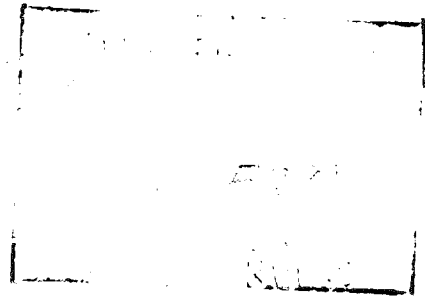


The Survival of Ethiopian Independence

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An evasive answer expressing the pious hope that Yohannis would 'be able to come to a friendly arrangement' with the Italians, and two swords of honour in recognition of the Ethiopian assistance in relieving the garrisons did not satisfy Yohannis. In his reply to this letter the King accepted the argument that he had not been promised Massawa in the treaty. But now the treaty had been violated by Italy. Ethiopian merchants were forced to pay customs duties, and the port was used as a base for aggression against Ethiopia. In conclusion, Yohannis asked the Queen to explain to him how to make friends with the Italians since he did not know how to love them; he did not have the required knowledge or skill for this (የግንባታና ግብርና ጉዳይ ላይ ለሰዎች ስሜት)!³⁹⁴ This was apparently a difficult assignment, so no answer was sent.³⁹⁵

At the local level, the language was clear. Alula was particularly annoyed that Italian troops had come to Se'aṭi, 30 kilometres from Massawa, and hoisted the Italian flag over the small fort when the Egyptians evacuated the place in August 1885: '... the country belongs to the King. I cannot dispose of it. Therefore clear out of Se'aṭi.' At this point Kasala was about to fall, and Alula was belatedly urged to march to its relief, which he did—and gained the victory at Kufit on 23 September—in spite of his preoccupation with the Italian threat. But he also made it absolutely clear that he wanted the Italians to 'go home and the sooner the better'. He did not recognize their right to Massawa, much less Se'aṭi, and wondered why the British allowed them to remain and threaten his frontiers.³⁹⁶

Yohannis was, in fact, as angry and contemptuous as Alula. Convinced that Ethiopia would soon have to fight the Europeans directly, he wanted to make sure that Minilik was also aware of what kind of people they had on their hands:

They [the Italians] are not a serious people; they are intriguers; and all this must be something which the English are doing to me. The Italians have not come to these parts because they lack pasture and abundance in their own country, but they come here because of ambition, in order to aggrandize themselves, because they are many and not rich. But with the help of God, they shall leave again humiliated and disappointed and with their honour lost before all the world. They are not a people who can frighten us; ... If the two of us always remain united, we shall with the help of God overcome not only the weak Italians, but also the strong people of other nations. As Adam wanted to enjoy the forbidden fruit because of ambition to become greater than God, and instead found nothing but chastisement and dishonour, so it will happen to the Italians.³⁹⁷

394 FO 95/746, no. 198, Victoria to Yohannis, 8 Dec. 1885; FO 95/747, no. 151, Yohannis to Victoria, 19 Apr. 1886. For the circumstances of this exchange of letters, see F. Harrison Smith, *Through Abyssinia. An Envoy's Ride to the King of Zion* (London, 1890), pp. 174–223.

395 FO 95/748, minutes on no. 194, 14 Jul. 1887.

396 Battaglia, *Guerra*, pp. 220–1; FO 78/3807, Chermiside to Izzet, 24 Jul. 1885; FO 78/3808, Marcopoli to Chermiside, 26 Aug. 1885, enclosing an account of a conversation with Alula, same date; Chermiside to Marcopoli, 4 Sep. 1885; FO 78/3809, Egerton to Salisbury, 2 Oct. 1885, with extracts from Marcopoli's diary; FO 78/3811, Egerton to Salisbury, 10 Nov. 1885, with enclosures.

397 AP.DD, 1889–90, XV, pp. 203–5, Antonelli to Robilant, 26 Nov. 1885. Whether it was Minilik himself or, more likely, one of his courtiers that leaked this letter to Antonelli is

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If Yohannis had hoped that Minilik would send away Antonelli, he was disappointed. The King of Shewa had much to gain from preserving good relations with the Italians at Aseb and did not feel threatened himself. In that respect the situation was different from 1875–76, and Yohannis may well have felt a bit apprehensive about the loyalty of his main vassal.³⁹⁸

