from Gonder. This we did to prove that our love for the Catholic party is only in name and not real. Because of this De Jacobis told *Dejjazmach* Wibē of our love for Your Honour and in what he said to him he used the words of Mr. Isenberg as evidence. As for Wibē, he said to him: “If you are an enemy of the metropolitan and are always speaking [ill] of him, do not come before us, lest you bring down upon us the wrath of the metropolitan.” He became afraid and did not mention our name again. In order to make him know us well, we sent the present to Aden, so as to see what effect this would produce with his consul, who is at Massawa. But I am very astonished that Your Honour has no consul at Massawa, for if you had a consul at Massawa, Your Honour would be esteemed in Abyssinia. We have, however, sent [word] to Captain Haines about the matter of a consul and I request your assistance in this [matter]. Send us a large telescope. Abundant, perfect greetings from us to all the teachers and all the pupils. May you be preserved by the protection of the Lord of the worlds. Amen.

[On] the 4th of Baona (Bawnah) [in] the year 1560 [of the] Coptic [era].

Whatever request you may have for yourself, inform us of it and we will endeavour to comply with it. By this your love for us will be known. As for news of the country of Abyssinia, *Dejjazmach* Farīs, who was the governor of the province of Lasta (Lāstah), died imprisoned by the mother of *Ras* Alī. And this year *Dejjazmach* Goshu (Qūshū), governor of Damot (Damūt), made war with *Itēgē* Menen (*Itīqah* Manan) and with the governor of Damot whom the *ras* had appointed, and he was defeated and also imprisoned by Lady (*al-Sitt*) Menen, the mother of the *ras*. As for his son, *Dejjazmach* Birru (Birrū), the governor of Gojjam (Qūjām), he also made war with *Dejjazmach* Merso (Marsū), whom the *ras* had appointed over Gojjam, and finally he was defeated and imprisoned by Birru. Until now both of them are imprisoned, namely *Dejjazmach* Goshu, the father of Birru, and *Dejjazmach* Merso, the son of the paternal aunt of the *ras*, he and his children. But now, as for the whole country of Abyssinia, it will either be in peace and safety, or there will be many wars; and God knows best which is correct.

Selama, metropolitan of the kingdom (*dawla*) of Abyssinia.

We also found in the letter of Your Honour that our friend Mr. Isenberg had [allegedly] come to us and told us of all that had taken place, but he really did not come to us at all; nor did we see him. Had he come to us, we would not have left him unhappy like that; and if all our subjects had assembled before us, there is no doubt that we would have been able to respond to them, according to our power, and to arrange [matters] for him, enabling him to return with joy to his house. However, he sent us the clock with one of the servants and informed us of all he had said, in detail. Let this be known to your noble mind. May [God] preserve you.

CMS, CM/O 48/60 B, copy of Arabic original; 48/60 C, English translation by Reverend Lieder in Cairo. In this letter Selama exposes the limitations of his education. Writing in his own mother tongue he appears to be only semi-literate. He is obviously intent on exonerating himself in the matter of Isenberg’s unsuccessful attempt to re-establish the mission in northern Ethiopia in 1843 (see also nos 67 and 74). But Reverend Isenberg on his part seems to have been an arrogant and imprudent man, and in spite of Selama’s assurances it is not likely that he could have helped Isenberg, or would have cared to do so even if he had been present in Tigray at the time (cf. nos 67 and 74). The way in which Selama reports Wibē’s argument—7000 thalers to bring a bishop from Egypt only to see “this Englishman”, *i.e.* Isenberg, destroy everything—shows that Wibē was not prepared to have trouble with the clergy of Tigray for the sake of a Protestant missionary, and that the bishop knew it. The 7000 thalers spent to bring *Abune* Selama are mentioned also by the Lazarist missionary L. Montuori (*Annales*, IX, pp. 291–292, 29 July 1842). For the events of 1843–44 mentioned in the paragraph about the internal political struggles, see *Douze ans*, II, pp. 257–268, 292–304, III, pp. 1–4.

May this letter sent by Goshu Zewdē, the *dejjazmach* of the country of Gojjam, Damot, Mēcha and Agew, reach the heir of the chair of Peter who lives in the country of Rome. How are you [though known to me only] by hearsay? I bow in front of you.

Although my country is a Christian country, my marches are [inhabited by] infidels; they are called Galla. By the help (lit. generosity) of God, I shall conquer them with arms. However, there is a greater honour than this. I would like to win (lit. push) them by conquering their souls the Christian way. Since there are few educated people in our country we need them for ourselves, and since the people of our country are not courageous [in the face of] the unknown (things) no one will be found who says, "I will cross the Abbay and teach."

Just recently, men have started to come to us from beyond Jerusalem. Formerly, before you became powerful, except a few Muslims there was no one who came to us. We lived surrounded by Muslims and unbelievers without having any visitors. In the past, however, our fathers said, "Monks from Rome entered Mēcha [and] settled in Qwelela; they made the region prosperous and founded churches." [And so the news of] your righteousness reached us. If the monastic rule of these teachers had not been strict, they would certainly not have lived without deviating from their rule when they were sent to such a distant country. Now we have also heard that they strive to teach the infidels [in] faraway [countries]. May God take [this] into account for you; [please,] send me some of those good and kind men. I will receive [them], familiarize them with my country and settle them in the Galla country together with [some] good men. I will see to it that no misfortune befalls them except [it be by] the wrath of God. The men of your country are persistent in whatever they undertake. Their education is wide and they are strict in [their] discipline.

Give us good men as a gift (lit. alms). With God's help (lit. generosity) we will bring many infidels into the kingdom of Christ. It is a patient man who will enter into the Galla [country] and civilize [it]. Wise is he who learns languages. Moreover, he who convinces is a man helped by God. When God has established me in the land of Ethiopia, making me the vanguard of Christianity, the blessings of St. Peter and the Apostles will dwell in me if I push on with the shield you have given me.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 1, Amharic original or copy, 190×510 mm, parchment; fol. 4, French translation. The document reproduced here could be the original, in which case one must assume that only a translation was actually forwarded to the Pope. It is followed by another copy with a few variations in the text and with the note: "This is the rough copy of the one on parchment."

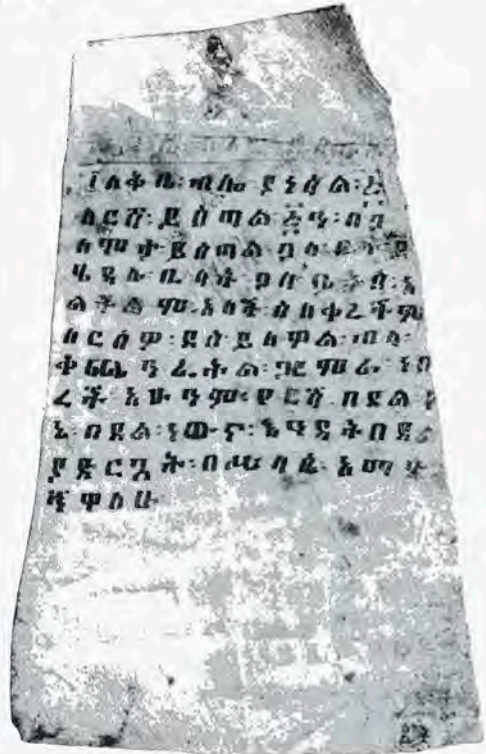
All attempts over several years to trace the original (or even a translation) in the archives of the Vatican or the S. Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli ("Propaganda Fide") have been in vain. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that the letter was forwarded to Gregorius XVI. To what extent it should be regarded as actually coming from *Dejjazmach* Goshu is also an open question. Its real origin is indicated by the note in the margin of the French translation: "Letter inspired and dictated to the Prince by M. Arnauld d'Abbadie". When Michel d'Abbadie did this is difficult to say, but the emphasis on the Oromo south of the Blue Nile (Mēcha) points to both Antoine's participation and a date after his first return from Limmu-Innarya in March 1844.

The letter from Antoine d'Abbadie which is ordinarily cited as the initiative leading to the Capuchin mission in southern Ethiopia was written from Qwerata on 9 March 1845. See G. Massaja, *I miei trentacinque anni di missione nell'Alta Etiopia* (Rome, 1885-95), I, p. 2. It so happens that Antoine spent part of that month together with Michel and *Dejjazmach* Goshu at Qwerata and this has led me to the conclusion that Goshu's letter was also written at that time. Obviously this is a very tentative conclusion.

Lamēh to Antoine d’Abbadie, [1845?]



fol. 566r



fol. 566v

May this letter sent by Azzazh Lamēh reach Antoine (Inṭoniyos). When you went to Owerāṭa, I implored you [to take care of Welette Gīyorgīs]. And now why did you mistreat Welette Gīyorgīs? Ahmedo gave the prepared (lit. ground) provisions to someone [else]. When she asked him, “Shall I grind supplies for the people of *Dejjach* Goshu?”, he took them with him and said, “No, the unprepared (lit. unground) are better.” He came to you and told you that she had refused to grind. He hates her. If you ask how this hatred came about, [it is] because he told her, “Let me give you money and sleep with you.” She told [him], “No, I, the Christian, will not be a Muslim.” Because of this he regarded her as his enemy.

He deducted 10 thalers for butter; 5 he gave for ploughing; 5 he gave to a prostitute. When he told her that you were going to the Galla, she replied, “To the Galla I cannot go.” And because she remained there, thinking that you would be pleased, she started to spin thread of fine quality. And now mistreating her means mistreating me. I beg you in the name of the Trinity to see to it that she is not mistreated.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 566r and v, Amharic original, 85×135 mm, parchment. Azzazh Lamēh is mentioned in other sources as a learned theologian and early teacher of the Catholic martyr *Abba* Gebre Mika’el (*Vicende*, p. 470; *Nuovi documenti*, p. 403). He does not seem to have been employed by the d’Abbadie brothers. For Ahmedo, see no. 71. I have not been able to establish the date of this letter; but Antoine seems to have been more directly involved with the affairs of *Dejjazmach* Goshu only in early 1845 and so I have tentatively placed this letter with those of 1845.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Alexandre Degoutin, April 1845

سلام الله الاله
 بين اعيانه ومخرافاته مجتاف فصل الفرنساوي سلمه الله تعالى امين
 واما بعد مزيد السلام نفرقكم من جناب حالنا نحن بالخير والعافية وكما
 نحن ما نسأل الاعنتكم وعن سلامتكم غايت القصد والمراد من رب العباد
 وصل كتابكم وفهمنا ما ذكرتمولنا ونحن كتبنا له ورفه الي قاييم مقام كالج
 رستم افندي من جناب ولدي محمد ابن النايب يجاب رسووم
 ما يخالف امروا والآذ ان كان يخالف امرنا انت تبقى شاهد
 علينا بكل الامور وانا امسك البر ما ينزل واحد نقر والاراذلان
 يجت الصلح برضوي احسن لنا وله وردت الجواب عرفنا
 مبادرا ودميتم بالخير امين
 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 من سلطانة الحبشة
 من دهرمانه فرغ
 ان دهرمانه جيلوا
 ما رستم
 في شهر ربيع الاخر
 الحادي عشر
 سنة 1261

see the reverse of the original

[May] the most perfect peace of God [be with you].
 [To] the most distinguished of notables, the pride of his peers, our beloved French consul.
 May God Almighty protect him. Amen.
 And now, after copious greetings, we inform you about our situation. We are well and in
 [good] health. Our only concern is you and your well-being, [which is] what we most seek and
 desire from the Lord of mankind. Your letter arrived, and we understood what you said to us.
 We sent a letter to the *qā'im maqām*, *Hājj Rustum Effendi*, through my son Muḥammad, son of
 the late *Nā'ib Yaḥyā*, [telling him] not to oppose [his] authority; otherwise he will be opposing
 our authority. You remain our witness in all matters. I control the [main-] land. Nobody shall
 set foot on it. If, on the other hand, he wants good relations, he should agree [not to oppose us].
 It is better for us and for him. [When] you receive the letter, let us know quickly. May you
 remain well. Amen. Asking for more blessing, the writer of the letter (*mustamidd al-du'ā'
 al-waraqā*) is the *sultān* of Abyssinia, *Dejjazmach Wibē*, son of *Dejjazmach Hayle Maryam*.

In the month of Rabī' al-Ākhar, on Friday [in] the year 1261.

AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 135, copy of Arabic original, with note in French that it was sealed, dated Massawa 5 May 1845. This letter to Consul Degoutin was part of an attempt by Wibē to have his candidate for *nā'ib* appointed and his rights to prevent the Turks from crossing over from Massawa to the mainland recognized.

Letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē, the Ethiopian, whose royal name is Jawiy and who is king from Gonder to the sea of Massawa over the five countries of (lit. which are) Wegera, Ṭegedē, Welqayit, Simēn, Tigray, ruling with justice according to the law of his Lord Jesus; glory be to him. Amen. May it reach in peace the friend (lit. lover) of God, Louis Philippe (Liwīs Fīlippos), king of France. Peace be with you through the love of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. So be it. Amen.

[In the same way] as the great history of Caesar (Qēsar), Alexander (Alēksandro) [and] Napoleon (Napuliyon) was heard all over the world, we have heard about your great history, what God did against the Muslims through your sons, the generals. When I learnt for sure that God had made you the protector, so that the Muslims would not rise against all the Christians, I therefore [decided to] send you a letter in order that you may be my friend and protect Ethiopia and myself, even though it is one year's journey from your country to ours, for the Turks are preparing themselves on two sides, in Sinnar and on the Red Sea (Bahre Ēritra), to help all the Muslims who live in Ethiopia [and] to exterminate the Christians.

I, too, will lovingly protect your people who have come or will come to me. And I pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for the great French king that you may live for ever (lit. live as an eternal plant). May God, to whom be glory for ever and ever, protect your kingdom always, [even] more than he has protected it hitherto. Amen.

This letter was written at Adwa on Thursday, the 17th day of the month of Ginbot 1837.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Wibē.

AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 141, Amharic and AEEP original, 315×410 mm. The French is a rather free translation of the Amharic version. A copy—also sealed—of this letter is found in the archives of the Congrégation de la Mission (Lazarist), Paris, De Jacobis, "Lettres manuscrites", II, no. 226. The fairly unimportant differences between that document and the original consist of corrections of grammatical errors.

The existence alone of the sealed duplicate in the archives of the mission reveals that missionaries were involved in this initiative to establish closer relations between Ethiopia and France. In fact the letter was written by Father De Jacobis and the German scientist Wilhelm Schimper (see no. 50), who after his conversion to the Catholic faith in 1843 was for some years regarded by De Jacobis as a staunch supporter of the Catholic mission (*Giornale*, II, pp. 199–202; "Lettres manuscrites", II, no. 203-bis).

According to De Jacobis (*Giornale*, III, pp. 519–520), Schimper had come to him on 23 May and asked on Wibē's behalf for assistance in securing the protection of France against the Turks. They had together prepared the letter for the French king, presumably the following day; Schimper had gone to Wibē and returned five days later with the sealed letter.

In addition to the existence of the sealed duplicate, which may not in itself be of very great significance, note should be taken of the following facts in connection with this letter. De Jacobis informs us that the French translation, written in Schimper's handwriting (cf. no. 50), was made for Consul Degoutin only on 29 June, one month after Schimper had returned from Wibē with the sealed letter. The impression given that Wibē had signed a bilingual document is therefore misleading. Secondly, the seal used is a very primitive one and quite different from the seals used by Wibē before and after this occasion (see nos 38 and 121). The possibility that Schimper had made this seal and used it without Wibē's authorization can therefore not be excluded.

Both Schimper and De Jacobis made a point of emphasizing that Wibē's "demand" was made "in legal form" and "in accordance with the Public Law of the Nations" which reveals that they in their amateurish way wanted to make the document the legal basis for some kind of French protectorate (AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fols 142–143, Schimper to Degoutin, 1 June 1845; CML, "Lettres manuscrites", II, no. 226, De Jacobis to Étienne, 10 July 1845).

Many historians, e.g. M. Abir, D. Crummey and Carlo Giglio, have interpreted this letter as a formal request by Wibē to the French king to establish a protectorate over Ethiopia. In my opinion this is not tenable.

See Crummey, *Priests*, pp. 68–69, and Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 109–115, for further information on the circumstances surrounding this initiative.

Mircha Werqē to John Wilson, 15 Sept. 1845

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It has been more than once my desire to inform you about my native land, but it was very difficult for me to send to Scotland, for there is no mail to Europe or India from our land. But it has pleased God to bring us again to see India and our Christian brethren, with great difficulty.

The religion of Abyssinia is Christianity, corrupted by a mixture of Jewish, Mohammedan, and Pagan superstition. My brother and myself were brought to you by our father, to Bombay, in April, in 1837, that we might attend the institution, under your care, till the 2d January 1843. Though we were of those that worshipped the graven images, yet, by our coming to you, and by your means, and by the Spirit of God, we have been called to be brought, through Jesus Christ, from darkness to the light, and from the wide and broad gate to the narrow (way) which leadeth unto life. Thanks be to God, greatly through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement of sin. O yes, we are thankful; but what a heavy burden is that upon us—not because we show the light—not because we have the Bible in our hand—not because we read it as we like—not because we watch and pray against temptation—not because we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! Then, my dear sir, what do you think that heavy burden is? Let me quote to you and to your fellow-brethren in Christ, the language of the holy apostle, whose witness was on high, and whose record was in the sky, and say: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Abyssinia is, that her children may be saved.” Is there greater than this burden in this world? O, I don’t think, that as for Gabru and myself, there is! This is the only (thing) which makes us weak and wretched. Though we were ready to preach the Gospel as much as we could, we were not ashamed, for it is the power of God unto salvation; and, though we have told them often and often that they are out of the way, and that they should worship the true and the living God only, yet, having dark, foolish hearts, they profess themselves to be wise—changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man—changing the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

Then, my dear sir, let your desire, and that of your brethren in Christ be, that the children of Abyssinia may be saved; but by what means? The answer is, by sending a preacher to that dark land, that we may suffer the heavy burden together, and that they may be enlightened through his means, and through the Spirit of God. Perhaps, you may say, “You may teach them;” but they wont like to hear us, for they say that we have sold our ancestors’ religion for money. They love the darkness rather than the light. But are we greater than them, O Lord? In no wise. Then, let me use this language: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Again, let me bring you to think what were the West Indies and Southern Africa—Sandwich Islands and India? They were just like them, or worse than them. It is only because the General Assemblies were kind to them and not to Abyssinia (that they are what they are). But I hope that from this time they will be kind, and have the desire to bring them to Jesus Christ, who

suffered for the guilty of mankind—for the rich and for the poor—for the white and for the black.

I am telling you again and again, and I am free after telling you, though I will not be happy till I leave this world; but I will fall at his feet, saying: “Hast thou not given thy dear Son for lost sinners? and wilt thou not, with him, freely give us thy Spirit, according to thy promises? Look down with an eye of pity on that land, for without thy grace they must perish. They have destroyed themselves; but our help is to be found in thee, by sending thy Holy Spirit to that land.” This desire and prayer is the love of country; and this love is found in every human being. The Son of God—in him was the love of country. He beheld the city, says the evangelist, and wept over it. May the Lord put the same love into you and the General Assembly—may he make you all to pray and to have zeal, and to send a missionary to that dark land! I am sorry that the deceiver is going to establish the Church of Rome in our land, to destroy the work of the Gospel.

I am sorry to inform you about our journey to this place. After leaving Aden, we enjoyed some wind for some days; but, when we came between Socotra and Coria, we suffered stormy wind for sixteen days continually. We landed in Cutch at Mundra; and, as our ship was not able to come to Bombay, we were obliged to travel from Mundra to Kattiarwar, to the pious brethren, and then to Gogo. We walked all along; for it was long. We left our land in January, and we came to Bombay in September; but we are thankful in all this trouble we have suffered. I hope God will see our trouble, and prayer, and hear us; for it is not for our glory, but for him who is above all. We were received kindly by Mrs and Mr Nesbit, and by the Christian friends. Give my salam to Dhanjibhai and all the Christians. I hope you will answer us very soon.

I am, &c.

The Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Free Church of Scotland (December 1845), p. 252, printed English original (?).

Mirçha Werqē was the son of Werqē Karapet or Garabet whose Armenian father had traded in Ethiopia (Pankhurst, “Ethiopian–Armenian Relations (II)”, pp. 259–260). A sister of Werqē’s had married Coffin (see no. 3) and the family’s contact with foreigners continued with the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries. As Mirçha writes in this letter, he and his brother Gebru were brought to Bombay for education as early as 1837, while their father accompanied Isenberg and Krapf to Shewa (Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals*, pp. 170–171). When the two brothers returned to Ethiopia in 1849 (after their second period in India) they opened a school at Adwa. Gebru seems to have died young but Mirçha Werqē played an important role in Ethiopian politics for several decades as a secretary, interpreter and diplomat in the service of the emperors Tēwodros and Yohannis.

A letter from Gebru of the same date and content as Mirçha’s is published in the same issue of the *Missionary Record* (p. 251) and extracts from further letters are found in the February 1850 issue (pp. 254–255) where the two brothers describe their return to Ethiopia. Unfortunately, I have failed to locate the originals of their letters. Whether they were edited, and if so to what extent, is impossible to say. I have reproduced Mirçha’s letter including parentheses, orthography, punctuation and grammatical errors as published in the *Missionary Record*.

Welde Maryam to Michel d'Abbadie, [1845?]

ዘቲ፡ ጦ ማዳ፡ ዘተ ል፡ ና ወቶ፡ እ
 ሞህገረ፡ ገሠ ጁ ሞ፡ አንገቲ፡ ጠል
 ለሞ፡ ይሠረጥ ልኒ፡ ይኮቶ፡ ደጃ
 ዝማቲ፡ እባ፡ ገቡ፡ ቀረ፡ ሌረኩ
 ና፡ ይደጃ ጁ ገሠ፡ ለለው፡ ተደ
 ዘ፡ ና ገረ፡ ወረ ጁ ሞ፡ ዘፍ፡ ተሰረ
 ሠ፡ ና ገረ፡ ከንግዳ፡ ለረ፡ ከ፡ እሊ፡ ና
 ግራ፡ እሳ፡ ሌቶ፡ ቲው፡ ሌሳ ሞ፡ ይ
 ሚካኤል ልኒ፡ ስው፡ ሌረኩ ገሞ፡ እ
 ቶንጉ፡ ጠልሎ፡ ስላው፡ ቀለብ፡
 ስጥተ፡ የው፡ ጅ፡ ተሰር ሞ፡ ለው
 ደዘሮ፡ ከቢቶ፡ የሐጥ ሞ፡ ጅው፡
 እደረ፡ ደሳኖኔው፡ እሰር ስቆ
 ወ፡ ተሰራው፡ ስፍር፡ ተቀሞጠ
 ሠ፡ እሱ፡ ስንግዳ፡ ስረ፡ ከ፡ ቢንግ
 ረሞ፡ ለካ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ገረ፡ ስ፡ ተ
 ሂው፡ ስ፡ ደጃ፡ ገቲ፡ ይወደል፡
 ሠላሳ፡ ና ገረ፡ ስላው፡ እገር፡
 ና፡ ገረ፡ እጅ፡ ይኖሩ፡ ስላው፡ ስ
 ሞር፡ ስሞ፡ እሌሳ ሞ፡ ስወልደ፡
 ሰው፡ ቲ ሞረው፡ ስላው፡ ሞ፡ ገ
 ስገንገሞ እጊ፡ ሞ፡ ገ፡ ስ፡ ደ
 ይሰሉ ገሞ፡ እሌሳ፡ እኔ፡ ስላው፡
 ቶሎ፡ ሌ፡ ገንገሠ፡ ይሞጡ፡ ስላው
 ሞ፡ ስላው ገሞ፡ ተገ፡ ገንገሠ፡ የሐጥ
 ደላህ፡ ስል፡ ገንገሠ፡ ገንገሠ፡ እህ
 ሆን፡ ቀረ ሆ፡ ስንግዳ፡ ገንገሠ
 ሮ፡ ህደ፡

ገጣሚ
 ገጣሚ ገጣሚ
 ገጣሚ 1846-

ሌሆን፡ እሌሳ፡ እንደሆነቶ፡ ሌ
 የኔው፡ ይሞጡ፡ ገጣሚ ገጣሚ፡ ሆ
 ስሞ፡ ይላኩ፡ ስላው፡ እሰር
 ቲቶ ሞ፡ ይላኩ፡ ይኖሩ፡ ስላው
 ና፡ ይሞጡ ስላው፡ ይኖሩ፡ ስላው
 የው፡ ስላው፡ ይኖሩ፡ ስላው
 ና፡ እደቶ፡ ይላኩ፡ ስላው፡ ስላው
 ተ፡ ወልደ፡ ስላው፡ ይላኩ፡ ስላው
 ወንድ ሞ፡ ስላው፡ ይላኩ፡ ስላው
 ና፡ ይላኩ፡ ይላኩ፡ ስላው፡ ስላው
 ገር ይላኩ፡ የሰረገሡ ስላው፡ ስላው

fol. 533v

fol. 533r

This letter is sent from the land of Gojjam. *Abba Gebbu*, whom the *dejjazmach* asked to make a talisman for him for his neck, has not come. The horse was taken on the allegation that it belonged to the *dejjazmach*. *Wereñña* and *Zeferu* were imprisoned. *Ingida* informed *Ras Alī* and had them released. The *ras* gave [them] supplies and said, "Do not touch Michel's (*Mīka'ēl's*) men and his horse. Give it back." They(?) were imprisoned at *Yewish*. What they(?) had entrusted to *Weyzero Kibbītu* is safe. They are living detained in the camp. When *Ingida* told the *ras*, he said, "Aha! (The heart of) Michel is with me. I thought that he loved *Dejjach Goshu*." Since the country was in upheaval, *Ingida* gave your money to the *ras* saying [to himself], "Let it [rather] be lost while in the hands of the king." The *ras* counted it and gave it to *Welde Maryam Teqwershē* telling him to take care of it. We have not made any profit. If we make [some], he will not take [it] from us.

The *ras* says, "Hurry and come at once while I am still here." As for the matter about which you sent me to *Debtera Hiṣanu*, he is not [even] here. I thought of going to *Gonder* [but] since *Nigusē* would be left alone, I stayed. *Ingida* has gone to *Gonder*.

If possible, come quickly as the *ras* said. If it is impossible, write (lit. send) about everything. The child and the mistress are well. As for the child, *Yitēyyē Menen* asked to see Michel's child and has seen him.

The writer [is] *Hiṣanu's* brother, *Qeñ Gēta Welde Maryam*. Have you been well to the extent of heaven and earth? I am the one with whom the maid servant (lit. slave) was.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 533r and v. Amharic original, 60×140 mm. For some reason the writer omitted both his own name and the addressee's when he started to write this letter. At the end he identifies himself as *Qeñ Gēta Welde Maryam*. The content of the letter reveals that the addressee was Michel d'Abbadie, and a note in his handwriting informs us that he received it in *Innarya* on 5 March 1846. It may well have been written several months earlier. Michel left *Yewish* in *Gojjam* in June 1845 to join *Antoine* in *Innarya*. According to his own narrative Michel entrusted his most valuable horse and those of his followers who were not going to accompany him to *Innarya* to his "brave colonel *Zeufarē*" (*Douze ans*, pp. 145–151).

Wereñña, *Ingida* and *Nigusē* were also related to Michel in one way or another, *Ingida* as caretaker of his property. They apparently succeeded in persuading *Ras Alī* that their master was not totally committed to *Dejjazmach Goshu's* cause. *Ingida's* hope that Michel's money would be safe if he deposited it with the *ras*—note that he is called "king"—seems not to have been fulfilled, for after his return from *Innarya* Michel opened a court case against the *Welde Maryam Teqwershē* to whom *Alī* had entrusted it (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 247–248, Michel to *Antoine*, 19 Oct. 1847). *Weyzero Kibbītu* was almost certainly a daughter of *Dejjazmach Goshu* (see *Rosenfeld*, "Eight Ethiopian women of the *Zemene Mesafint*, p. 80).

This letter is one of the very few sources which mention Michel's wife and children (see no. 174).

Gebre Qal to Michel d'Abbadie, [1846]

አቲ፡ ጠዐሃር፡ አተራ፡ ንሠባ፡
 ኢምሃብ፡ ሮሳ፡ ገብረ፡ ቃል፡ ታላቅ
 ብሃሕ፡ ገዛ፡ እቶ፡ ሀሂ ንኤል፡
 ፈረንሳይ፡ እንደታ፡ ንሙ፡ ደሃ
 ናንሙ፡ ሰላሳሁ፡ እግዚአብሔር
 የሃሱ፡ ምህሉኤ፡ ከህ፡ እሀሂን፡
 ታላቅ፡ ኮሃብት፡ ከሂደታ፡ እሱ
 ህ፡ አር፡ ሰገዝን፡ ስጪቱ፡ ን
 ቡርሁ፡ ቢሩታሁ፡ ከደራ
 ታን፡ የጠበቀ፡ እምሳክ፡ ሰላ
 ናን፡ ከእደ፡ ረቡን፡ ደንኤል፡
 ን፡ ከኤራ፡ እሱሰላ፡ ደሃታን
 ከቅሐኤ፡ የጠበቀ፡ እምሳክ
 ደ፡ ጠቃቻ፡ ሆሁ፡ ጠዐሃር፡
 ደሃሳብ፡ ሆሁ፡ ጠዐሃር፡ ንጠ
 ራ፡ እሁን፡ ላን፡ የሆነ፡ ቀን
 ርቀሰ፡ አሁን፡ የምሁረ፡
 ንን፡ እንደ፡ ደህ፡ አሁን፡ ቢ
 ሆን፡ ኤሳ፡ በተገባኝ፡ ስደሆ
 ን፡ ልዘሰ፡ ቁሰ፡ ደቅር፡
 የሰሙን፡ ደክኖ፡ ሀሳብ፡
 ሰሃሁ፡ የሀንድ፡ ሀሳብ፡
 ደክኖ፡ ሀሳብ፡ ደሰሃን፡

May this letter sent by Qēs Gebre Qal reach
 Mr. Michel (*Ato Mīka'ēl*), the Frenchman.
 How are you? Are you well? May the peace
 of God be with you. Amen.

Ever since you went to [the place] where
 the Galla live(?), I have been in sorrow
 and distress. I prayed and said, May God
 who protected Bīrutawīt from the dragon,
 Susanna from the hands of the rabbis (*reb-
 benat*), Daniel from the mouth of the lions,
 and who protected David from Goliath,
 protect you and bring you out.

Moreover, I can be a guarantor and a
 friend [for you] in bad days. A friend like
 me deserves something else; if not, should
 I not get [at least] clothes and supplies?
 I have heard of your safe arrival. May [God]
 also let me hear about the safe arrival of
 your brother.

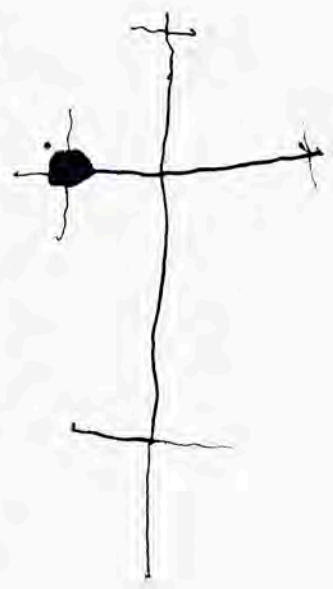
BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 501, Amharic original, 80×235 mm. Qēs Gebre Qal belonged to the clergy of the important Medhane Alem Church at Adwa (BN, NAF 23848/II, fol. 20v). He had joined the d'Abbadie brothers already on their first trip to Gonder and was listed with *Ato Wesen Gebre Amlak* (no. 108), *Merī Gēta Matēwos* (no. 30), *Līqē Aṣqu* (no. 51) and a few others as a recipient of a present on Antoine's return to Ethiopia in 1839. He seems to have remained a close associate of the d'Abbadies throughout their stay in Ethiopia.

The likely date of this letter is Aug.–Nov. 1846, *i.e.* after Michel, but before Antoine, had returned after the latter's long stay in the Oromo lands south of the Blue Nile. The biblical and hagiographical references serve to demonstrate the erudition of the writer. The maiden saved from the dragon is in Ethiopia known as "Bīrutawīt", *i.e.* the one from Beirut. Another letter by the same person (fol. 567) contains further references of this kind.

Kasa Haylu to 'Isā Walad Ziyād, [1846?]



الحمد لله وحده لا شريك له
 الصلاة والسلام على خير الانعام منذ حضرة المكرم
 واشيخ الشيخ وافر من الفرسات العزيز
 المعظم المشهور والملك الدر طاهني قدس
 الشيخ كاسا بن الشيخ هيلو الي حاضرة النيز
 المعظم المشهور المعلم سمح بصير قدس الشيخ
 عسي ولد نزياد سبب الجوار اليك وكيف
 حالكم وعفيتكم والسلام كثير السلام القبر
 قبري الاول ما قليل قبر ابوي قليل وقبري
 اخوي قليل والقبر انا كثير ما لهم الحد
 من قدميك الي راسك ذلجنا ان جيتو
 جيتو ان ما انا جيتي ادخلو مكان ما يبقي
 من بطن امك ماخلي وانا الشيخ كاسا
 و ما في زول يلقي ان كان التري وراس
 علي ما بقي لهم طيفتهم تر القوق



هذا الكلام
 في النيز
 في النيز
 في النيز



Seal (illegible)

Praise be to God alone. There is no prophet after him. May blessing and peace be upon the best of all men.

From His Excellency, the honoured, the bravest of the brave and the greatest of horsemen (lit. the horseman of horsemen), the mighty, the exalted, the praiseworthy, the owner of all the land, that is *Shaykh* Kasa, son of *Shaykh* Haylu, to His Excellency, the mighty, the praiseworthy, the teacher (*mu'allim*) who has the power to hear and see, that is *Shaykh* 'Īsā Walad Ziyād.

The reason for the letter to you—how are you and [how is] your health? greetings, many greetings—is my tribute. From the beginning my tribute was not small. My father's tribute was small. My brother's tribute was small. My own tribute is large. My own has no limit from your feet to your head. Now, if you bring [it], well and good. If I come [to get it], then enter whatever space is left in your mother's womb.

I will not leave [you alone]. I am *Shaykh* Kasa. No man [can] face me, even the Turks. As for *Ras* Alī my obedience to him is over. You will see [my] word [transformed into action]. I will beat the hell out of all the men.

These words are from *Shaykh* Kasa.

Seal (illegible)

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 3, Arabic original. This letter is written on thick, coarse and untrimmed paper, size 235×335 mm. It seems to be the first of four Arabic letters written by Kasa Haylu and preserved in the National Archives in Cairo. In spite of his use of the title *shaykh*, and the Muslim character of the opening phrases where, however, the words "May God bless him after whom, etc." are omitted, the writer obviously wanted to emphasize his Christian faith and did so by drawing a large cross on the document. On the basis of documents no. 96 and no. 100 below, it is possible to identify him as the future King Tēwodros. It is difficult to assign a date to this letter and the following. In view of the revolt against *Ras* Alī mentioned in the letter, late 1846 or early 1847 seems likely, but an earlier date cannot be excluded.

The calligraphy is very poor with irregular ligatures and inaccurate forms of letters particularly at the end of words. There are also a number of orthographical errors and irregularities largely due to the influence of dialect. The spelling *QBR* (grave, tomb) for *GBR* (tribute, tax, serf) is a crucial but understandable error since *GBR* for *gibir* or *gebbar* is a loanword from Amharic. Simple grammar mistakes also occur, for instance both definite article and possessive pronoun with *QBR* the first time it is used. In other instances the definite article is missing where it should occur. Composed in very colloquial Arabic, this letter contains several obscure passages which permit more than one reading. If we read 'serf' instead of 'tribute', the central passage runs, ". . . are my serfs. From the beginning my serfs were not few. My father's serfs were few and my brother's serfs were few. My own serfs are many. There is no limit to them from your feet to your head."

The awkward sentence "My own has no limit from your head to your feet" contains a parallel to the Amharic *ke-igr̥ih ṭifir iskerasih tegur* (from the nails on your toes to the hair on your head), *i.e.* more or less "all is mine". Though not a literal translation, the English of the last sentence corresponds to both the intent and the vulgarity of the Arabic.

For further information on the young Tēwodros, see Sven Rubenson, *King of Kings Tēwodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Abeba, 1966), pp. 15–34, and for this and the following letter, *idem*, "Shaykh Kasa Haylu", *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Lund, 1984), pp. 279–284.

Kasa Haylu to Muhammad, [1846?]

الحمد لله وحده لا شريك له
 الصلاة والسلام على خير الانعام
 فخر الامة والاعوام زوالقدر والافتخار
 الشيخ كاسا بن الشيخ هيلو في حضرة
 اتيننا العزيز محمد كاشف سبب الهم
 اليكم وحبكم وعفيتكم ذلي القدر
 حافظكم فوق ولد زهد بلا قبور
 ما بخاي الر حقي اعما عطني القدر
 ستر بخ واما بعد فكان ما يبقى تلحق
 ما يبقى بسبب العنتنا معكم ان قلنتوما
 قنر وعما انا واثم وانا كاسا زول
 يقابلني حافيه



Praise be to God alone. There is no prophet after him. May blessing and peace be upon the best of all men.

[From] the glory of the noble and illustrious, the esteemed and respected *Shaykh* Kasa, son of *Shaykh* Haylu, to Your Excellency, our dear brother *Muhammad Kāshif*.

The reason for the letter to you—how are you and [how is] your health?—now, my tribute: what is due from you is what is due from *Walad Ziyād*. He refused to pay his tribute to me. I will not give up the land which belongs to me. If he gives me my tribute, we shall be in peace. If he runs off, we shall get him, wherever he is. There will be no cause for discord between us [if tribute is paid]. If you say the tribute is not mine, then it is either you or me. I am Kasa. No man [can] face me.

These are the words of *Shaykh* Kasa.

Seal (illegible)

هد الكلام
 الشيخ كاسا

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 4, Arabic original, 235×335 mm, same quality of paper as no. 93. On the back of the paper is written in Arabic "The paper to be delivered into the hands of *Muhammad Kāshif*". *Kāshif* is in all probability the title and not the second name of the addressee. It was a common title for district governors in the eastern Sudan. For author, possible date, style of language and circumstances in general, see document no. 93.

Kasa Haylu to Ḥasan, 17 Feb. 1847

بعد السلام من افرس الفرسان وانتم
الاستحقاق الفخر السلطان بن السلطان دجاج
ماج الشيخ كاسا الى حضرت الشيخ حسنة
شيخ دار القلابات القبر قبرى البندية دجاج
كنقواي خمسة عشر يوم تجيبه مع قواي
اما جيت اخبره كانا ايضا ريك من قواي
يضرنا بالكرم القوايد وعلكم امان الله وامن
الرسول بعد قبرى ما عندكم من كرم بشر
والسلام دجاج كاسا
غايه عا

After greetings from the greatest of horsemen (lit. the horseman of horsemen) and the bravest of the brave, the horseman, the *sulṭān*, son of the *sulṭān*, *Dejjazmach* Shaykh Kasa to His Excellency Shaykh Ḥasan, *shaykh* of the land of Qallabat. The tribute which you were paying to *Dejjach* Kinfu belongs to me.

Bring it with my officers within fifteen days. When you bring [it], tell [us] a place where you are safe(?). My officers will determine the amount due. You shall have the safe conduct (*amān*) of God and the safe conduct of the Prophet. After [receiving] the tribute, I shall harbour no evil against you.

Greetings. *Dejjach* Kasa.

The last [day] of Ṣafar, the year of 1263.

Seal: *Shaykh* Kasa.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 85, Arabic original, 150×215 mm. This is the only one of *Shaykh* Kasa Haylu's four letters which has a date on it. Note that he uses the title *dejjazmach* alongside with *shaykh*. He seems to have taken the title when he rebelled against Alī and Menen in September 1846 though the chronicler describing these events (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 388–394) begins to call him *dejjazmach* only after his final victory and capture of Menen and *Aṣḡ* Yohannis in June 1847.

The Arabic of this letter and the following from Kasa Haylu (no. 100) is slightly less colloquial and the calligraphy much better than in Kasa's two earlier letters (nos 93 and 94).

A note found with this document reads: "Among the Ethiopians QBR means yearly tribute or tax which they imposed on the people of the neighbouring lands of the Sudan. This word including its interpretation is mentioned in letter no. 89."

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Ismā'il Haqqī, 8 April 1847

This letter is addressed by *Dejjazmach* Wibē, head of the governors (chief of the noblemen in Abyssinia), to the *qā'im maqām* installed by His Highness Muḥammad 'Alī (at Massawa).

I greet you, presenting my congratulations to you on your arrival, of which I have taken notice. (Desiring the continuation of peace with my neighbours) I expect—since Hargīgo (Semhar) is my country and the *nā'ib* is installed by me—that you (your troops) will not touch this region which is known to be my lawful possession by (my friends) the French and the British. If you go there in spite of my warning, I will (while continuing with the process of negotiation) call for the intervention of His Majesty, the king of the French, who has guaranteed my possessions (is expressed: “who has written to me that he is willing to prevent the Turks or the Egyptians from entering there”), something the consul of His French Majesty (who is close to you at Massawa) can explain to you (in the name of his master).

For whatever else there is to be said on my part, Wilhelm Schimper will enter into correspondence with you. Listen to him as to myself (as to my mouth).

Inçhet Kab in Simēn, 9 April 1847. 1 Mīyazya 7339.

Seal

AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fols. 214v–215r, copy of French translation, reportedly by Schimper, of an Amharic original. The date 1 Mīyazya corresponds to 8 April, *not* 9. The French consul reported that Ismā'il refused to receive the letter because it was in Amharic. In all probability the original has been lost. Ismā'il Haqqī became governor of Massawa when Muḥammad 'Alī took over the administration of Sawakin and Massawa in the Spring of 1847. He was later appointed governor general of the Sudan 1852–53. The reason for this letter from Wibē was no doubt the appearance of Egyptian troops at Massawa and the awareness that this might well herald expansion from the island unto the mainland, where Wibē's candidate for *nā'ib*, Muḥammad Yaḥyā, had been accepted by Ismā'il's predecessor in December 1845 (AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 149, and document no. 87 above).

Though the translation here is made from the French and the opening phrases therefore differ slightly from the wording I have chosen when translating from Amharic originals, there need be no doubt that this letter opened with the standard phrases. The parentheses appear as such in the French version; some are no doubt interpolations, others literal translations or explanations.

Alī Alula to Khālid Khusraw, [1847]

إلى حضرت الطلعة البهية المأمون علي بنه والرعينة المتمسك بالشريعة المحمدية نفعي وتخص
 بذلك اجبتنا العزيز خا ليداشة وممانعا حضرتكم هذه السنة عصبوا علينا ناس الحبش نكلمهم نخلمه لا
 وجدنا معهم قتال ولا طاعة وصبرنا الفقيه على لاجل جبر خاطرنا معكم وما لقينا انلغاثه من الهدا
 ولعذروننا في هذه السنة وواصلنا ابي حضرتكم فرحة ما تليف بكم و القلنا نفعله كل الفقيه على
 كلمناه بهمه ما القينا دريا من كثرنا الاعداء واول الدرث الفقيه هل يصل عندنا واجبتنا
 احمد باشة جاب لنا مهر وراح اكلت البيسنا النارجيسوا لنا خاتم نمهر صيد
 والصاحب عند الورحه لا بلور صاحب الفرحة الجبناها لكم عندنا فيها تحمل
 حكم المكثون بلا هدية تقبلوه منا والسلام
 راس
 علي

To His Excellency, the resplendent countenance, [he who is] trustworthy in regard to his religion and his subjects, and who holds fast to the *shari'a* of Muḥammad. By this we mean and signify our dear brother Khālid Pasha. We inform you that this year all the Abyssinians united in a coalition against us. They neither fought [us] nor did they submit [to us]. We asked *Faqīh* 'Alī to be patient because of our good relations with you. We have been under continuous pressure (lit. did not find any turning aside) from the enemy. Excuse us this year. A slave-girl which is unbecoming [as a present] for you comes to Your Excellency [with this letter].

We will do everything we have said. We have told *Faqīh* 'Alī about this. We did not find a route because of the multitude of the enemies and the onset of the heavy rains (*awwal al-dirra*).

Will the *faqīh* come back to us? Our brother Aḥmad Pasha sent us a seal. It happened that fire consumed the house. Send us a seal to stamp with. A friend does not blame a friend at a time when things are difficult (*'ind al-'awja*). We feel embarrassed about the slave-girl we sent to you. The status of this letter is that of one without a gift.

Accept it from us. Greetings!

Ras Alī.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 89, Arabic original, 160×315 mm. The request for a new seal explains why this letter has no seal. It is written in colloquial but generally comprehensible Sudanese Arabic and in fair handwriting.

Khālid Pasha Khusraw was the governor general of the Sudan 1845–49. The coalition against Ras Alī refers to the situation after *Abune* Selama had been banished from Gonder in 1846 and after *Dejjazmach* Wibē's second attempt to replace Alī as the chief in control of Gonder. In 1847 Kasa Haylu fought Alī's mother over Dembiya, and Goshu and Birru also marched on Gonder (see nos 100 and 103).

Kasa Haylu to Khālid Khusraw, [1847]

الحمد لله وحده ^{محمد} والثناء على عباده الصالحين والسلام
على خير الانعام

من حضرت من تقاهه الرجال وتخشع من صولته الاقبال يوم الحروب والنزول السبيح دجاي
ماج كاس ابن السبيح حبل بحضرت العبد الاجر عال القدر والمحل احبنا العزيز خالد باش
دام عزه امين .

بعد من زيد اللام والسوق الرادي الذي لا يرام خلد الله تعالى عليك جليل الفضل والانتقام
ان نفضلتكم وعنى حالنا السلام فدمه مزيد حمده بخبر وعافيه ولم نسأل الا عن عافيتكم وسلامتكم
التي هي القصد والمراد من رب العباد اما بعده يا احبنا اخي الملك راجينا من الجدايل الجدا
تخوعا عشرين من هو سلطان من قبل ماروا ومن قبل كنف من سايه ملكنا قديم ماجديد
والحين الحمد لله نبيت مكان اباي واجداد وانت سابق عندك صحبه مع كنف وختي وهو
ابغض اولاد ابولوسا بن الوزري وقت اخذت البلد انا صغير ما ملكت الركوب اما الكنت
لمجدسه خليه الوزري ان كان اعظم ما ليون في سلطنت الحبس ما يقين في وجهه وان كان
كذب اسماهل المسافرين والحواجات واستل الفقه علي وحلف فوق الكتاب يحدك لاله
بالمسافرين بعد ذلك بلد ابوي قنبر سابق هبل السلطان الكبير اليوم في ملكي انا
لا اكن رينا خوي اعطانا وانا ما ارسلت الي شي وانت ارسلت لي رأس علي والوزري والفقه علي
روح وديني بعد ذلك وقعد سنة لي حول ثم بعد ذلك جا عندي وانا قلت انت
سلطان ومرسال السلطان بعد ماجي ان كان من سيد وان كان من خاخر ماشوي
فيه عرج والفقه علي انا ما ارسلت ليه ولا مسكنت في الدرب ولا اجبت في الخيانت ملكت
الدرار كلها بعيد وقريب طبعته جار عندي وما قعد عند لي اكثر من عشرينه
يوم قلت اء اصبر اود لي للبانته هه به طيبه ابا ما يصبر قال الخريف جاء
وخاف مني ما امنه لون مائه مرسل عند لي وبي عجبت جينا لكم هه بيه لا
تليف يا تيمتهاق لا اسمكم اقبلوها منا وسونا صاحبك ولي افندينا
محمد يا لله سونا له ولد ان جاء لي عندي وان طلبتم باليل والنهار رخصتر
عندي واني جاء كره عندي والطلبون باليل والنهار احضر عندكم ولا تخطوا كلام
لسان تشنوقا بعيتك والهدية الواضله الي حضرتكم فرحان اثنت قالوا بيات
خاتقات اللون وخصان احضر ما يلقاكم وا تشنوا الله صباح الوفا هه
الفقه علي ما كيه من عندك تشنوا هه ربا الملوك والمراسيل من عندنا انقوا
وهجه التوزر صاحبنا ان كان يقول للصاحب ارسل التشنو البعج يفرح له
وانت انا عارف ما تقدم من طلبنا مع وان طلبنا قلت يند والمناجعه القله تبهنا
دجاي حاج
كانت حاج

Praise be to God alone. There is no prophet after him (inserted: Muḥammad). May blessing and peace be upon the best of all men.

From him (lit. the presence) whom men fear and before whose fury heroes bow themselves on the day of battle and combat, *Shaykh Dejjazmach* Kasa, son of *Shaykh* Haylu, to His Excellency, the most dignified pillar, highly esteemed [and] elevated, our dear brother, Khālīd *Pasha*. May his glory remain [for ever]. Amen. After copious greetings and longing beyond that which might be coveted, may God Almighty cause abundant grace and favour to remain with you for ever. If you are so gracious as to ask about our situation, [we are] in good health and circumstances—praise abundant be to God. Our only concern is your health and well-being. This is what is sought and desired from the Lord of mankind.

And now, O our brother, kingship has been awaiting us from generation to generation (lit. ancestor to ancestor) [for] about twenty *sultāns*, before Maru and before Kinfu. Our sovereign rights date from time past. They are old, not new. Now, God be praised, I have reached (lit. found) the place of my fathers and my grandfathers. You were a friend of Kinfu before. We and he are brothers, sons of one father, and [this was] before the time when the *weyzero* (*Weyzero* or *Itēgē* Menen) took the land. I was young [and] had not learned to ride. But now, God be praised, the *weyzero*, however powerful she may be in the realm of Abyssinia, will not stand up against me. Ask the travellers and the foreign merchants (*khawājāt*) if [you think] this is a lie and ask *Faqīh* 'Alī. Make him swear on the Book. He will tell you that honestly, as he saw it with his [own] eyes. The land of my father, Gonder, formerly [belonging to] Haylu, the great *sultān*, is today in my possession. However, our Lord is good; he gave [it] to us.

You did not write to me; you wrote to *Ras* Alī and to the *weyzero*. *Faqīh* 'Alī went and gave them your present and stayed for one year, a [whole] year. After that he came to me and I said [to myself], "You are the *sultān*, and when the messenger of the *sultān* comes, whether on his master's behalf or his own, we do not make any trouble for him." I did not send for *Faqīh* 'Alī, I did not waylay him on the road, and I did not bring him [here] by treachery. I have taken possession of all the land far and near. Of [his] own free will he came to me and stayed with me no more than ten days. I said to him, "Wait [a while] and I will send the *pasha* a nice gift." He refused to wait. He said, "The rainy season (*khariḥ*) has come." He was afraid of me. He did not trust me. Since he was not my messenger [and hence I could not delay him], I sent you in haste a gift which is not worthy either of us or yourself. Accept it from us and make us your friend, and make us [like] a son to our *effendi*, Muḥammad *Pasha*. If an enemy comes to me and I call upon you by night or by day, you will come to me. If an enemy comes to you, ask me by night or by day and I will come to you. Do not consider these mere words. You will see with your [own] eyes. The gift coming to Your Excellency is two Galla slave-girls, whose colour is neither very dark nor very light (*khāḥifāt al-lawn* for *khāḥifāt al-lawn*), and a eunuch. Send [me] what you consider appropriate. God willing, the morning after *Faqīh* 'Alī's arrival, when he returns from you, we will exchange gifts befitting kings. Our messengers are Abu (one word illegible) and Mehammed Nur (Muḥammad al-Nūr). If a friend says to his friend "Send the thing that pleases me" he rejoices. I know you will not fail to ask [for something] from me. If you ask, saying "I want such and such a thing", I will rejoice. Greetings.

Seal: *Shaykh* Kasa.

Dejjazmach Kasa.

ENA, Carton 19 Bahr Barra, no. 89, Arabic original, 190×315 mm. This letter seems to belong to the period between Kasa's victory over the army of *Itēgē* Menen (the WZRĪ or *weyzero* as he calls her in this letter) in June 1847, and his campaign against the Egyptians which ended by his defeat at Dabarkī in March 1848 (Zeneb, *Ye-Tēwodros Tarīk*, English title: *The Chronicle of King Theodore of Abyssinia* (Princeton, 1902), p. 13). It is to my knowledge the only primary source we have for his early aspirations to kingship. The "twenty generations", moreover, support in a remarkable way Kasa's pedigree through male ancestors only (as later inserted in the family chronicle) which connects him with King Seyfe Arad of the fourteenth century. The letter also confirms that he regarded himself as the immediate political heir of Maru and Kinfu—and *Weyzero* Menen as an intruder. The "great *sultān*" Haylu is almost certainly Kasa's father Haylu (or Hayle Maryam) Welde Giyorgis, (see Rubenson, *Tēwodros*, pp. 15–28).

This letter appears to be penned in the handwriting of three different persons. The three opening phrases are in a hand clearly different from the rest of the letter. The most obvious explanation for this is that Kasa began to dictate his letter with the words "From him whom men fear . . ." and that the Muslim phrases were added in order not to offend the addressee (cf. no. 96 where space has been left for the phrases without being utilized). At any rate they cannot be used as an indication that Kasa was a Muslim or wanted to be taken for one.

Zeray Zegīyorgīs to Antoine d'Abbadie, [Jan. 1848]

ዘቲ፡ መሌክነት፡ ዘተፈነወ ት፡ ኢሥጋብ፡ የሽሐታ፡ ዘራ
 ይ፡ ትብዳሐ፡ ኅብ፡ አቶ፡ ኢንጦንሮ፡ ከ ለጥር፡ በገብተን
 የሌገዛህ፡ ኢንደሆን፡ ገንዘብህ፡ መሃዳ፡ ነው፡ ወር፡
 ቁንሥ፡ በቀጠሮ፡ ከከነ፡ ገብተን፡ ገብ፡ ገብህ፡ ባት
 ገቡ፡ ሊወከደው፡ ሠጠቶ፡ አሁን፡ ጠላኩ፡ ከሰ፡
 ሳክበት፡ ብሎውኝ፡ ነው፡ ፡፡ ገብተን፡ ተባሎ፡ ይይሉ፡ ነው፡
 ያጠፋው፡ አሁንም፡ ይሆንሉህ፡ ኢንደሆን፡ ከደጃ
 ዝማች፡ ደር፡ ስህ፡ ብሩግረሁ፡ ነ፡

May this letter sent by *Yeshaleqa* Zeray reach Mr. Antoine (*Ato* Inṭoniyos). If you do not come by Ṭirr the 13th, your money will be lost. If you come by the 13th for the appointment, well and good; if you do not come, however, they have given him the gold as well (to take it). I am writing (lit. sending) to you now, because the *abun* has told me to inform (lit. send) you. It is Qebero Haylu who spoiled the case. And now, if it is possible for you, go to the *dejjazmach* and tell him and [then] come.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 534, Amharic original, 135×205 mm. This is obviously a follow-up of the preceding letter (no. 101). Thus the unnamed person to whom the property would be given was Agew Deres. Antoine did not come but a letter which arrived at Aksum or Adwa on 10 Ṭirr (see no. 105) may well have been written in response to Zeray's letters. The *dejjazmach* referred to was Wibē, the final authority on a matter like this.

The disciple kisses the ground and then kneels with his sinful head upon the footprints of the sublime feet of [His] Holiness, the father, the master, the blessed patriarch, *Anbā* Buṭrus, patriarch of the great city of Alexandria—may he remain protected through the guardianship of the Lord of mankind. May the exhortations of his preaching continue to bring health to all the hearts of the subjects, and may [God] make its meaning strengthen the hearts and take possession of the minds. May all those (lit. the circle of) minds continue to draw upon his grace, and the life of souls spring from his noble and honourable qualities, and may all his subjects follow his voice and repent and turn back from all their sins and crimes by the favour of the prayers of the Virgin, the saints and all the blessed. Amen.

Having kissed his gracious hands and presented greetings mingled with respect and great and lofty salutations, which the gentle breeze spreads and from which it causes an exalted scent to come forth, my longing for my master is [like] the longing of the thirsty for water (lit. drink) and of the barren land for rain (lit. clouds). Hearts and minds are aflame with yearning for you. Let us be in your thoughts, and do not stop mentioning us, who are exiled and strangers. We remind [your] gracious heart and mind that when we left Gonder and stayed in Tig: 1, we sent Your Holiness a number of letters. We did not receive an answer to any of the letters sent from our side, although we sent Your Holiness three letters: one with two monks, its date is Abīb in the year 1562(?); the second we sent to you with our son, Archpriest Mattā; the third we sent with the monk Mikhā'il al-Balyanī, by the hand of Mr. (*al-khawāja*) Tūmā(?). This was after the arrival of our son, *Hājj* Khayr. We did not receive answers to them. We hope that what prevented this is good. We inform [Your] Exalted Holiness that *Hājj* Khayr arrived and that all the cloth reached us in full and that the sacred staff and al-Balyanī also arrived. May God preserve Your Holiness for us.

As for the current news in Abyssinia, by the blessing of your prayers and the prayers of St. Mark *Anbā* Murqus), after *Itēgē* (*al-Tīqah*) Menen had done with us the deeds of Jezebel (*Azbāl*) against Elijah (*Ilyās*), one called Kasa rebelled against her and the *ras*. She went to fight him, but she was defeated in the war; they pierced her with a bayonet in her thigh, and she was taken captive and her country was occupied. Two sons of the *ras* and her husband were also captured. Also our son *Dejjazmach* Wibē had at that time been preparing for war against her son the *ras* for eight months, but *Dejjazmach* Wibē could not face him in open terrain because the *ras* had brought many horses from the land of the Galla, his maternal uncles. *Dejjazmach* Wibē also had more soldiers and guns than the *ras*. He occupied rough terrain so that the *ras* was not able to approach him. As his mother had been defeated in the war, he (*Alī*) made peace with *Dejjazmach* Wibē on condition that he be reconciled with us, and [that we] enter Gonder as before. Also, his mother would be set free. In accordance with this the reconciliation was effected, and his mother *Itēgē* Menen was released from her fetters, and our son *Dejjazmach* Kasa ruled (it) because of this. They sent to us for reconciliation. People representing the *ras* and his mother Jezebel came to us. People representing *Dejjazmach* Wibē and Kasa, who had captured Menen, and people representing *Dejjazmach* Goshu and his son *Dejjazmach* Birru, the rulers of Gojjam, all these came to settle the peace. We sent people representing us to the *ras* and stipulated that if they wanted to be reconciled with us, they would have to follow the statement of faith (*darj al-amāna*, for *al-imān*?) brought from Your Holiness. In that case we will be reconciled with them. When the people representing us left, the country of Lasta and other territories rebelled against the *ras*. The latter went to fight and the discussion was delayed until his return from the war. As for the rulers of Gojja, this decision pleased them. They are one with us. They had made peace with the *ras*, but as he delayed his reconciliation with us until his return, they cancelled their reconciliation, too, and said to the *ras*, "If the metropolitan returns to his place, we shall make peace." Until now matters remain as they were. May God [in whom we] trust not cause our labour to go in vain. We will inform you what happens next. God Almighty did to Sahle Sillasē, the *sultān* of Shewa, who was the cause of all of this, as he had done to Arius. For he had previously been shot in the thigh by a shotgun. Some shot remained in his thigh, which became gangrenous, and he died the most miserable death in the year of 1564 on the 11th of the month of Bābah. His son was enthroned, and we think there is hope in him because before the death of his father, he sent to [tell] us that he clings to our faith. May God grant us all his good will. The statement of faith you sent to us caused us the greatest joy. But we beg from Your Holiness that you write similar documents to all the rulers and their lands, to everyone with his name and the names of his priests. The names of the ministers and the content of what is to be written to them is sent to you enclosed with this letter of ours. Because the Abyssinians are proud by nature, they will say, "They sent to so-and-so and they did not send to me," and discord arises from this. So please send in their own names an exact copy of the first statement.

When we came to the land of Tigray we found that the European De Jacobis (*Ya'qūb al-Ifranjī*) had corrupted all the subjects; in particular he had corrupted *Dejjazmach* Wibē and his ministers, whom he corrupted with money and fine clothes. We found that he brought a European metropolitan, hid him, and built two churches for him claiming that they were [simply] large houses. Through the blessing of your prayers, behold the miracles of St. Mark when he wanted to reveal the secret of these wicked wolves. A letter was sent to the afore-mentioned metropolitan from the land of the Europeans. On it was written in Arabic, "May it reach the metropolitan of Abyssinia." The people of Massawa sent it to us, believing it was for us. When we looked at it, we found that it was written in [a] European [language]. We sent it to *Dejjazmach* Wibē and told him about the churches and about the unauthorized residence of the European metropolitan in his country, and we asked him to clear away the thorns [growing] among the sacred vines. He ordered that the metropolitan should return to his country and that the churches which had been constructed, and the European De Jacobis who built them, should remain. He said to us, "The Europeans live in your land. They have a number of churches [there]." We became very sad; we gathered a council of priests. All the churches and monasteries sent a message to him by the hand of two leaders among the elders (*al-shuyūkh*) saying, "Expel this European from our land for us." He refused to listen to what they said, for bribery blinds the eyes of the judge. Indignation overcame us and our sons, the priests. They all wanted to go and demolish the churches which this European had built, and expel him. All of us replied, "Death is preferable to life." When he heard this, he said, "When I get to Tigray, I will make a law (*shari'a*) for you." We took a decision that on the 24th of the month of Ṭubah all the priests should gather and we would look into this matter. As far as we are concerned, the case is still not settled. *Dejjazmach* Wibē has not [so far] made a law and expelled the Europeans. On the contrary, being afraid of the trouble which might happen while he was far away, he said, "When I return to Tigray." Your Holiness must help us to remove this darnel from the wheat, for a little leaven raises a lot of dough. If the poison of the serpent spreads, there is no healing. We ask Your Holiness to write to *Dejjazmach* Wibē and excommunicate him, so that he expels the Europeans from his country. This must be done because we and our sons in Tigray have had a lot of trouble due to these matters. If we excommunicate him, he will say, "To-morrow they will absolve me," and if the priests excommunicate him, he will take their endowments and will not listen to or heed the excommunication.

Your disciple *Hājī* Khayr sends his greetings and prostrates (*yaḍrib al-maṭānawa*) at your feet. Shortly he will come to you and will tell you everything by word of mouth. However, send us the document of excommunication of *Dejjazmach* Wibē quickly, as soon as you receive our letter, for we must needs exert ourselves for the faith. Do not forget us in your pure prayers because tribulations surround us on every side. As soon as we escape from one tribulation we fall into another. Pray for us and support us in our weakness. If you hear the news of our death, please absolve us. May God Almighty protect you and preserve you for us in safety, by the prayers of the Virgin, the Saints and all the blessed. Amen.

On the 7th of the month of Ṭubah, the year of 1564 [of the] Coptic [cal.].



no. 161

We also inform Your Holiness that we had the book of "The Confession of the Fathers" (*I'tirāf al-Ābā*). It was stolen from us in Gonder. We brought it [back] by stealth, but we found that worms had damaged it. It cannot be used any more. Without it we are as useless as the blind. Send us another copy of yours. Give your order that the other books, about which we have previously written, be copied. When *Hāj*j Khayr comes, he will pay the cost. May [God] protect you. Amen.

On the 7th of the month of Ṭūbah, 1564.

Coming from the lowliest of your disciples, Selama by name, metropolitan of Abyssinia.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

We have also been informed about the hypocrites (*al-munāfiqūn*), the people of the Three Births. They sent word to Your Holiness complaining of us. They are not satisfied with what they did to us earlier. They held another council and sent their perfidious message to affect your good opinion [of us] adversely. Do not listen to the envious and malevolent talk which they pass on to you, for they are jealous and envious because of our staying in Tigray. All this talk has been [spread] on the advice of Mikhā'il al-Balyānī to the *ras* and Menen. He said to them, "Send word to His Holiness, our father, and tell him this and that and [tell him that] our disagreement with the metropolitan is because of his deeds, not because of his faith. If our lord, the patriarch, hears this, your purpose will be realized." Thus they wrote to Your Holiness. One of the Christians who was present at this council, and whose heart loves our faith, told us about the entire council of the hypocrites, which they held before the *ras*. We are sending word to tell Your Holiness about this, so that [it comes to] your respected attention.

If they have sent word to you, then inform us of the content of their message in order that we may reveal their lying to our sons so they do not give ear to their words. May God Almighty protect you! If they, [the people of] the Three Births, send a message to you, say to them, "Why did not the people of Gojjam and Tigray write to us?" Then they will shut their perfidious mouths. May you be continually protected by the Lord of the Worlds!

On the 7th of the month of Ṭūbah, the year of 1564.

The lowliest of your disciples, Selama, metropolitan of the kingdom (*dawla*) of Abyssinia.

All who are with us here, the Coptic and Abyssinian priests, greet you, [namely] your son and disciple the priest Yūsuf, and the priest Murqus, and the monk Gebre ('Abd) Maryam(?). All who are with us here kiss your pure feet and ask your blessed prayers at all times.

Ethiopian correspondence at the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo, photocopied with the special permission of His Holiness *Anbā* Qērīlos VI by Merrit Boutros Ghali, document no. 160–161, Arabic original with Selama's large seal. As the dating shows, these two folios comprise one letter. *Abune* Selama has apparently had great difficulties in concluding his epistle. It has been impossible to find any of the three earlier letters to Buṭrus referred to by Selama. The reading Abīb 1562 (July 1846) for the first is based on the fact that it was, according to the text, written after Selama had been expelled from Gonder in June 1846 which excludes the possibility of 1561. Of the messengers, Mattā and Khayr are known from other sources.

This letter by Selama is the earliest description that I have come across of Ali's and Wibē's 1847 conflict and Kasa Haylu's victory over Menen. It greatly increases our knowledge of these events. Menen's loss of the governorship of the Gonder area to Kasa in July 1847 was a blow to the power of the leading Wello and Yejjū families and a very important step in the career of the future King Tēwodros. It also shows that Selama was prepared to use the situation. In this struggle he singled out Goshu and Birru together with Kasa as his supporters. Aware of the problems of establishing his authority, Selama pleaded for support in the form of doctrinal statements addressed straight to the various rulers of the country. The list of persons and the draft of the statement said to have been enclosed with this letter have not been preserved together with it. The second part of the letter deals with the activities of the Catholic mission in Tigray and the arrival of Bishop (later Cardinal) Massaja in November 1846. While Selama had been obliged to accept the presence of Catholic priests in Tigray, the appearance of a rival bishop, revealed to him by the delivery to him of a letter intended for Massaja, was a much more serious matter and Selama decided to try to put an end to the mission altogether. This letter is certainly the most authentic description existing of the conflict as perceived by the Ethiopian bishop. For several reasons, including the poor quality of the photocopies at my disposal, this document and no. 119 were particularly difficult to read and translate. In some places the translation must be regarded as conjectural.

Goshu Zewdē to Michel d'Abbadie, [Jan. 1848?]

ዘቲ፡ጠ ማር፡ዘ ተፈትወተ፡አ
 ምሳቢ፡ደ ጽአዝ ማፍ፡ጎ ሹ፡ጎ
 ብጻሕ፡ጎብ፡ራ ስ፡ሚ ገኢል፡አጅ
 ጉፍ፡አጅ ጉፍ፡አንዱ ስ፡አሰህ፡
 አግዚአብሔር፡በመገናኘት
 አከቲያ በቃን፡ፈረሱን፡መል
 ካም፡ፈረሰ፡ይዘልህሰሀ፡አ
 ሁን፡ምሳገዱ፡ቢቸግር፡ነው
 የቀረ፡አሁንም፡የላክኸብ
 ጁ፡የ ሰቃው፡ነገር፡የምወደ
 ውን፡አቃ፡አንተ፡ታውቀዋ
 ስህ፡ኩላሊት፡ገደ፡ማር
 ያም፡ተቀብሱ፡ተኔያድርስ
 ልኝ፡ተካሳ፡ጋራ፡የተዋጋኔ፡
 አንደሆነ፡ጎንደር፡አገባሁ፡
 አንገሳኛ ለጎን፡ወደቆሳ፡የሸሸ፡
 አንደሆነ፡ሰው፡ገገኝ፡ፈልጋ፡
 አሰድልህሰሀ፡ፈረሱን፡በቅ
 ኩም፡ቼግሮህ፡አንደሆነ፡ጫ
 ምራ፡አሰድልህሰሀ፡ቢሆን፡ቢ
 ሆን፡አንተም፡አንድትመጣ፡
 መልካም፡አገር፡የምትቀመ
 ጥበት፡አቼይህሰሀ፡አጅግ፡ና
 ቸቲህህ፡።



May this letter sent by *Dejjazmach*
 Goshu reach *Ras Michel* (Mīka'ēl).
 How are you, really, really, until God
 enables us to meet again? As for the
 horse, I have kept a fine horse for you.
 It has remained [here] because the route
 is not safe (lit. difficult) now.

And now, concerning the things about
 which you wrote to me, you know
 what things I want. Let *Kulalīt Kīdane*
Maryam receive [them] and bring [them]
 to me. If we fight with *Kasa*, I will enter
Gonder [and] we will meet. In case he
 flees to the lowlands, I will look for
 someone, and if I find [someone], [I
 will] send you the horse. And in case
 you are in need of a mule, I will also
 send you [a mule]. Preferably, come
 yourself. I will have some good land
 for you to live on. I long very much
 for you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 540, Amharic original, 85×210 mm, parchment.

The impending war between Goshu and *Kasa Haylu* almost certainly refers to the political situation in late 1847–early 1848. *Kasa* avoided battle and Goshu came to *Gonder* where he was elevated to the rank of *ras* in February 1848 (*Nuovi documenti*, p. 395). Goshu's attempt to keep *Michel d'Abbadie* in Ethiopia failed in spite of the offer of a governorship which most certainly is what "land for you to live on" means. For *Kulalīt Kīdane Maryam*, see no. 97.

Abebayyehu says: May this letter (which has been sent) reach my lord Antoine (Inṭoniyos). How have you been? Have you been well? Is your brother Michel (Mika'ēl) well? Are your slaves and your servants well?

On Sunday, the fifteenth of Ṭirr, I sent a letter [to you] with someone I know. Did he come back to you? You had told him to return within ten days. The name of the man who brings the letter [is] Gebre Sillasē.

On Sunday, the twenty-second, my master Charles (Qērilos) went hunting in an area called Damo Gelīla—it is *Aleqa* Kīdane Maryam's fief. He was not successful. He came back to us on Monday nine days after he had left. The letter you sent to us arrived on Tuesday the first of the month.

Dejjazmach Wibē was in Sehart Astah. He went to [a place] called Amba Alajī to capture (lit. break) [it]. They say that *Balgada* Araya's brother is there on the *amba* and that *Balgada* Araya has gone to [a place] called Gwankwa Sebebora. And they say that *Dejjazmach* Ishetu is in Inṭicho (Inkī Ḥew) at the place called May Kerbahra.

I finished the book on Monday, the 23rd of Ṭirr. And now, I will start with the book called *Giṣṣiw* on Monday. You are late. The inscription on the stone is impossible for me [to copy] because the edges are damaged. It is impossible for me. I have given it up, assuming that with your skill and wisdom you will copy it. As the proverb goes, "One does not catch the tail of a leopard, and if one does, one does not let it go."

Zeweldē said that Father (*Abune*) Gebre Mesqel and Father Felicissimo (*Abune* Filiksiyos) went away. He came from Massawa on Wednesday the second of Yekkatīt. They say that the consul is quarrelling with the *qā'im maqām*.

As for my grievances, I will let you know when you come. May God bring you back in peace. May he let us meet each other in peace. Send me red ink with a solvent(?).

Qēse Gebez Qelemsis says, "How are you to the extent of heaven and earth?" Since the Psalter which has come to you with the letter belongs to *Qēse Gebez* Qelemsis and since he has come unexpectedly, send it to me at once.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 546r and v, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 175×215 mm. This letter was written soon after no. 105, which was almost certainly the letter dated 15 Ṭirr (23 Jan.). The book finished on 23 Ṭirr (31 Jan.) was a copy of *Widdasē Maryam* (see BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 516).

This letter is a very good illustration of how the art of writing letters had developed, crammed as it is with information of interest to the addressee. Abebayyehu starts off with news about Antoine's young brother Charles, who had come to Ethiopia to bring his brothers back to the family in France. Then he reports the whereabouts of the political leaders of the province: *Dejjazmach* Wibē and his son Ishetu and *Balgada* Araya and his brother. The events of 1842 had repeated themselves in 1847; Araya had once again challenged Wibē's position in Tigray when the latter involved himself too deeply in the power struggles in central Ethiopia. Finally the writer turns to the work he is doing for Antoine, but interrupts this to report the departure of two of the Catholic missionaries and a conflict that had arisen between the French consul Degoutin and the Egyptian governor at Massawa, Ismā'il Haqqī (see no. 98).

Many of the Catholic missionaries either Ethiopianized their names or chose to be known by Ethiopian names. Filiksiyos of this letter is obviously Father Felicissimo Coccino, while *Abune* Gebre Mesqel is almost certainly the famous Massaja, who had realized that his presence in Tigray was dangerous to both himself and others and who left Altēna for Massawa and Aden together with Felicissimo in late November 1847 (Massaja, *Trentacinque anni*, I, pp. 76–77; O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix*, pp. 64–66; see also no. 103 for *Abune* Selama's report about the exposure of Massaja, which does not implicate Antoine d'Abbadie).

Note that the sentence at the top of this letter is an addition to the text. It has been inserted in the translation where the sign for omission in the Amharic text indicates that it belongs:

Abebayyehu to Antoine d'Abbadie, [Feb. 1848]

ደቢ፡ አበባዎች፡
 ዛቴ፡ ማር፡ ተገባሪ፡ ገብ፡ አግቢካይ፡ ከገ
 ግንቡ፡ ልጅ፡ ገብ፡ ደገና፡ ስገብ፡ ሰዎች
 ዎች፡ ገብ፡ ደገና፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ደገና፡ ገብ፡

የዘሉትን፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ግን፡ ሠረተ፡ የካቲት፡ ባሕር፡ ተን፡ ሙሉ፡
 ስ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ስ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ገብ፡ ስ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ከገ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡

ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ደ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡

ደቢ፡ ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡ ሙሉ፡

Abebayyehu says: May this letter reach my lord Antoine (Inጥoniyos), the Frenchman. How have you been? Are all your people well? Is your brother well?

I finished the book you ordered [me to copy]. And now, on Thursday, Yekkatit 10, I started with *Mesihafe Giṣṣiw* because I realized that you would want it. The goods arrived on Thursday at the house of *Qēse Gebez Iyyaqēm*. They say that *Dejjazmach* Ishetu is in *Dībērē*, *Dejjazmach* Wibē in *Aybeto* and *Balgada Araya* at *Arara*.

News about our holy Catholic fathers: Father (*Abune*) Gebre Mesqel and Father Felicissimo (*Abune* Filiksiyos) returned to their country. They say that Father (*Abune*) Gebre Maryam is in the town of *Altēna* with Father *Giusto* [da Urbino] (*Abune* Giṣto). As for His Beatitude Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune* Ya'iqob), the teacher of the Gospel, he is with *Dejjazmach* Wibē. And *Abbatini* (*Abba* Tinī) went to *Gola* on Sunday Yekkatit 6 with his household, the Catholics. *Abbatē* Araya who was the custodian in *Tembēn* says, "Are you well, really?" He [also] says that you spoke to *Debtera* Baryaw, when you could not find him (*Araya*).

Seyfu Welde Maryam says: Have you been well? We arrived safely, and now, when you come, do not quarrel with *Ato* Hayle Maryam. Whether you come with your brother or alone, do not say that he has taken your money.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 539, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 95x210 mm. Thursday 10 Yekkatit corresponds to 17 February, and "now" indicates that this letter must have been written on or soon after that date. Again (see no. 106) Abebayyehu provides precise information about dates and places related to his own work as well as developments in general. The difficulties experienced by the Catholic missionaries seem to have prompted Abebayyehu to report the whereabouts of all the Capuchins, in addition to Gebre Mesqel/Massaja(?)

and Felicissimo, Gebre Maryam/Cesare da Castelfranco(?) and Giusto/Giusto da Urbino. I believe the last one to be a safe identification, although Giusto should have been rendered *Yostos*. That we have *Abbatini* hiding behind *Abba* Tinī is not so difficult to guess. De Jacobis was in fact in *Wibē's* camp from 9 Jan. to 3 March 1848 trying in vain to save the mission work in *Tigray* (*Giornale*, IV, pp. 59-70). *Ato* Hayle Maryam is in all probability the *Qebero* Haylu of documents no. 101 and 102. Michel also indirectly advised his brother not to quarrel with *Haylu*, whom he regarded as a very good man (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 543).