Towards the end of 1886 the moves by the Italians to strengthen their position in the hinterland of Massawa increased the tension there. Alula first sent an ultimatum to the Italians to evacuate two positions, Wi'a (just occupied) and Zulla. When the Italian general refused, Alula descended on Se'aṭi, and on 26 January he attacked and almost wiped out a column of some 500 men who had been sent to reinforce the position there. This was the so-called Dogali massacre, a far stronger protest than the Italians or British had expected.³⁹⁹

Yohannis was aware of the seriousness of Alula's action, and wrote to both London and Paris to point out the injustice of Italy's claims to succeed to territories restored to Ethiopia by the Egyptians through the Hewett treaty. Again he asked if the British government had authorized the Italian advances.⁴⁰⁰ Though the treaty did not define any boundaries, Yohannis had been promised verbally that Se'aṭi would be evacuated, and the Italians knew this.⁴⁰¹ The clash, therefore, was not due to misunderstanding. The British government agreed with the Italians to try to mediate, but did not improve the chances of succeeding by telling Yohannis that the Italians were 'a powerful nation, with friendly and good intentions' who had been attacked 'injustly by Alula'.⁴⁰² A mission headed by Gerald Portal from the British legation in Cairo was sent to negotiate a settlement. The Italian government laid down the terms, and the British Foreign Office warned Yohannis to 'give full credence to all that he [Portal] shall say to you on behalf of the Queen and of Her Majesty's Government'. Italy's terms included an 'apology' for Alula's attack, territory including Se'aṭi, Wi'a, and Aylet, recognition of an Italian protectorate over the Habab and the Asawirṭa, and, jointly with Britain, a new occupation of Bogos with the fort of Keren.⁴⁰³

Under these circumstances, Portal's mission was bound to fail. While he was still preparing to go to Ethiopia, Yohannis informed the British government

not known, nor can we be sure, of course, that Antonelli's text is correct. In Ethiopian historiography (for instance, BN, Ethiop. 259, fol. 30) Yohannis is reported to have declared the Italians a cunning and wicked people as early as 1883.

398 Italian authors, also Battaglia (*Guerra*, pp. 224–5), have more or less taken for granted that Minilik was prepared to betray Yohannis at any time and that he was actually happy that Yohannis was in trouble with the Italians. This is yet to be proved.

399 Battaglia, *Guerra*, pp. 225–42; BN, Ethiop. 259, fols 32–3; MT, 1887, pp. 37–8, Winquist, 21 Jan.–3 Feb. 1887.

400 FO 95/748, no. 194, Yohannis to Victoria, 8 Mar. 1887; AED, Protocole C41, to Grévy, 8 Mar. 1887.

401 ASMAI 36/3–31, 'Istruzioni per la missione d'Abissinia', 7 Jan. 1886.

402 FO 95/748, no. 204, Victoria to Yohannis, 11 Aug. 1887, with minutes.

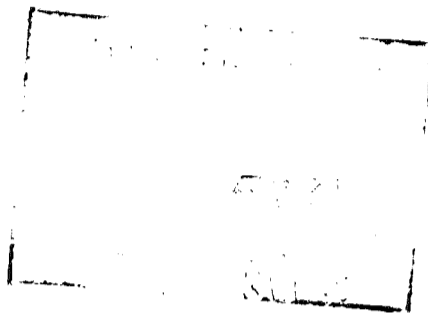
403 *ibid.*, nos 206 and 207, Victoria and Salisbury, respectively, to Yohannis, 12 Oct. 1887; Gerald Portal, *An Account of the English Mission to King Yohannis in 1887*, Winchester, n.d., pp. 7–14; Battaglia, *Guerra*, pp. 287–94.

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the Abyssinian frontier peasantry . . . the soldiery, when they come down to attack us, pillage every one, whether friends or foes. This having gone on for nearly eighteen months, the peasantry are nearly ruined, and are as anxious for peace as even Egypt is.³⁸⁵ Year after year, this was the message of the French vice-consuls and the Swedish missionaries alike. To escape hunger and death, the population migrated by the thousands: 'Whole populations have fled towards the west and south of Abyssinia, where abundance and salubrity reign, and have been able to save themselves that way.'³⁸⁶ Not all of them, however, for one missionary reported that an army of destitute peasants from Hamasēn, in search of land and food, had fought a regular battle with the local population in Wag. Others fled to the lowlands or to Massawa, where much of the early work of the Swedish mission was carried out among destitute refugees from Hamasēn.³⁸⁷ At one point, when the population of Še'azega appealed for the assistance of Gordon, they stressed that the killing and looting by Welde Mika'el's troops was not the greatest problem, 'but the worst of all is that he passed the rainy season expelling us and saying, "Do not stay in your country"'.³⁸⁸

On the political level, intrigue, violence, and family feuds destroyed much of the local autonomy of provinces such as Akkele Guzay, and Hamasēn. Elsewhere Yohannis normally left provincial government to members of the provincial nobility, but in the exposed areas in the north he found it necessary to place outsiders as his governors. In 1875 a *wagshum*, Dejjazmach Gebru, was the governor of Hamasēn. After the battle of Wekī Dibba, neither Hazega nor Še'azega provided a governor there. The responsibility went to Alula from Tembēn who wielded power with an iron hand.