Wesen to Antoine d'Abbadie, [April 1848]

ዳጊ፡ ጠጣር፡ ዲተ ራገወ
 ፋ፡ እምነ፡ ጠ፡ ምልእክ፡
 ፀሐይ፡ ወሰን፡ ትብጻሕ፡
 ገ፡ እንጠግብ፡ ፍራንሳ
 ዊ፡ ኩፋ ሌ፡ ሕረ፡ ድልግ፡ ቢ
 ኩ፡ ደብተራ፡ ጌታ ሁ፡ ገ፡ ምላ
 ደብዎ፡ እልጉ፡ እገህ፡ ግንግን፡
 ማሳ፡ ጠመም ህር፡ ለደ፡
 መም ህር፡ ከደገገም፡ ብደ፡
 ገወ፡ ስሁ፡ ግን፡ ጠታ፡ ገሰ
 የገ፡ ስህ፡ ለዋሰ፡ እሰከዲ
 ዎ፡ ግን፡ እንደገገም፡ ኩፋ
 ሌ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ደደርግኝ፡
 ትርጉሙ፡ እመልክቼ፡
 ስቂዎም፡ ሊመጡ፡ ስህ፡ ለ
 ዋኝ፡ እከከ፡ ሃሬ፡ ደቂዎሉ
 ም፡ እልመሰሰኝም፡ ገበረ፡
 እግዚአብሔር፡ ደፈው ለዎ፡
 ለመገናኘት፡ ምብቅ፡

May this letter sent by *Melake Şhay* Wesen reach Antoine (Inṭoniyos), the Frenchman.

When you asked me to recite the commentary of the Jubilees for you, I told you to have *Debtera* Gētahun recite for you [instead]. I said this because it is not proper for one *memhir* to interfere with another.

But now that we are separated (by space) I will recite to you. Until then, however, grant me a book of the Jubilees so that I do not sit idle. Let me annotate [it] and have it ready for you. I shall recite for you when you come. I did not think you would be delayed until now. May God restore your health. May He enable us to meet.

.....

Seyfu Welde Maryam says: Are you well? May God restore your health. Give Welette Gīyorgīs one thaler on my behalf so that she will not be sorry with me. I am waiting for you, expecting you to come. If you want me to come, let me come.

ደቤ፡ ስደ፡ ወልደ፡ ማር
 ም፡ ደሳ፡ ገደ፡ እግዚ
 አብሔር፡ ደማረዎ፡
 ወለተ፡ ጊዮርጊስ፡ እንደ
 ታዘንብኝ፡ ከደ፡ ብር፡ ደ
 ስጡልኝ፡ ገረ፡ እርሰዎ፡ ደ
 መጠሉ፡ ብደ፡ ገጠብቃለ
 ጉ፡ ፍ፡ ደሉኝ፡ እንደሆነ፡
 ልምጠ፡

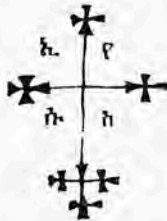
BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 541, Amharic original, 50x155 mm. Though I strongly suspect that *Melake Şhay* Wesen is the well-known governor of Adwa in the 1840's and early 1850's, *Ato* Wesen Gebre Amlak (see no. 188), I have not been able to establish this beyond all doubt. It was not uncommon at all for a cleric to be involved in secular administration. It is remarkable, however, that neither he himself nor others used the more prestigious title on other occasions. *Debtera* or *Memhir* Gētahun is mentioned in several other letters, e.g. nos. 71, 139, 144, 168 in this collection.

A note on the back of this letter (or letters if the part below the line should be regarded as a separate letter) informs us that it was received and answered at Gonder in April 1848.

Sahle Dingil to 'Abd ül-Mejīd, [April 1848]



ዘ ስፍራ፡ ማሕተም፡ ዘ ነገሥት ሁለተኛ፡ ስፍራ፡
ሣህለ፡ ድንግል፡ ዘ ረገሱ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡
ከብድሩ፡ መጅድሩ፡ ሥልጣን፡



መጽሐፈ፡ ትእዛዝ፡ ዘ ነገሥት ሁለተኛ፡ ስፍራ፡ ሣህለ፡
ድንግል፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡
ር፡ ዘ ይተወሐድ፡ በ መሰከት፡ ወ ይህ ስፍራ፡ በ ገዳት፡
ትብቅሕ፡ ገብ፡ ከብድሩ፡ መጅድሩ፡ ሥልጣን፡
በ ቱከጠንጢኖስ፡ መንግሥት፡ ሆኖ ለገደብ፡
በ ከከባም፡ መንግሥት፡ ሆኖ ለገደብ፡
የ ያ ገንዘብ፡ የ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ በ ከጳጳሩ፡ ከከከ፡
ዛ ራ፡ ድረ ስፍራ፡ ገብ፡ ሲተማኑ፡ መንግሥት፡
ም፡ አላህ፡ ከ ገተን፡ ሆኖ ለገደብ፡ ሲሰህ፡ ከ ገ
ተማ፡ ከከ መሰከት፡
ከ ገደብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡ ገብ፡



Lion Seal

This seal is that of the king of Ethiopia, Sahle Dingil, which he sent to 'Abd ül-Mejīd (Abdil Mejid), the *sultān*.

Jesus (in cross)

Letter [containing] the order of King of Kings Sahle Dingil, servant of the King of Kings, God, who is one in Divinity and three in person(s). May it reach 'Abd ül-Mejīd, the *sultān*. Why do you keep silent when the Greeks (*Rom Griik*) have taken by force that which we held, which has been in our hands up to this day, 305 years under the kingdom of Constantine and 1201 years under the kingdom of Islam? Let us not be robbed when there is a king like you. Have [it] returned to us.

How are you? Are you well? May God protect you.

Lion seal

LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 15, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 225 × 330 mm; fol. 16, free, incomplete English translation. The seal at the top, the cross and the first seven lines—in Gi'iz—are in red ink. The seal is the large (diameter 55 mm) lion seal of the emperor of Gondar. The head of the lion is topped by a cross. The seal has no legend. For the date of this letter, see no. 111.

This document and the following five are the most important primary source for the attempt by Sahle Dingil and the court of Gondar to regain possession of the Ethiopian convent at Jerusalem. For reasons explained in the note of no. 111 they have remained unknown to Ethiopian historians until now. No foreigners seem to have been involved in the initiative which took place at a time when Gondar had passed through great difficulties due to the civil wars (see *Nuovi documenti*, pp. 393–396).

Sahle Dingil to the Armenian Christians in Jerusalem, [April 1848]



Lion Seal

This seal is that of the king of Ethiopia, Sahle Dingil, which he sent to all the Christian Armenians.

Jesus (in cross)

Letter [containing] the order of King of Kings Sahle Dingil, servant of the King of Kings, God, who is one in Divinity and three in person(s). May it reach our Christian Armenian brothers, and Bishop Polos (*Abune Pawlos*).

The Ethiopian monks living in Jerusalem sent to me, saying, "They denied us our provisions which we have received (lit. existed) [from] ancient times until this day." And now, arrange for them as (it was) before; give them their food and drink; do not deprive them of it. How can you do this while occupying our quarters and our land? If you refuse, let us know the answer.

Lion seal

LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 19, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 230x330 mm; fol. 20, free, incomplete English translation. As in the preceding letter to *Sultān* 'Abd ūl-Mejīd, the imperial seal at the top and the introductory phrases—in Gi'iz—appear in red ink. The manner in which Bishop Polos is added (as addressee) to the Armenian Christians in Jerusalem indicates that he must have been in charge of their community in one capacity or other. While the letter to *Sultān* 'Abd ūl-Mejīd (no. 109) deals with the major historical problem of property rights at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, this one reflects the apparently growing unwillingness of the wealthy Armenian convent to provide for the Ethiopian monks in accordance with earlier agreements or established practice (see Enrico Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina* (Rome, 1954-57), II, pp. 197, 209-213; O. F. A. Meinardus, "The Ethiopians in Jerusalem", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LXXVI (1965), pp. 127-132).

For date and further references, see no. 111.

ዛቲ፡ ማሕተም፡ ዘንጉሥ፡ እትገሥጽ፡ ማህሰ፡ ይንግል፡
ዘፈነዎ፡ ኅበ፡ ነፍሱ፡ ሙ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ሰብኦ፡ ክር፡ ማንሃ፡



መጽሐፈ፡ ተከባዮ፡ ዘንጉሥ፡ ነገሥት፡ ማህሰ፡ ይንግል፡ ነብረ፡
ንጉሥ፡ ነገሥት፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዘይተወሐድ፡ በመሰጥት፡ ወ
ይሢሳስ፡ በገጽተ፡ ትብጻሕ፡ ኅበ፡ ክንግሥ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ሰብኦ
ክር፡ ማንሃ፡ ወኅበ፡ ክቡን፡ ጳውሎስ፡
በኢየሩሳሌም፡ ሦሎ፡ የኢተጥ፡ ጳውሎስ፡ ሳኩብኝ፡
ጥንት፡ እስከ፡ ዛሬ፡ ድረ፡ ሕይወት፡ ምግባችንን፡ ነቅ
ኛ፡ ብለው፡ ከሁንም፡ እንደ፡ ጥንተ፡ እንደነበረ፡ ክድርጉ
ባቸው፡ ምግባቸውን፡ መጠጣቸው፡ በሙሉ፡ እታጉ
ድሉባቸው፡ በፍራንሳይስ፡ ቦታችንን፡ እባኛት፡ ይዛቸው፡
ምነው፡ እንዲህ፡ ታደርጋባችሁ፡ ከምቢ፡ የምትሉ፡ እን
ደ፡ ሆን፡ ምሳሌን፡ ሳኩብኝ፡



Sahle Dingil to Samuel Gobat, 29 April [1848]



Lion Seal

May this letter from the king of Ethiopia, Sahle Dingil, reach Samuel Gobat, the patriarch (Samu'el Guba *betrek*).

How are you? Are you well? Make this message succeed for us. You are our close friend, the one we know. Take [it] to the king for us. Make the Armenians give to our people their provisions. Protect them. May God protect you. We have not forgotten you. You gave the book of the Gospel to everyone in Gonder and left. This is the sign.

This is written in the year of John on Saturday, Mīyazyā 22. *Aleqa Fenta* (the man) of Debre Birhan, who wrote this, sends his greetings (lit. says "How are you?").

Lion seal

LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 1, Amharic original, 105×335 mm; fol. 2, free, incomplete English translation. In this letter it is the imperial seal at the bottom that is in red ink. Though the year is missing in the dating, the appearance of the Evangelist and the day of the week make it possible to establish that this letter was written on 29 April 1848. The two preceding undated letters (nos 109, 110) were most certainly written on the same occasion as this one. The following four, though very similar, form a separate group as indicated by the different pattern of the cross, the change of seal and the fact that *Aleqa Fenta* (no. 92) wrote a covering letter of his own. I have not been able to establish whether they were written soon after the preceding three or later in the year. At any rate they were probably still in the country as late as December when *Ras Ali* added his plea for the protection of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem (no. 118), and it seems to have taken another year before they reached Samuel Gobat, who had been sent to Jerusalem as Anglican bishop in 1846 and who reported that he had "received letters from the King, from the Reis, and from several influential priests of Abyssinia" at the beginning of 1850 (*Samuel Gobat*, p. 271). Letters from Ali and Wibē to Queen Victoria about the situation of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem (nos 142, 143) were sent to Gobat on a later occasion and forwarded to London in June 1852. For Gobat's communications to the British Government, see FO 401/1, pp. 96, 101–102, 124a–126. As for the letters of Sahle Dingil to 'Abd ūl-Mejīd and Gobat's colleagues, Gobat seems to have taken the liberty to withhold them from the addressees. They were given to the archbishop of Canterbury by a great-granddaughter of Gobat's and incorporated in the collections at the Lambeth Palace Library as late as 1961.

Sahle Dingil to Kyrillos, [1848]



ከ ምንጉ ሆኖ፡ ነገሥት፡ ማህሰ፡ ደንግል፡
 ገብረ፡ ነገሥት፡ ነገሥት፡ ከገዢ ከህሎር
 ዘይት ወሎ፡ በመሰከት፡ ወይሄሳስ፡ በ
 ገንቱ፡ ተባኝ ስ፡ ወገኑ፡ ማረ፡ መልክክ
 ት፡ ነ፡ ላ፡ ላ፡ ስ፡ ርም፡ ዘኢየሩሳሌም፡
 በሰላሙ፡ ከገዢ ከህሎር፡ ከሙ፡ ከሜን፡

 ምንው፡ ስምታችን፡ ሲደረግ፡ ምን፡ ተላ
 ላችሁ፡ ከርመን፡ ግብ፡ ሲያጠቃችሁ
 ከስላም፡ ፈረንጅ፡ ሲበድላችሁ፡ ዕሌ
 ኒ፡ ነገሥት፡ ርም፡ ገና፡ ኢትዮጵያ፡
 በኢየሩሳሌም፡ ወሰ፡ ርዕተ፡ ከድርጋ፡ ስ
 ርታ ስች፡ ስሁሉ፡ ከላንተ፡ ስች፡ ተተ
 ርቡ፡ ስችሁ፡ ገዳማችን፡ ገዳር፡ ምላሳ
 ጠንገ፡ ግብ፡ ስች፡ ተምታሁ፡ ስል፡ ስ
 ሰው፡ ስል፡ ስችሁ፡ ከስመላሉላን፡
 ምስክርችን፡ ከላንተ፡ ስችሁ፡ ከምቢ፡
 ያሉ፡ ከገደሁ፡ ስች፡ ገረላን፡ ከገደተ፡ ስች፡
 ብተርፈኑ፡ ከላንተ፡ ወስዳችሁ፡ ስች፡
 ገም፡ ከትገኩ፡ ስች፡



Jesus (in cross) Lion seals

From King of Kings Sahle Dingil, servant of the King of Kings, God, who is one in Divinity and three in person(s). May this letter reach the Greek bishop (*pappase Rom*) of Jerusalem. In the peace of God, the Father. Amen.

Why are you silent when injustice is done to our people, when the Armenians and the Copts maltreat them, when the Muslims and the Franks (*Ferenj*) do injustice to them? Queen Helena has established us, Constantinople (*Rom*) and Ethiopia, as land owners in Jerusalem. You are nearer to us than anyone else. Since the Copts have taken away our monastery Dayr al-Sulṭān (*Dēr Silṭan*) and have done injustice to us, inquire and recover it for us. You are our witnesses. If they refuse, take our suffering upon yourselves. When [only] a small plot was left for us, you took it away from us. And now, leave it alone (for us).

LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 12, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 230×210 mm; fol. 13, free, incomplete English translation. For the date of the letter, see no. 111, and for the seals, no. 112. The black spot in the upper right corner is probably a badly applied imperial lion.

In Ethiopian history *Rom (Rum)* stands for Constantinople or the Byzantine Empire as well as for the Greek Orthodox Church. In these letters it is normally used to signify the Greek Orthodox community in Jerusalem, but in the reference to Queen Helena it seems better to translate "Constantinople and Ethiopia", the two powers which according to Ethiopian tradition originally shared the Holy Places. On the other hand *Ferenj* (Frank) remained the term normally used to signify Catholic. The combination *Rom Grik* in document no. 109 is probably an attempt to avoid confusion in a letter to a secular ruler. If this interpretation is correct, the addressee of the above letter is Kyrillos, Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem from 1845 to 1872 (Fedalto, "Liste vescovili", p. 19).

Fenta to Samuel Gobat, [1848]



ዛቴ፡ ምላክ፡ ዘ ክሰታ፡ ፈገገ፡ ብኣሌ፡ ደብረ፡ ብርሃን
 ተገዳሎ፡ ገብ፡ ኪጸኑ፡ ቅጹስ፡ ሰሙኤል፡ ጉባ፡ ዘህሉ-
 በኢየሩሳሌም፡ በሰላሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ከብ፡ ለሚን፡
 ክጅጉን፡ እንደተ፡ ጎህ፡ በጎ፡ ጎህን፡ እኒ፡ አረሻሁኽም፡
 ያንተን፡ አሳውትም፡ ወንጌል፡ የሰጠኸኑ፡ ወረቀት
 የሰጠኸኑ፡ ፈጽላ፡ ጽፈ፡ የሰጠሁህ፡ ምልክት፡ ጎህ-
 አሁንም፡ እንተ፡ ~~.....~~፡
 ተሚስ፡ መጠምጠሚያ፡ ስደድልኝ፡ ሰቀቅር፡ ምልክት
 ይሆናል፡ የሳክናቸውም፡ መገኘት፡ አባ፡ ወልደኪ
 ሮስ፡ አባ፡ ሚካኤል፡ አባ፡ ገብረ፡ ወልደ፡ አባ፡ ገብረ፡ ሥላ
 ሴ፡ አሲህ፡ ናቸው፡ ያንተንም፡ ምልክት፡ ያመጡ፡ ልን፡
 አሲህ፡ ናቸው፡ ወኪል፡ ይሁን፡ ብለው፡ አርሱ፡ ይሻሻል፡
 አሉን፡ እኛም፡ ጽፈን፡ ሰደድን፡



እትርሳኝ፡ ከወጃኹም፡ አታስረኝ፡
 አሉ፡ ስራህ፡ አሉ፡

Lion seal Jesus (in cross)

May this letter from *Aleqa* Fenta (the man) of Debre Birhan reach Bishop Samuel Gobat (*Eppis Qorppos* Samu'el Guba) who is in Jerusalem. In the peace of God, the Father. Amen.

How are you really? Are you well? I have not forgotten you. As for you, I do not know. That you gave me the Gospel and that you gave me paper and that I copied the alphabet and gave to you is the sign. Now send me a tunic and a turban. It will be a sign of friendship. The monks whom we have sent are these: *Abba* Welde Kīros, *Abba* Mīka'el, *Abba* Gebre Weld and *Abba* Gebre Sillasē. These are the ones who brought your message to us, suggesting that you should be [our] agent. They said to us, "He is the best." And we have written [about this] and sent [it] off.

Lion seal

Do not forget me. *Ras* Alī says, "Do not allow your friend to forget me."

LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 8, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 155×220 mm; fol. 9, free, incomplete English translation. Also this letter by *Aleqa* Fenta is stamped twice with *Ras* Alī's seal, in red with a cross drawn inside the seal at the top, in black with a cross outside the seal at the bottom. For the date of this letter, see no. 111. The hand-writing in this and the six preceding letters is identical. It can therefore be safely assumed that *Aleqa* Fenta has written all of them.

Of the messengers who had obviously arrived from Jerusalem with news about the problems there and some kind of offer from Samuel Gobat to try to help, *Abba* Welde Kīros (see no. 28) was probably the person who had been educated in Rome and had served for some years in the Roman Catholic mission before returning to the Orthodox fold, and *Abba* Gebre Sillasē the monk from the Ṭana region who succeeded Mahiṣente Mīka'el as *iḥegē* in 1848 or 1849.

Ababayyehu et al. to Antoine and Michel d'Abbadie, [April? 1848]

ፆቤ፣ አበባ፣ አየጥ፣ ካቶሊካዊ፣ ዘቴ፣ ጠማር፣ ዘተ
 ፈነወት፣ እምገብ፣ ሰይፍ፣ ወልደ፣ ማርያም፣ ወብሳት፣
 ገብረ፣ መሢሐ፣ ተብዳሐ፣ ገብ፣ እግዚአብሔር፣ እገጠን
 ዮሐንስ፣ ወራሕ፣ ሚካኤል፣ ከገደብ፣ ፍራንሰዎስ፣
 እንደተ፣ አካቶ፣ ጉዳ፣ ገን፣ አካቶ፣ ጉዳ፣ እቃው፣ ሰው
 ጉዳ፣ ገን፣ እቃው፣ ገም፣ ሦስቱ፣ ጉዳ፣ እገጠብ
 ቃላት፣ ከባቶ፣ ሌቶ፣ ምድባ፣ ስቴ፣ ማርያም፣ ሸዊ
 ቶ፣ ከሁ፣ ገም፣ ወረ፣ ብንጠይቅ፣ እቃቸው፣ ገን፣ ተ
 ቀሙ፣ እርሷቸው፣ ከመሰጠት፣ እገሰጡ፣ እቃ
 ቸው፣ ገን፣ ራሱ፣ ሚካኤል፣ ይዘው፣ ወጡ፣ ጌታ፣
 እገጠን፣ ሰገን፣ ግን፣ ደጀገማቸው፣ ካሳ፣ ይዘው፣ ሰገ
 ይቸው፣ ቢሉት፣ ጌዳ፣ ልቀሰ፣ በገባቸው፣ ገን፣
 ብንጠባ፣ ብንጠጣም፣ የቀመስ፣ ከይመስ
 ገም፣ ወረቀት፣ ባይመጣ፣ እውነት፣ ተይዘዋል፣
 በማለት፣ ጨገቆናል።

ጌታ፣ ፎርሱስ፣ እጅግ፣ ተጨንቀዋል፣ ወረቀት፣
 ባይመጣ፣ ከሁ፣ ገም፣ ቢመጡም፣ ቢሰጡን፣
 ደግን፣ ተቸሁን፣ ተሰጡ፣ ይሰጡን፣ አይዋል፣
 አይደር፣ ለኛም፣ ይሰጡን።



Ababayyehu, the Catholic, says: May this letter sent by Seyfu Welde Maryam and *Blatta* Gebre Mesih reach my lord Antoine (Inṭoniyos) and *Ras* Michel (Mika'el), the French brothers. How are you? Are you well? Are the things and the people safe? The three of us are guarding the things. The mules are safe at Maryam Shewīto.

And now, there is much sorrow and weeping among us when we ask for news and they tell us, "Their belongings were captured, [but] they escaped," and others [say], "As for their belongings, *Ras* Michel took them and got away, but *Dejjazmach* Kasa captured Mr. Antoine (*Gēta* Inṭoniyos)." When we eat and drink, we do not feel that we taste anything. When no letter came, we were distressed, believing that he was really captured.

Mr. Charles (*Gēta* Qērilos) is very distressed because no letter has come. And now, whether you come or stay longer, write (lit. send) at once about your safety. Do not delay. Also write to us.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 538, Amharic original, 90x180 mm. This letter deals with the final departure of the d'Abbadie brothers from Gonder in early 1848. The rumours which distressed the writers were somewhat exaggerated. In his diary Antoine noted "effets saisis" on the 21st of February and "effets rendus" on the 22nd, adding on the 28th that Michel's belongings had been dispatched (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 267, p. 328). In a letter from Wegera on 9 April (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 93-94), Antoine writes to his brother Charles that *Dejjazmach* Kasa "ne nous ont pas encore pillés" and describes how Kasa's mother had cared for him during his recent illness: "ma mère ou ma sœur ne pourrait mieux faire". On the other hand, Antoine had parted with a mirror and four ells of silk, for "la dame porte le nom expressif de 'elle ne se rassasie pas'." In fact, her name Attitṭeggeb means "she will not satiate, will not bore", "she is enjoyable". For the problematic situation in which the d'Abbadie brothers found themselves, see also Michel's undated letter to Antoine, NAF 23848/II, fol. 244.

Other sources (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 395-396) inform us that Kasa chased away Goshu and Birru from Gonder on 17 Feb. 1848, marched to Metemma and the unlucky battle with the Egyptians (at Dabarkī in March) and returned to celebrate Easter (23 April) at Gonder.

Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie, [May 1848]

ዛቲ፡ ቃ ል፡ ዘተ ፈ. ነ ወተ፡ እ ምኅተ፡ ገብረ፡ ል.
 የሱሱ፡ ትብዳሐ፡ ትቡእ፡ ገዢ እዩ፡ እቲ፡ ጠንዮ ስ፡ ፊ
 ረንሳዊ፡ እንዲት፡ ሰነባቱ፡ ናተሐ፡ ነገሥቱ፡ እለ
 ቀ፡ መደጉ ስ፡ ዝር መረ፡ ዳሩ፡ ገን፡ እሊደ፡ ሰዎች፡
 ዓና፡ የሐዲት፡ ሁሳት፡ ሰንበት፡ ሆኖቸው፡ ም
 ንምን፡ አልዘላቁም፡ እገዢ እብሐር፡ ይጠገ
 ቀዎ።



May these words sent by Gebre İyyesus reach my lord Antoine (Inṭoniyos), the Frenchman. How have you been?

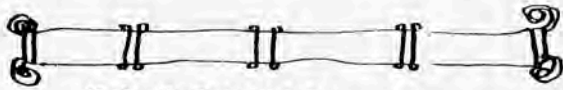
The *Fitha Negest* is completed. They have started to decorate [the cover]. It is two weeks, however, since those people went to Ṭana. They have not shown up. May God protect you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 537. Amharic original, 115×145 mm. Antoine left Gonder for the coast on 30 April and a note on the letter states that it was received at Aksum on 4 June.

Gebre İyyesus, who normally styled himself *qen gēta*, was one of Antoine d'Abbadie's most important and most capable collaborators. In his beautiful hand he copied numerous documents—one letter (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 593) lists a *tarik*, *Gedle Lalibela*, *Meṣihafe Kristinna*, *Meṣihafe Nuzazē*, *Haṣure Mesqel* and *Siqoqawe Dingil*. Gebre İyyesus appears in Gebre Mesīh's report of people paid for services at Gonder in early 1844 (no. 73), and may have joined the d'Abbadies as early as 1842. He does not, however, seem to have worked for them continuously, for in 1844 he also appears as the *ṣehafe ti'izaz* of *Dejjazmach Wibē* (*Giornale*, vol. III, 27 April 1844). For some years after the d'Abbadies had left Ethiopia in 1848, he was Antoine's most diligent correspondent and a capable chronicler of current events (see nos 128, 129, 139, 144, 154–157, 167, 168).

With our present knowledge of nineteenth-century Ethiopian biography, identifications are hazardous. Nevertheless it is tempting to raise the question whether Tēwodros's father confessor and envoy to Sa'id Pasha, *Līqe Memhīran* Gebre İyyesus, is not the same person as Antoine d'Abbadie's *qen gēta*. The Protestant missionary J. M. Flad (*Notes*, pp. 77–78) commented that he was learned, open-minded and humble and a friend of Amharic. Coming from a Protestant missionary, the emphasis on Amharic was as important as the other virtues mentioned.

Alī Alula to Samuel Gobat, [Dec.? 1848]



ዘቲ፡ ጠጣር፡ ዘተረፈ፡ ጠቅ፡ ንዎ፡ ትበ፡
ንሉሉ፡ ስሉ፡ ትጠግሎ፡ ትበ፡ ሳሙኤል
ል፡ ግባ፡ ጳጳስ፡ ዘኢየሱስ ኢየሱስ፡ ገሊ
የኛ ንኢየሱስ፡ ትገሰ፡ ወይ፡ ኢየሱስ
ሳሙኤል፡ የሚመጠው፡ ሰው፡ ሁሉ፡
ወኪል፡ ይሁኑ፡ ልክ፡ እንቅ፡ ስሉ፡ ንሰ
ጠቅ፡ ዋሰሁ፡ በታቸው፡ ገም፡ የሂደው
ገ፡ ያለሙሉሉልኛ፡ ስኔ፡ ገቡ፡ ሳውደገ
ጋራ፡ ስገ፡ የኛ፡ ይህ፡ ገ፡ ታል፡ ገ፡ ግራ
ቴቶ፡ ጠጣር፡ ንሉሉ ስሁ፡ ታሉ፡ ገ፡ ስሉ
ዎ፡ ዘገደ፡ ንገደመጣ

May this letter sent by Ras Alī reach Samuel Gobat (Samu'el Goba), the bishop (*pappas*) of Jerusalem.

[Please] be the agent for me for every one who sets out from Ethiopia and comes to Jerusalem. I will give them money. Recover for me their quarters which were lost. When I meet with Plowden (Bulawdīn), I shall send this message in a letter to the queen so that instructions (lit. word) will come to you.

Lion seal



LPL, Ms. 1747, fol. 6, Amharic original, 295x210 mm; fol. 7, English translation. This letter, which is in the same handwriting as the earlier letters to Jerusalem, *i. e.* in the hand of *Aleqa Fenta*, was most probably written in December 1848, when *Ras Ali's* Scottish retainer John Bell (in Ethiopia c. 1840–1860) wrote as follows to Bishop Gobat:

My Dear Sir

Ras Ali desires me to write you begging that you will become protector of all the Pilgrims of Abyssinia at the suggestion of *Abba Guebra Weld*, & *Abba Michael*—also *Abba Welda Kiros*. Accompanying is a letter in Amharic to the same effect from the *Ras*. It will give him great pleasure to hear that the poor monks of Abyssinia have a protector in Jerusalem if you will take the task upon yourself.

Devra Tabor 28th Dec. 1848

Yours obediently J J Bell

PS Mr Plowden has also received letters for Her Majesty to the same effect. As he is Consul of this country it is better that they should go through him.

J J B

This letter, preserved in Basel's Staatsarchiv, Privataarchiv 653, XXX/3, is sealed in the same manner as *Ali's* letter, including the cross above the head of the lion.

Walter Plowden had spent four years (1843–1847) as a travelling companion of John Bell in Ethiopia. He returned to the country in August 1848 and negotiated the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1849 with *Alī*. In view of the postscript, it seems safe to conclude that Bell did not dispatch his and *Alī's* letters until after Plowden's arrival at Debre Tabor in February 1849. They may have been delayed until December, when a group of monks including a former *ichegē*, *Gebre Maryam*, left for Jerusalem (*Giornale*, IV, p. 123). Consul James Finn in Palestine reported (FO 401/1, pp. 96, 101) that Gobat had received letters from *Alī* and Plowden (Bell?) in 1850. He did not mention any letters addressed to Queen Victoria. On 29 June 1852, however, Gobat forwarded letters from *Alī* and *Wibē* to Victoria (FO 177, fol. 76), but since it does not seem likely that the bishop would have kept letters addressed to the queen for two years, I have provisionally concluded that these (nos 142 and 143) were written later and that the letters referred to in the postscript were lost.

In the last sentence of *Alī's* letter it is possible to read "from her" instead of "to you".

The disciple kisses the ground and then kneels with his sinful head upon the footprints of the pure feet of His Holiness, the blessed father, the glittering pearl, father of the *asbāt* and the *anbāt*, crown of the Copts, the father and the master, the patriarch, *Anbā* Buṭrus, patriarch of the great city of Alexandria—may his days remain free from trouble and may the light of his teachings not cease to shine in the hearts of [his] flock with the light of suns and moons and protect them from all misdeeds and burdens [of sin], by the blessing of his devout prayers which are accepted by night and by day. May [God] cause him to remain upon his throne as the splendour of his age and times throughout a long life, by the power of the Messiah and all the martyrs and saints and [Our] Lady among all women (lit. of the worlds). Amen.

After presenting greetings imbued with respect and lofty and splendid salutations, and kissing the feet and the places they will tread upon, and imploring devout prayers, perpetually—then, if you are so gracious as to ask about our lowly self, [know that] we are, thanks to your devout prayers, in good circumstances and health. We ask only about that holy presence and the resplendent countenance which is protected by divine providence. Next, what is laid before you without imposing upon Your Holiness is the information that our blessed son the archpriest (*qummuṣ*) Girgis, your son the Antonian, has come to us in Abyssinia and informed us of the announcement of the death of the father, the bishop, *Anbā* Damyānūs. He also told us that the catechists (*al-mu'allimūn*) who live in the region of the Sudan have a desire to consecrate the afore-mentioned as bishop over them, and they have recommended him. Accordingly, we have ventured to present this matter to Your Holiness, so that your attention may be drawn to the afore-mentioned and you may make him share in the apostolic rank; for since your sons in that region have recommended him, the afore-mentioned is more suitable than others. So, for our sake, do not disappoint our hope and trust in you, but satisfy the ambition of the afore-mentioned, since it is God's task to fulfil the desires of the heart. He is your son and closely attached to you. All are your sons, but because of his great effort in coming to us, travelling all this long distance, and due to his high hope in us, [we beg you] not to disappoint him. Do not dampen our hopes in Your Holiness, weak though we are, for you are far more informed and knowledgeable [than we] in all matters, and you know the thoughts and affairs of monks. We shall say no more to you on that matter by way of recommendation.

Earlier we sent Your Holiness a letter from us in which we informed you of the departure from Abyssinia of De Jacobis the European (*Ya'qub al-Ifranjī*), and the difficulties that befell us before we had the afore-mentioned ousted. Do not forget us in your devout prayers, for none of our endeavours will be successful unless your prayers and your heart are with us. Do not deprive us of your letters containing [news of] your good health, for how many a time have we [not] written to Your Holiness [asking] for books that were necessary for us, but you have not sent us a single one of them. So we implore you to send them, as is to be expected from Your Exalted Holiness, for you know that without books we are not able to answer these stiff-necked people who are [so fond of] discussion and argumentation. Send us the exegesis of the New and Old [Testaments] and the book [called] "The Confession of the Fathers" (*I'tirāf al-Ābā'*).

This is imperative, O my master and my father, because our honour is your honour. We cannot do without books like these which will give us assistance in matters of faith. If you send them to us, we will write to the scribes in Egypt to make [new] copies of them for the prosperous patriarchate (*al-qallāyat al-'āmira*). We prostrate at your feet begging that you send us the books mentioned above. God knows the difficulty we suffer on behalf of the Christian faith. Your Holiness hears about this all the time. God willing, and with the blessing of your prayers, we shall certainly return to Gonder. After we re-enter Gonder, I am resolved through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of your prayers to select a group of worthy priests and

send them to the Galla of the interior to baptize in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for us concerning this matter so that our Lord may bring it to pass for us and make our endeavours successful, through the blessing of your accepted prayers; do not forget us in your devout prayers at any time.

Abundant spiritual greetings from me to the noble fathers, the firm and mighty pillars, the father, the bishop, *Anbā* Sarābamiyun and *Anbā* Abrāām, and all the fathers, the bishops of the prosperous thrones, and all the fathers, the monks in the synods (*al-majāmi*'), and to all the priests and monks in the prosperous patriarchate. Do not at any time deprive us of your letters and do not forget us in your devout prayers. Do not put us out of your noble mind and thoughts.

And may our Lord Jesus Christ give you a long life and sustain you on your throne for many years through lengthy and good times through the prayers of the Lady (*al-Sayyida*), the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind, and all the saints. Amen.

[In the year] ???4 [*sic*] [of the] Coptic [era], on the 5th of the month of Tūbah. From the lowliest of your disciples who implores your devout prayers, the wretched Selama by name, metropolitan of the kingdom (*dawla*) of Abyssinia.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Coptic Patriarchate, Merrit Boutros Ghali, no. 146, Arabic original with Selama's large seal. This second preserved letter by Selama to Buṭrus is dated the 5th of Tūbah (13 Jan.) with all figures of the year smudged but the last which quite clearly seems to be "4". This must, however, be a mistake since it is inconceivable that Selama could have written this letter just two days before no. 103, dated 15 Jan. 1848, in which he carefully lists the letters written after his expulsion from Gonder in 1846 as well as recounts the events of the previous year. In January 1848 he was still hoping to have De Jacobis banished from the country, and in October he succeeded in effecting a temporary expulsion. In this letter he states that he has already informed the patriarch of this, unfortunately in a letter which seems also to have been lost. In all probability this letter was also written not too long after the expulsion while Selama still hoped to return to Gonder within the near future, which makes January 1849 a likely date.

At this point Selama was clearly making plans to face up to the challenges presented by the Catholic missions, not only within his see. He wanted to have a Coptic colleague consecrated for the Sudan, and envisaged sending missionaries of his own to the Oromo of the southwest, the field to which Massaja had sent his Capuchin co-workers. For his work among the "stiff-necked" Ethiopians, he felt that he needed theological literature. His pleas and promises to arrange for the replacement of whatever books he received would seem to indicate that he had little support from the patriarchate.

The two words *asbāt* and *anbāt* in the first sentence seem to have been used merely to effect a rhyme. The first means tribes (or people), especially the tribes of Israel, the second the Nabateans

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Walter Plowden, [Feb. 1849]

መ ልእክ ት፡ ዘተረፈ ሰው ት - እ ም
 ኅ በ፡ ደጅ፡ እ ዝሰሃ ች፡ ሙዚ፡፡ ት
 ብ ጸ ሕ፡ ኅ በ፡ በ ግ ድ፡፡ ሞራ፡ የሰላ
 ሰ ሩ፡ ሰ ሞ ች፡ ቢ ሆን፡ ራ፡ ግ ደሆ
 ን፡ ር ት፡ ብ ታ ገ ጂ፡ ከ ም ጽ ሞ ፡
 ባ ታ ገ ጂ፡ ካ ገ ር ህ፡ ል ከ ህ፡ እ
 ስ መ ግ ል ጂ፡ ለ መ በ ጉ ቱ ም ፡
 ሰ ሞ ች፡ እ ገ ር፡ ቢ ወ ዱ፡ እ ገ ር፡
 ሰ ጥ ች፡ ደ መ ወ ዝ፡ ቢ ወ ዱ፡ ደ
 መ ወ ዝ፡ ሰ ጥ ች፡ እ ሞ ራ ች ወ፡
 እ ለ ሆ፡፡

May the letter sent by *Dejjaz-
 mach* Wibē reach Plowden
 (Bulad). Bring me men who
 make lime, if possible five,
 if impossible, three; from
 Massawa if you can find
 [there], if you cannot find
 [there], send to your country
 [for them]. I will provide for
 the people that come, giving
 land [to them] if they want
 land and wages if they want
 wages.

FO 1/5, fol. 306, Amharic original, 315×180 mm; fol. 307, English translation. Though the original is unsealed, this letter is certainly authentic. Forwarded to London in a dispatch from Debre Tabor dated 3 March 1849, it was in all probability written and given to Plowden when he visited Wibē on his way to Debre Tabor the month before.

Wibē was at this time planning to build a new church and residence at Deresgē. The contemporary translation written in Plowden's hand is as follows:

Dejjaj Oobey greeting to Mr. Plowden. If you can find five or three workmen if possible at Massowah, if not by sending to your country, builders, or masons, bring them for me. If they wish for lands or appointments, I will give them plenty, if they wish for wages, I will give them wages.—And take care of them.

The word translated "land" (*ager*) actually means "country", "district", etc. What Wibē is offering may therefore be district governorships which would entitle the workmen to collect taxes in kind themselves. Plowden tried to get the craftsmen requested but was instructed to "divert his [Wibē's] thoughts from the notion of obtaining the assistance of English workmen" (FO 1/5, fols 347-348).

May this message sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē reach Victoria (Zīqtorya), king [*sic*] of the English. In the past Massawa, as far as the sea, was in the hands of our fathers. Later, when we fought with each other, the Turks came and took it by force, against our will. Then two years ago, they sent an army and occupied Minkullu and the port of Dehono. In consequence, when the *nā'ib* stopped [paying] the tribute which he used to send me regularly, this year I sent an army, chased away the Turks and confined them to Massawa.

You, too, are a king [*sic*] of Christians who loves all Christians. Because you are strong, I seek your friendship in order that you may help us so that the Muslims (lit. the Muslim army) whom you also dislike do not come and pillage and covet our country, but remain without acquiring (lit. reaching) land or tribute, and so that the *nā'ib* does not touch (lit. reach) my official. My soldiers, unintentionally, out of ignorance, burned the house of the consul at Minkullu. When I heard [this] I was very sad, because what we want most is the friendship of the English. It is in this way that we will know that you love Abyssinia.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Wibē.

FO 1/5, fol. 310, Amharic original, 200×315 mm; fol. 311, English translation (with significant errors). The same Amharic/Arabic seal was used by Wibē later the same year on a letter to the French consul at Massawa (no. 133) as well as in 1852. The authenticity is therefore beyond doubt in spite of the fact that it has been penned by Plowden's secretary or at least someone who accompanied him to Debre Tabor.

The letter was written when Plowden passed through Tigray and Simēn on his way to Debre Tabor in February 1849 and dispatched from Debre Tabor on 3 March. The main purpose was to apologize for the burning down of Plowden's residence the month before. The reaction of the British government with regard to the coast was that "it would not be advisable for Her Majesty's Government at present to meddle" (FO 1/5, fol. 320), and Wibē was informed that the *sultān* was also a friend of Great Britain (fols 322–323).

Goshu Zewdē to Giustino De Jacobis [1849?]

ላቲ፡መ ል እክት፡ዘጸጅ፡
 ከዝ ማቸ፡ጎቹ፡ትብጻሕ፡
 ጎበ፡አቡ፡ገ፡ያዕቆብ፡። እጅግ
 ገን፡እንዲት፡አሁ፡በዜና፡
 አምናም፡ወረቀት፡ከጽ
 ርሐ፡ገብረ፡ማርያም፡ስ
 ድጅ ልዎ፡ነበረ፡። አሁን
 ም፡መ ልካም፡መ ነጠር፡
 ይሰዩዱ ልኛ፡። እኒም፡ያ
 ከኛን፡አሰድ ልዎ አሁ፡
 ማክኢ ልክርሰዎ፡ዘን
 ድ፡ሁሉም፡ሳክ፡ብሁኛ
 ል፡። እንግዲህ፡ጉዳዩን፡
 ሁሉ፡ከርሰዎ፡ዘንድ፡የም
 ልክ፡ነው፡። አሁንም፡
 ማክኢ ልክ፡ዘንድ፡እሸክ
 ድቸ፡ልኪ አሁ፡ሲመሰ
 ል፡አሁኛ ትው፡ይሰዩ
 ድ፡ልኛ፡።

May this letter from *Dejjazmach* Goshu reach
 Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune Ya'iqob*). How are
 you really, [though known to me only] by
 hearsay? Last year I sent you a letter with
 ሻርኪ ገብረ ማርያም. Now send me [a pair of]
 good field glasses. I will also send you what
 you tell me. Michel (*Mika'el*) has told me to
 write (lit. send) everything to you. So I am
 going to write (lit. send) to you about all my
 affairs. And now, I have sent [some] servants
 to Michel (*Mika'el*). When they return, send
 them off and see to it that they are accom-
 panied [on their way].

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 80, Amharic original, 90×190 mm. Though difficult to date with certainty, this letter would
 seem to fit best in late 1848 or in 1849 after Michel had taken farewell of Goshu to return to France. I have opted for
 1849 because of the reference to a letter the previous year and because Goshu might have been expected to use his
ras-title until his reconciliation with Ali in the Spring of 1849. The letter shows that Michel had established contact
 between Goshu and the Catholic bishop, whom Goshu addresses as *abun*.

ሻርኪ ገብረ ማርያም is mentioned in *Vicende* (p. 480) as the monk who carried *Abune Selama's* orders to Goshu and
 Birru to destroy Gonder some time after Selama's expulsion in 1846.

Though "*menetter*" could of course mean simply "eyeglasses", as it does today, it is more likely that Goshu is asking
 for field glasses, a highly valued article in the last century.

Selama to Bākhūm, 2 Aug. 1849



اللهم صل على
الشيخ محمد

الشيخ محمد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 هذه بركة كاملة والتمهه شامله الى ذات الابن المبارك الذي الازرود كسي الشمار للمعلم والاشرف المتقبل الوفا
 الحبيب المعلم باخو الشيخ الصفي السيب العلم العلامة الفصيل وحيد عصره السبيل جبر العلم المشار اليه بالبيان الحافظ لتمام العباد والبيان
 المنطق المشهور صاحب الفصاحة النحرير العليق الحبير بارك الله عليه واعدده وبالسرور وشقه ولازالت ايامه صافيه
 من الكد والارواح اعداهه بحيمه بالزرايا والاوزار ولا برحت مساعيه تايده في فعل الصلاح وسماح الاصل والصحه ليدته
 مناشا وخلقنا ونفسه باجمه في افعال البري لا حين استقامت اذ رفع حجت وسنده بالسود الى يوم الخلود
 بهمة به الجود والسبه الكرام التوريات الفضله الجود وجميع الجيوس الملوين وكل الدوايا والصدقه من اهل
 انما تحمد هذه البركات الالهيه والادعيه الابديه والتجات الفلديه تنزل الى الله الرحوم متفرعين لكي يتخذ على
 العفو والصفح وروام الايام العتيه ومعرفه كل حيلته وخلص النفس ليعطي بالساده الابدقيه ثم الذي بيده ينزل
 على الولد والشيخ الشيخ العتيه سائنا حضا عطاياكم ها ويا سلاستكم وارسلناكم وده مع الجيوس
 الفاضله والذرايا المعريه فلم ورد لنا عن ذلك الخايريه مع اننا نحن من كل حين نستحضر فكم الحنايات
 بالانفلاق شانه اياكم السزيفه الحاويه التاكم العذبه المنيعه فانه وان كنت على بعدكم بالجسد من حيا مسورة
 عندكم في ارض ارض الاخرم الا ان نركم فدائما اسلون بالانوار اسلامكم الذي شرعها التلوه والحواطر ونفراجها الارواح والنفوس
 ونسأل الله ان يبارك علمكم ويحسن اليكم ويعطكم سعاده الدارين ويبيحكم اذمة التورين وعلمكم من سائر
 الحق والذرايا ويضع عنكم كل الزلايا وسيمم في ذلك اليوم الفصد الصوة الحوا للذيق القابل للانشاء الملك بعدكم من انشا
 العالم والذين لمادك جيفا صلوات الله على العديين بل الاول والابناء والصالحين وكل الطوائف وتكونوا اهل النور
 مبارك وبالاعمال الصالحة فان شرب وجم اياته حوسن حوسن وحلاسن وامين وعلمك بنا التزمه تاسا والنهال
 ومن يد السلام انشا والفا مع تحية والشا وفضل السلام الرجائي على جميع ما تجوده منكم الشرف والحق واحد
 باسمه وبالاذن وطلا لاكم المسامح والله سالى جميعهم ومهمهم وبنفسهم اهبكم ولا يجمعهم منكم وايضا تبرم انتم
 من الانهم ما عذنا غنروا اولنا الشيخين هم الانفولون لعل من الحش الاشد اكتمنا الا هم يوم تم تبرم
 من الذين لا انسا ويعرفون لاكتساب الرنج للمخشي الديلوب ولا انفلون الا ابتدا كتمنا والله يحفظكم والسلام
 ارب عمل التكم والتمهه والبركه شتمكم والتكمله فاه ابريا سروديا امين اللهم
 في شهر ابيب سنة 1267

God is my helper. I shall not fear.
 In the name of God the benevolent and merciful. Glory be to God on high.
 Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.
 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

This perfect blessing and all-inclusive grace goes forth to [our] blessed, devout and orthodox son, the honoured deacon and venerable archon, our beloved son *Mu'allim Bākhūm*, the *shaykh*, the wise, the pure(?), the learned, the distinguished scholar, the unique of his age, the nobleman, the repository (lit. sea) of learning, the cynosure (lit. one pointed to with the fingers), the celebrated memorizer of rhetoric (*al-hāfiz*

al-ma'ānī wa'l-bayān), the logician, the skilled master of eloquence, the accomplished philosopher. May God bless him, make him happy and grant him joy. May his days ever be free from distress and his enemies beset by calamities and crimes. May his endeavours always be steadfast with regard to pious work and godly conduct, [may] health be a bed and a cover to his body, and [may] his soul always succeed in acts of righteousness at all times. May his glory be enhanced and adorned with felicity until the day of eternity by the power of the Lord of hosts and of [Our] Lady, the Virgin, the mother of light, endowed with abundance and generosity, and of all the heavenly hosts and all the men of God and of the righteous. Amen.

And now, after presenting divine blessing and pastoral prayers and cordial salutations, we humbly beseech the merciful God that he grant you bodily health and the continuance of pleasant days and the remission of all sin and the salvation of the soul in order that it may enjoy eternal bliss.

So, what we inform you of, O dear son and noble *shaykh*, is that we previously received a letter from you containing greetings. We sent you a reply with some Abyssinians who were going to Egypt, but no news about it has reached us in spite of the fact that we are constantly asking you for news (one word illegible). So please do not withhold from us your sublime letters, containing your sweet and enjoyable words, for truly, even if I am far from you in the body, my spirit is held captive with you. The news which arrives is not aflame unless kindled by you. Therefore always exchange with us information about your well-being, which gladdens [our] hearts and minds and refreshes [our] spirits and eyes. We ask the Almighty to bless you and be charitable to you, to give you happiness in both worlds and grant you the permanency of the sun and the moon, to save you from all trials and tribulations and ward off from you all calamities and let you hear on the prepared day the sweet and delightful voice saying, "Come and inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the beginning of the world."

May this happen to all of us through the prayers of the Virgin and the saints and all the men of God and the martyrs and the virtuous and all the beatified, and may you be blessed and triumphant through good works and defended and safeguarded at every moment by His protection. Amen and amen. Blessing from us upon you a second and a third [time] and abundant greetings a thousand and a thousand together with love and affection and spiritual greetings from us to all who are in your noble residence, everybody individually by his name, more especially your blessed children. May God keep them and cause them to grow and bring them close to you (lit. your eyes) and [may He] not deprive them of you.

We advise you, too, that from now on you should tell our Christian children that they should not accept anyone from Abyssinia unless he has a note from us, since there are many among them [*sic*] who are against our faith and come to gain worldly profit. Do not receive them unless they have our notes. May God preserve you and may the peace of the Lord descend upon you and grace and blessing encompass you. Thanks be to God always, for ever and ever. Amen.

[In] the year 1565, on the 27th of the month of Abīb [of the] Coptic [era].

Coptic Patriarchate Library, Mss. Hist. 15. Arabic original, 220×300 mm. The existence of this letter inserted at the front of the 400-page manuscript of biographies of the Coptic patriarchs was noted by Marcus Simaika in his *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt*, vol II (Cairo, 1942). The left edge of the document is in very poor condition and sufficient care was not taken when it was photographed. Nabih Kamel Daud kindly supplemented the text for me. The words or letters missing in the photograph appear to the left of the thin line with the conjectural ones in brackets.

The quotation "Come and inherit the kingdom . . ." is from Matt. 25:34.

Tewelde Medhin to Antoine d'Abbadie, 9 Aug. 1849

ዛቲ፡ ጠዋር፡ ዘተፈነወት፡ እምድን፡ ጠፍ፡ መድኅን፡
 ኢትዮጵያዊ፡ ትብቅርት፡ ነፍስ፡ ነፍስ፡ ጠንፍህ፡ ልረንሳዊ፡
 ሰብዓዊ፡ ሰከ፡ ወሰን፡ ሰብዓዊ፡ ሰብዓዊ፡ ወይን፡ ከኔስ፡ ጦርሰዎ
 ን፡ ወይን ጅንት፡ ወይን ጅንት፡ እድርሰው፡ ብዮ፡ ከሰንደር፡ እስከ፡
 ኢየሱስ ጳውሎስ፡ ደረሰ፡ ያደረጉልኝ፡ በጉንት፡ እስከሰውት፡
 ከደረሰኝ ም፡ ዛሬ ም፡ የምበሰው፡ የምጠጠው ም፡ የሰው፡
 ነው፡ ገንዘብ ም፡ የፈሰሰው፡ ከደምስል ም፡ የሰው ጅ፡ ይ
 በቃኛ ል፡ ነፍሰ፡ ጠን፡ በኢትዮጵያ ም፡ በመሣልት ም፡ ብመሰክ
 ወ፡ ትርጓሜው፡ ከጅግ፡ ቸገረኝ፡ ከግር፡ ከጅግ፡ ከጠሁት፡ መ
 ጽሑፍ፡ ከርባ፡ ቀን፡ ከሰዎን፡ ወይን ጅንት፡ ትርጓሜ፡ ከደገም፡ ከሁን ም፡
 ከግዚክ ስብሐት፡ ያውቀል፡ ልግሞም፡ ከንጅ፡ ከደደሰ፡ ምንው፡
 ይመረጥኛል፡ እርሰዎ፡ ከባቲ፡ ነፍስ፡ ከኔም፡ ልጅ ም፡ ነፍስ፡ ከሁ
 ን ም፡ የኒውን፡ ጽትሐት፡ ነገሥት፡ ይገዙ፡ ከንደህን፡ ይግዙት፡
 ሞገሱን፡ እርሰዎ፡ ከጅንት፡ ብር፡ ብሰው፡ ተኖግረው ታል፡ የኔስ፡
 ከውታረ፡ በገኘ፡ ስም፡ ሰከቱ፡ ከውታረ፡ ከግሪት፡ ይባላል፡ ከስቱ
 ም፡ ከውታረ፡ በግዛ፡ ይባላል፡ ከሌቱ፡ ከውታረ፡ ዜማ፡ ይባላል፡
 የገጠደኝ ም፡ የገጠደኝ ም፡ ወራ፡ ከሌስ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ወረቀት፡ ከስ
 ል ም፡ ተጽሕፈ፡ ከመ፡ ረቡ፡ ሰከሐሌ፡ በገምስት፡ ወይን ጅንት
 ምት፡ ምስረት፡



May this letter sent by Welde Medhin, the Ethiopian, reach Antoine (Inṭoniyos), the Frenchman. Peace be to you and peace be to your brothers and mother.

As for me, what am I going to do about your friendship? I will not as long as I live (lit. until death) forget the kindness you have shown to me all the way from Gonder to Jerusalem. What I eat and drink even today comes from you (lit. is yours). Do not think it is money I want. What you have given me suffices for me. Nevertheless, I have very great difficulty working day and night on the interpretation. I cannot make head or tail out of it (lit. I do not find foot [or] hand). A book [which has been looked at] for forty days [in vain] will have no interpretation. And now God knows that it is not a matter of unwillingness. Why do you suspect me? You are my father and I am your son. And now if you [want to] buy my *Fitha Negest*, buy it. You have fixed the price at sixty dollars.

The names of the ten strings of the harp (*begena*): three strings are called “*amarit*”; three strings are called “*boz*”; four strings are called “*zēma*”.

The news of Gonder and (of) Gojjam is there for you in the letter to *Ras Michel* (Mīka'ēl). Written on 4 Nehasē in the year of Grace 1842 [*sic*].

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 550, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 220×180 mm.

Abba Tewelde Medhin, which is the name he uses in other documents, was one of Antoine d'Abbadie's scholarly collaborators. In October 1848 he left Ethiopia together with Antoine and went to Jerusalem (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 27). He was a relative, probably the uncle, of Birru Pētros (no. 134). He returned to Ethiopia at least once and eventually ended his life in a monastery in Egypt in 1854 (see no. 190).

The passage about the *tirgwamē* seems to indicate that Tewelde Medhin was engaged in interpreting rather than translating a text. Antoine may have asked him to produce a commentary of some kind to one of his manuscripts. At any rate Tewelde Medhin obviously found the difficulties insurmountable and gave up after forty days.

I have not been able to find the letter to Michel referred to in the last sentence anywhere in the d'Abbadie collections.

May this letter sent by Tewelde Medhin, the Ethiopian, reach Antoine (Inṭoniyos), the Frenchman. Peace be to you and peace be to your brothers and mother.

As for me, what am I going to do about your friendship [and] your favour? I will not as long as I live (lit. until death) forget the kindness you have shown to me all the way from Gonder to Jerusalem. What I eat and drink even today comes from you (lit. is yours). Do not think it is money I want. What you have given me suffices for me. Nevertheless, I have very great difficulty working day and night on the interpretation. I cannot make head or tail out of it (I do not find foot [or] hand). A book [which has been looked at] for forty days [in vain] will have no interpretation. And now God knows that it is not a matter of unwillingness. Why do you suspect me? You are my father and I am your son. And now if you [want to] buy my *Fitha Negest*, buy it. You have fixed the price at sixty dollars.

The names of the ten strings of the harp (*begena*): three are called “*amarūt*”; three are called “*boz*”; four are called “*zēma*”.

The [one with] six strings [is called] *çeçema* in Tigrīñña and *krar* in Amharic. We have received 50 dollars by the hand of the consul as instructed.

Debtera Tewelde Medhin has gone to his country. He will soon return. Birru is here. All the important people have gone to their country, having quarrelled with the Armenians and the Copts. [It is] about the property (*rist*) that they have quarrelled.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 487, Amharic original, 195×240 mm.

The text of the first part of this document is almost identical with that of document no. 126. There are, however, a number of discrepancies. Most of these indicate that this version may in fact have been written first, and by Tewelde Medhin himself, while no. 126 is a fair copy in the handwriting of someone else. A number of mistakes, some probably due to Tigrīñña dialect, for instance አይደለም (line 7) and ተናግሮዋል (line 14), and quite a few omissions of individual letters have been corrected. On the other hand, ሣልሂት has been omitted (by oversight?), Tewelde has become Welde (more common in Amharic) and a few correct expressions have been unnecessarily modified, for instance “day and night” to “night and day”. Finally, the “fair copy” has been dated before being dispatched.

The second part of the document, in larger and poorer handwriting, was obviously added by someone else since it states that *Debtera* Tewelde Medhin had gone to his country. In fact, the handwriting indicates that two different persons were involved in making the addition.

The statement about important people who had left refers to a group of clerics who had gone to Jerusalem in 1848 or early 1849 to attempt to regain control of the property of the Ethiopian church there, apparently with little success. See nos 109–115, 118 for the importance given to this mission from the Ethiopian side.

in f. 118
167
over
Dec 1849
9c pp. 118

Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie, [1849]

መልእክት፡ ቀዳሚት፡ ዘተፈነወት፡
 እምነ፡ ቀኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኤ. የሱስ፡
 ትብዳሕ፡ ንብ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ስቶ፡ እንጦን
 የሱ፡ ፍራንሳዊ፡ እፎ፡ ሀሰኩ፡ ስማእኩ፡
 ዜናኩ፡ ግሕቱ፡ ዚና፡ ዚአብሔር፡ ስማእኩ፡
 ስንተ፡ እኔ፡ ታምሚ፡ ልሞት፡ ነበር፡ ም
 ጽዋ፡ ወንድምቸው፡ ከመጽዋ፡ ወዲያ፡ ወ
 ታደርም፡ እስከ፡ ምጽዋ፡ የወረረ፡ ጊዜ፡
 ሲገለጹ፡ ነበረ፡ እምነሱ፡ ነበርሁና፡ እግ
 ዚአብሔር፡ ኃይል፡ ስርቶ፡ አዳነኝ፡ ደብ
 ዳቤ፡ እስከ፡ ዛሬ፡ ደለመሰደዱ፡ ሰው፡ ግግ፡
 አቡነ፡ ደዕቆብ፡ ቢርቁኝ፡ ነው፡ ከዚህ፡ ወ
 ዲያ፡ በአቡነ፡ ደዕቆብ፡ እውቀት፡ ነው፡ የ
 ምሰድ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ቢገጥመኝ፡
 ከዚህ፡ ጋራ፡ የወራ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ስድጃ
 ለሁ፡ ሁለቱ፡ ዳግሚት፡ ማልሲት፡ ደ
 ብዳዖች፡ ደብረሱ፡ ቀዳሚዎ፡ አልቦ፡

May the first letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord Mr. Antoine (Inጥoniyo፡), the Frenchman. How are you? I have had news about you, but you have had no news of me. I was ill and about to die. After your brothers had come to Massawa, at the time when soldiers were raiding as far as Massawa, they were going to kill me, for I was at Minkullu. God saved me miraculously. [The reason] I have not written is that I have had no person [to send], [and] that Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune Ya'iqob*) is far from me. From now on I will write (lit. send) through the good offices of Bishop De Jacobis, if God arranges it for me. I am sending a book about recent events (lit. of news) together with this. Two letters, the second and the third, have arrived; the first has not.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 161, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 110×150 mm. Gebre İyyesus (no. 117) had apparently been told by Antoine to number his letters and this was the first one he wrote after the departure of the d'Abbadies in late 1848. Antoine numbered his letters to Gebre İyyesus as well. Copies of his no. 2 and no. 6 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 554, and 254, fol. 157, respectively) have been preserved. Also the original of no. 2 is found in the collection (254, fol. 27). It had been returned to Antoine by De Jacobis "sans explication".

The personal danger referred to by the writer was no doubt the attack and burning down of Minkullu by Wibe's army in January 1849 (see no. 121; for the circumstances, Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 123–127).

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [Sept.–Oct.? 1849]

ዛቲ፡ጦማር፡ዘተፈነወት፡
 እምነበ፡ቀኝ፡ጌታ፡ገብረ፡
 ኢየሱስ፡ጉብዳሎ፡ነበ፡ራስ፡
 ጸጊካኤል፡ፍራንሳዊ፡እንደታ፡
 ነዎ፡ደጅ፡አዝማች፡ገብሩ፡ከ
 ራስ፡እሲ፡ጋራ፡ተራረቁ፡ልጅ፡
 ተሰማ፡ተፈታ፡ራስ፡አሲም፡
 ገብዳሎ፡ዘምተዋል፡ደጅ፡አዝ
 ማች፡ብሩም፡ሰማ፡ገቡ፡ቡካ
 ድ፡ከደጅ፡አዝማች፡ገብሩ፡ጋራ፡
 ወደጅ፡ምነው፡አደስጠደቁኝ
 ም፡ሆነ፡እጅግ፡እምነው፡ነበር
 ሆ፡ደግሞ፡ኢሳ፡ደብዳቤ፡እሽ
 ዳሰሁ፡ዳሩግን፡ጌታው፡ውንድ
 መዎ፡አሱልኝ፡ብወድሙ፡ነው፡

May this letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach *Ras Michel* (Mika'el), the Frenchman. How are you?

Dejjazmach Goshu has made peace with *Ras Alī*. *Lij Tesemma* is released. *Ras Alī* is campaigning in Gojjam. *Dejjazmach Birru* went to Soma. Plowden (Bulad) has become friends with *Dejjazmach* Goshu. How come that you do not inquire about me? I had great trust in you. I will write again one more letter. Whatever happens (lit. nonetheless), I have the master, your brother. [I write] because I love you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 150, Amharic original, 105×150 mm. The events described took place in May–June 1849 (*Nuovi documenti*, p. 398). Plowden reports a visit to Goshu at the end of the rainy season that year (*Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country With an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848* (London, 1848), pp. 416–417).

Though Birru was the better known and more powerful of Goshu's sons, his half-brother *Lij* or *Fitawrari* Tesemma was reportedly the favourite of his father; he was certainly the more loyal of the two (see, for instance, *Nuovi documenti*, pp. 383, 398; *Douze ans*, I, pp. 386–390; II, pp. 98, 162–164; III, pp. 59–60). As the son of *Weyzero Sahlu*, he had better claims to the governorship of Gojjam than Birru, and in the end it was his son Adal who was crowned *Nigus Tekle Haymanot* by *Yohannis IV*.

Fenta to Michel d'Abbadie, [1849?]

ዛቲ፡ጠማር፡ዛተ፡ፊ፡ነወት፡እ፡ም፡ነበ፡ደ፡በተራ፡ፈንታ፡ክ
 ደ፡ዋ፡ት፡በ፡ደ፡ላ፡ነበ፡ጌታ፡ዮ፡ወ፡ክ፡ባ፡ቲ፡ወወ፡ደ፡ጄ፡የ፡ጉ፡ል፡ማ፡ሶቶ፡
 ክው፡ራ፡ሰ፡ምህ፡በሁሉ፡የተ፡ጠራ፡እራሱ፡ሚ፡ካኤል፡ደ፡ላ፡ና፡አሉ
 ን፡ክ፡ጄ፡ጉን፡ደ፡ላ፡ና፡አሉን፡የሰ፡ማ፡ዩን፡የም፡ደ፡ሩን፡ያህል፡ከተላይ
 የነ፡እሰ፡ካሁን፡ድረሰ፡ሰላሙ፡እ፡ግዚኣብሔር፡የሀሉ፡ምሰሌ
 ከ፡አሜን፡እራሱ፡አሲና፡ደ፡ጄ፡ዝማቶ፡ካሳ፡ታረቁ፡ታርቀው፡
 ጉ፡ጄ፡ም፡ዛመቻ፡ሔዱ፡ሔደው፡ራሱ፡ፊ፡ራሳቸው፡ሲቀሩ፡ሁ
 ሉ፡ተ፡ዋ፡ጋቸው፡አ፡ገወ፡ን፡ከሶ፡ለደ፡ጄ፡ዝማቶ፡በሩና፡ሰራሰ፡
 ጉ፡ቹ፡~~፡~~እ፡ዝ፡ያም፡ወር፡ደው፡ተ፡ዋ፡ጉት፡ሸረው፡ሰ፡ደ፡ዱት፡
 በሰኔ፡ተሰማ፡ደህን፡ወረ፡ገደ፡ዋ፡ከማኸሉ፡ተነሰቺ፡መጣሁ፡
 በ፡ያመ፡ኛ፡እ፡ፈ፡ወሰሰሁ፡በ፡ዮ፡ምሰር፡አሁንም፡ምሰር፡ተቀ
 ም፡ጩ፡አሰሁ፡ተምሜ፡የበረኻን፡ሁሉ፡አራ፡ገ፡ፍሁ፡ኛ፡ሸር፡ከብ
 በክራይ፡አሁንም፡ሰነ፡ሩሰም፡ነው፡ደ፡ዛ፡ኑልኛ፡ከማካውቀ
 ው፡አ፡ገር፡ነው፡ወደቁ፡ያለሁ፡ሰብልሕ፡ን፡ገረው፡ምን፡ደሰት
 ው፡በ፡ዮ፡ለደንቶር፡ን፡ገረው፡ምን፡ያውቀው፡በ፡ዮ፡የሚሉት፡
 ተረት፡ነው፡ሰርሰም፡ምን፡ልን፡ገረም፡

ዝሎላሲ፡ቅኔ፡ሰሎምሰን፡ትሙሰሉ፡ወደሙሰሰከ፡ሰምሰን፡
 እራሱ፡ሚ፡ካኤል፡ፀ፡፱፡፱፡፱፡፱፡ዘርኸሉ፡እራሱ፡ሚ፡ካኤል፡
 ብርሃን፡ዘረቀ፡ኃብተ፡ወርዛዌኬ፡እምሮሚ፡መካን፡ከመ
 ቀዳሚሰ፡ሰቀሕ፡ደእኔ፡ሰሕሙምከ፡ምሰኪን፡እደ፡
 እንቲክከ፡ዘየማን፡አምጣነ፡እራሱ፡ሚ፡ካኤል፡አደን፡ቤዛ፡
 ዓይን፡ትፊ፡ጠርከ፡በሮሚ፡ማላ፡ፀን፡እነር፡ሰበረከት፡
 እ፡ጄ፡ን፡ሸልኛ፡አንቶ፡ወረቀት፡ሰንኳ፡ደላና፡ገቡ፡አ፡ገረ
 ምን፡እኔም፡ያለሁኛ፡ከግብ፡ጸ፡በትረክ፡ነኛ፡ከተዳፊ
 ም፡፪፡ወ፡ዮ፡የሚወሰደው፡አ፡ጥቶ፡

May this letter sent by *Debtera* Fenta, Adwa, reach my lord and father and friend, *Ras Michel* (Mika'ēl), the leader of the strong young men, whose name is invoked by everyone. Are you well? Have you been well, really, from [the day] we parted until now, to the extent of heaven and earth? May the peace of God be with you. Amen.

Ras Alī and *Dejjazmach* Kasa concluded peace. Having made peace, he [Alī] went on a campaign to Gojjam. (Having gone), when the *ras* was there, by himself, everyone fought against him, when he encircled the *amba* against *Dejjazmach* Birru and *Ras* Goshu. And they came down and fought him. They defeated him and chased him away. The news about this was heard at Adwa in Senē. In the meantime I left and came [here] because I was sick and hoped to be cured in Cairo. And now I am staying in Cairo. As I was ill, I spent all I had on the passage (lit. boat rent). And now, have pity on me, (it is) for the sake of your soul. It is in a country that I do not know that I have been stranded.

“Tell the clever.”—“Why should I assume that he missed it!”—“Tell the stupid.”—“Why should I assume that he will understand!” [So] the story goes. What shall I say to you?



This is a *Sillasē* poem:

You resemble Samson and Samson resembles you.
Ras Michel (Mika'ēl), the sun of every one,
Ras Michel, the light,
whose gift of youth has risen from the city (lit. place) of Rome.
Stretch out your right hand now as before
to your sick [and] needy,
for you, *Ras Michel*, as a just (lit. eye for an eye) priest,
were created in the womb of Rome.

Behold, [this poem is] a gift [for you].

You little letter, pay [your] respects on my behalf. I am pleased that you reached your native land safely. I am staying with the Egyptian patriarch. [It is] two months since [this] was written because there was no one to take it.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 139, Gi'iz/Amharic original, 205 × 290 mm. The events in Ethiopia referred to in this letter are almost certainly those described in *Nuovi documenti*, pp. 397–398, as having taken place in the early months of 1849. Known at Adwa in Senē, they would probably have been known at Cairo a month or two later. The portion of the letter beginning with the poetry—or at least the last few lines—were written a further two months later.

For *Debtera* (or *Aleqa*) Fenta, see no. 92. *Sillasē qinē* is one of the types of traditional Ethiopian poetry.

Fait à Massouah, en double expédition, le premier octobre mil huit cent quarante neuf. Le vice-consul de France à Massouah, Rolland, a fait de cette signature Dubié a mis son sceau.

⁽¹⁾ L'écrit est écrit: Nous soussignés, certifions que le traité écrit en français ci-dessus, est la version fidèle que nous avons de l'écrit en langue qui y est écrit, et que le sceau apposé au traité est bien celui d'oubié roi du Tigre. Lefebvre, Schimper, naturalistes. Signés.

Le vice-consul de France à Massouah, sous. sig. certifie que cette copie est conforme à l'original déposé sur sa table.

Massouah, le 20 Oct. 1849.

Rolland

Treaty of friendship between *Dejjazmach* Wibē, ruler [of the country] from Gonder to Massawa, and Mr. Rolland (Roland), the consul of France, who is in charge of the affairs of the ruler of France at Massawa.

The agreement with (lit. of) Mr. Rolland is like this: He shall ask (lit. send to) the ruler of France to liberate the entire coast from the hands of the Turks for *Dejjazmach* Wibē. After it is seized, the French shall guard so that foreign enemies do not penetrate the coast. With the permission of *Dejjazmach* Wibē the French will build houses [there]. Other foreigners, however, shall not build houses on the coast. This done, the ruler of France shall send to *Dejjach* Wibē one thousand muskets and two cannons. The whole agreement shall be binding for the French ruler [only] after it has been sealed.

This is written on the 23rd of Meskerem. The document which has been written is written in two copies (lit. letters).

AACP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 288r and v. As indicated at the top and in the margin, this document is a second copy of a sealed original which the French vice-consul at Massawa, Eugène Rolland, had apparently retained at his post. A first copy was reportedly "perdu sur un bateau qui a sombré". I have found no record of what eventually happened to the original.

Rolland, who had replaced Consul Degoutin at Massawa earlier in the year, was anxious to counteract Consul Plowden's influence, at least in Tigray. His first, and probably only visit to Wibē resulted in three documents: this treaty, which was never ratified by France, a letter to "the ruler of France" (no. 132) and one addressed to himself (no. 133). As the treaty, the letter to Louis-Napoléon is preserved only in a copy, while the sealed original of the letter to Rolland himself is found in the Ethiop. 184 volume in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The internal evidence of the treaty document speaks in favour of its authenticity. On the one hand, the Amharic text is a very poor piece of writing, certainly too poor to have been composed by an Ethiopian in the service of *Dejjazmach* Wibē. The obvious candidates are instead Lefebvre and Schimper, who had been involved in this kind of business before (see nos 32, 50, 66 and 88) and who certified that the French version was "quant au sens" a true translation of the Amharic. On the other hand, there are substantial differences between the two versions which Lefebvre and Schimper need not have introduced unless the Amharic text was to be submitted to Wibē for approval. Where the French version, for instance, has Wibē pledging himself "envers la France, à lui donner le droit de former à libre de Protectorat" (art. 2), the Amharic simply states that the French should guard *yebahir dar ingida indaygebba*.

For further information on this French attempt to gain a permanent foothold on the Red Sea coast, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 125-127.

The second figure in the Ethiopian date is neither 2 nor 3 but something in between. Since the two letters, presumably written the same day as the treaty was signed (all are dated 1 October in the French versions), bear the date 23 Meskerem, I have tentatively opted for 2 October as the date of the treaty. This would mean that the French versions were actually ready and dated the day before the Amharic, unless the drafters/translators simply confused the dates.

Wibē Hayle Mariam to Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, 2 Oct. [1849]

Mise Consulat.
gala
1^{re} fois par un homme qui a tenu
Masouah h
287
 Direction

 ጳጳሳዊ፡ ከጉግሬ፡ ንጉሥ፡ ከወዲ፡ የተሳከ፡
 ከፈ.ጌ.ጊ.ሲ.ከ.ገጽ፡ የጽ.ጊ.ከ.

May the letter sent by Wibē, the king of Tigray, reach the ruler of France.

All the land on the coast, Saho (Shiho), Adal, Tīlṭal [and] Habab, is mine. And now make the *sultān* of Istanbul evacuate [it] for me. Let it be done voluntarily. [The reason] why I did not send my army was to avoid bloodshed. Since you are my spokesman (lit. my mouth is your mouth), what you say is said by me.

This was written on Meskerem 23, when I was at Hawzēn.

Je n'ai pu envoyer la lettre que par un homme qui a tenu
à l'empire d'Égypte, par un homme qui a tenu à l'empire d'Égypte.
 በባሕር፡ ጳጳ፡ ያሰ፡ ስገር፡ ሁሉ፡ ስሆ፡ ለጳጳ፡ ጥልጣል፡
 ሀባብ፡ የጽ፡ የወ፡ ለሆንም፡ ከሕግጥጥ፡ ከሰጥ፡ ለሕሰቅ
 ቅልጥ፡ በውጭ፡ ያሁን፡ ጦረኝ፡ ለሰላም፡ የሰጠ፡ ይህ፡ ጽም፡
 ለንጹግ፡ ጊ.ከ.ገ.፡ የወ፡ የጽ፡ ስገር፡ ያንጉ፡ ስገር፡ የወ፡ የተገ፡
 ገር፡ ከወ፡ የገር፡ ለጽ፡ የተገ፡ ገር፡ ጽ፡ የወ፡
 የኩ. የተገ፡ በሀገራችን፡ በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ፡ ስላለ፡ የሆነ፡
Recommandation au Roi de l'Égypte au sujet des Français
 Nous déclarons que cet état, plus soumis au Gouvernement français, le nous
 représente à Constantinople, que y sommes le différent qui nous vient avec le sultan
 relativement à la Syrie. Le sultan de la Syrie nous a
 Nous déclarons accepter d'hors et déjà tout ce qui sera résolu par le dit Gouvernement
 Français à cet égard, et nous en tenir à sa décision qu'elle nous soit ou non favorable.
 Nous avons été en l'air de visiter la continuation de la mer rouge vers les Indes
 et une nouvelle émigration de sang, qui se produirait naturellement à nos dépens.
 Tout à Constantinople, le 1^{er} 8⁵⁴ 1249. Wibē Hayle Mariam
 L'écrit est écrit. Nous deux signés, certifions que la Recommandation ci-dessus est
 est la version fidèle, parait au sens de l'original en langue qui le contient, et en son en quel
 est le cachet d'auth. du dit Tigray, d'Égypte, d'Arabie, d'Inde, d'Inde, d'Inde, d'Inde.

AECP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fol. 287, Amharic copy and French translation. This is reportedly a second copy of the original, sealed document which Rolland had retained at his post (see no. 131).

While the text of the treaty signed the same day is so obviously influenced by the Europeans involved, this letter is written in Wibē's characteristically concise style. Where the treaty emphasizes that he rules from the coast as far as Gonder, Wibē simply writes "king of Tigray". His message is simple too: The Red Sea littoral is Ethiopian, not Ottoman. Put pressure on Istanbul to evacuate the mainland (see nos 98 and 121), otherwise there will be war. Again, the French version of this document, elevated to the status of a "power of attorney" (whether prepared in advance or actually a "translation") is more elaborate. Note in particular that Wibē is supposed to have written: "Nous déclarons accepter d'hors et déjà tout ce qui sera résolu par le dit Gouvernement Français à cet égard, et nous en tenir à sa décision qu'elle nous soit ou non favorable."