In this situation it is not remarkable that the process of alienation vis-à-vis Ethiopia, initiated by Egyptian/Muslim and European/Catholic influence decades earlier,³⁸⁹ continued and intensified. The Italians could move in and benefit from the war weariness at the local level to gain a foothold. Thus the Ethio-Egyptian war, which contributed to consolidation and a growth of self-esteem and self-reliance at the level of the Ethiopian state, also contributed, in spite of the victory, to the weakening of the ancient ties between the population of the northern provinces and the remainder of Ethiopia. Somehow, the strength and the wisdom of Yohannis and his advisers was not sufficient to cope with this slow but persistent development.

Massawa to Metemma

For Ethiopia, the replacement of the 'Egyptians' by the Italians meant one more decade of continuous struggle to preserve her integrity and independence. In

385 Hill, *Gordon*, p. 211.

386 AECC, Massouah 2, fols 100-1, Carbonnel to Waddington, 16 Aug. 1875 (*sic*); correct date is 1878.

387 *MT*, 1878, pp. 57-8, Hedenström, 10 Feb. 1878; see also 1877, pp. 40-1, Carlsson, 2 Jan. 1877; 1878, p. 28, Lundahl, 2 Jan. 1878.

388 BM, Orient. 12913 (A), [Those] of Še'azega to Gordon, n.d.

389 See above, p. 171.

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Europe, the Powers were busy establishing the ground rules for the partition of Africa. Italy's occupation of Massawa and following attempt to gain complete control over Ethiopia was the kind of mission implicitly expected of her. Backed by the moral support of Great Britain, there was no reason for the Italians to be overly concerned about problems that might arise, in spite of angry protests against the violation of the sovereign rights of the Ottoman Empire. And if these rights, which had caused so much headache at the Foreign Office in connection with the eventual restoration to Ethiopia of places seized only a few years earlier, could now be ignored with regard to Massawa, there is no reason to expect that Italy would be bothered about the historical rights of Ethiopia, whether recognized by an international treaty or not. Besides, the Italians were convinced—without much justification, to be sure—that the Ethiopians regarded them as particularly close and trustworthy friends.³⁹⁰

The Italian government had sent missions to both Minilik and Yohannis in 1883 and offered the facilities of their small colony of Aseb as a means of avoiding the Egyptian blockade. For Shewa, Aseb was a suitable port, and Minilik signed a treaty of friendship and commerce in May 1883. Yohannis hoped to obtain Massawa and apparently saw no purpose in a treaty with Italy.³⁹¹ The landing of Italian troops at Massawa without prior consultation deeply disturbed Yohannis, and it is not likely at all that the two Italian emissaries who visited him to profess Italy's friendship were as successful as they reported, even if Yohannis decided to give them the benefit of the doubt for the time being. One of Yohannis's first actions was to alert Minilik who immediately protested to both Umberto and his envoy in Shewa, Pietro Antonelli, about their failure to consult the Emperor beforehand about such an important step.³⁹²

For Yohannis the crucial question was whether the British government had completely abdicated its responsibilities under the Hewett treaty or not. He found it difficult to believe that a pact to maintain peace and friendship 'from generation to generation' should have become invalid within one year. He wanted to know if it was with Queen Victoria's permission that the Italian army had come and if the purpose was to use force and seize his country. The signs were disturbing: consignments of arms for Ethiopia were stopped at Massawa and Italian troops were gradually occupying a number of positions in the hinterland of Massawa, as far as 'the edge of the salt plains'.³⁹³

390 Battaglia, *La prima guerra d'Africa*, pp. 216-17. This book is the latest Italian work—and a very fascinating one—to cover the whole history of the Italian-Ethiopian relations from the first contacts in the 1850s to the battle of Adwa. Giglio's *Etiopia-Mar Rosso* has reached May 1885 only; the accompanying volumes of documents, however, the end of 1889. Since my purpose in this final chapter is only to bring the narrative to its logical conclusion, the battle of Adwa, and indicate how the earlier experiences of the Ethiopians had prepared them for that event, I will not aim at a complete documentation and only refer to original documents on particularly significant points. The following text is based mainly on Battaglia's work and on my monograph *Wiçhalē XVII. The Attempt to Establish a Protectorate over Ethiopia* (Addis Abeba, 1964) and article 'Adwa 1896: The Resounding Protest' in Rotberg and Mazrui, eds, *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, pp. 113-42.