Birru Pētros to Antoine d'Abbadie, 29 Oct. 1849

ዛቲ፡ፆ፡ ማር፡ ዘተፊነወት፡ ግም ጎዘ፡ ተወልደ መስጋ፡
 ትብ ጳጳሕ፡ ጎበ፡ እንጦንዮት፡ ዘአበዲዮ፡ እንኛት፡ እሎ፡ ደጎና፡
 እሎ፡፡ እጐ፡ ቴም፡ ነመግ ጎበሩ፡ ጌ፡ ሄደ፡ ወደ ጎበሻ፡
 በርስ፡ እ፡ ጎር፡ ተግሪተዉ፡ ነርመንና፡ ነግብገጽ፡ የሄደ
 በበት፡ ወራትም፡ በነሃሌ፡ በጊቀን፡ ሄደ፡፡ አሁንም፡ ስንሁ፡
 ልትብስገ ሥጵም፡ ለቆንስሎ፡ ሰጠሁኝ፡ ስሂደ፡ ነግረዉኝ፡ ነገሩና
 እንደ፡ ተግገሳኝሁ፡፡ የብተራ፡ ጎብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ የሰጠኝ፡ ሁሉ፡ ስ
 ደሎ፡ እመጣሎኝ፡ ስኔም፡ እየሩሳሌም፡ ትተዉኝ፡ ለመ
 ማር፡ በሌላ፡ ቁንጭ፡፡ እኔም፡ እድግ፡ እድናና ጭቆሁ
 እሰሁ፡ ጭ፡
 ስኔም፡ ለርሰዎ፡ ለጌጉ፡ መግኛ ል፡ ለጌጉ፡ ጭርሎሰ፡ እድ፡
 ነሳሁኝ፡፡ እኔም፡ ለአካሪ ጌሮ፡ እግ፡ ሰጣም፡ ይበሎ፡ ልኝ፡፡
 የቀሰሙ፡ መሪ ነምና፡ ጭ፡ የመገኛቅ፡ የሰው የሰም፡፡ ስኔ
 ብሩ፡ ጎርያኝ፡ የጸፍ ነሱ፡ በሌት፡ በጌሌሰሚ፡ ጭ፡ ጳጊሪና
 ብሰዉ፡ እየዘኑ ግኝ፡፡ በጥቅምት፡ ጊቀን ጎብራኝ፡፡
 እምተ፡ ምስረት፡ በ፲፯፡ ሣ፡ ፡

May this letter sent by Tewelde Medhin reach Antoine d'Abbadie (Inṭoniyos Zeabediye). How are you? Are you well?

My uncle has gone to Abyssinia with the delegation (lit. community) after having quarrelled with the Armenians and the Copts about the property (*rist*). As to the date of their departure, they left on the 20th of Nehasē. And now look, I gave the *Fitha Negest* to the consul for he (Tewelde Medhin) told me when he left that you had agreed [so]. He said, "I will bring with me for you whatever *Debtera* Gebre Īyyesus gives to me." He left me in Jerusalem to learn (in) other languages and went. I long very, very much for you.

I greet you and Mr. Michel (*Gēta* Mīka'ēl) and Mr. Charles (*Gēta* Qērilos). Greet Adula and Argēfo very much. There is no one who knows the [difference between] good and bad ink. I, Birru, your servant (lit. slave) wrote to you during the night in the dark. Do not be sorry with me saying that my writing is ugly.

Written on the 20th day of Ṭiqimt in the Year of Grace 1842.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 256, fol. 484, Amharic original, 150×200 mm. Though the writer, Birru Pētros, begins by saying that the letter comes from Tewelde Medhin, he later not only reveals his identity but informs us that he wrote in Tewelde Medhin's absence.

Birru, who never seems to have used his father's name in writing, is better known as Birru Welqaytē, *i. e.* Birru from Welqayit. He was one of the young Ethiopians who left their homeland in the 1840's in order to obtain a "modern" education. They were almost all sponsored in one way or another by missionaries or other Europeans who hoped to benefit by their future services as co-workers, secretaries, interpreters and translators. In the case of Birru, it was through his uncle, Tewelde Medhin, that he first became a protégé of Antoine d'Abbadie (see nos 126 and 180).

Birru studied in Jerusalem, probably two or three years, before joining the CMS college on Malta in 1852, apparently on the advice of Bishop Gobat. Tradition in the family has it that he was an 18-year old deacon when he left Ethiopia, and that he studied in Beirut (not Jerusalem) for three years and on Malta for six years (manuscript biography written in 1957 by Birru's grandson Beqqele Abriha and kindly placed at my disposal by Rev. G. Arén, Uppsala).

Treaty between Ethiopia and Great Britain, 2 Nov. 1849

Treaty
 of
 Amity and Commerce
 between
 Great Britain and Abyssinia
 የወደጅ ገብገፍ፡ የገግድ፡ ው ል፡

በ ጸ ግ ሊ ገ፡ ገ ግ ለ ሆ ገ፡ በ ሐ በ ገ፡ ገ ገ ለ፡ መ ማ ክ ል፡

*Trade commerce is
 a source of great wealth
 and prosperity to all —
 those nations who are
 firmly united in the bonds
 of reciprocal friendship,
 and whereas the conclusion
 is a Treaty of perpetual
 amity and Commerce
 between Abyssinia and
 Great Britain, which*
 ከ

በ ገ ግ ድ፡ ኦ ጅ ግ፡ ሀ ገ ገ፡
 ኦ ጅ ግ፡ ገ ግ ገ ገ ገ፡ የ ማ ገ
 ገ፡ ገ ሆ ገ፡ ለ ለ ገ ገ ገ፡ ሐ ገ
 ር ገ፡ በ ወ ደ ጅ ገ ገ፡ በ
 ፍ ገ ር፡ የ ተ ሐ ገ ፡ የ ው
 ል፡ ማ ለ ር ገ ፡ ፡ የ ገ ገ ገ ገ ገ
 ግ ለ ገ ገ ፡ ወ ደ ጅ ገ ገ ገ ገ ገ
 ገ ገ ፡ በ ገ ግ ለ ገ ፡ ጸ ገ
 ግ ሊ ገ ገ ፡ በ ሐ በ ገ ፡ ገ ገ ገ
 ለ፡ መ ማ ክ ል፡ በ ማ ገ ገ ገ
 ር ገ፡ ሆ ለ ገ ፡ ጸ ገ ር ገ ፡

has already been received
 by their respective Governments
 would tend to the mutual
 advantage of both countries;
 and every friendly measure
 that the two countries should
 be possessed of towards the
 commercial intercourse
 between the two nations
 should be encouraged;
 and as a friendly relation
 long and peace is existing
 between Great Britain
 and the Kingdom of Abyssinia
 her Majesty's intention
 is to give effect to
 the same and improve
 to that effect to be
 for the said Kingdom and

እገዳግ፡ ፆሚ ጠቀሙ፡
 ለ ለ ሆኑ፡ ሳሁን፡ ቀዳሞ፡
 ለ ለ ተፈለገ፡ በሁለቱ፡
 ነገሥታት፡ ፆሁለ
 ቱ፡ ለገሮቹ፡ ነገዳ፡ ወል፡
 ለ ነገዳ ምን፡ ለገዳ ምን፡ ፆሚ
 ሆኖ፡ ለገዳ ገዳ፡ ፆሚ
 ገገ፡ ለገዳ ሆነ፡ ለ ለ ለ
 ለ፡ ፆሚ ነተ ለ ወ፡ ፆሚ
 ለ፡ ሁሉ፡ ተገገ ሮኖ፡ ተገዳ
 ሮገ፡ ገገ፡ ተ ለ ወ፡ ዳ፡ ገ፡
 ነገ ለ ለ፡ ገገ ለገ፡ ለገገ
 ለ ለ ለ፡ በሁለቱ፡ ፆሁን፡
 ወ ለ፡ ለ ሆላ ለ ለ፡ ተ ለ ወ፡
 በ ገገ ለገ፡ ለገገ ለ ለ ለ፡
 በ ሁለቱ፡ ገገ ለ፡ ሆላ ለ ለ፡

by the said Kings of
 Abyssinia on the other
 part.

Article I.

I from free and lasting
 friendship, well - known
 between his Majesty the
 Emperor and his Successors
 on the one part and her
 Majesty's Successors on
 the other part
 and for the purpose of
 increasing the mutual
 knowledge of Great Britain
 and Abyssinia and her
 Successors on the other part

ወ ለ፡ ለ ተ ፆ፡
 ገ ሮ ፆ፡ ለ ለ፡ ለ ለ ለ፡ ፆ
 ሆ ሆ ፆ፡ ፆ ሆ ለ ለ ለ፡
 ተ፡ ሆ ተ ሮ፡ በ ገ ገ ለ፡
 ለ ለ ለ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡ ለ ለ
 ሆ ሆ ለ ለ፡ በ ለ ገ ገ ለ፡
 ለ ለ ለ፡ ገ ገ ለ ለ፡ ለ ተ
 ለ ለ ለ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡
 በ ሆ ሆ ለ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡
 ለ፡ ለ ገ ገ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡

Article II.

For the purpose of
 preserving and strengthening
 the friendly relations existing
 between the two nations,
 and

ሁ ለ ተ ፆ፡፡
 ፆ ሁ ለ ተ ፆ፡ ለ ገ ሮ፡ ፆ
 ሁ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡ ወ ለ
 ፆ ሆ ለ፡ ለ ገ ገ ለ፡ ሆ ለ፡
 ለ ገ ገ ለ፡ ሆ ለ ለ፡

Treaty of Friendship and Commerce Between the Queen of England and the King of Abyssinia.

As great wealth and property in abundance are to be found through commerce for countries bound together by [their] friendship [and] love, [here is] an instrument for concluding a treaty. Since the two countries will benefit very much by establishing everlasting friendship and commerce between the queen [of] England and the king of Abyssinia, since [this] has been desired earlier by the two monarchs, [and] since the details of a commercial treaty between the two countries have to be written down, therefore all the following agreements have been worded and enacted by Mr. Plowden (Pulawdun), the consul of the queen [of] England in Abyssinia, who has been instructed to conclude a treaty between the queen of England and the king of Abyssinia.

First article

There shall be a firm, mutually cordial [and] lasting friendship between the king of Abyssinia and [his] successors and Victoria, the queen of England, and [her] successors.

hereafter granted to the subjects
produce & commerce of any
the British Empire.

Article V.

This import duty shall
for every hundred and no
more, may be levied and
received by the subjects of
Abyssinia and his successors
upon all goods and merchandise
imported by British subjects
into the kingdom of Abyssinia
to be sold there or in
the countries beyond.

Article VI.

This import duty shall
for every hundred shall be
increased upon the consent
of the Emperor
at the market, here
Gonder

አምስተኛ፡
የአገላለገ፡ ዜጎች፡ ወይ
ህ፡ ወጪ ሐበባ፡ የሚያገ
ቡት፡ ዕቃ፡ ሲገባ ለጋራ፡
አምስት፡ ከመቶ፡ ይጠል
ና፡ ይቀበል፡ ጓጉሠ፡ ሐበቻ
ና፡ ቀጥሎ፡ የሚገባ፡
በሐበቻም፡ ቢሆን፡ ቢሸ
ላ፡ ወጪ፡ ከሌላ፡ አገር፡
አልፎም፡ ቢሸላ፡

አጽኑ ስተኛ፡
ይህ፡ አምስት፡ በመቶ፡ የተ
ጠለው፡ ገቢ፡ ቀረጥ፡ በገደ
ር፡ ገቢ፡ ዕቃ፡ አገጻሚ
ላ፡ በወራቱ፡ ይገምገምና፡
ይሰጥ፡ ይህን፡ አምስት፡ በ

Gonder and shall be levied
at the rate of five per cent
hundred either in kind or
in value, at the option of
the merchant.

Article VII.

When the said import
duty shall be levied upon
any of the subjects of
Abyssinia, the said subjects
shall be at full liberty to
dispose of his goods at any
place or places within the
territory of Abyssinia
without any license being
required for the removal
to the same, and without
any prohibition, restriction
or further duty or import
upon the buyer, and the
importing

መቶ፡ የተጠለው፡ ገቢ
ገመገም፡ ቢሆን፡ ዕቃው
ገምገም፡ ሲሆን፡ ነጋዴው፡ ለገ
ደገ፡ ይሰጥ፡

ሰተኛ ስተኛ፡

ይህን፡ አምስት፡ በመቶ፡ የ
ተጠለው፡ ቀረጥ፡ በሚገባ፡
ሰጥቶ፡ የሚገባው፡ ነገ
ጋዴ፡ ዕቃው፡ በአጭራ
ው፡ ሆኖ፡ በገባት፡ አበቻ፡
በረቀጸው፡ አገጻሚ ላ፡ ዕ
ቃው፡ ለመውጣት፡ ተለካ
ዝ፡ ሳይፈለግ፡ ሳይከለክል፡
ሳይቀጥር፡ ቢሆን፡ ቀረጥ፡
ሳይጠለቅት፡ ከገደር፡ ሳይ፡
ሆኖ፡ ቀረጥ፡ አገጻሚ
ሰጥቶ፡ ከምገባው፡ ነገ
ዴ፡ ያገ፡ ዕቃ፡ ከሌለው፡ ለ
ፍፍ፡ ከሌላ፡ አገር፡ በወጪ

Fifth [article]

The king of Abyssinia and [his] successors shall impose and receive a duty of five per cent when the goods which the British subjects import (here) into Abyssinia are imported, whether [the goods] are sold in Abyssinia or sold (beyond) in another country after passing through [Abyssinia].

Sixth [article]

[The merchant] shall estimate [the value] according to goods sold at the market of Gonder at the time and pay these imposed five per cent import duty. The merchant shall pay these imposed five per cent, either the estimated value or the merchandise itself, as he prefers.

Seventh [article]

The merchant who imports [goods], duly paying these said five per cent duty, may sell the goods as he likes in any place within the domain of Abyssinia and shall not need (lit. without needing) [any further] permission (lit. order) to move (lit. export) [his] goods without hindrance [or] harassment

Number...

Article V.

Commercial intercourse shall be allowed and encouraged between the subjects of Abyssinia and the subjects of Great Britain or the other

Article VI.

In order to increase and promote commerce between Abyssinia and Great Britain his Majesty's successors and the successors shall encourage Merchants of all Nations to bring the produce of the interior of Abyssinia into the Dominion of Abyssinia.

Article VII.

With a like view her Majesty's successors

ከ ስ ረ ፍ ።

ከ ፍ ፡ በ ፍ ፡ ገ ግ ጽ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ፡ ስ ፡ ዜ ግ ች ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ስ ሰ ገ ፡ ም ፡ ያ ሎ ፡ ስ ገ ሮ ች ፡ ሁ ሶ ፍ ፡ በ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ዜ ግ ች ፡ ማ ህ ል ፡ ደ ሁ ገ ፍ ፡ ይ ረ ግ ።

ከ ስ ረ ግ ገ ጽ ፍ ፡

የ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ገ ገ ፡ ሠ ፍ ፡ ተ ህ ች ፡ ሎ ፡ የ ሚ ገ ግ ሠ ሙ ፡ የ ሌ ለ ሙ ፡ የ ፍ ቁ ገ ፡ ስ ገ ሮ ፡ ነ ጋ ጸ ች ፡ ያ ስ ስ ሎ ፡ ዕ ቃ ፋ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ግ ስ ች ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ያ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ዜ ጸ ፡ ግ ግ ጽ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ በ ዛ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ስ ፍ ፡ በ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ሙ ህ ህ ል ።

ከ ስ ረ ሁ ሰ ፡

በ ገ ጸ ፡ ስ ስ ሎ ፡ ደ ግ ሞ ፡ ስ ገ ግ

British subjects and her Successors shall promote commerce between the subjects of Abyssinia and British subjects who are needed there.

Article VIII.

In order to increase and promote commerce between the subjects of Abyssinia and Great Britain his Majesty's successors shall encourage Merchants of all Nations to bring the produce of the interior of Abyssinia into the Dominion of Abyssinia.

Article IX.

With a like view her Majesty's successors

ደ ፡ ህ ፡ ይ ህ ገ ፡ ስ ጸ ፡ ተ ሙ ፡ ገ ግ ሠ ፍ ፡ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ፍ ፡ ተ ህ ች ፡ ለ ሙ ፡ የ ሚ ገ ግ ሠ ሙ ፡ የ ሌ ለ ሙ ፡ የ ፍ ቁ ገ ፡ ስ ገ ሮ ፡ ነ ጋ ጸ ች ፡ ያ ስ ስ ሎ ፡ ዕ ቃ ፋ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ግ ስ ች ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ያ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ዜ ጸ ፡ ግ ግ ጽ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ በ ዛ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ስ ፍ ፡ በ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ሙ ህ ህ ል ።

ከ ስ ረ ሁ ሰ ፡

በ ገ ጸ ፡ ስ ስ ሎ ፡ ደ ግ ሞ ፡ ስ ገ ግ ስ ፡ ስ ፍ ፡ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ፍ ፡ ተ ህ ች ፡ ለ ሙ ፡ የ ሚ ገ ግ ሠ ሙ ፡ የ ሌ ለ ሙ ፡ የ ፍ ቁ ገ ፡ ስ ገ ሮ ፡ ነ ጋ ጸ ች ፡ ያ ስ ስ ሎ ፡ ዕ ቃ ፋ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ግ ስ ች ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ያ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ዜ ጸ ፡ ግ ግ ጽ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ በ ዛ ፡ ስ ገ ጸ ፡ ሙ ሙ ፡ በ ሐ ሰ ስ ፡ ስ ፍ ፡ በ ስ ገ ግ ለ ገ ስ ፡ ሙ ህ ህ ል ።

ከ ስ ረ ሁ ሰ ፡

የ ሁ ሰ ፡ ስ ገ ሮ ፡ ዜ ግ ች ፡

of] the queen of England, shall not be taxed more than goods imported from other countries (are taxed).

Tenth [article]

There shall be (and be done) mutual commercial intercourse between Abyssinian subjects, [subjects of] all countries adjacent to Abyssinia, and British subjects.

Eleventh [article]

In order that commerce may increase [and] grow between Abyssinia and England, the king of Abyssinia and [his] successors shall attract merchants of other distant lands so that they bring their goods through the domain of Abyssinia.

Twelfth [article]

On the other hand, the queen [of] England and [her] successors, seeing this [happen], shall see to it that British merchants bring whatever goods are needed in Abyssinia.

and intercourse between
intercourse between the
subjects of the two nations
impediment his Majesty of
Abyssinia agrees to
hinderance to his successors
that no hindrance or
impediment shall be done
to British travellers and to
travellers visiting the territories
of Abyssinia or passing
through them in the course
of visiting the countries
beyond but such travellers
shall be protected both
as to their persons and
as to their properties.

Article IV.

ሙገሩ ጽድቅ ውጤት ለገደገፍ፣
አገጺ ሙሉ ሙሉ ጸሐፊ ስጦት፣
ገንዘብ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ነገሱ ለሙገሩ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ልጅ ጸርጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ዝጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ሙሉ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ቸው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ተቀምጠው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ልጅ ገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፡፡

Article IV.
The goods belonging to
such travellers, and not
intended for sale shall
not be liable to duties
any sort, and shall
never be liable to be
taken possession of
and to be seizable.

Article V.

The subjects of the
Empire of Abyssinia
shall meet with no hindrance
or obstruction while residing
in any part of the dominions
of her Britannic Majesty,
and shall not be prevented
from proceeding beyond
these

አካሉ ለሙሉ ለገደገፍ፣
ገንዘብ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
አገጺ ሙሉ ሙሉ ጸሐፊ ስጦት፣
ገንዘብ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ልጅ ጸርጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ዝጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ሙሉ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ቸው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ተቀምጠው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ልጅ ገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፡፡

አካሉ ለሙሉ ለገደገፍ፣
ገንዘብ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
አገጺ ሙሉ ሙሉ ጸሐፊ ስጦት፣
ገንዘብ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ልጅ ጸርጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ዝጋ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ሙሉ ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት
ቸው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ተቀምጠው ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ወይም ለገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፣
ልጅ ገደገፍ ጽድቅ ውጤት፡፡

Thirteenth [article]

To secure safety for the merchants and their property, the king of Abyssinia and [his] successors [and] the queen of England and [her] successors shall protect [the routes] according to their ability; they shall make the route from the sea to Abyssinia convenient [for travel].

Fourteenth [article]

In order that the intercourse between the subjects of the two countries shall develop (lit. push) and grow, the king of Abyssinia shall agree for himself and for [his] successors that British citizens (lit. foreigners) shall not encounter harm or hindrance [and] that their persons and their property shall be well protected while residing in the domain of Abyssinia or passing through to visit another country.

Fifteenth [article]

The goods of these foreigners, which they did not bring for sale, shall not be taxed at all. Their possessions shall not be touched for any reason whatsoever.

Corresponding with the
 Abyssinian date, the
 twenty-first day of October
 in the year of our Lord
 one thousand eight
 hundred and ...

ደ. ረ. ገ. በ. ስ. ገ. ግ. ለ. ገ. ቀ. ሰ.
 ክ. በ. ሺ. ሺ. ሠ. ሺ. ሺ. ሠ. ሺ.
 ክ. ሞ. ሰ. ደ. ተ. ክ. ር. ከ. ገ. ክ.
 ሞ. በ. ሞ. በ. ር. በ. ሺ. ሺ. ቀ. ገ.

"The Seal of the Emperor of Gondar
 is affixed thereto also by order of the
 Ras (Ali)"
 see General Plowden's report
 April 7, 1852

Walter Plowden



1842, the Year of Mark; on the second of November 1849 after the Birth of Christ, British calendar.

Walter Plowden.

Seal [of the emperor]

Alī, king of Abyssinia.

Seal [of Alī]

FO 93/2/1, Amharic/English original, blue folio paper 200×325 mm, 20 pages tied together with a ribbon and sealed with a wax seal. The large seal to the left is the seal of the emperor of Gondar, featuring a lion facing left and crowned with a cross (cf. nos 109–111). The smaller seal with only partly legible Arabic text is Ras Ali's (cf. nos 76–77). After ratification (see no. 141) the English text was printed in *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons*, 1852, LIV, pp. 1–8.

The Amharic text, in the handwriting of Plowden's secretary, is a translation of the English. The problems of making a faithful, accurate Amharic translation of a legal English document were obviously very great, as the retranslation into English shows. The Amharic text contains many irregular forms and spellings. Some of these, for instance *Habesh* for *Habesha*, *nigist Ingliz* for *ye-Ingliz nigist* and *seb'ateñña* for *sabateñña* may be an indication of Arabic influence in the translation process. In several of the articles the obligations entered into are expressed by imperative forms such as *indinor*. They have mostly been translated with a "shall", in some cases with a "may", as the context seemed to require.

There is, however, only one substantial difference between the English and the Amharic. This appears in article XVII where "Her Brittanick Majesty's consul" in the second place where it occurs is rendered "*Ye-Habesh nigus kunsil*", i.e. "the consul of the king of Abyssinia". In all probability this is nothing but a slip of the pen since it does not make much sense to speak of a consul of the king of Abyssinia in *Abyssinia*. For the circumstances surrounding the negotiations, see Rubenson, *Survival*, pp. 129–131.

Alī Alula to Victoria, [November 1849]

ዘቲ፡ ጠ ማር፡ ዘተ ፈ ነወት፡ እም
 ኅበ፡ ራኩ ንሊ፡ ንጉሠ፡ ሐበኸ፡ ትላ
 ዳሕ፡ ኅበ፡ ፊ ቅ ጠ ሪፆ፡ ንግሠተ፡
 ን ንግሊዝ፡ ኩን ከል፡ ቡለ፡ ይፆ
 መ ጠ ልኛ፡ ዕቃ፡ ከቀበለው፡ ንፎ
 ግ፡ ደከ፡ ን ሰኅኛ፡ ያ ሳ ፆኛ፡ ሁሉ
 በ ማላተም፡ ያ ሰው፡ ወ ዳ ጃ ነተኛ
 ን፡ እንዳይፈርክ፡ እንዳር ሰዎ፡
 ሀብቱ፡ ሳይ፡ ክኔ፡ ይኑ፡ ነኛ፡ ግገሬ፡
 ከመረገኛ፡ ትንንሽ፡ ትንሽ፡ ዕቃ፡ ሊ
 ሲ፡ መ ከደ ድ፡ ንይ ሆን ልኛም፡ ን
 ሁን፡ የ ሰደ ድሁት፡ ፪ ጋ ሽ፡ ፪ ሸ
 ተ ል፡ ፪ ቢተዎ፡ ፪ ከለቻ፡ ፪ የፈ
 ረክ፡ ክ ረቻ፡ ፪ የበቅሎ፡ ክ ረቻ፡
 ፪ መርገፍ፡ ድርህ፡ ፪ ክልባ፡ ድ
 ርህ፡ ፪ ከ ሱህ፡ ፪ ልሙ፡ ፪ ፬
 የዘሆን፡ ጥርክ፡ ፪ የበግ፡ ሰም
 ድ፡ ፩ ነጭ፡ ፩ ጥቁር፡ የኔ፡ ድህነ
 ት፡ ጠር፡ ክየሆነብኛ፡ ወታደር፡ ክየ
 በዘብኛ፡ ነው፡ ደመ ወዝ፡ የም ስጠ
 ው፡ ህር፡ ቢ ሰደ ልኛ፡ የወደ ጅ ነትም
 ልክት፡ ነው፡ ደግሞ፡ የጳጳስ፡ ነገደኛ፡ ም
 ጥዎ፡ ቢ ጠብቃቸው፡ በተረፈ፡ የሰደ
 ድ ልኛን፡ በርጭ ቆ፡ ግምጃ፡ ፪ ህ፡ ንፆ
 ግ፡ ወ ድ ጃ ለሁ፡ ደግሞ፡ ፍ ልፍ ል፡ ፈ ረ
 ግ፡ ነፍጥ፡ በ ህም ሱ ል፡ የሚተ ነክ፡
 ዘለግ፡ ያ ሰ፡ ቢ ገኛ፡ ንወደ ለሁ፡ ክንግሊ
 ዝ፡ ሁሉ፡ ቢ መ ጠ፡ ዐም ገዘው፡ ክገር፡
 በ ምኛ ሰው፡ ሁሉ፡ በ ፍቅር፡ ክቀበሳ
 ለ ሁ፡፡

ንሊ፡ ንጉሠ፡ ሐ
 በኸ፡



May this letter sent by *Ras Alī*, king of Abyssinia, reach Victoria (Fīqtorīya), the queen of England.

When I received the things which Consul Plowden (Bulad) brought for me, they pleased me very much. Let not our friendship, all he showed me which is in the treaty (lit. seal), be destroyed. When I see [something] like your wealth, I am poor. I cannot send anything but a few small things which are found in my country. What I send now [is]: 2 shields, 2 daggers, 2 bracelets, 2 coronets (*kellecha*), 2 horsesaddles, 2 mulesaddles, 2 [garments decorated with] double fringes, 2 double capes, 2 adorned necklaces for mules (*sillusē*), 2 plain necklaces for mules (*limutt*), 4 elephant tusks, 2 sheepskin cloaks—one white and one black. [The cause of] my poverty is that there is continual war and that the soldiers continually grow in numbers. It is a sign of friendship if you send me money to pay as salary; also if you protect my merchants at Massawa. Otherwise, I very much liked the glass [and] the red silk (*gimja juh*) which you sent me. Besides, if a long European rifle fired with percussion caps is available, I would like [one]. If any Englishman comes to the country which I rule, I will receive [him] in any way I can with friendship.

Alī, king of Abyssinia.

Seal (illegible)

FO 1/6, fol. 71, Amharic original, 195×310 mm, wax seal; fol. 69, English translation. This letter, forwarded by Plowden on 2 Jan. 1850 (FO 1/6, fol. 64), was written in connection with the signing of the treaty in November 1849. Alī, who showed little interest in the treaty, reveals more about his concerns and interests in the letter. He was clearly embarrassed by the fact that he could not reciprocate properly in terms of gifts. Though he stressed the lack of peace in the country, he did *not* ask for arms (except a new rifle for himself) but for some financial assistance to pay his army. The British government decided to send 500 thalers but Plowden declined to forward it as unnecessary (FO 401/1, pp. 94, 106–107). His other concern was the protection of Ethiopian merchants at Massawa, a request which had been made repeatedly since the days of *Ras Welde Sillasē* but for which no explicit provision had been made in the treaty.

Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie, [1850?]

መልእክት፡ ደግሚት፡ ዘተረነውት፡ እምታቦ፡ ቀኝ፡ ጌ
 ታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ተብላ፡ ገብ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ እንገጥም
 የከ፡ ፍራንሳዊ፡ ሰላም፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ የሃሱ፡ መስ
 ሌክ፡ አሚን፡ አኔዊክ፡ ደኅኖ፡ ናቸው፡ አለቃ፡ ኪዳነ፡
 ማርያም፡ ወደብተራ፡ ጌታሁን፡ ተወክሏል፡ ዘራኖክ፡
 ሱሙ፡ እምእዲሁ፡ ለአቡነ፡ ደዕቆብ፡ ነበዘመነ፡ ማር
 ቆስ፡ እኔም፡ ተቀበልሁ፡ በዘመነ፡ ሱቃስ፡ ደረጃተ፡
 ባሕቱ፡ ተርፌ፡ ድራር፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ የሀብክ፡ ዕድ
 ሚ፡ ወየሀብክ፡ ሞገስ፡ የወሬ፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ፈትም፡
 ሰደድሁ፡ አሁንም፡ እነሆ፡ እኔ፡ ለመስደድ፡ ደብዳቤ፡
 አልገበዝም፡ ለአቡነ፡ ደዕቆብ፡ መስጠት፡ መገንገ
 ም፡ የአቡነ፡ ደዕቆብ፡ ሦታ፡ ሦታ፡ ቢርቅ፡ ታሪክም፡
 እርሰም፡ የማያውቁት፡ ያላዩት፡ አግኝቶ፡ ነበርሁ፡
 ባለቤቱ፡ አልገኝም፡ ብሎ፡ የብዙ፡ ሰው፡ ገንዘብ፡
 ሁኖ፡ አሳጣውም፡ ጽፌ፡ አሰዳለሁ፡ እግዚአብሔ
 ር፡ ቢረዳኝ፡
 እግዚአብሔር፡ የሀብክ፡ ዕድሚ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ እከመ
 አገተ፡ ተስፋየ፡ ወብክ፡ ጸናዕኩ፡ ባሕቱ፡ ረሲሐቱክ
 መ፡ አደገንዳ፡ ድራዘውሀብክ፡ ተስፋ፡ ብሂሐክ፡
 በአገተ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡

May the second letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord, Mr. Antoine (*Ato* Inጥoniyos), the Frenchman. May the peace of God be with you. Amen.

Are your brothers well? *Aleqa* Kidane Maryam and *Debtera* Gētahun received what you have sent them by the hand of Bishop De Jacobis (*Abune* Ya'iqob) in the year of Mark. I also received the stipend (*darengot*) in the year of Luke but the main payment (lit. meal) remains [unpaid].

May God give you long life and [great] honour. Earlier I have sent you a book about recent events (lit. of news). And now, be sure, I would not hesitate to send letters, giving [them] to Bishop De Jacobis even if Bishop De Jacobis's place is far away. I have also found a history which you did not know of and have not seen. [Unfortunately] the owner[s] could not be located

[because] it is the property of many persons. I will not let it escape [me]. If God helps me, I will copy it and send it.

My lord, may God give you long life because you are my hope and I am strengthened by you. For God's sake, see to it that what you gave me saying "[Your] hope" is not delayed.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 149, Gi'iz/Amharic, 140x160 mm. In the correspondence between Gebre İyyesus and Antoine, this letter follows no. 128 above. The years of Mark and Luke referred to must be 1842 (1849/50) and 1843 (1850/51) and the most probable date of the letter is some time in the second half of 1850. At any rate it does not seem to have been written in reply to letters from Antoine to Gebre İyyesus and Gētahun dated 28 Dec. 1850 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 157 and 59, respectively).

Hayle Meleket to Stafford Haines, Nov. 1851

Praise be to God, etc.

May the refreshing coolness of the North wind and all health in sickness attend Commander Haines Sahib—the beneficent—the most beneficent, the Leader of all Learned Doctors, the perfect—the most perfect—the peace of God on him. Amen.

I beg to state you informed me you sent by the hands of Hadji Ibrahim what you had sent—and it was gold as I had asked you. It reached me and I took hold of it but found it not to be gold. I tried it in the fire. I cut one in two, but could not make it out gold. It became brass. I told you to send red gold that would not turn to Brass. I send this back to you by the hands of Hadji Ibrahim Shehem.

The friend of the Father is the friend of the Son. Our affection for each other has been of profit and when will it benefit you to break it off. I put between us Hadji Ibrahim Shehem (as agent). Even if our friendship is gone let there not be enmity between us. Salaam.

Written on Sunday the month of Suffur 1268. November 1851.

Seal: Dedjasmaj Jeleel bin Saleh Selassee.

IOR, R 20/A1A/110, p. 221, English translation of what must have been an Arabic original. Two copies of the translation are found in FO 1/7, fol. 5 and 15–16. Apparently the Arabic version was not forwarded from Aden and has been lost.

This is very unfortunate both because the English text is merely a translation of “the substance” of the original, as Haines admits in his covering letter (R 20/A1A/110, p. 219) and because of the words reported in the seal. No son of Sahle Sillasē known to me had a name resembling “Jeleel”. Assuming therefore that “Jeleel” stands for the Arabic “great, powerful”, the words in the seal are “the great *dejjazmach*, the son of Sahle Sillasē”. In view of the fact that Hayle Meleket had written to Queen Victoria two years earlier and asked for 1500 silver thalers and some gold in exchange for a gift of ivory and rhinoceros horn (see no. 122), and that the 300 gold sovereigns had been sent to him in return, it is quite reasonable to assume that this letter was also written by or on behalf of Hayle Meleket. It is, however, rather strange that Hayle Meleket, who called himself Beshah Wired, “king of Shewa”, in 1849 (no. 122) and Hayle [Meleket Sahle] Sillasē in 1850 (no. 138), should use the title *dejjazmach*, rather than *meridazmach* or *nigus*, and omit his own name in a seal used in 1851. On the other hand, the character of the gift ties the first and the third letter together and the name of the messenger, Ibrāhīm Shehem, the second and the third.

The displeasure of the Shewan ruler is understandable. His first letter was an invitation to re-establish the friendship expressed through the Harris mission (see nos 34–35, 41–42 and 44). He resented the fact that Victoria had not taken note of the death of his famous father. The invitation to Krapf and Harris to return to Shewa (no. 123) was no doubt the main issue as far as the future was concerned. The gifts were in a sense matters of protocol. When Palmerston refused to consider sending artisans, and Krapf and Harris failed to appear, the Shewan ruler apparently felt rebuffed and decided to reject the box of “brass coins” as a gift below his dignity. In the words of his messenger, “Why exclaimed he. The Commander Harris brought my Father presents that required 150 camels to carry them . . . Why should the son be differently treated from the Father?”

Nevertheless, the last sentence of the letter indicates that Hayle Meleket did not want to break off all relations, and Haines reported in the covering letter that the messenger asked for “powder, shot and guns”.

This letter is reproduced with the orthography and the punctuation of the document in the archives.

Alī Alula to Victoria, [1852]



አምላክ፡ ርእሱ፡ መኪንንተ፡ ክሊ፡ ገብረ፡ ንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ አግዚኤክራር፡
ዘይተወሐድ፡ በመሰከት፡ ወይሢላስ፡ በገጃት፡
ትብጃሕ፡ ሳብ፡ ንግሥተ፡ እንግሊዝ፡ እንዲት፡ ነኸ፡ በገ፡ ነኸ፡ የሰማይ፡ የምድሩን፡
ያህል፡ እኒ፡ ባንት፡ ወዳጅነት፡ ጠንቅቀሁ፡ እንቶም፡ በኒ፡ ወዳጅነት፡ ጥኝ፡ ምነው፡
አንት፡ ሳብኸ፡ ርስቲን፡ መነተሊ፡ ሁሉ፡ በየርስቲ፡ ተተም፡ እኒ፡ ተነተላሁ፡ ከሁን
ም፡ ርስቲን፡ እንገሳልነተላ፡ ክድር፡ ጊልኝ፡ የሐበሻን፡ አጣ፡ መረቲን፡ ተነተላሁ፡ ከሁን
ት፡ መነተላ፡ ጥን፡ ነገር፡ ነው፡ ርስተ፡ ምድር፡ ርስተ፡ ሰማይ፡ ነው፡ ሞላክንት፡ መንግ
ሥት፡ ዘመኛ፡ አይነተላ፡ ሳሙኤል፡ ጉባ፡ አገራኸን፡ ጠበቅ፡ ሁኖተው፡ ርስቲን፡
ክልነተላ፡ ዘመዶቲን፡ አደራ፡
የምተወጅውን፡ ነገር፡ ሳኪብኝ፡ አሰድልጅዕሁ፡

Lion seal

From *Ri'se Mekwanint* Alī, servant of the King of Kings, God, who is one in Divinity and three in person(s).

May it reach the queen of England. How are you? Are you well to the extent of heaven and earth? I am firm in [my] friendship for you. You, too, be firm in [your] friendship for me. How is it that while you are there, I am uprooted from my inheritance (*rist*)? When everyone [else] abides in his inherited land (*rist*), I am uprooted. Now see to it that I am not uprooted from my inheritance. I have been uprooted from my land, the portion belonging to Abyssinia. To be uprooted from one's inherited land is a serious matter. Because inheritance on earth is [like] inheritance in heaven, let not my people (lit. relatives) be uprooted during your reign. I entreat you, let Samuel Gobat (Samu'el Guba) be their advocate; let me not be uprooted from my inheritance. I entrust my people (lit. relatives) to you. Ask (lit. send) for the things you like. I will send [them] to you.

FO 1/7, fol. 79, Amharic original, 310×200 mm; fol. 81, English translation. The seal and the two top lines are in red ink. This letter and the following (no. 143) concern the property (the *rist*, translated "inheritance, inherited land") of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem and were forwarded to the British government by Bishop Samuel Gobat together with a covering letter dated 29 June 1852 (FO 1/7, fol. 76) and a report about the whole matter of the Ethiopian convent and chapel (fols 81–85). The bishop refers to letters which he received about two years earlier from the king of Ethiopia, from Alī, Wibē and several influential priests (see nos. 109–115, 118) and states that Alī and Wibē had now written to Queen Victoria at the request of the king of Ethiopia and a council of priests.

The opening phrase expressing faith in the Trinity, used in several of the letters referred to above, the use of red ink for the first two lines, as well as the calligraphy, all point to *Debtera Fenta* (no. 92) as the official who composed or at least penned this letter. Whether Plowden was involved or not is uncertain, but it seems likely that he would have been consulted and that the letter was, therefore, written at about the same time as the consul handed over the ratification of the 1849 treaty and received his receipt for it (no. 141). The two letters were nevertheless not forwarded to London but to Jerusalem, presumably with *Ichegē* Gebre Maryam who went on a mission to Egypt at this time.

The conclusion of the British government that the Ethiopians desired the consular protection of Bishop Gobat in addition to ecclesiastical protection is no doubt correct. Their reply dated 10 July 1852 was that it could not "undertake to protect officially the natives of Abyssinia" there (LPL, Ms. 2338, fols 41–44). For information on the Abyssinians in Jerusalem generally, see Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina*, II, pp. 239–291.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Victoria, [1852]



እምሳብ ርክስ፡መኳንንት፡ውዜ ገብረ ጌጉሠ ነገሥት እግዚአብሔር፡ዘይትወሐድ በመሰኘት፡ወይሒለስ በገዳት፡፡ትብዳሕ፡ኅብ፡ሕግ
ሥት እንግሊዝ እንደት፡ነሽ በኅ ነሽ ፋይሰማይ፡የምድረ ጌደህል እኔ
ባንቶ ወደጅንት፡ጠንቻሰሁ ክንቻም፡በኔ ወደጅንት ፋጁ፡፡ምነው እ
ንቻ ሳለሽ፡ርስቴን መነቀሴ ሁሉ በየርስቴ ተቀምጦ እኔ ተነቀልሁ
ክሁንም፡ርስቴን እንደልነቀል ክድር ጌልኝ የሐሻን እጣ፡መራቴን፡ተ
ነቀልሁ ርስት መነቀል ግን፡ነገር፡ነው ርስተ ምድር፡ርስተ ሰማይ ገ
ውሩ በክንቻ መንግሥት ዘመዶቹ ክደነቀሉ ሳሙኤል ገብ አደራ ግን
ጠበቃ ሁሩቹው ርስቴን አልነቀል ዘመዶቹን አደራ፡፡

Seal: Dejjazmach Wibē

From *Ri'se Mekwanint* Wibē, servant of the King of Kings, God, who is one in Divinity and three in person(s).

May it reach the queen [of] England. How are you? Are you well to the extent of heaven and earth? I am firm in [my] friendship for you. You, too, be firm in [your] friendship for me. How is it that while you are there, I am uprooted from my inheritance (*rist*)? When everyone [else] abides in his inherited land (*rist*), I am uprooted. Now see to it that I am not uprooted from my inheritance. I have been uprooted from my land, the portion belonging to Abyssinia. To be uprooted from one's inherited land is a serious matter. Because inheritance on earth is [like] inheritance in heaven, let not my people (lit. relatives) be uprooted during your reign. I entreat you, let Samuel Gobat (Samu'el Guba), be their advocate; let me not be uprooted from my inheritance. I entrust my people (lit. relatives) [to you].

FO 1/7, fol 80, Amharic original, 310x200 mm. That this letter was part of the same initiative in early 1852 as no. 142 is obvious from the fact that the text agrees exactly with that of the letter of *Ras* Alī with the exception of the name, the omission of the last two sentences, and some minor irregularities: *nigist ingliz* and *Habisha* instead of *nigiste ingliz* and *Habesha*. The same two irregularities appear in the treaty of 2 Nov. 1849 and *nigist ingliz* also in the receipt for the ratification.

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [July? 1852]

ይቤ፡ ተኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡
 ዛቲ፡ ጠሚር፡ ዘቅብዳሕ፡ ጎበ፡ እግዚ
 እዮ፡ ወፍቁር፡ ራስ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ፍራ
 ንሳዊ፡ እንኳ፡ ደኅኖ፡ መጡ፡ ስኖቀዎ
 ኦኒ፡ እንደመወደዎ፡ ይውደዱኝ፡ ጌታ
 ው፡ ወንድመዎ፡ ያሱኝን፡ አሳስቀረሁ
 ም፡ ሶስት፡ ገዢ፡ ደብዳቤ፡ ለእርሶም
 ም፡ ለወንድመዎም፡ ከታሪክ፡ ጋራ፡ ስ
 ድኝሆ፡ ይድረስ፡ አይድረስ፡ አሳውቅ
 ም፡ አንዱ፡ በአቡነ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ እጅ፡ አንዱ
 ም፡ በአቡነ፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ሰው፡ እጅ፡ ሶስተኛ
 ው፡ ለደብተራ፡ ተወልደ፡ መድኅን፡ እኔም
 ተድታሞ፡ ሲሔዱ፡ ምጽዋ፡ ስት፡ ወር፡ ታ
 መሙ፡ ብቻዮን፡ ባሰ፡ ፍንቅ፡ ሁሃ፡ አስታ
 ማሚ፡ አልባ፡ አቡነ፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ሁሉቱን፡ ወ
 ር፡ አስጠየቁኝ፡ አንዱን፡ ወር፡ ግን፡ የጠየቀ
 ኝ፡ የሰሙ፡ ብቻዮን፡ ወድቁ፡ አብር፡ ሁኖ፡
 ከተሰደደ፡ ወዲህ፡ አቡነ፡ ያዕቆብ፡ ጽብር፡
 ለአቡነ፡ ቢንኲራ፡ ሰደዱልኝ፡ ስሰ፡ አዱሳይ
 መስሐኛል፡ እግዚር፡ ዘመድ፡ ይሁናችሁ፡
 ዘመድ፡ ሁናችሁኛልና፡

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ይይሱ፡ ሰኒ፡ በባተ፡ በ፲ቀን፡ ግን፡ ግንድ፡ የመ
 ጣው፡ ሰው፡ ታመዋል፡ ወይ፡ ተሳካው፡ እንደ
 ሒድ፡ ምንገዱ፡ ታወክ፡ ደጅ፡ እገማች፡ ካሳ፡ እ
 ምጠው፡ ዳሩ፡ አልቀርም፡ አስ፡ ተመልሲ፡ በሐ
 ምሌ፡ ከርሶም፡ አይርሱሁ፡ ብሎ፡
 ርመሀር፡ ጌታሁን፡ እንደት፡ ገም፡ ደሳሉ፡ ጌታ
 ው፡ ወንድመዎ፡ ከሒዱ፡ ፲፪ብር፡ አቡነ፡ ያዕቆ
 ብ፡ ሰሙኝ፡
 ይቤ፡ ተኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ጌታው፡ ፀም
 ስ፡ ጌይሱ፡ እንደት፡ ገም፡ እንኳ፡ ደኅኖ፡ መጡ፡
 ጌታዬ፡ ሆይ፡ ራስ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ቀድሞ፡ የሰድሁ
 ቲን፡ ታሪክ፡ አሁን፡ ጽፎ፡ ለጌይሱ፡ እስደሁ፡ እ
 ርሰም፡ ከመጠልኝ፡ ደመወዝ፡ ለሳጣም፡ ቀድ
 ሞ፡ ጀምሮ፡ ወደጀ፡ ገምና፡ አይዘህ፡ ይሱኛልና፡
 ቅዱስ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ይጠብቀዎ፡ የምጽዋ፡ መ
 ክራዮን፡ ግን፡ ከሒዱ፡ ወደያ፡ ያከተው፡ ስልኝ፡
 ያገኘኝን፡ ያስተውሉልኝ፡

fol. 38

Qeñ Gēta Gebre İyyesus says: May this letter reach my lord and friend *Ras* Michel (Mika'ēl), the Frenchman. I am pleased that you arrived safely when I longed for you. Be my friend as I am your friend. I have not failed to do what your brother, the master, told me. Three times have I sent letters to you and your brother with [copies of] history. Whether they have reached [you] or not, I do not know. One [was] by the hand of Father Giovanni (*Abune* Yohannis), one by the hand of one of Bishop De Jacobis's (*Abune* Ya'iqob's) men, the third [I gave] to *Debtera* Tewelde Medhin. Before, when you left, I was ill for three months at Massawa, alone [and] suffering without anyone to nurse [me]. For two months Bishop De Jacobis saw to it that I was visited. For one month, however, there was no one who visited me; I was stranded alone because of unrest [in the country]. Since we parted, Bishop De Jacobis has sent me twenty thalers through Father Biancheri (*Abune* Bēnkērī). I suppose [it is] for Adula. May God be your helper (*zemed*); for you have become my helper.



Haylu arrived on the 8th of Senē. The man who came together [with him] is ill. Because *Dejjazmach* Kasa has rebelled, the road is so disturbed that he cannot go to where he is sent. Nevertheless he refuses to stay, saying that he must return and be back with you in Hamlē.

Memhir Gētahun says: How are you? Since the master, your brother left, Bishop De Jacobis has given me 12 thalers.



Qeñ Gēta Gebre İyyesus says: How are you, Master Şemru Haylu? I am pleased that you arrived safely.

O my lord *Ras* Michel (Mīka'ēl), the history which I sent [once] before I will now copy and send to Haylu. Now that you have come, I shall not be without a salary, for you are my friend since long ago and [always] encourage me. May Saint Michael protect you. But remember [please] the (lit. my) hardship which I met with at Massawa after you had left.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 46 and 38, Amharic original, both sheets 145×185 mm. There are several good reasons to combine these two folios into one document. Firstly, the paper is of the same size and quality and the folds of the two sheets coincide, presenting an address, "Ras Mīka'ēl Fransawī", on the back of fol. 38 only. Secondly, while the first sheet ends as an Ethiopian letter might be expected to do, the second sheet certainly does not start the way a letter normally does. Thirdly, the content and the context point to one and the same occasion. The pencil note "1847" on fol. 46 and the fact that the two sheets were not placed together in the collection must, I believe, be disregarded. Very little care was in fact taken when the Ethiopian correspondence of the d'Abbadie brothers was arranged in the volumes Abb. 254 and 256.

Instead of 1847, the letter was written in June or July 1852. Of the letters referred to, the first two are presented in this volume as nos 128 and 139, the third, forwarded through Tewelde Medhīn (see nos 126–127, 134), seems to have been lost. The sums of 20 and 12 thalers were promised in letters to the recipients dated Paris 28 Dec. 1850 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fols 157 and 59). The safe arrival of Michel d'Abbadie must therefore refer to his return to Ethiopia in May 1852.

Though the main purpose of Michel's journey was to bring gifts to his old friend and master *Dejjazmach* Goshu, he had been obliged to promise his family in France on oath that he would not proceed inland (see *Douze ans*, vol IV, forthcoming). Haylu and his companion had apparently been sent to Gonder and further on to inform Goshu of this, and Gebre İyyesus (no. 117) was taking the opportunity to welcome Michel and remind him of assignments carried out and hardships suffered in his brother's service.

Father G. Stella, known as *Abune* Yohannis, arrived in Ethiopia in 1847 and was sent to the Gonder area, where he remained until 1851 (O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix*, pp. 70, 74, 89). Father L. Biancheri accompanied De Jacobis on his return in 1842 and was stationed at Gonder 1851–53 (*ibid*, pp. 32, 89, 115). Both Gebre İyyesus and *Memhir* Gētahun, another of Antoine's collaborators since 1842 at least (see no. 108), lived at Gonder during this period. Adula, finally, was a young man whom Antoine had taken with him to France (see no. 171). The reference to Adula is obscure; perhaps Gebre İyyesus expected the young man to send money for his family or relatives.

Asseggaheñ (Zewadla) to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852]

ዚቴ፡ጠመር፡ዘተፈነወነት፡አምላ
 ቦ፡አሰጋጥኝ፡፳ተብዳሕ፡ሂበ፡ፊ
 ስ፡ጫካኤል፡ፍራንሳዊ፡እኚ፡ጸ
 ሳ፡መጡ፡አጽጊ፡ጸስ፡አሰኝ፡ከወ
 ደዘሮ፡አትጠገብ፡ቤት፡ጸብደቤ፡
 አርሰዎና፡አቶ፡አንጦን፡፡አጽ
 ተቶ፡አ፡አንደል፡፡አሰገዘታች
 ተኝ፡፡አቶ፡አንጦን፡፡አጽ
 ሳ፡አሰተ፡፡አንደል፡፡አንደል
 ሰግ፡አሰገዘታች፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ጸርግ፡አንተ፡አታጽርግ፡አሰኝ፡፡አ
 ቦ፡አግዚአብሔር፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ደበሱኝ፡ከወ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ሰግ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ጸ፡አ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ጸ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 አንግ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ሳ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ሰግ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ
 ሰግ፡፡አጽ፡፡አጽ



May this letter sent by Asseggaheñ reach *Ras* Michel (Mika'el), the Frenchman. I am pleased that you arrived safely. I am very happy. You and Mr. Antoine (*Ato* Anṭoniyos) made me write a letter at the house of *Weyzero* Attiṭtegeb and put me under a ban not to tell [anyone]. Moreover, Mr. Antoine (*Ato* Inṭoniyos) taught me medicine and put me under a ban not to practise [it]. He said to me, "*Lij* Sahlu shall practise, you shall not." Forgive me, for the sake of God, and intercede with your brother (lit. send to your brother) for me. I fear that I may come to harm because of this. Send me the reply. I have not told [anyone] up to now; I shall not tell [anyone] from now on either. Have no doubts about this matter. Let the ban be lifted. It is not good for any of us.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 63, Amharic original, 110×135 mm. This letter from *Debtera* Asseggaheñ to Michel d'Abbadie seems to fit in best with the latter's return to Ethiopia in May 1852, but the safe arrival referred to could also be related to some journey inside Ethiopia during the 1840's.

Asseggaheñ from *Wadla* (*ze-Wadla*), as he called himself, was one of the better known Catholic converts, whose detailed letters reporting the events of Tēwodros's reign and fall were published by Conti Rossini as "Epistolario del Deberā Aseggachēgn di Uadlā", *RRAL*, 6, 1 (1925). In September 1852 he accompanied the missionary L. Biancheri to Gojjam (*Vicende*, p. 505).

The information that he (and Sahlu) had been taught "medicine" by Antoine is interesting, and so is the cryptic reference to an oath and a promise not to practise his skills. In a letter to Michel as early as January 1843 (BN, NAF 23848/1, fols 115–116), Antoine mentions that he had explained about smallpox to Sahlu at Gonder. The Sahlu referred to is in all probability the *Lij* Sahlu Aṣqu of documents no 60 and 68. When Asseggaheñ made his promise under oath not to practise his knowledge is difficult to know, but it was only in 1848 that the d'Abbadies seem to have been in contact with *Weyzero* Attiṭtegeb (see no. 116).

Selama to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852]



Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

May this letter sent by Selama, metropolitan of Ethiopia, servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, reach Prince Michel (*Abēto Mīka'ēl*), the Frenchman. Peace be with you, and may the peace of God be with you.

How have you been? Have you been well, really, really? Whether you come or not, let me know so that I may tell (lit. send) you about all my activities.

ዛቲ ሙሉ ክክት ዘሊ ነዎ ለባህን ጳጳስ ዘኢትዮጵያ ግብ
ፉ ለክግዚኤኑ ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ትብንሖት ነባ ክብሩ
ሚካኤል ፈረንሳይ ለዘመ ለክግዚኤኑ ክግዚኤኑ
ርዮሃሉ ሙሉ ከሊክ ጽሕፈት ክረመታ ደባቦ ክረመኽ
ን ክጅጉን ክጅጉን ጽሕፈት መጣም ክገደደዩ ጽሕፈት መ
ጣም ክገደደዩ ለክግዚኤኑ ተግባራት ህሉ ክገደደዩ ጽሕፈት



BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 57, Amharic original, 125×330 mm. This letter, addressed to “Micael Esq. Hallai” in the handwriting of a European, may well have been the first of Selama’s letters to Michel after the latter’s return to Ethiopia in May 1852. According to his own memoirs (*Douze ans*, forthcoming vol. IV), Michel stayed at Halay for four months, *i. e.* throughout the rainy season that year. He has noted that he received an important message from Selama during that period. This would most likely be the following document, no. 149.

Selama to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852]

وسمعت نبيك جدينا صداما بنو يحيى
 تكلمت من ذوقنا الذي نختار
 بالحق على سلاطين كما جئنا نعلمون
 بما رهاهم وحملهم من حرمات
 تلك العول بذي الأسماء حرمات
 عرف فلما ولا يطيقون الحجة المسموعة
 كما خرج اللا من سبيلنا في التنازل
 فترسوا وانا سوجه السقط الذي
 ترفع بغيره عند الامم الغربية
 فحق لنا كرم ذلك الامم الغربية
 انما نحن الامم الصفة والحقا ان
 اذا كانا نريد هذين السنين الاثني عشر
 في سبيلنا نحتاجا وورا من حقنا هذا



حضرة اجتادكم المحترم محبا العزيز مكابيل والدي ببيت
 حقه المولى من كل الشكر والثناء يا ام
 هنيئة منتقبة بالذبح والسرور والسد قائما منكم في خدمته كخدمة عبده وعلامة وجوده نغز الاله

اتابعها هذا سلام ارف من النجم ووضحت بيته بله بالا فلا صرنا حكمكم الكرم ثم ما غام به حاتم الشريف
 اننا اولادنا كلكم جميع ما جاز بيتا وبين انا بيتنا وجماعته الذين جيزت لاجل التعليم اولادنا
 عنده كتابس وعقد كنهه وادخلهم في ايمانهم نانا حضر واحد مطران يدعي انا ماسيا من وجلسه
 كامله مختفيا بوسه شامسه وفضوس في بيت انا بيتنا ومن الجمله انه فعل فدا حريلا ووسم
 فضوس كانوا اولادنا سوسا السيف منهم من ايام المطران انا كيرس الذي فلنا والبيره منوسا عايرنا
 وهذا كان غير واجبا لانه كان موصولا الى بلاد الفلده كما سمنا في معنى الاجار ولكن نحن لما حقتنا
 بوسه لكضوت قائمتا وصدقنا انه من بلاد الجبشة واسم القلده هذا حلية لاجل السمع
 لاجل هذا علما كلكنا عند حرمات اوسيه وطلع من الترتبه ونوجه الى مصوع وورد السبع
 تانيا ونوجه الى بلاد الشوي وطلب ان يجلس عندهم فتالوا له ليس عندنا عاده يجلس مطران في بلادنا
 فرجع عند الراس وبعد ذلك الى مصوع وبعد هذا جميعه تركوا كلام الدين ومسكوا بسبنا عفن جلا فلما
 نيتنا في الجبشة وادعوا ان لهم عندنا عنتنا وخدم هاربا منهم فاعطينا لهم الخدام والعفن على انهم
 قلم ضيووا يقول خراسم بل مسكوا الرجل النبطي سنه ونسبته اسهم و تجارته كلكنا حشر
 وما نواسه اربعة اعمار عبيد كما اهلكناكم تفصيلا بكل ما صار وحتى ما نكتب الى حضرة الاله العظم
 بلاروسيه وليس جدينا وجمعا ذلك اولاسب انه لم يجده عندنا يدخل لنا جوابنا وناينا لانه
 دخل فيما بيننا عند الحيز يدعوا المال فوجدنا اننا اذا طالعنا الحضرة الجبشة جميع ما صار فيلن بنا الاسم
 مراسلتنا لاجل انه نسلك رجالا وما لاسبنا هذا هو الذي سقنا من الاعراض لذلك الحما
 ولكن الان قد سرنا بحضرتكم لدينا وهما قد نظرتهم وسمت كل من كان منا ومنهم وحضرتكم رجلا
 تقبنا بحجنا الصلح والسلامه فترجوكم ان نقرضوا لنا دعوات على المسامحة الكريمة و اير لنا بان
 امره القاطع في انا بيتنا وجماعته ان لا يفرزون على كتابنا ورجعتنا الوضوح اسم السبع لاركم حضرتكم نظرون
 انه حين تذهب بنا الكتابس والتاريخ يدخل في مذهبهم ونحن نسكت عن ذلك فنتمم بلنا الارض
 ورو وسأجها وسبب ذلك عنهم لفرقتهم في بلاد الحبشة مثل كل الممالك وحضرتكم قد تعلمون ان اهل
 الجبشة ليس جميعهم منتقنين معنا يا ايمان واحد كما في الممالك بل البصر مقترقين من بعضهم
 ولما منعهم نحن ونهضهم عن ذلك فينا مواكيل الشرور وكينون يمكن ان لا تخرج كتابهم ويكفون

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. God is my helper. I will not fear.

[To] His Excellency, the most noble and respected, our dear friend Michel d'Abbadie *Bey* (Mikāyīl Dābadī *Bīk*)—may the Lord protect him from all evil. May his days be always delightful and spent in gladness and joy, and may happiness be reserved for his service as if it were his slave or servant. May the faces of his enemies be [as] dust under his feet.

And now, after presenting greetings softer than the zephyr and expressing love, to the sincerity of which Your Noble Self bears witness, we inform Your Noble Honour that we have already told you about all that happened between us and Father De Jacobis (*Abba* Ya'qūb) and his people who have been here to give instruction. First, they seized a number of churches and some priests and converted them to their faith. Then a metropolitan called Father Massaja (*Abba* Māsiyās) came and stayed in hiding for one year, ordaining deacons and priests in the house of Father De Jacobis. In brief, he did something unprecedented by ordaining priests who were already priests, some of them since the days of the metropolitan *Abune* Qērilos (*Anbā* Kīrilus), who was before us, and some [who had been] ordained by us. This should not have been done because, as we heard from some sources, he was sent to the land of the Galla (*al-Qalla*). But when we realized that he was ordaining for the priesthood, we became convinced and certain that he had been sent for the lands of Abyssinia and that the word Galla was but a ruse, for the ears. Because of this we had a talk with *Dejjazmach* Wibē. He (Massaja) left Tigray and went to Massawa, and after this he returned a second time and went to the land of Shewa and asked [to be allowed] to stay with them. They said to him, "We are not accustomed to having a metropolitan stay in our land." So he returned to the *ras* and later to Massawa.

After all this they stopped talking about religious matters, and because of us they seized the goods of a Copt who was on his way to Abyssinia, claiming that we had with us property [of theirs] and a servant who had run away from them. We handed over to them the servant and the property through the good offices of the governor of Massawa. They did not agree to take their servant back but detained the Copt for a year and seven months, so that all his business was lost and four slaves of his died. We have informed you in detail about everything that has happened. However, we did not write to His Holiness, the Father, the Universal Master, His Beatitude the Pope of Rome. We did not find any way to do that, firstly, because we did not find anybody who could deliver our letter for us; secondly, because the enemy of goodness had introduced this property claim between us, and hence we found that if we disclosed to His Resplendent Holiness all that had happened, he might think that men and property had been seized because of us. This is what prevented us from informing His Holiness (*al-janāb al-'ālī*).

Now we are happy because of your coming to us. Here you have seen and heard everything regarding us and them. Your Excellency is a God-fearing man who loves reconciliation and peace, and so we ask you to submit our plea to His Holiness (lit. the Noble Ears), and he will on our behalf give his effective and decisive order to Father De Jacobis and his people not to encroach upon our churches and our flock, who are believers in the name of Christ. For Your Excellency knows that if the churches are lost to us and the people convert to their rite and we keep silent about this, the land and its rulers will turn against us. The reason for this is the lack of freedom in the land of Abyssinia as in all [other] kingdoms. As Your Excellency may know, the people of Abyssinia do not all agree with us in a single belief as [is the case] in other kingdoms, but on the contrary they differ from one another and from us. Were we to prevent and prohibit them from doing that, they would oppose us with every [kind of] wickedness. How is it

possible for us to keep silent when their churches are lost and they hear a new doctrine opposed to their faith? Indeed, they have stoned us as [they stoned] Stephen. Your Honour knows the rudeness and ignorance of their monks. So we beg you to inform the Blessed Father about this, so that he knows about the injustice done to us and does not think that we lack that love which is prescribed for all people by the Lord of mankind, who said "Love thy neighbour as thyself". As for the catechists (*al-mu'allimūn*) who want to give instruction among the people of the western [part of the country], we do not resent that, because Christianity is better than Islam or paganism, provided they go and instruct the [pagan] peoples with honest intentions and without coming into conflict with our flock and with our religion.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 156v, Arabic original, 205×325 mm. This letter seems to be incomplete. The last clause which has been made part of the last sentence in the translation presented here might in fact be the beginning of a new sentence completed on a second page which has been lost. Selama, moreover, normally dated and often signed his Arabic letters at the end (cf. nos 83, 103, 119 and 125).

Though the relationship between Selama and the d'Abbadie brothers had been strained at times (see no. 101), the bishop apparently greeted Michel's return in 1852 with satisfaction and counted on his help to solve an embarrassing sequence of quarrels with the Catholic missionaries. Selama was evidently anxious to improve his relations with the Catholics at this time as the closing paragraph of the letter indicates. There is reason to believe, therefore, that Selama would be one of the first to contact Michel when he arrived at Massawa in May 1852 (see BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 272–273). For more information on the quarrels and the solution of the most immediate conflict, see documents no. 150–152, 161–163.

The Catholic view of the conflict naturally dominates in the literature: Arata, *Abuna Yakob*, pp. 331, 339; Crummey, *Priests*, p. 90; O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix*, pp. 90–93.

Selama to Walter Plowden, [Aug.? 1852]

From the Aboona Salama, Papas of Ethiopia, to our esteemed friend, the English Consul at Massowah, may God bestow on you health. We write this to you to say that we heard from you, and you requested to know the reasons of our detention of the property of Mr. Rocher, French consul at Jiddah, and if it could not be set free, and we inform you, that we have seized these effects after having suffered much injustice at the hands of that Consul, who seized, on account of me, a Coptic merchant named "Hajjee Khayr" and this man had already been seized at Massowah by the Padre "Felixios" and the French agent, Padre Pasquale who brought the false testimony of men, converted to their creed, to prove that the effects of the said "Hajjee Khayr" belonged to me and I received letters through the French Agent from the Governor of Massowah, the "Kadi, the Mufti", and Padre Felixios, stating that a servant of Felixios had run away with much property, and had taken sanctuary with us, and that we must have received that property which they valued at three hundred German Crowns. In consequence of these letters, we seized the thief and took from him all the money and effects we found in the presence of all the most respectable persons in "Adowah", and the thief made oath after usage of the country, that there were wanting only ninety-six German Crowns. We then had the man chained, and sent all the property we had found, to Massowah, with letters to the Governor, requesting him to set free Hajjee Khayr, and we offered in the space of four months to receive from the thief if possible, the remaining 96 German Crowns, and to send them, which proposition however the priests would not accept. We therefore sent the thief in person chained, to the Governor of Massowah, but they also would not receive him; and the Governor then according to law called a council of the Kadi, Mufti, and principal merchants, who unanimously decided that Hajji Khayr should be allowed to continue his voyage; and the thief himself, declared in their presence, that I had received no portion of the missing property, and that he had entered my house empty-handed. And so the question was finished at Massowah, and "Hajji Khayr" departed for Jiddah; and on his arrival there was again seized by the French Consul because we have no agent or other person there interested in us, and the Coptic merchant has been now arrested there a year and two months, and all his effects are spoiled, and four slaves are dead, and he himself is very sick from grief and hunger, and before we caused the seizure of the effects of Mr Rocher, we wrote to you, and to your Vakeel, and to M. D'Abbadie, and no one did anything for us, in consequence, finding property belonging to him at "Halay" we seized it by the judge of the county, you being witness of the seizure, in all, nine mules laden with "Kusso", and we seized it that the right might appear, and when you can, do you, and the French Consul that is coming to Massowah, judge between us according to law, and if you find that we are in the wrong I submit myself to your judgement and will not resist your orders, and will even pay four for one; but without this just proceeding of the law I will not abandon that which I have seized, and if other people and effects belonging to the Franks arrive in this country, I will seize them also, to obtain redress; and as you have requested me to release the effects of Mr. Rocher why should you not rather use your influence to obtain the release of Hajji Khayr which would be more just, and in accordance with your general character, and the benefits you have conferred on the Abyssynians, causing even Christians to be restored from slavery to their country, and I now pray you to finish justly this affair, and as I before said I am obedient to any orders that may be given jointly by the French Consul of Massowah and yourself.

Selama to Pasquale, [Aug.? 1852]

Aboona Salama to the respected Agent of France at Massowah.

We write to you respecting the affair of the Copt "Hajjee Khayr". When he was at Massowah, the priest Felixios instituted a suit against him, on account of an Abyssynian servant, and saying that the goods of Hajjee Khayr belonged to the Aboona Salama.

The priest Felixios and the Aboona Salama not being of the same creed, Dejajmatch Oobeay ordered Felixios to quit the Country that there might not be two Aboonas in Abyssynia.

The servant of Felixios, who had been also with the Roman Catholic bishop "Massaja" came to my house and shortly afterwards Hajjee Khayr was seized at Massowah. People were shortly after sent to me from the French Consulate to demand the effects brought by the said servant, which we immediately ordered him to deliver up in the presence of all the respectable inhabitants of Adowah, and he gave them up.

After this the priest Felixios said that he still demanded three hundred German Crowns and we sent him the man himself (his servant) to Massowah, where he publicly stated the entire innocence of the Aboona Salama in this affair and on his statement the authority of Massowah unanimously decided that Hajjee Khayr should be set at liberty; and when the said Copt arrived at Jiddah, he was again seized there by the French Consul, in consequence of a letter sent by the priest Felixios, and I have now seized the effects of the Consul of Jiddah, to elicit the truth, and you, and the English Consul, and M. D'Abbadie, should consider this matter. Seeing that Hajjee Khayr is now arrested since a year and more and his goods have been sold at auction and at a great loss, and that none have been found to render justice, or to set him at liberty, we have therefore taken possession of some goods belonging to the French Consul at Jiddah, trusting to God and to you for the recognition of the right, and this seizure has been made legally and authorised by the king (i.e. Dejajmatch Oobeay), and we have written all these things to the English Consul and to M. Arnauld D'Abbadie.

FO 1/7, fols 182–183, English translation, certified by Consul Plowden. The original was not forwarded to London. This letter is reproduced with the orthography—including the Ethiopian names—and the punctuation of the text in the archive.

Pasquale da Dumo arrived in Ethiopia together with Massaja whose serving companion he then was. He settled at Massawa when the other Capuchins moved on to mission fields in the interior, and when Consul Rolland left in 1850, he took charge of the consulate.

This document is quite clearly not a literal translation of the Arabic original. Selama is twice referred to in the third person, and only in the second instance can it possibly be due to direct speech in the original. It is highly unlikely, too, that Selama would speak of a "Roman Catholic bishop" or of "German crowns", much less use "Arnauld" for the d'Abbadie brother he knew so well as Michel. Selama shows a clear tendency in this letter to focus the blame on Felicissimo alone, as if Pasquale was not equally involved, and to lessen his own responsibility by citing *Dejjazmach* Wibē's authorisation for the seizure of the goods belonging to Pasquale's superior.

FO 1/7, fols 178–181, English translation, certified by Consul Plowden. The original was not forwarded. This letter is reproduced with the orthography—including the Ethiopian names—and the punctuation of the text in the archive.

When this letter was written, not later than mid-August 1852 (see Plowden's covering letter to the Foreign Office FO 401/1, p. 139), Selama had reacted against the treatment of his friend and countryman *Hājj* Khayr by arranging for the seizure of a consignment of *koso* belonging to the French consul Rochet at Jidda. For Rochet's earlier career in Ethiopia, see nos 33 and 66. Felicissimo (Filiksiyos in Ethiopia) and Pasquale were Capuchin missionaries who had arrived with Massaja in 1846. Pasquale, a lay brother, had undertaken to look after the French consulate at Massawa in the absence of a consul (see also no. 151).

May this letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Goshu reach *Ras* Michel (Mika'el). Greetings, greetings to you. I am glad that God brought you back. For heaven's sake, for earth's sake, do not stay away. You will return immediately. Is your mother well? Are your brothers and sisters well? What have you killed since we parted? I have killed three strangers. I have killed three buffaloes. I have killed five elephants. I have killed two leopards. I have killed a snake. In one day I killed two hippopotamuses. If you come, you will kill elephants. You will also kill lions.

Now, I have sent you the two good mules that you asked me for. The men, too, whom I have now sent are trustworthy. Send me the things that you wrote (lit. sent) to me about. Preferably, come yourself and bring them (lit. have them brought) with you for me. Friendship is more important than the oath. If I die before we meet, you will not be able to bear the regret, and if you die without our meeting, I will not be able to bear the regret. Please do not stay away. If you can find, send me a pistol, five [or] six caps (*kufia*) of good quality, a new kind of small case [covered with] silk (*huqqa*), capsules and bullets [and] gunpowder in large quantities. Send me *zemzem* water, arrack [and] wine from your country, if it is available. Send me medicines for rheumatism, eye disease, the effects of syphilis [and] fever, preferably adding a doctor; if [this] is not [possible], send me in writing the exact dosage for each one as well as [instructions] on how to apply it. The reason why I have not sent you the colobus (*gurēza*) [skin] is that I am in difficulty since I am now on a campaign. I will send [it] to you later. I have been told that there is a gun which kills without making any sound; look for [one] and, if you find [it], send [it] to me. Look for and send me a percussion gun for elephants, too. Send me the lead bullets, about which you told me that they can be fired with white powder inside [and] set an elephant or a house ablaze. Even with all this, I will not be happy if we do not meet.

Fītawrarī Tesemma also says, "How are you really? Are you well? Send me a fine cap [and] a fine small case [covered with] silk."

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, f. 78, Amharic/Oromiñña original, 180×330 mm. Except for the usual opening sentence in Gi'iz, the first paragraph of this letter is written in Oromiñña. Goshu used Oromiñña in his relations with the chiefs south of the Abbay, and Michel d'Abbadie had learnt some of that language too. Note that Goshu styles himself *dejjazmach* in this letter, but calls his European friend and retainer "*Ras* Mika'el".

The letter is Goshu's reply to Michel's letter written in July 1852 (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 54). There Michel told Goshu that he had returned to Ethiopia with gifts for him but had promised his relatives by oath not to cross the Tekkeze, in other words not return to Goshu. Michel d'Abbadie's account of his correspondence with Goshu in 1852, as summarized in the forthcoming vol. IV of *Douze ans*, is somewhat confused. He cites one letter containing information about the two mules, the trustworthy messengers and Goshu's appeal that he come in person, etc., but cites the touching lines about regrets in connection with a later letter, or possibly an oral message.

In addition to the letter published as no. 104 and this one, there are only two very brief notes from Goshu to Michel in the Bibliothèque Nationale collection. After the usual introductory phrases and greetings, the first (BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 62) runs: "I am pleased that you arrived (*gebbah*) safely. Please, please, since I long very much for you, let us not delay our meeting." The second (fol. 81) is a warning to Michel not to listen to what his servant Kasa says. In both, however, Goshu calls himself *ras*, a title which he took at Gonder in Feb. 1848 (see *Nuovi documenti*, p. 395) but seems to have stopped using the following year. I have therefore assumed that these were written in 1848. At any rate they do not contain the "prière triste et résignée" of the last message recorded by Michel in *Douze ans*.

The letter demonstrates the common interest of the Gojjamē *dejjazmach* and his young friend in firearms and hunting, as well as the health problems with which the former or his family and court were presumably plagued. It is clear that Goshu was not only aware of the value of European drugs in general but also of the need for expert advice, or at least clear prescriptions, on how to use them.

Zemzem is the name of the well inside the great mosque in Mecca. It is rather odd that Goshu should be asking for *Zemzem* water. It must be assumed that he was using the word *zemzem* in some general sense of healing water.

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [Sept. 1852]

ዛቲ፡ ጠማር፡ ዘተ፡ ፈነወት፡ አምላክ፡
 ቀኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ትብዳሕ፡ ሳብ፡
 አገዛዚ አዩ፡ ወፍቁርዮ፡ ራስ፡ ማረካ አል፡
 ፍራንሳይ፡ አጃጉን፡ ደኅና፡ ዘረመሩ፡ ጌታ
 ወ፡ ፀመሩ፡ ጀጃ፡ ሃምራ፡ ስ፡ አሰ፡ ዳሞ
 ትን፡ ለደጅ፡ አዝማች፡ ደጃም፡ ደጅ፡ ኔ
 ደሙ፡ ጠጥ፡ ወ፡ ዳሞ፡ ለደጅ፡ አዝማ
 ት፡ ሌሎ፡ ሲጠ፡ ደጅ፡ አዝማች፡ ካሳ፡ ገ
 ን፡ ቋራ፡ አሉ፡ ብሎ፡ ስሙ፡ ገንደር፡ ደጅ፡
 አዝማች፡ ጉሹ፡ ገብተው፡ ጌታን፡ አድ፡
 ረው፡ ሕዳ፡ ደሙ፡ ብደፍ፡ ጉንደር፡ ስታ
 ወ፡ ከረመሩ፡ ከደሙ፡ ብደ፡ ጉንደር፡ ደኅሳ
 ል፡ አልተገደደ፡ የታመመው፡ ጉሹ
 ም፡ አንድ፡ ትመ፡ ስ፡ አልዳነም፡ አኒ
 ም፡ ወ፡ ሀ፡ ሲገል፡ ምጥቶ፡ አዩም፡ አሉ
 አስክ፡ ዘደም፡ ወ፡ ረው፡ ጉንደር፡ አዩ
 ፍሁ፡ አሰዳሉ፡ ስው፡ ሳገኝ፡ አደራ፡ አንደ፡
 ፈተኛው፡ ደሰቡኝ፡ ፍቅር፡ ደውቃሉ፡ ፍ፡

May this letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord and friend *Ras Michel* (Mika'el), the Frenchman. Have you been well, really? Master Şemru Haylu, how are you?

Ras Alī gave Damot to *Dejj Azmach Yimam* [and] *Dembiya* to your friend *Dejj Azmach Goshu*. *Dejj Azmach Kasa*, however, is in *Owara*. In *Hamlē Dejj Azmach Goshu* entered *Gonder* and, after staying there for six days, he left. *Dembiya* and *Gonder* have gone through a period of disturbances. *Gonder* is better off than *Dembiya*; it has not suffered [much].

Goshu, who had fallen ill, is still sick. He has not recovered. As for me, I will come and see you when the water [in the rivers] subsides. And until then I will write and send you all the news whenever I find a person [who will take it for me]. Please, have the same regard for me as before since you know [what] friendship [means].

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 44, Amharic original, 135×180 mm. The events described in this letter took place during the rainy season of 1852, the official appointment of *Goshu* as governor of *Dembiya* on 12 September (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 401–404).

A following letter (no. 156) refers to a letter written in *Meskerem* which must be the above.