391 Rubenson, *Wiçhalē XVII*, pp. 42-5.

392 Battaglia, *Guerra*, pp. 217-18, Giglio, *Etiopia-Mar Rosso*, Vol. I, pp. 403-11.

393 FO 95/746, no. 196, Yohannis to Victoria, 28 Aug. 1885.

vieille Kasbah (Médiouna in Morocco), in *Recueil des Notices et Mémoires de la Société Archéologique du Département de Constantine*, li (1917-18), with plan; P. Ricard, *Pour comprendre l'art musulman dans l'Afrique du Nord et en Espagne*, Paris 1924; H. Basset and H. Terrasse, *Sanctuaires et forteresses almohades*, Collection Hespéris, v, Paris 1932; H. Terrasse, *Kasbas berbères de l'Atlas et des oasis*, Paris 1938 (with illustrations); *La Kasba, Acropole de Tanger*, special no. of *Tanger-Rivière*, Tangier 1939; R. Brunschvig, *Hafsides*, index; F. Hernandez, *The Alcazaba of Merida*, in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, ii, Oxford 1940; L. Torres Balbas, *La alcazaba almohade de Badajoz*, in *al-Andalus*, vi (1941); idem, *Excavaciones y obras en la alcazaba de Malaga*, in *ibid.*, ix (1945); J. Despois, *L'Afrique du Nord*, Paris 1949, index; R. Le Tourneau, *Fès avant le Protectorat*, Paris 1949; J. Caillé, *La ville de Rabat jusqu'au Protectorat, histoire et archéologie*, Paris 1949, 3 vols.; H. Terrasse, *Histoire du Maroc*, Casablanca 1950, index; Ch. Allain and J. Meunie, *Recherches archéologiques au Tasghimout des Mesfionna*, in *Hespéris* (1951); R. Duru, *Une gasba berbère au pied du versant sud de l'Atlas*, in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, No. 35 (1951) with plans; J. Meunié, H. Terrasse and G. Deverdun, *Recherches archéologiques à Marrakech*, Paris 1952; H. Terrasse, *La forteresse almoravide d'Amargo*, in *al-Andalus*, xviii (1953); G. Marcais, *L'architecture musulmane d'occident*, Paris 1954, index; R. Ricard, *Recherches sur la "Porte de la Trahison" dans la forteresse hispanique*, in *al-Andalus*, xx (1955); J. Caille and J. Hainaut, *La Gasba des Gnaoua*, in *Hespéris* (1955); J. Meunié and Ch. Allain, *La forteresse almoravide de Zagora*, in *Hespéris* (1956); R. Duru, *Une gasba des Aït Quarrab* (plans and photographs), in *Hespéris-Tamuda* (1960); G. Deverdun, *Marrakech des origines à 1912*, Rabat 1959-66; Dj. J. Meunié, *Greniers-citadelles au Maroc*, Paris 1961, 2 vols., idem, *Architectures et habitats du Dades, Maroc pré-saharien*, Paris 1962; F. Nasser, *Emprunts lexicographiques du français à l'arabe*, Beirut 1966, No. 754; M. Morsi, *Moulay Ismâ'îl et l'Armée de métier*, in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, xiv (1967), 2; R. Landau, *The Kasbas of southern Morocco*, London 1969.

(G. DEVERDUN)

—KASAK [see ÇERKES].