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [Oct.? 1852]

ዛቲ፡ መ ል ኦክቶ፡ ዘተፈነወቶ፡ እም
 ቶበ፡ ቀኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ትብዳ
 ሐ፡ ቶበ፡ ኦግዚ እየ፡ ወፍቁር፡ ራከ፡ ማ
 ካኤ ል፡ ፍራጃሳዊ፡ ሰላሙ፡ ኦግዚ ክብሐ
 ር፡ የሃሉ፡ ምስኪክ፡ ኦሚ፡ የደጅ፡ ኦዝ
 ማች፡ ካሳ፡ ነገር፡ ኦክፊነቀ፡ ፊት፡ የራከ፡
 ሰዎች፡ ቢሔዱ፡ ካደጅ፡ ኦዝማች፡ ጉሹ፡
 ጋራ፡ በገጠሙ፡ ኦክፊነቀ፡ የራከ፡ ሰዎች፡
 ሲሔዱ፡ መገጠሙ፡ ኦቃታቸው፡ ቁሳ፡ ሰ
 ቁሳ፡ ደዘራሉ፡ ገገ፡ ትማገች፡ ኦር
 ሳቸው፡ የመሆኑ፡ ደጅ፡ ኦዝማች፡ ጉሹ፡
 የመሰሉ፡ ትማገች፡ ኦማሮች፡
 ተዋግተው፡ ድል፡ ነሱ፡ የደገ፡ ቤት፡ በ
 መስክረም፡ ኦሐድ፡ ቀገ፡ ተሸብሮ፡ ነበር፡ በ
 ደጅ፡ ኦዝማች፡ መርሶ፡ ነገር፡ ፊት፡ ኦውራራ፡
 ተሰማ፡ ፊት፡ ኦውራራ፡ ኦንግዳ፡ መጥተው፡
 የጊታው፡ የወንድ መዎ፡ ደብዳቤ፡ ካገ፡ ዘንድ፡
 ኦሁ፡ የመጣልኝ፡ የተዳፈው፡ በገጥ፡ ነው፡ ጌታ
 ራክ፡ ጌታው፡ ያሉት፡ ነበር፡ በቤገምድር፡ ፈል፡
 ጌ፡ ተገደች፡ ነበር፡ ስብዘ፡ ጭንቅጊሔ፡ በዳፍ
 ሐ፡ ገመግሁት፡ ስብዘ፡ ቀገ፡ መቀመጠዎ፡ ገደ
 ቅ፡ ኦደሌ፡ ነው፡ ኦሐ፡ ጌታው፡ ፀምሩ፡ ኃይሉ፡ ደሳፍነዎ፡

May this letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord and friend *Ras Michel* (Mika'ēl), the Frenchman. May the peace of God be with you. Amen.

The matter of *Dejjazmach Kasa* has become worrisome. Before, when the troops of the *ras* mobilized, he said, "I wish I had fought with the troops of *Dejjazmach Goshu*." Today, when the troops of the *ras* have mobilized, he is unable to fight. He moves about in the lowlands. However, the Qimant fought and defeated those who are like themselves and those who are like *Dejjazmach Goshu*, Qimant as well as Amhara. The quarters of the *içhegē* (*Içhegē Bēt*) were disturbed on a Sunday in Meskerem [because] *Fītawrarī Tesemma* and *Fītawrarī Ingida* came on account of the matter of *Dejjazmach Merso*.

The letter of your brother, the master, has now arrived with me. It was written in Tīrr. The history which the master mentioned is in *Begēmdir*. I have looked for

[it] and now it has been found [though] with great difficulty. I would have gone [there], copied it and brought it, had I known that you would stay many days. They say it is big.

Master Şemru Haylu, are you well?

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 73, G'iz/Amharic original, 110×130 mm. This letter was almost certainly written in October 1852. The incident in *Içhegē Bēt* referred to is described in *Nuovi documenti*, p. 404, as having taken place on Sunday the 24th of Meskerem, that is 3 October. There the names of the two violators of the sanctuary go unmentioned. Tesemma was *Dejjazmach Goshu's* son and Ingida one of his officers. For Merso see no. 50. This letter throws interesting light on the situation in Dembiya as late as a month or two before Kasa Haylu's decisive victory over Goshu and Birru at Gur Amba (27 Nov. 1852). Some passages of this text are ambiguous and have been translated conjecturally. The sentence about the Qimant fighting "those who are like themselves and those who are like *Dejjazmach Goshu*" is particularly obscure. It could refer to the Qimant fighting both Kasa's troops (from the lowlands like themselves) and Goshu's Amhara troops.

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [Oct.? 1852]

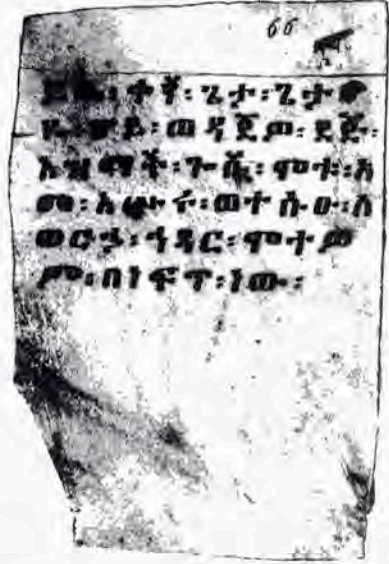
ይዚ፡ ተኝ፡ ጌታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ጌታዮ፡ ሆይ፡
 ራስ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ተግረ፡ ኃይሉ፡ ይዘት፡ ከመጣ
 ው፡ መጽሐፍ፡ ተክፍሎ፡ ተርታል፡ ክረመቶን፡
 ብረራ፡ ከዚያ፡ ወዲህም፡ ተጠንቅቶ፡ የሚያ
 ደርስ፡ ባጣ፡ ነው፡ ዳግመኛም፡ ሌዲ፡ ሌሊዲ፡ ነ
 ው፡ የሚሉ፡ ወረ፡ አየሰማሁ፡ ወደ፡ ዚኸም፡ ደ
 መጣሉ፡ እደሉ፡ ስሞች፡ ዳሩ፡ ግን፡ ለኒ፡ የሚመ
 ጡ፡ ወደዚህ፡ እደመስለኛም፡ ጉሹም፡ ዳነ፡
 ጉልበቱ፡ አልጠየ፡ አለ፡ እንጂ፡ የርስዎን፡ ወረ፡
 ኦርግጠን፡ ለኒ፡ የሚገግረኝ፡ የለም፡ ከዚህ፡ በ
 ፊት፡ ወረተት፡ ስድጃ፡ ነበርሁ፡ በመስክረም፡ የ
 ደረስ፡ መስለኛል፡ ክርስቶስ፡ ጌታው፡ ፀምሩ፡ ያደ
 ሉኦጅ፡ ጉን፡ ደግኖ፡ ነው፡ አገዛኩን፡ ከራሴ፡ አርሰዎን፡
 ከጌታው፡ የጋራ፡ ሁለታችሁን፡ ለመገናኘት፡ ደብ
 ቃች፡

Qeñ Gēta Gebre İyyesus says: O my lord *Ras* Michel (*Mīka'ēl*), of the books which Haylu, the Tigrean, brought, [some] were separated [from the rest] and left behind because I was afraid of the rainy season, and later because I could not find anybody who would bring [them] with care and, furthermore, because I heard rumours (which said) that you had left or were leaving. Some people said that you were coming here, but I do not think you will come (here). Goshu has recovered except that his strength has not returned. There is no one who tells me reliable news about you. Earlier, in Meskerem, I sent you a letter. I think it reached you.

Master (*Gētaw*) Şemru Haylu, are you well, really? May God enable me to meet the two of you, yourself and (lit. with) the master.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 33, Amharic original, 125×130 mm. This letter was probably also written in October, at any rate before the battle of Gur Amba on 27 Nov.

Gebre İyyesus to Michel d'Abbadie, [Nov.? 1852]



Qeñ Gēta says: O my lord, your friend *Dejjazmach* Goshu died on the nineteenth of Hidar. His death was by gunfire.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 66, Amharic original, 65×100 mm, parchment. The writer is no doubt *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus and the addressee Michel d'Abbadie. 19 Hidar agrees exactly with 27 Nov. 1852, the day when Goshu fell in the battle of Gur Amba against Kasa Haylu. Since Gebre İyyesus lived in or near Gonder, it may be assumed that he sent off his message within a day or two of the battle. The absence of the writer's and the addressee's names probably indicates that Gebre İyyesus did not want to be identified, should the letter fall into the hands of someone hostile to the addressee or to himself.

Yohannis III to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852?]

ዛቴ፡ጠማር፡ዘተረ፡ገደ፡ክምብ፡ፍጉሠ፡ገ
 ሠቶ፡ዮሐንስ፡ተብላሕ፡ገብ፡ግዳ፡ፈረንሳ
 ዊ፡ክፍጉ፡ክፍጉ፡ክፍጉ፡ክፍጉ፡ክፍጉ፡ገብ
 ፍ፡ገገር፡ምላክ፡ክንደሰስ፡ድልህ፡ያ፡ሰው፡ፊቀ
 ብኛ፡፡ገገር፡ግን፡ፈጠጣልኛ፡ክስክምከር፡ክ
 ልክብሀሱ፡፡በክብ፡ክፍ፡ዮሐንስ፡ህልኛ፡፡ፊቀ
 ተቀለል፡ክግዢር፡ፈሰጥልኛ፡፡ደስ፡ክንደሰስ
 ፍ፡በገ፡ክህፍ፡በሥጋህ፡ደስ፡ዮሐንስ፡፡ክሰጠክ
 ፍ፡ገንዘብ፡ጋራ፡ያልሰጠክ፡ግሰብህ፡ክፍ፡ግ፡ደ
 ስ፡ክሰኖ፡፡በደ፡ሥጋ፡ያስተያየ፡፡
 ሀርገ፡ዮማሠራበት፡ቀይ፡ሐር፡ገገር፡፡
 ስደድልኛ፡፡

May this letter sent by King of Kings Yohannis reach *Ras* Michel (Mīka'ēl), the Frenchman. How are you, really, really? That man is [so] far from me, that I am unable to send you a reply concerning the matter about which you wrote (lit. sent) to me. But, when he comes to me, I will send [a letter] to you, all the way to Egypt. I have received the things that you sent to me by the hand of Kebtē. May God compensate you. May He make you happy in spirit and body as you have made me happy. In addition to the money you gave me, your concern about what you did not give me made me very happy. May [God] enable us to see each other in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body). Send me red and yellow silk from which to make a fringe (lit. I may make a fringe).

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 68, Amharic original, 135×135 mm. The reference to money received (see no. 145) and the fact that this letter is written on the same kind of paper as nos. 155 and 156 indicate a date in October or possibly November 1852.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852?]

መልክክት፡ዘተረጎሙት፡ኧ
 ምንበ፡ደጃዝ ማኛ፡ውቢ፡
 መስፍነ፡ትገራ፡ወስ ማረፊ፡
 ትብፃሕ፡ነበ፡ሚካኢ ል፡ፈ
 ረንሳዊ፡። ሆሰደድህልኛ፡አቀ
 ነፍጡ፡ምንጣፈ፡ደረሰኛ፡።
 ኧገዢክብሔር፡ደስጥህ፡።
 ኧሁን ም፡መልካካም፡ነፍ
 ጥ፡ባሰደ፡ባም፡ሆነ፤ባሰቡገ
 ድም፡ሆነ፡ባሰ መሀጠቀሻም
 ሆነ፡ፈረንጅም፡ሆነ፡ጁሐር
 ዳም፡ሆነ፡ፈልጎልኛ፡
 ሆሰደድህልኛው፡ምንጣፍ፡
 ኧንደርሱ፡ያለ፡ሁኖ፡ጥለቱ፡
 በቀደ፡ሐር፡ሲሆን፡ያምራ
 ልፍ፡በቀደ፡ሐር፡የተጣሰ፡ፈ
 ልጎልኛ፡። ኧረም፡ደህን፡ኧ
 ድርጎልኛ፡ያልክኛውን፡ኧ
 ድርጎልሃሰሁ፡።

May the letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē, prince (*mesfin*) of Tigray and Simēn, reach Michel (Mīka'ēl), the Frenchman. The things which you have sent me, the gun [and] the carpet, have reached me. May God compensate you. And now look for really good guns for me, be it [the kind] with percussion caps, or flintlocks (*balebulad*), or matchlocks (*balemeṭtaqesha*), either European or large-size (*juharda*). Look for a carpet for me like the one you sent me but embroidered with red silk, because if the embroidery is in red silk, it looks beautiful. On my part, I will do what you tell me to do for you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 77. Amharic original, 130×250 mm. This and the following letter are very similar in style and content. It can be safely assumed that they were written in the same period, and several factors point to Michel d'Abbadie's visit to Ethiopia 1852–53. There are no indications in other sources that Michel had anything to do with Wibē during his years in the Ṭana region, and when he passed through Tigray on his way to the coast in 1848, the presents he had for Wibē were horses (see *Douze ans*, vol. IV, forthcoming). Michel mentions having sent messengers to Wibē on his return, when he was also better supplied with the kinds of goods mentioned in these two letters. Wibē was apparently very eager to have more of the same kind, especially firearms.

The absence of Wibē's seal is not important—it is often missing in letters to persons inside the country—but the use of the title *mesfin* is unusual in his letters.

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Michel d'Abbadie, [1852?]

መልክት፡-ዘተፈነወት፡-ከምጎብ፡
 ደጃዝማች፡-ውቤርክስ፡-መኳንን
 ት፡-ትብግሕ፡-ጎብ፡-ሚካኤል፡-ፈረንሳ
 ዊ፡-ክጅጉን፡-ክንጻት፡-ክለህ፡-የሰደ
 ድህል፡-ክቃ፡-ደረብኛ፡-አገር፡-ይሰጥ
 ህ፡-አሁንም፡-ባለድባ፡-ፈረንጅ፡-ባ
 ከብልጭት፡-ጁሐርዳ፡-ባሰቷ፡-
 ጁሐርዳ፡-ነፍጥ፡-መልካም፡-ግ
 ምጃ፡-የሚያስመሰግን፡-ባለወር
 ት፡-ቀስም፡-ባለብር፡-ቀስም፡-ወር
 ቀዘቦ፡-ግምጃ፡-ፈልገህ፡-ስደድል
 ኝ፡-።

May the letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē, head of the governors (*ri'ise mekwanint*), reach Michel (Mika'el), the Frenchman. How are you, really? The things you sent to me have reached me. May God compensate you. And now look for and send to me European guns with percussion caps, large flintlocks (*balebilçhet juharda*), large matchlocks (*baleqwad juharda*), fine muslin cloth, praiseworthy (lit. that brings praise) gold cord, silver cord, [and] muslin cloth with threads of gold.

Seal: *Dejjazmach* Wibē.



BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 79, Amharic original, 205×280 mm. The seal used on this letter is very similar to but not the same as the one used on Wibē's letters to Victoria and to Rolland in 1849. For date, see no 159.

Selama to Michel d'Abbadie, 9 Jan. 1853



Handwritten text in the left margin, written vertically in Arabic script.

Main body of handwritten Arabic text, including a signature and date '١٢٦٨' (1853).

In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. God is my helper. I will not fear.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[To His] Excellency, the most noble and respected Michel d'Abbadie *Bey* (Mikāyil Dabadī *Bīk*)—may God Almighty protect him from misfortune and oppression. After our abundant greetings to you and our asking about your noble and dear self, we inform you concerning the *koso* belonging to Mr. Rochet (*al-khawāja Rūshī*), which is with us, and we urge you to take it with you to Egypt or any other place and put an end to this dispute for us. For the goods belonging to (name indecipherable) are now unlawfully impounded at Jidda. Six horns of civet are being held at Mr. (*al-khawāja*) Šawah[’s establishment].

If you can solve this dispute at Jidda or in Egypt, then solve it for us as you see fit, for we do not like to be at odds because of money with people who come to these lands. It is a disgrace to all of us to dispute with one another over money in a foreign land. Rather we should protect them (the foreigners) and help them as necessary in all matters. Your Excellency, act as a mediator between us in solving this dispute as you see fit and in accordance with your good and perceptive vision. May [God] preserve you.

In the year [1]269, 28 R[abī’ al-]A[wwal].

Inasmuch as Your Excellency knows our love for white people, since they are closer to us in all matters, our discord (*al-shamṭa*) is first [and foremost] on account of the faith, not on account of money. We shall be overjoyed if Your Excellency can bring this matter (*al-kalām*) to an end so that there may be reconciliation and good-will among all of us, since Your Honour is loved by all and you love reconciliation and peace. So bring this matter to an end for us as you see and consider fit. May [God] preserve you.

The *koso* which has been with us is nine mule-loads, exactly, no more. We are sending a letter (from us) to the governor of Halay so that he will give you the *koso* as stated (lit. according to the accounting) in front of the servants of the aforementioned consul, the owner of the *koso*. When our letter concerning this arrives with the gifts, we would ask you to take that *koso*. May [God] preserve you.

In [the year] [1]269, 28 R[abī’ al-]A[wwal].

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 53, Arabic original, 165×310 mm. Selama apparently became so embarrassed because of this business about the civet impounded at Jidda and the *koso* impounded at Halay (see nos 149–152) that he decided to hand over the whole matter to Michel d'Abbadie. See also documents no. 162 and 163.

Selama to Tesfay, [Jan.? 1853]



ሃዳ፡ መላእክት፡ ዘረኑ ጥሰት ሰጠላ፡ ጳጳሱ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ ተብራርቶ፡ ብባሕርቱ፡ ተሰፋ
 ደፍሎ፡ ሐሳድ ሰጠላ፡ ኣግዚአብሔር፡ የሃሎ፡ መላእክት ኣካላት፡ ያለውን፡ ክሰጥ
 ቶ፡ መገኛ ልጅ ፈትካሪ፡ ዘረኑ ደግሞ፡ ኣገደኒ ሁሉ፡ ተተብሎ ለተሺ ሰጠላ፡ ደግሞ፡ ለዘነገሩ
 ያሙ፡ ባንዳ ፈትጊ ሰጠላ፡ ተረጎመው ደተባሎ ፡ ልጅ ልጅ ላንተሙ
 ደካሞኽን፡ አው ተላህ አለሁ አታውልብኝ አታሳድርብኝ ቶሎ ለጥልጅ
 ለረት አውራሪ ወልደ ጊዮርጊስ እኔ አላክ አለሁ ሐላዊ ወልደ ጊዮርጊስ
 ኪመጣ እነገረው አለሁ የዋለ ያደረ እንደሆን ገንዘቡ ደበሳሽ ብኛልዮ
 ቶሎ ለጥልጅ እግዚአብሔር ደባርክህ እግዚአብሔር ደፍቶሐን



Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.
 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

May this letter sent by Selama, the metropolitan of Ethiopia, reach *Abēto* Tesfay, the *shum* of Halay. The peace of God be with you.

Let Zeray receive the *koso* that is with you in front of Mr. Michel (Mīka’ēl) and hand it over to Rochet’s (Rushī’s) people on my behalf. And [as for] them, let them take possession after acknowledging receipt (lit. having said and admitted that they have received) in front of you. Please my son, my son, as for you, I will recognize your effort. Don’t waste time (lit. let not day or night pass) for me. Hand it over quickly for me. I will write (lit. send) to *Fitawrari* Welde Gīyorgīs. When Welde Gīyorgīs of Halay comes, I will tell him. Since the goods will be spoiled for me if it takes time, hand them over quickly for me. God bless you. God absolve you.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 51, Amharic original, 155×160 mm. Though it is quite clear from the other documents (nos 149–152) dealing with this business that Selama had initiated the seizure of the *koso* belonging to the French consul, this letter reveals that secular officials were also involved, and that they were not necessarily prepared to take orders from the bishop. See also document no. 163. Selama’s assertion that the seizure had been made legally on *Dejjazmach* Wibē’s authority (no. 151) seems therefore not to be without foundation. His promise to exonerate the *shum* of Halay by informing his superior *Fitawrari* Welde Giyorgīs points in the same direction. For the tensions created at Halay as a result of De Jacobis’s decision to make it his headquarters, see O’Mahoney, *The Ebullient Phoenix*, pp. 93, 110–111.

Selama to Michel d'Abbadie, [Jan.? 1853]



ዛቲ መልእክት ዘፈነጥ ሰላማ ጳጳስ ዘኢትዮጵያ ገብሩ ለእግዚአብሔር ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ትብጽሖ ሳብ ኣቢት ማኅኢ ልገረገሳ ድክተ ለያየኹ እኩክ ኣሁን እንደት ስነበትህ፡ እጅጉን እግዚአብሔር በሰሰሎ ያግባህ፡ በዓይኑ ሥጋ ለመተያየት ያብታን፡ የሰደድ ላላኝ መሽመሹሪ መከላ ልእንደታተመ፡ ደረሰልኝ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ደሥላህ ሆኖ ክሰውን ነገር ክቶ ተስፋይ ወረተት ስደጅክ ለሁኖ የሸለታ ዘራይ እንደይ ሆኖ ተተብሎ ባንተ ፊት ደሥላሳ ቸው ኣቶ ተስፋይ ግን ስልሰጥሎ ቢል እኒ ኣለሁ ብለህ፡ እንተ ተተበለው ክወልድ ጊዮርጊስ ሐሳይ እንደልክ ስሚን ሂደ ኣልክሱ ወረተቶን ስለቶት ስፋይ የሸለታ ዘራይ ደሥላሳው ናበተረው ግን ነገሩን ኣንተ እንደለሳክ ድርገው ናያሎብኸውን ነገር ሁሉ ላክብኝ እግዚአብሔር በሰሰሎ ያግባህ፡ እግዚአብሔር ደባር ክህ በዓይኑ ሥጋ ለመተያየት ያብታን ናሐላይ ኮሎኖ ጌቶን መድጓኒት እስድለሎ ኣለሁ ያልኸኝን ስደድልኝ ኣትርሳ።

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.
 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

May this letter sent by Selama, metropolitan of Ethiopia, servant of Our Lord Jesus Christ, reach Prince Michel (*Abēto Mīka'ēl*), the Frenchman. How have you been, really, from the day we parted until now? May God bring you back in peace [and] may he make us worthy of seeing each other in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body). The [dried] apricots (*mushmushī*) and the pickled vegetables (*mekelel*) which you sent me reached me unopened. (lit. as it was sealed). May God reward you. Concerning the *koso*, since I have sent a letter to *Ato* Tesfay, let *Yeshaleqa Zeray*—on my behalf—receive it and hand it over to them in your presence. But if *Ato* Tesfay says he won't give [it] up, take it from him, telling him that you are responsible. I could not ask (lit send to) *Welde Giyorgīs* of Halay since they say that he has gone to *Simēn*. Let *Yeshaleqa Zeray* give the letter to *Ato* Tesfay. As to the rest, you see to it that the matter succeeds. Whatever you think, let me know (lit. send it to me). May God bring you back in peace. God bless you [and] may he make us worthy of seeing each other in the flesh. Send me the two medicines about which you have told me that they are at Halay and that you will send [them to] me. Don't forget.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 52, Amharic original, 150x295 mm. By the arrangements outlined in this letter, the "civet and *koso* war" between the Catholic/French party and their opponents led by *Abune Selama* (nos 149–152, 161–162) seems to have come to an end. For *Yeshaleqa Zeray*, see nos 61, 101 and 105. *Mushmushī* and *mekelel* in the text are the Arabic words *mishmish* and *mukhallal*, only slightly modified by Selama's Ethiopian secretary.

Khayr to Michel d'Abbadie, [1853?]

ግጥም፡ መሰል ኢየሱስ፡ ዘመን ኢየሱስ፡ ግጥም ጌታ፡ ስራ ክር፡
 ትብቅ ሕይወት፡ ኃይል፡ ክብር፡ ማኅበራዊ፡ ክፍሎች፡ የሰማ
 ይና፡ የምድር፡ ደረጃ፡ ክብር፡ ፡፡ ወሬዎች፡ ብሄራዊ፡
 ደስ፡ ብሎ፡ ልና፡ ክብር፡ ማኅበራዊ፡ ማኅበራዊ፡ ማኅበራዊ፡
 የኑ፡ ስራ፡ ቀን፡ የተጨማሪው ትው፡ ክብር፡ ክርስቲያን
 ም፡ ክፍሎች፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡
 መቻቻ፡ ክፍሎች፡ ክብር፡ ክፍሎች፡ ክፍሎች፡ ክፍሎች፡
 ም፡ ወሬዎች፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡
 ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡
 ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡
 ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡ ስራ፡



May this letter which comes from *Shaykh* Khayr (Shēker) reach Prince Michel (*Abēto* Mika'ēl). Are you well, really, to the extent of heaven and earth? When we heard news about you, we rejoiced. And now may [God] make it possible for us to see each other eye to eye. You know what we, I, you and God as the third of us, discussed on the day you left. Until I die (lit. unless I enter the grave), I will not fail you, my father. And now, when you come here, I will not ask for anything else than that you inform me so that I [can come] two days' journey to receive you. [The reason] why I say all this is because you have—with God—delivered me from death (lit. the grave). I love you because of this. Even if everything [else] can be forgotten, the matter of Qeyih Kor cannot be forgotten.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 58, Amharic original, 205×230 mm. Whether the writer of this letter is *Shaykh* Khayr, whose title (Amharic *shēh*) and name have been combined into Shēker, or some one else with this unusual name is impossible to say with certainty. If *Shaykh* or *Hājī* Khayr is indeed the writer, the most probable date is 1853, after the settlement at Halay near Qeyih Kor (see nos 149–152, 161–163).

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Michel d'Abbadie, [1853?]

ዛቴ = መ ልክ ክት = ዘተፈነወ
 ት = ክ ምኅበ = ደ ጃ ዝ ማኛ =
 ውቤ = ትብፃ ሕ = ኅበ = ማኒ ካ
 ኪ ል = ፈ ረን ሳ ዊ = ጉዳደ =
 ክ ለኝ ና = ካ ሰብኸ ው = ተግ
 ባር = ደር ሰህ = ተመለስ =
 ክኒ ም = ታካ ት = ክገር = ሰጥ
 ቺ = ደስ ክሰኝ ሀሰሁ = ክን
 ተም = ኅፍ ጥ = ትገዛ ልኛ
 ሰህ ና = ቶሱ = ተመለስ =

May this letter sent by *Dejjazmach* Wibē reach Michel (Mīka'ēl), the Frenchman.

Since I have business [to take care of], fulfill the task which is on your mind and return. I will make you happy by giving you a large territory. Since you are going to buy firearms for me, return promptly.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 103, Amharic original, 190×240 mm. This letter was most probably addressed to Michel shortly before he left Ethiopia again in 1853. Wibē was in Simēn throughout Michel's stay in the country and the two did not meet. In a farewell message Michel told Wibē that he was going to Jerusalem and Rome to initiate requiems for his deceased friends (*Douze ans*, vol. IV, forthcoming). If my tentative dating is correct, this letter with its references to a task to be fulfilled by Michel and business (Kasa Haylu's rebellion?) to be taken care of by Wibē, would then be a response to that message.

Wibē's letters were often brief and to the point, (cf. nos 82 and 120). This was noted by Consul Plowden, who described Wibē as follows:

Terse in his answers, he dislikes long letters, circumlocution, or hesitation, and prefers to despatch all business, if possible, personally. He is implacable to his enemies, but staunch to his friends, and in general strictly just . . . his word once passed is to be trusted, but he will not pardon the smallest deviation in another, even if involuntary (Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia*, pp. 389–390).

Qwerenç to Alī Alula, [1853?]



GIOVEDI

Handwritten Amharic text in a cursive script, consisting of approximately 10 lines of text.



May this letter sent by Abba Qwerenç (Qwerekī) reach the head of the governors (ri'ise mekwant) Ras Alī. How are you, really, to the extent of heaven and earth? On my part, due to lack of a [safe] road, [I and] the Egyptians, whom I brought with me, were delayed at Gonder. So I will come with Shaykh (sheh) Alī. The Egyptians have been starving, because they have had no friend (zemed) at the metropolitan's residence.

May God be your helper (zemed). May He fulfill what you have in mind with the exception of sin. [Let us pray] "Our Father in heaven".

BN, Ethiop. 184, fol. 23, Amharic original, 140x195 mm. Though the writer calls himself Qwerekī instead of Qwerenç, there is every reason to believe that we have to do with the same person as in document no. 47—a monk and a friend of Alī, accustomed to travel.

The dating of this letter is much more problematic. It could belong to the early 1840's when Ras Alī had frequent contacts with the Sudan and Egypt (nos 76 and 77). The paper, however, with its illustration of a Greek/Roman god (most probably Zeus/Jupiter) and "Giovedi" points to a period when some Italian lived at Gonder. This was the case in the early fifties with among others Biancheri (O'Mahoney, The Ebullient Phoenix, pp. 115, 118). In January 1853, moreover, an Egyptian envoy arrived in company with a returning Ethiopian mission (Theodor von Heuglin, Reisen in Nord-Ost-Afrika (Gotha, 1857), pp. 4, 13, 18). The first half of 1853 is the latest possible date. The pronoun in the last two sentences is ambiguous. The preceding sentence speaks of the Egyptians having no zemed (relative/friend), and so the following sentences might refer to them rather than to Ras Alī. For Shaykh Alī, see nos 75 and 81.

Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie, [1853]



no. 1846 / 1853
Apr. 1853 / Jawwal 6

ዛቲ፡ መልአክት፡ ራብሂት፡ ዘተፈነወት፡ ኢሥጥጣር፡ ተኝ፡ ጊታ፡
 ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ትብዳሕ፡ ገብ፡ ኦግዚአዮ፡ ወፍታዲዮ፡ ኢት፡ ኢገ
 ጦገዮ፡ ፍራገገ፡ ዘክባድዮ፡ ሰፋመ፡ ኦግዚአብሔር፡ የሀሉ፡
 ምስሉክ፡ አሚገ፡ ኢፎ፡ ኮነ፡ ግብረ፡ ዘ.አዮ፡ ዘከገገ፡ አቤ፡ ሰብ፡ ሰ
 ማአኩ፡ ክመ፡ ኢ.በጽሑ፡ ለክ፡ ዠሉ፡ ጽሑ፡ ራታዮ፡ ይመስለኒ፡ ሰብ
 ኦ፡ ዘክታረፎ፡ በዘመነ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ በወርኃ፡ ሰነ፡ ፈነወ፡ ሌተ፡ መ
 ልአክት፡ እጉክ፡ ራሱ፡ ማካኪል፡ በዋኩ፡ ውስተ፡ ምጥጥ፡ አነሂ፡
 ፍጡ፡ ማጥኩ፡ መልአክት፡ አነ፡ ክመ፡ ኢ.ይሑር፡ ሐሚምዮ፡ ነ
 በርኩ፡ ድጎረኒ፡ ዩሑ፡ ፍዮ፡ ታረክ፡ ዘዚኛ፡ ፈነወኩ፡ በወርኃ፡ ሐ
 ምሌ፡ ክመ፡ ነገርክኒ፡ አገጥተ፡ ብሂሉክ፡ እገዛ፡ ትፈነ፡ ሌተ፡ ታረ
 ክ፡ ዘዚኛ፡ አገተ፡ ኢትርፍ፡ ሆላኛ፡ ምክር፡ ውክቱ፡ በወርኃ፡ ሐ
 ምሌ፡ ድጎረ፡ ፈነወኩ፡ በወርኃ፡ መስከረም፡ በጽሑ፡ ሲተ፡ መ
 ልአክት፡ ሳብግዮ፡ በእይ፡ አቡነ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ጊር፡ በእሱ፡ ዝኩ፡ በ
 ማርክ፡ ዘሀሉ፡ ውስተ፡ ልብክ፡ ውስተ፡ ልብ፡ ዩ.አዮ፡ ነገረኒ፡ ኦ
 ስመ፡ ጸሐዊ፡ ኪደዮ፡ ኪደክ፡ ዘጸሐ፡ በምሥጢር፡ ከአመርኩ፡
 የሙ፡ ግሑ፡ እንበሉ፡ የጠማራት፡ አልዮ፡ ዘበጽሑ፡ ሲተ፡ ሳብግ
 ዮ፡ እገዛ፡ ትብሉ፡ ካዕብ፡ አቡነ፡ ዮሐንስ፡ ኢገዛ፡ ደካውን፡ ፍቱር
 ኩ፡ ሆ ለፎ፡ አርመምክ፡ ከስክ፡ ደክዜ፡ ወአገሱ፡ ብሂልዮ፡ ክመ፡
 ካልአገ፡ ወዘተ፡ ቡኩ፡ አመ፡ ደታረክ፡ በ፡ ዘታድሙ፡ ግምደ፡ ጽዮን፡
 ስመ፡ ነገሥት፡ ረኩ፡ ብዮ፡ ሀሉኩ፡ ኦግዚአብሔር፡ ይጠብቀዎ፡

May this fourth letter sent by *Qeñ Gēta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord and friend Mr. Antoine d'Abbadie, the Frenchman (*Ato* Inጥoniyo፡ *Fransawī* Zeabediye). May the peace of God be with you. Amen.

What happened to my work which [was done] in vain? When I heard that all the (lit. my) copies did not reach you, I said [to myself], "It seems to me that someone kept them." In the year of John in the month of Senē your brother *Ras* Michel (Mīka'ēl), having arrived at Massawa, sent me a message, and I replied at once (with a message). I could not go because I was sick. Then I copied a history (of events) and sent [it] in the month of Hamlē as you told me (saying), "When you send me the history (of events), keep [a copy]." It was good advice. After I sent [it] in the month of Hamlē, your se-

venth letter reached me in the month of Meskerem by the hand of Father Giusto (*Abune* Yo፡፡፡፡፡፡), the good man. This letter of yours, which is in your heart and in my heart, told me that those who hated you, [also] hated me. I knew of them in secret. You say the seventh, but no more than (lit. except) three letters have reached me. Furthermore, if Father Giusto is your friend, why did you not say [so] until now? I, for my part, thought that [he was] like the others. I have found what you [asked me for when you] said, "See if the names of the kings before Amde ፡፡፡፡፡፡፡፡ can be found." May God protect you,

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 111, Gi'iz original, 185×215 mm. Antoine noted that he received this and the following letter, Gebre İyyesus's fifth (dated 19 June 1853) in November 1854. It can therefore be safely assumed that the above letter was written too late to reach Michel before he left Ethiopia in 1853. The letter sent in the month of Hamlē, which seems to have disappeared, must have been Gebre İyyesus's number three. Giusto da Urbino was one of the Capuchin missionaries in central Ethiopia.

Gebre İyyesus to Antoine d'Abbadie, 19 June 1853

ዘቲ፡ ኃመሲ ስተ፡ ጠማረ፡ ኃዘን፡ ዘተፈነወት፡
 ኢመላብ፡ ቀኝ፡ ተገታ፡ ገብረ፡ ኢየሱስ፡ ተገታ፡
 ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ወፍቁር፡ አቶ፡ አንጦንዮስ፡ ፍራን
 ሳዊ፡ ብዝኃ፡ ሰላም፡ የሃሉ፡ ምስሊክ፡ አሚን፡
 እእግዚአብሔር፡ ስማኦ፡ ወሰቡ፡ ነገር፡ ኢመኒከት፡
 ወእምአቶክ፡ ዘተርፈ፡ ሃዋይ፡ ድሳረ፡ ሰምዖን
 ዝንዮ፡ አንዘ፡ ኢይረአዮ፡ ዓይንዮ፡ እስመ፡ ለግዊ፡
 ወማዕመር፡ አንተ፡ ሐተት፡ ዘንተ፡ አኑ፡ ወመሀር
 ጊታሁን፡ አንዘ፡ ንብል፡ ማክዚ፡ ደመጽኦስ፡ ሰ
 ሚዓነ፡ ሐረቶ፡ ለእቶክ፡ ራኩ፡ ሚካኤል፡ ተስፋ፡
 መተርጎ፡ ወእልጸተት፡ ለሞት፡ ሐይወት፡ አንሰ፡
 ፈንዊዮ፡ ዘይከውኅኒ፡ ሲሳዮ፡ ወዓራዝ፡ እስከ፡ ጊዚ
 ሁ፡ እቲ ክዝ፡ ጥቀ፡ ምክንያት፡ እመ፡ ኢመጽኦስ፡
 ቤዮ፡ ክመ፡ ኢይበል፡ ኢትምጻኦ፡ ደቤሰክ፡ እግዚአብሔር
 ደቤሰኒ፡ ሄኤ፡ ጊዚ፡ ወዓልት፡ ጻሕቶ፡ ንስቲተ፡ አትሐ
 ዘብ፡ በጸሐ፡ ላብ፡ ጅዳ፡ ወምስር፡ እመ፡ የሐሊ፡ ሊተ፡
 ሠናዮ፡ ደተርፍሰ፡ ዝነገር፡ እስመ፡ ረዳእዮ፡ ወምስካ
 ደዮ፡ አንተ፡ ሐሊ፡ ሊተ፡ ወዳግመ፡ ተወክፍ፡ እምአቶ
 ክ፡ ታሪክ፡ ዘዚኖ፡ እስመ፡ ወሀብክ፡ ወሰደድክ፡ ገሐ
 ቱ፡ ዘዚአብሔር፡ ተርፈ፡ አንዘ፡ ኢይረክብ፡ ምንተ፡ ወሀሉ፡
 ለክ፡ ጽሑፍ፡ ዘቆድመ፡ ዓምደ፡ ጽዮን፡ ስመ፡ ነገሥ
 ቱ፡ ዘምስሉ፡ ታሪኒ፡ ወዘማላደረ፡ ማርያም፡ ታሪክ፡
 ወሐዝ፡ ነገር፡ እመ፡ ኢወሰንኮ፡ አንተ፡ አቶክ፡ ኢይዊ
 ሰኖ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ እስመ፡ ዘእቶክ፡ ነገር፡ ያቁልርር፡
 ልብ፡ ወፍጡነ፡ ሚዮ፡ ሊተ፡ ነገረ፡ ተስፋ፡ ወኢይዮ፡ ጽዮ
 ፊ፡ ኃዘንዮ፡ ወደኩን፡ አቡነ፡ የሰጠሉ፡ ለነገር፡ ገ፡ ዓቃቤ፡



እግዚአብሔር፡ ደጠብቶም፡
 ጸሐፍክዋ፡ እመ፡ ነገረ፡ ለሰኒ፡ በዘመነ፡ ማቴዎስ፡ በ
 ነገረ፡ ማቴዎስ፡ ማቴዎስ፡ ምሕረት፡

May this fifth, sorrowful letter sent by *Qeñ Gêta* Gebre İyyesus reach my lord and friend Mr. Antoine (*Ato Inṭoniyos*), the Frenchman. (Much) peace be with you. Amen.

O my lord, listen and understand my problem. Is it with you or with your brother that the money remains without my eyes having seen it although (lit. after) my ears have heard about it? For you are a person with understanding and knowledge. Consider this: While I and *Memhir Gêtahun* were asking [ourselves] when he would come to (lit. for) us, we heard about the departure of your brother *Ras Michel* (*Mîka'êl*) and we lost hope and were on the verge of dying (lit. our life came close to death). Having sent as a gift to him what was intended for me for food and clothes for the time being, I am in great distress. So that he will not say as a pretext, "If he did not come to me," [please note that his] servants twice said to me, "Our master tells you not to come." I entertained the idea that he would have thought of something good for me after reaching Jidda and Cairo. Let this matter be dropped. However, since you are my helper and my refuge, keep me in your thoughts.

And now, ask for (lit. receive) a history (of events) from your brother because I have given [it to him]; I have sent [it through him]. But what is mine has remained [undelivered], so that he has no excuse. I have also copied for you the names of the kings who lived before Amde Şiyon with [their] history, and the history of Mahdere Maryam. If you do not finish (lit. decide about) this matter, O my master, your brother will not finish it. For the words of your brother chill the heart. Send me a word of hope at once, so that my distress does not become greater. Let Father Giusto (*Abune Yosṭos*) be in charge of our affairs.

.....

May God protect you.

I wrote this on 13 Senê, in the year of Matthew, the Year of Grace 1845.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 104, Gi'iz original, 165×225 mm. Finally, in addition to numbering his letters, Gebre İyyesus starts to date them.

Gebre İyyesus was apparently not receiving the payment he thought he and Gêtahun were entitled to for their work, and suspected that Michel had held back money intended for them. He had written several times to Michel (nos 144, 154–157) and had announced that he would come to Tigray to meet him (no. 154), but for some reason this did not happen. His suspicion that Michel would blame him for this was not unfounded. Michel wrote to Antoine from Cairo that he had paid nothing to Gebre İyyesus because he had been very negligent and had not even come to see him once (BN, NAF 23848/II, fols 137–139, 29 Aug. 1853).

Fenta to Antoine d'Abbadie, 21 Sept. [1853]

ዘቲ፡ጦማር፡ዘተፈነወት፡ኤመሃበ፡
 ጸብተራ፡ፈንታ፡ትብዳላ፡ሃበ፡ፍቁርዮ፡
 እንጦንዮሁ፡ጸላፍ፡ክሉን፡ክጅጉን፡ሬከ፡
 ክሊፍ፡ካላ፡በጃር፡በሰኔ፡ተዋጉ፡ፊት፡
 ራከ፡ክሊ፡ከሩ፡ማታዉ፡ካላ፡ክረ፡ጃ
 ላ፡ሸሸተው፡ጸብረ፡ታቦር፡ከረሙ፡መ
 ልሰው፡በኃመሌ፡መጥዋቶው፡ሸሸ
 ተው፡ወሱ፡ገቡ፡ፊ፡ግን፡ከሩ፡ገቡ
 ፍ፡ካላ፡ተጸጸቶዋሉ፡ሰመዋጋት፡ክ
 ማራ፡ክገርሙ፡ራከ፡በግር፡ሁነዋሉ፡።
 በመከከረሙ፡ገገ፡፪፡ቀን፡
 ተክሰ፡።

May this letter sent by *Debtera* Fenta reach my friend Antoine (Inጥoniyos). Are you well, really? *Ras* Alī and Kasa fought on 23 Senē. At first *Ras* Alī was victorious, [but] in the evening Kasa prevailed. Then [Alī] fled and stayed at Debre Tabor for a while. [Kasa] returned in Hamlē and marched against him. [Alī] fled and went to Wello. Now, however, Birru Goshu and Kasa are confronting each other in order to fight. The Amhara country is in upheaval. Written on the 12th day of Meskerem.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 109, Amharic original, 110×135 mm. The defeat of Alī took place on 29 June 1853 at Ayshal in Gojjam (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 407–408; Zeneb, *Tarik*, p. 15).

Wibē Hayle Maryam to Walter Plowden, [Oct. 1853]

May this letter from Dejjajmatch Oobeay, King of Ethiopia, reach the Consul Plowden. What were the terms of our friendship? That I should do what you demand of me, and that you should do, what I ask you. Now if it be possible do you go for me to your country, if not some person in your confidence, who understands guns should go. I will send Mr. Wurkee with him on my part. I wish to buy guns and pistols of different kinds and of good quality; and rely upon you. I shall have the money ready after a few months.

FO 1/7, fol. 343. Of this letter only the above translation in Plowden's handwriting and certified "True translation Walter Plowden" is found in the Foreign Office files. A covering letter by Consul Plowden is dated 20 October 1853. Wibē's letter is written not too long before that date.

When Wibē calls himself "King of Ethiopia", it is a clear indication that he was prepared to challenge *Dejjazmach* Kasa for the supreme position of power in Ethiopia after the latter had defeated *Ras* Alī in June 1853. In earlier documents of his, where the title "king" was used, the kingship was always limited to Tigray (nos 132 and 133) or at the most the provinces "from Gonder to the sea of Massawa" (no. 88). These documents were, moreover, those inspired or even written by Europeans and intended for addressees who knew little about the internal situation in Ethiopia. It is highly unlikely that Wibē would insert a "king of Ethiopia" in a brief note to Plowden unless he meant something by doing so.

Fenta to Michel d'Abbadie, 14 Nov. [1853]

መሀል ክብተ፡ ደብተራ፡ ፈንተ፡ ተብዳላ፡ ጎብ፡
 ፍቅር፡ ክራክ፡ ጣሊካኪል፡ ሰካም፡ ስከው
 ሰካም፡ ክግዚኤብሔር፡ የሀሱ፡ ምስኪክ፡ ክጣጫ
 ጎ፡ ክንገደ፡ ፍቅራቸን፡ ገይነ፡ ሥጋ፡ ያስተያየን፡ ገላ
 ቤተቱም፡ ቤተ፡ ሰዎም፡ ልጆቻዎም፡ ደጎና፡
 የወራ፡ ነገር፡ ግን፡ ራስ፡ ክሊና፡ ሄጃዝጣቸ፡
 ካሳ፡ ጉጃም፡ ካይ፡ ተዋጋ፡ ደጃዝቸ፡ ካሳ፡ ክ
 ራ፡ ራስ፡ ክላ፡ ሰገጥ፡ ክላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡
 ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡ ገላ፡
 ካሳም፡ ደብተራ፡ ተባር፡ ክከው ደጃ፡ ነተና፡ ፍ
 ጥረት፡ ሆ፡ ቀን፡ ነው፡ ከብላከ፡ ክሂነግሩ፡
 ነው፡ ክዚህ፡ ወረቀት፡ ጎራ፡ ሆ፡ ወረቀት፡ ነ
 ው፡ ሰጂ፡ ያህሁ፡ ደደር ስሰዎ፡ ክይደር ከዎ
 ክካው ቅም፡ ክንገደ፡ ያጎፍተኮ፡ ያኪኪኮ፡
 ወካክር ጎኑ፡ በጊ፡ ቀን፡ በላይ፡ ተገፊ፡

May *Debtera* Fenta's letter reach my friend *Ras* Michel (Mika'el). Peace be to you and may the peace of God be with you. Amen. May He let us see each other in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body) in accordance with our love. Are the mistress and your household and your children well?

As for the news, however, *Ras* Alī and *Dejjazmach* Kasa fought in Gojjam. *Dejjazmach* Kasa was victorious. *Ras* Alī fled and went to an *amba* called Kwakwit. *Dejjazmach* Birru is in Gojjam and Kasa in Debre Tabor. Friendship and creation [arise] in one day. [The proverb] is: One does not tell the clever. It is four letters that I have sent you, including this one. But I do not know if they have reached you or not (reached you). O my beloved (lit. my soft one), may we meet [again].

Written on the 6th day of Hidar.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 357, Amharic original, 95×95 mm. The battle between Kasa and Alī referred to here was fought at Ayshal on 29 June 1853. The proverb "One does not tell the clever" continues "one does not cut meat for a lion" and is probably *Debtera* Fenta's way of checking himself when he discovers that he has started to cite Ethiopian popular sayings to Michel d'Abbadie who had lived so long with and so close to the Ethiopians that he would already have heard them. In an earlier letter (no. 130), Fenta cites the same proverb and follows it up with "One does not tell the stupid" [because they will not understand anyway]. Both the proverb and the three words in Oromiñña at the end of this letter may be Fenta's way of assuring Michel that he and no one else had written the letter.

Welette Rufa'el to Raphael Baroni, 15 Jan. 1854

ዛቴ፡ ወጋቀ ት፡ ዘ ወይ ዘይ፡ ወለተ፡ ርታኤ፡
 ትይዳህ፡ ግበ ጌታ፡ ስቶ፡ ገረ፡ ሂ፡ ስ፡ ጌ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡
 ስ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡ ጉ፡
 መ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡
 ደ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡
 ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡
 ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡
 ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡



ደ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡
 ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡ ግ፡

May this letter from Weyzero Welette Rufa'el reach Mr. Baroni (*Gēta Ato Baroni*). How are you, really?

Abba Teklu, the monk who came from over there, arrived safely with *Shaleqa Hadgu*. The things have reached me by the grace of the Lord, your God. May Christ grant you long life and health. Amen.

When I say the things, however, I mean the 156 thalers.

This is written on the 8th day of *Ṭirr* in the year of 1854.

BN, Ethiop. 184, fol. 69, Amharic original, 215×115 mm. The year "1854" must be according to the Gregorian calendar. I have found no indication that Michel remained in contact with his Ethiopian wife as late as 1862, and she thanked him, too, for money received at the beginning of *Ṭirr* and by the hand of *Abba Teklu* (no. 178), that is the very amount acknowledged in the above letter.

Baroni was at this time Consul Plowden's assistant at Massawa. Both *Abba Teklu*, most likely *Tekle Haymanot* of *Adwa* (Crummey, *Priests*, p. 79), and *Shaleqa Hadgu* (Lefebvre, *Voyage*, I, pp. 109–110, and the correspondence of the d'Abbadie brothers in BN, NAF 23848 and 23853) belonged to the French/Catholic community in Tigray.

Selama to Victoria, 23 April 1854



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين
والصلاة والسلام
على سيدنا محمد
والآله الطيبين
التواترين

حسب سنة المولى وبهجة الايام والليالي نادرة الزمان ونتيجة الاوث ومدت معرفت ومصلاحتنا
الكهنة الارثوذكسية طرز حلة الاكليروسيين قائمة شباب الدين حامية زماريين دعانة الكنيسة
سراج البقية ونورها خلاصت النجد واشرف معز السلو والخلو وحت نجداني نعت آثارها وروفا
التي نضوعت ازهارها وسماه بكرتات التي اشرفت بجوها وجات بها وطل نعت عيونها رافعة لواء
والرشاد قاسم اهل البني والفساد انت السيد املكه فلكسندرية ملكة دولة استنصره عظم القوم
وصافها مما شاها واحسن مساعها وتحقت امايتها وارتعت انوف شاتجها ايس

امابد الرعا الخالص في الانتقار وبث الاشواق الماند للطور من السماد وبسط اكنوا نضمه والابتنها
لحضره المولى والجلال ببناء وجودكم مدا الايام والليالي محفوفين بايين وسرور ولائنا نسبحي ليل
الكريمة وسبدي اليه لخير لخلقكم الرجيه ان عديم مقدم هذا العرف حصل له غاية الشرف والظلم
الروم الكافركيين الميهمين بالجنه وهم اذا يعقوب وجماعته اولاد تعدوا علينا واخذوا منا الاث
كنايس في بلاد القزبيه ثانيا احضروا مطران من طرف البايا يدعي المطران ماسياس وج
الكهنة الذين تتعوا وياتهم البعض منهم كانوا قسوسا اولاد مجلدوم قسوسا مدعة
من يد المطران المذكور وكذلك الشمامسة الذين كانوا شمامسة الكنيسه الجبته جلا
شمامسه ووسمهم ثانيا وجلاوا يوسموت شمامسه وقسوسا من طائفتنا ونحن لاسمه
بذلك فاعرضا امرنا للسلطان اوبيه فمنهم من ذلك فلما منعهم عن فعلهم نيرلوا ب
في مصوع وصاروا يسكنون من يحدون من طرفنا فلما سالناهم عن السب فادعوا ان لهم
خادمنا في الجبش بطرنا اخذناهم عنفت وقدره ثلثماية ريال فراسه فاعضف مع بعض وحاد
الذي فالوا عنه فاخذوا العنق بل يدكم مصوع ووكيل فنصل الاكسبرو ودر فصل مرض وحاد
قالوا ما نقبله وسكوا الحد التجار من الاقراط مدعيين ان بافي هم جنسنا فاقضى بنا
حاكم مصوع والعامي ولسن وقال لهم من حيث ان الرجل لذي ولتر انه ذاككم رسلكم فلا
نطقوت حال التجار ولا لكم دعوى عند مطران الجبش وهم ربه يوقيقبور خادمهم

الموت الرجل العتيق بسا ورجاله نفساً بحكم الحكام بمصوع اطلعوا سيده من بعد من
 يصوع مسكوه ثابتاً يخدمه مدة سنة الى ان فتمداله و الفرجاله ومات منه فزير من الخ
 له الخ والرجل العتيق كذبت اشرف على الموت فاطلعوا سيده واخذوا منه ماله و اعاد
 به خدمه من اسايون علمنا بذلك لم يروق الي الان معاد بين لنا
 بيتا يدعون كذا ايما يبرحون و ادا منقاهم من ذلك فتمنعون الماسر من طرف
 كونهم طارعا كما ذكرنا انفا و الان نحن ملتسبين من طرف السعاده ان تنظروا
 بين الرحمه و تعلموا ان نعيت تحت ظل حمايتكم و تكون كاحد اعضا
 ادولتكم لاننا علم جيد ان الدوله الاكطيزيه داغما ججهتة لكن كان من ^{ظلمنا نحن}
 العموميه او من اى ملية اخرى فكم بالامر يا اعيانكم الذي منذ صبا و كت من ريبا و عايقنا
 بظلمنا في مدارس سعادتكم بمر و الاث ملتسما من فضل افعال ساداتكم النصر
 ان اشرف بمشرفه بالحمايه لنا و اعيش تحت ظل لورا حيا السعاده ما يثي من مدة جاني
 الله تعالى بديم مذكوم و بتمام و برقع شان المملكه الاكطيزيه في كل حين امين

١٢٧

٢٥ شهر رجب

عبدكم

سفر الحلبه

١٥٢



fol. 106v

In the name of God, the benevolent and merciful. God is my helper. I will not fear.

Seal: Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. 1557.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[To] Her Honour, the supreme among sovereigns (*sayyidat al-mawālī*), the joy of days and nights, the unique of [her] time, the cynosure of [her] age, the mine of knowledge, the fountain of kindness, crown of the Orthodox priests, embroiderer of the garment of the clergy, upholder of the rites of the faith, defender of the true faith (lit. bond of certainty?), pillar of the Church (*al-kanīsa*) [one word illegible],* lamp and light of the Church (*al-bī'a*), the essence of glory and nobility, the pride of earlier and later generations, the mighty tree of glory whose fruits have become ripe, the garden of [mercy]* whose flowers diffuse perfume, the heaven of honoured women, whose firmament is bright and whose clouds distil abundant rain, who carries aloft the banner of [guidance]* and wisdom, subduer of rebels and evil-doers, Lady and Mistress, Queen Victoria, queen of England, may God render her glorious, preserve her from whatever may harm her and perfect her endeavours, and may her wishes be fulfilled and her enemies brought low. Amen.

And now, after sincere and heartfelt prayers and longings which prevent the eye from sleep, and [after] stretching forth hands of supplication and prayer to [our] Glorious Lord (*ḥadrat al-mawlā*) that your existence be prolonged through days and nights, surrounded by prosperity, happiness and popularity, we bring to your noble attention and disclose to your exalted and

merciful person that your servant who submits this petition has been severely harrassed and ill-used by the Roman Catholics living in Abyssinia, to wit, Father De Jacobis (*Abba Ya'qūb*) and his flock. In the first place they have shown hostility to us and seized three churches in Tigray. Secondly, they had a metropolitan, called Metropolitan Massaja (*Muṭrān Māsiyās*), sent by the Pope. Among the priests who follow their religion, some were already priests and they were made priests a second time at the hand of the aforementioned metropolitan. Similarly, the deacons who were already deacons according to the Abyssinian church, they made deacons and ordained a second time. Then they went on ordaining deacons and priests of our [confession]. When we heard about this, we put our problem to *Sulṭān* Wibē, and he stopped them from doing that. When he restrained them from their unlawful act, they settled at Massawa and began to lay hold of whomever they found [coming] from us. When we asked them the reason for this, they claimed that a servant of theirs who had taken some of their property amounting [in value] to 300 French *riyāls* was [staying] with us in Abyssinia. We returned to them the property and the servant they had spoken of. They took charge of the property through the good offices of the governor of Massawa and [in the presence of] the agent of the British consul, the agent of the French consul and my servant. But they refused to take back [their servant] and seized a Coptic merchant, claiming that there was still some property left. The governor of Massawa, with the judge and the *muftī* arbitrated between us. He said to them, "Since the man whom you said was your servant has been sent to you, you must release the merchant's property. You have no claim against the metropolitan of Abyssinia." But they did not agree to take back their servant and release the Copt so that he could go to his own business.

However, the authorities (*ḥukkām*) of Massawa forced them to release him. After he left Massawa they seized him again at Jidda [and held him] for a year until his property was lost and his health ruined. Two of his men died for lack of food and from excessive heat. Also the Copt himself almost died, so they released him and took his property which the French consul sold at Jidda [on his behalf?]* without our being aware of it. Until now they remain at enmity with us [seeking]* to possess our churches unlawfully. If we prevent them from doing this, they will prevent travellers coming from us and detain them unjustly in the way we have mentioned.

Now we ask from Your Excellency (*al-sa'āda*) that you regard us with the eye of mercy and allow us to live in the shadow of your protection and to be like a citizen of your kingdom. For we know full well that Britain always strives to protect all those who are unjustly treated, be they those who have been baptized or those of any other confession (*milla*). How much more fitting is it [not] for me, your servant, [to be protected], I, who during my youth was educated and lived in the shadow of your protection in the schools of Your Excellency in Egypt.

And now, I seek help, through the great favour of Your Excellency, to be esteemed with the honour of [your] protection (of us) and to live in the shadow of the banner of the protected enclosure (*ḥimā*) of happiness for the rest of my life. May God Almighty prolong your might and your life and uplift the cause of the British kingdom at all times. Amen.

In the year 1270, on the 5th of the month of Rajab.

Your servant Selama, metropolitan of Abyssinia.

Seal: [1]256. Selama, the metropolitan of Abyssinia (*muṭrān al-Ḥabas[h]*). 1859 [sic].

FO 1/8, fols 105r and 106v, Arabic original; fols 109–113, English translation. This is one more letter of complaint against the activities of the Catholic missionaries in Ethiopia in general and the treatment of Selama's friend Ḥāj Khayr in particular (see nos 149–151, 161). Selama apparently felt that he, too, needed the support or protection of a European government, but soon after writing this letter he would finally be back in Gonder, allying himself with Kasa Haylu to form the "king and bishop" leadership of the nation predicted in the *Fikkare İyyesus* (see Rubenson, *Tēwodros*, pp. 49–50). Due to the tight binding of the volume, some words (marked *) have had to be restored conjecturally.

Fenta to Antoine d'Abbadie [Sept.? 1854]

የወረራ፡ መልእክት፡ የተጻፈች፡ በደፍተራ፡ ፈላጊ፡ ክ
 ጅ፡ ትድረ ስ፡ ከኪቀ፡ ኪቃውንት፡ ክገጠጋሉ፡ ደገና፡ ክ
 ሉ፡ ክጅጉን፡ ጸጂዝማቶ፡ ብሩ፡ በግንቦት፡ ተደዡ፡ ክጉ
 ድሩ፡ ለደ፡ በቀ፡ ክደጋ፡ ድግግት፡ ነው፡ ጋካ፡ መርቶ፡
 ከሐተዋጉም፡ የሞተ፡ የለም፡ የቤሰሐ፡ የለም፡ ~~የለም~~
~~የለም~~፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኪማም፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኃይሉም፡
 ክብረ፡ ተደዡ፡ በዋና፡ ተሸግሮ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ክሣ፡
 ደዡ ዋቶው፡ መሸታቶው፡ ሰማ፡ ለቆ፡ መተ
 ራ፡ ገቡ፡ የደጂቶ፡ ክሣ፡ ጦር፡ በመጣ፡ ክካሰገገም፡
 ክሉ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ብሩ፡ ግን፡ ክጅገና፡ ክግራ፡ ክጣ፡
 ብለው፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኃይሉ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኪማ
 ሞ፡ ሲደግ፡ ክገደ፡ ተሰሩ፡ ሰደዱ፡ መሸታቶ፡ ግን፡ ክ
 ፍታ፡ ክገገገ፡ ክጣ፡ የነበረ፡ ፅቃ፡ ወጣ፡ ክፍሉ፡ ክ
 ራ፡ ስዋ፡ ሰጡ፡ ክፍሉ፡ ክርሰው፡ ወሰዱ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡
 ክሣ፡ ክሰሮ፡ ክገቡ፡ ዋቶው፡ ክርግ፡ ክጣ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኃ
 ዲሉ፡ ~~የለም~~፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ኪማም፡ ክሉ፡ ተረ፡ ክ
 ር፡ ሳቶው፡ መሞቶ፡ ነበሩ፡ ወገቱ፡ ተመሰሱ፡ ቤ፡ ሞላ
 ር፡ ክርግ፡ ሞላ፡ ፅቃ፡ ክገደ፡ ግን፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ክ
 ደጂዝማቶ፡ ወሴ፡ ብቶ፡ ደታያሉ፡ ክሉ፡ በገ፡ ግ
 ገቦት፡ ጉንደር፡ ገቡ፡ ደጂዝማቶ፡ ወሴም፡ ተገራ፡ ክ
 ር፡ ሞላ፡ ~~የለም~~፡ ~~የለም~~፡ ~~የለም~~፡ ~~የለም~~
~~የለም~~፡ ክቶ፡ ወሰንም፡ መንገድ፡ ደብረ፡ ደሞ፡ ገቡ፡
 ደጂዝማቶ፡ መርሶም፡ በኩ፡ ሞቶ፡ ግን፡ ግን፡ ግን፡
 ጠቅላላ፡ ሐተሰማ፡ ሰጡት፡ ደጂቶ፡ ክሣ፡

May the letter containing news written by the hand of *Debtera* Fenta reach the eminent scholar Antoine (Intōniyos). Are you really well? In Ginbot *Dejjazmach* Birru was captured in Gudru. It was by a sudden ambush (lit. accident) in daytime with a Galla leading [the way]. They did not fight. No one died; no one was wounded. *Dejjazmach* Yimam (Imam) and *Dejjazmach* Haylu were captured together [with him]. *Dejjazmach* Kasa swam across [the river] and captured them. His (Birru's) wife left Soma and went to Mutera. When *Dejjach* Kasa's army came, she did not let them enter. But *Dejjazmach* Birru, fearing that he would lose his hands and feet, told *Dejjazmach* Haylu and *Dejjazmach* Yimam to intercede (lit. go on his behalf). He sent them, prisoners as they were. The wife, however, opened and let [Kasa]

in. The goods which were on the *amba* were taken out. He divided and gave her [her share] and took [his share] for himself. *Dejjazmach* Kasa imprisoned them on Arba Amba. *Dejjazmach* Haylu and *Dejjazmach* Yimam and he himself as the fourth had come [there].

Dejjach Kasa returned to Wegera. He is staying in Begēmdir. He has united and occupied the whole area (lit. world). Only *Dejjazmach* Wibē [and he] are facing each other. The *abun* entered Gonder on the 24th of Ginbot. *Dejjazmach* Wibē is staying in Tigray. *Ato* Wesen renounced the world and entered Debre Damo. And *Dejjazmach* Merso died of smallpox. *Dejjach* Kasa, however, gave the whole of Gojjam to Tesemma.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 112, Amharic original, 170x230 mm. The events described by *Debtera* Fenta in this letter took place between May and Sept. 1854, the capture of Birru on 26 May. It confirms many details of the printed sources (*Nuovi documenti*, p. 408; *Vicende*, p. 512; Zeneb, *Tarik*, pp. 16-18), but also adds new information of interest for the history of the rise of Kasa to the position of supreme ruler of Ethiopia. *Ras* Alī had two younger brothers named Haylu and Yimam, apparently allied with Birru in the final struggle against Kasa. Birru's wife was, moreover, their sister (*Nuovi documenti*, pp. 383, 390, 404). For Merso, see nos 50 and 83, for Tesemma, no. 129.

Mahdere Qal to H. Venn, 10 Oct. 1854

Malta Protestant College on the 10th of octbr. 1854.

To the Revd. Mr. Venn

My dear sir,

Accept this letter from me your christian child. I send it by the request of the Revd. R. Bryan, as to be thankful of your kindness to me and of your long christian love and interest to Abyssinia my native land.

Thus on the first of october, early in the morning, Mr. Bryan arrived in his residence in this blessed College, after having passed the holidays in England, at the first sight he told me of my return to my country as a Lay-Missionary agent of your Most high, and respected Society, by its duty to its God and and [sic] love and virtue to His creatures, inhabited on the sun-dominated visible world! And my reply was, with inward joy and outward gait, yes dear sir; there are a year and a half since he gave me this happy and holy news, thus of becoming a servant of Christ by whatever means it may be in my own country. This was my first and chiefest determined desire, which indured me to study with speciality and regularity from 1847 till 1854. And I can be allowed to thank God of His favour of connecting me with the Protestant Church of England of which I am professing during five years, and hope to continue during my sojourn in this world. And yet more, I am very gland [sic] of its Evangelical harmony than all other Churches in the world, although of Christ, which add many intercessors and mediators than Christ the only Head and Author of the Church, to whom is only given all power in heaven and on earth. Above all things, we have His own sayings, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [And] again, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." And all the prophets and apostles believed but Christ, predicted and desired to see but Christ, taught or preached that man's remission of sins and eternal life are to be obtained but through the righteousness and faith of Jesus Christ, who shed for many His own precious blood. "And there is none other name under heaven given among men, wherby [sic] we must be saved," but through the Name of the Son of God, who Himself has declared Him, saying, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."

Thus dear sir, as he has also told me that some German Missionaries sent by the most beloved and devoted servant of Christ the Lord Bishop Gobat shall come here in this autumn, and that we shall go there together to serve the Lord of life, I was still expecting them with all patience and blessed hope and courage, but as they did not yet arrive, I was little discouraged, but in the same day, that is, on the first of october, the Revd. H. Carr told me also that the Church Missionary Society has appointed me to be a Lay-Missionary agent in my country, with Dr. Krapf, who will be here soon. And our dear patron Dr. Crawford wrote to Mr. Bryan the same news, saying, "I am very glad, because Maderakal is appointed by the Church Missionary society as a Lay-Missionary agent in his country, and he will go to Abyssinia with Dr. Krapf who will be in Malta this autumn. Thus now is the autumn, now is october, I am willing, determined, and ready to work among my dear countrymen for the sake of Christ my Lord and Saviour, in whom I trust that my present and future life consits [sic] only, yes, being under His eternal banner

and through His blessings to spread His glorious holy Gospel, in which are hid His durable treasures, His Holy Spirit, and the life and immortality which the Father by His great love unto the world has given in the Son!

Thus honoured sir, I am very impatient, urge therefore speedily your holy and long undertaking for the christian knowledge of this country already professing the same holy religion. O let that the cultivated soil soon bring forth the ripe and meet fruit for the Son, in order that when He shall come again into His visible Kingdom to reign, that He may not find any one who will be as the fig tree, or as an unprepared servant. Let me say then, "For the harvest is ready but labourers are few," or again, "Come over into "Abyssinia" and help us."

For your Missionaries who entered Abyssinia in 1829, the Lord Bishop now in Jerusalem, who, during three years, zealously preached the Gospel of Christ in that land, and his companion Mr. Kugler although for a few years, had already sown the good seed of the Gospel, and this seed is taken a deep root since, on many and eminent persons and families, thus, this light is still glimmering there and there. Therefore, urge on that this seed may be gathered by the the present labourers, and that the good or pure preserved light in the minds and hearts of those who heard them and have heard of them may be rekindled, and the spirit may be revived, finally that the soul may attain its prepared eternal home by the Great Redeemer of the world! O Lord Jesus, work for Thine own glory and for the salvation of those whom Thyself has called them, "My friends, my brothers! And who are Thine own gusts [sic]!"

And dear sir, on my part, I cannot express what inward joy and impression, and yet more, the increasing hope and future zeal which I presently have, thinking that this is and shall be the answer of my prayers of the christians of this blessed Society and of the Church of England more! O Lord God, let these our prayers in Thy Son Christ Jesus for the same purpose may be heard by Thee and answered speedily! O yes make this holy Mission be successful and effectual through Thy infinite power and blessing!

And now I sincerely and deeply thank you for your long christian labour, with great love and continual interest for Abyssinia, and for that which you accounted me worthy with your beloved and faithful missionaries by whatever means it may be, in the soil in which the Author of creation has created me, and enabled me to know Him according to the proportioned [sic] man's knowledge of Him, and His dear Son Jesus Christ, who brought life and immortality to light for the Redemption of men by the faith and righteousness [sic] even in Him, whose Name is "The Lord Our Righteousness."

I beg you pardon honoured sir, for without eye knowledge, I took the liberty of writing to you, trusting this will be your pleasure, and a high duty of encouraging and employing christians [who] even offered themselves for this holy office! And yet, Mr. Bryan has purposed me thus to honour you!

Your most humble, sincere, dutiful willing to devout and to be zealous with great readiness and activity in the proposed present subject for The sake of Christ our Lord! Under Him thus

T. MadéraKal.

CMS, CM/O 8/57B, English original. Mahdere Qal (or MadéraKal as he wrote his name in English) later in life defined himself as "[the one] from Adiyabo". He was selected to go to France with Lefebvre in August 1843 in order to receive a European education. After three years in France (see AACP, Égypte, Massouah 1, fols 160–161, Lefebvre, 27 Dec. 1846), he continued his education on Malta where he was later joined by, among others, Birru Pētros. It was only after 12 years abroad he finally returned to his home country in 1855 to serve as a teacher, secretary, and interpreter until his death in 1883.

This letter is reproduced with the orthography and punctuation of the original except that I have added a few [sic] and "[and]" in one place and "[who]" in another where the edge of the paper has been torn away.

Wesen Gebre Amlak to Michel d'Abbadie, 10 Oct. [1854]

ዘ ጉ፡መ ል እ ክ ት፡ዘ ተ ራ ነ ሠ
 ት፡እ ም ጉ ስ፡እ ቸ፡ወ ሰ ጊ፡ት
 ብ ጸ ሐ ፡፡፡ ስ ፡እ ራ ስ፡ወ ጊ ን
 ሌ ል ፡እ ገ ጺ ት፡፡፡ ስ ፡እ ጽ ጉ
 ገ ፡እ ራ ም ፡መ ነ ስ ስ ሀ ፡፡፡
 ገ ጽ ር ፡እ መ ጸ ስ ሀ ፡፡፡ ገ ጽ ፡፡፡
 ስ ር ሀ ፡እ ስ ፡፡፡ ገ ገ ተ ሠ ፡፡፡
 እ ስ ት ራ ታ ፡፡፡ ገ ራ ስ ፡፡፡ ስ ነ ስ ት
 ሀ ፡፡፡ ገ ጽ ፡፡፡ ስ ጽ ር ስ ፡፡፡
 ሠ ጺ ሴ ፡፡፡ ስ ጽ ነ ሠ ፡እ ገ ጺ ት፡
 ነ ስ ፡እ ጽ ጉ ገ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ሰ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡
 ም ጽ ጉ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ሰ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡
 ስ መ ተ ጽ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡

May this letter sent by *Ato* Wesen reach *Ras* Michel (Mika'el). How are you, really?

I have become a monk. I intended to come this year. [But] since the bishop has excommunicated me, I have waited until I would be absolved. I will come; do not forget me.

(And) Widdineh says, "How are you, really, to the extent of heaven and earth? May He enable us to see each other in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body). Amen."

Written on the first of Ṭiqimt.

የ ገ ገ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ሰ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡ ስ ገ ገ ፡፡፡

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 35, Amharic original, 110×270 mm. This letter is written on the same kind of paper and in the same handwriting as the following, dated 2 Ṭiqimt and reporting events up to and including the rainy season of 1854. Both letters are also addressed on the back of the paper in the same manner.

Ato Wesen is mentioned as the governor of Adwa by almost all of the foreign travellers in Tigray during the 1840's (see Ferret and Galinier, I, pp. 54-59, in particular). He had served Subagadis before Wibē, but seems to have been loyal to Wibē throughout the latter's turbulent years as the ruler of Tigray. A quiet and loyal official, he had on at least one occasion (in 1847) tried to mitigate the enmity between Selama and De Jacobis. He was an early and loyal friend of Michel d'Abbadie (*Douze ans*, II, pp. 39-40, and IV, forthcoming). He obviously thought of leaving Ethiopia, but wanted to have the excommunication (by Selama, no doubt) lifted first.

Khayr to Michel d'Abbadie, 11 Oct. [1854]

ዘ ቲ፡መ ል ክ ከ ት፡ዘ ተ ፈ ኒ ወ ት፡እ ም ን በ፡
 አ ት ፡ቸ ከ ር፡ፀ ት ገ ጸ ሕ ፡ን በ፡እ ር ስ፡ሚ ክ
 ሌ ል፡እ ገ ሄ ት፡ነ ም፡እ ጁ ጉ ገ፡የ ሰ ማ ዩ ገ፡የ ም
 ደ ፡ሩ ገ፡ደ ህ ል፡በ አ ደ ኒ፡ሠ ጋ፡ሰ ሙ ተ ሄ የ ት፡ደ
 ብ ቃ ገ፡ደ ጁ ች፡በ ሩ፡ተ ደ ዘ፡ደ ጁ ች፡ካ ሳ፡ወ ገ
 ር፡አ ሱ፡ሰ ሚ ገ ገ ም፡ደ ዘ ወ ት፡ክ ረ ሀ ሀ፡ተ ደ
 ጁ ች፡ወ ቢ ም፡ጋ ር፡ተ ዳ ል ተ ሞ ል፡የ ማ ሞ ጉ፡
 ና ች ወ፡እ ር ስ፡አ ሲ ም፡ደ ል፡ተ ነ ሰ ተ ወ፡አ ገ
 ር ት ወ፡አ ሱ፡አ በ ነ፡ሰ ሳ ማ፡ገ ገ ደ ር፡ገ ሱ ጁ
 ጋ ዳ፡አ ር አ ደ፡አ ሙ ዳ ወ፡አ ዘ ሞ፡አ ሱ ጁ አ ገ
 ር ም፡ተ ወ ን፡አ ሱ፡ሀ ክ ት፡ሀ ና፡አ ሱ፡አ
 ጥ ገ ቀ ገ፡ረ ር ተ የ ል ጁ

በ ጥ ት ም ት፡በ ሁ ሰ ት፡ቀ ገ፡ተ ዳ ፍ፡፡

May this letter sent by *Ato Shaykh* Khayr (Cheker) reach *Ras* Michel (Mika'el). How are you, really, to the extent of heaven and earth. May He enable us to see each other in the flesh (lit. with the eyes of the body).

Dejjach Birru is captured. *Dejjach* Kasa is in Wegera. He occupied Simēn, too, for quite some time. He quarrelled with *Dejjach* Wibē. They will go to war with each other. *Ras* Alī has been defeated and is in his country. *Abune* Selama has gone to Gonder. [*Bal*]gada Araya has rebelled and is in Azebo. And the land is troubled; there is unrest. We are extremely worried.

Written on 2 ṭiqimt.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 34, Amharic original, 205×330 mm. With the exception of the local news from Tigray that *Balgada* Araya (nos 50 and 147) had rebelled once more, the letter contains no information beyond what is found in document no. 186. News about the important council at Amba Ḥera in Meskerem (*Nuovi documenti*, p. 409) had apparently not yet reached Tigray. Although he is here called *Ato* Cheker, I have tentatively concluded that the writer is the same *Shaykh* Khayr (Shēker) who wrote to Michel the year before (no. 164).

የሀረግ ርብ-ቱ፡ የነበረ፡ አገር፡ አገዳጅ፡ ሁሉ፡ ማህ-ቱ፡ አገር፡

ቅም፡፡ ብቻ ስ፡ ሆኖ ስምዖን፡ ፲፱ ቀን፡ ሂረሰዓን፡ አገር፡

ሉ፡ አገር፡ ያገኘ፡ የተሰጠ፡ ፡ ማህ-ቱ፡ አገር፡

ስምዖን፡፡

ሀረግ ርብ-ቱ፡ ስምዖን፡ ተነሳሽ፡ ሰው፡

አገር፡ ያገኘ፡ ሆኖ፡ አገር፡ የነበረ፡ አገር፡ አገር፡

አገር፡ ሆኖ፡ አገር፡፡

የአገር ርብ-ቱ፡ ፲፱፡ ስምዖን፡ ሆኖ፡

fol. 87v

May this letter sent by Birru reach Antoine d'Abbadie (Inጥጥር ገረግረግ). How are you, my master? On June 27 I wrote you a letter. Since then, however, I have not written to you, having nothing to tell [you]. And now, as for your friend, *Debtera* Tewelde Medhin, my heart melted like wax and I stared [in unbelief]. The [whole] wide world became too narrow for me, as [if it were] a small hole. He whom you called your teacher has passed away. Your friend, *Debtera* Tewelde Medhin, has died. Where shall I go? What shall I do? I pray to God that He alone be my father. O, what is a man, that he be a father to me! Man is futile. One generation comes, the other passes away. [Man] withers quickly like a flower, like a blossom, as Solomon says.

I do not know how he died in the country where he was living; only what *Abba* Haylu wrote from Jidda reached me on 11 December: "I have heard from Egypt [about] your uncle's death."

Mahdere Qal suddenly got up and went to our country. If he writes to me, I will know for sure.

December 16, (in) 1854.

BN, Ethiop. Abb. 254, fol. 87r and v, Amharic original, 110×175 mm. This letter is written on the first two pages of a folded paper. On the third page Birru has given vent to his sorrow in a twelve-line poem which begins with common and general phrases—*Amlakīye temesgen, deggu meharī, ante neh geday, antem feṭarī* (Be praised, my God, the kind and merciful, you are the Killer, you are the Creator)—but continues with specific references to what his uncle had meant to him.

For *Debtera* Tewelde Medhin, see nos 126–127, and for Mahdere Qal, no. 187.

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