✕KASALA (variant, Kasalā; conventional spelling, Kassala), a town and province in the east of the republic of the Sudan, extending from the frontier of Egypt to that of Ethiopia. Geographically, the province contains five distinct types of country. (1) A rough triangle in the south, bounded by the railway, the river Rahad and the Ethiopian frontier, where al-Qallābāt (Gallabat) is the principal town, is a westward extension of the central clay plains of the Sudan. (2) North of this is the Buṭāna, a plain lying between the Blue Nile, the main Nile and the river 'Aṭbarā, which provides grazing for nomadic and semi-nomadic Arab tribes, of which the Shukriyya is the most important. The town of al-Qaḍārif (Gedaref) on the border between this and the previous region originated as the market of the Shukriyya, and was called Sūḵ Abū Sinn from the name of the tribal chief. A section of the Bedja [q.v.] tribe of Bishārīn [q.v.] has been established in the eastern Buṭāna and on the 'Aṭbarā since the 12th/18th century. (3) The 'Aṭbāy consists of the plains lying east and north of the 'Aṭbarā and fringing the Red Sea Hills. This is mostly nomad country, inhabited by Bedja ranging from Ummarār

(Amarar) in the north through Bishārīn and Hadanduwa to Banū 'Āmir in the south. It includes, however, the fertile cotton-producing delta of the river Kāsh (Gash), at the head of which, beneath the spectacular isolated Djabal Kasala (2,791 ft.), is the town of Kasala, the provincial capital. To this area, inhabited by the Ḥalānka tribe of Bedja, the now obsolete name of al-Tāka was formerly given. (4) The Red Sea Hills, a northern extension of the Ethiopian Highlands, are sparsely inhabited by nomadic Bedja. Sinkāt (Bedja, Ōkāk) is a market-town and administrative centre occupying a strategic position on the route (now followed by the railway) between the Red Sea and the Nile. (5) The coastal plain, while supporting a nomadic Bedja population, has been the site in succession of the ports of Bāḍī', 'Aydḥāb [q.v.], Sawākīn (Suakin) and Port Sudan. The town of Tūkar (Tokar) lies in the delta of the Baraka. Traditionally the granary of the region, it now produces cotton.

Until the 19th century, most of what is now the province of Kasala was tribal territory, open to trade and cultural influences through the Red Sea ports, and, from the 10th/16th century, within the sphere of influence (rather than the effective control) of the Fundj [q.v.] sultanate of Sinnār. Holy men played an important part in the region. Ḥasan b. Ḥassūna (d. 1075/1664-5), the grandson of an immigrant from the Maghrib, established a patriarchal lordship in the central Buṭāna, based on the herding of flocks and the export of horses to Sinnār and other Sudanese states; he maintained a slave-household and army (see Yūsuf Faḍl Ḥasan (ed.), Muḥammad al-Nūr b. Ḍayf Allāh, *K. al-fabakāt fi kḥuṣūṣ al-awliyā' wa'l-ṣāliḥīn wa'l-'ulamā' wa'l-shu'arā' fi 'l-Sūdān*, Khar-toum 1971, 133-48; cf. S. Hillelson, *Sudan Arabic texts*, Cambridge 1935, 194-99). In the 12th/18th century, the holy clan of the Madjādhīb, propagators of the Shādhiliyya *ṭarīqa*, acquired great influence among the eastern tribes from their centre at al-Dāmīr at the junction of the 'Aṭbarā with the Nile. Burckhardt in 1814 noted the security that they afforded to travellers passing between al-Dāmīr and Sawākīn (J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, London 1819, 268). The devastation of al-Dāmīr in 1822 by the Turco-Egyptian commander, Muḥammad Bey Kḥusraw al-Daftardār, and the flight to Sawākīn of the chief of the clan, led to a further strengthening of Madjādhīb influence among the Hadanduwa. In the later 12th/18th century, in the disintegration of the Fundj sultanate, the Shukriyya emerged as the dominant tribe in the Buṭāna. (See H. A. MacMichael, *A history of the Arabs in the Sudan*, Cambridge 1922, i, 250-3.)

The establishment of Turco-Egyptian rule in the riverain areas made possible the conquest of the nomadic tribes. Although the Hadanduwa were raided in 1823 and again in 1831-2, their effective subjugation was achieved by the *ḥukūmdār* (governor-general) Aḥmad Paṣha Abū Widān, who invaded al-Tāka in 1840 and established a garrison-post, from which developed the town of Kasala. The resistance of the Hadanduwa was finally broken by his successor, Aḥmad Maniklī Paṣha, who made a punitive expedition in 1844. Meanwhile, a new Sūfi *ṭarīqa*, the Khatmiyya, was being propagated among the Bedja by al-Ḥasan, the son of its founder, Muḥammad 'Uṭhmān al-Mirghānī. He established his headquarters at al-Khātmiyya, near the town of Kasala, where he died and was buried in 1869. In 1864-5 he played an important part as a mediator during serious mutinies of Sudanese (i.e., black) troops at Kasala. (See J. S. Trimming-