THE HISTORICAL NOTES OF LIQÄ-ŤABBÄT
ABBÄBÄ YERÄFU

BY BAIRU TAFLA

I. Introduction

The elders of North-East Africa have long been renowned for their powers of memory on which their compatriots relied for genealogical lineages, rights of ownership, procedures of law, marriage customs and the like. Literate or otherwise, they all for the most part imparted their accumulated knowledge by word of mouth. Unlike the griots of West Africa, however, quite a few made use of written documents, at least in the form of notes.1 These documents are different from and independent of the royal and ecclesiastical records which are well known to scholars. These are private papers intended for personal use and as such contain valuable, uncensored, historical information. I realized how ubiquitous the practice was during my research travels in the various regions of the Ethiopian Empire during the years 1965–75. Whenever such an informant failed to recall a particular name, date or fact during an interview, or doubted the accuracy of the sequence of his narrative, he would quickly pull out his mnemonic aid from a box under his bed or would call for a family member to hand him the desired item. The mnemonic aid often consisted of scribbled scraps of paper, letters, photographs, invitation cards to weddings or commemorative feasts. Some possessed thin school notebooks comprising sketches in Amareña, Tegreña or Arabic, sufficient to prompt the memory to produce a fluent narrative. The contents of such a notebook, and indeed a typical one of its kind, constitute the body of the present article.

These sketches were contained in a 32-page notebook measuring approximately 200 by 160 mm in the handwriting of the author himself with whose kind permission and in whose presence I had them copied.2 The additional notes jotted down on small pieces of paper and inserted between the pages were incorporated in the course of copying. All the notes were adopted without change except in a few cases where the author insisted on dictating corrections; due reference is made to these in the footnotes.

This compilation of notes is characteristically different, at least in intent and presentation, from the royal annals or the well considered autobiographies of leading personalities which flourished after the liberation of 1941. In purpose it

1 The system is by no means a recent development, though it is hard to say how far back it goes. It is a continuation of the centuries-old practice of jotting down particular facts on the colophons of parchment manuscripts. The sketchy royal chronicle published by R. Basset in 1882 was perhaps a precedent for the separate notebooks, some of which began to appear by the second half of the nineteenth century, their number increasing by leaps and bounds in the twentieth century. Cf. J. Kolmodin, Traditions de Tsazega et Hazzega: Textes Tigrigna (Rome 1912) 264; Gärima Taffära, Abba-Tafla Kassa, Yäqwarä Anbäsa (Addis-Abäba, 1961 A.M.) 88; Bairu Tafla, A chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV, 1872–89 (Wiesbaden, 1977) 33 n. 13; Heywäät Hedaru, Yachi Qän Tärässach: Kätemhert-Bêt Wada Qwänäsela Sera, 1925–33 (Addis-Abäba, 1967 A.M.) pp. iv–x. See also the historical notes of azmach Gábrä-Mika‘el Germu in the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis-Abäba, MS Nos. 325 and 326.

2 A few owned thick cash-books containing historical, autobiographic, poetic, and miscellaneous notes. Käntiba Dästa Metéké, one of the first Ethiopian journalists, had kept eighteen such records.

3 Because of the lack of a photocopying machine in the town, I had to reproduce the text in two ways: first, an assistant took down the text in its entirety by hand. Then, a cassette recording of the whole text was made from the original manuscript. Comparison has shown no significant discrepancy between the two versions. It may not, however, be fair to hold the author responsible for orthographic inaccuracies and I have, in consequence, refrained from commenting on the particulars of this aspect. The late Dr. Richard Caulk had xeroxed the original a few years later, but his copy was not available for further comparison in the process of this edition.
is private and not at all intended for the wider public. Hence, it is frank in expression and unpolished in style. The chain of statements does not necessarily express a sequence of ideas; rather it represents more or less a list of points, frequently with only faint relation to one another. For example:

In 1880 A.M., the year of St. John, a military expedition was launched to Armačeho. Ras Ar'aya-Sellasé died. The reconstruction of the great church of Feché-Giyorgis began in this year. On his return from Armačeho in sānē, asê Menilek visited the newly begun work of reconstruction.

The death of the Prince had nothing to do with the royal expedition, and the King’s visit was merely a by-product of the circumstances which obliged Menilek to take the route through Gojjam and Sālalé. Their only common factor is the year in which all took place.

The sketches are chronological in order. Particular days, months and evangelists are noted together with the years, though not altogether without errors, omissions or transpositions. Some, if not all, of the errors have apparently arisen from the traditional method of reckoning time employed by the author. Usually people remembered the precise date and month of the births, deaths, foundations and convocations which were of interest to them, most of which were in any case associated with fixed holidays; but they seldom noted the precise year of the happening. Years are often given in relation to an outstanding event—a war, a devastating epidemic or a natural catastrophe imprinted on the memory of the society. These outstanding events formed the landmarks in the timespan which an individual used as points of orientation. Being a learned man, our author did not depend entirely on such points of orientation. He recorded particular years with their respective evangelists. On the other hand, he did not abandon the traditional system altogether. He reduced it to a miniature and used it as a guideline within a particular year. The supposed major event of a particular year is given precedence in relation to the births, deaths, marriages, inaugural celebrations, promotions and demotions. An error is then likely to creep in if the so-called major event takes place at the beginning or the end of the year and the author (or his informant) fails to notice that the presumed minor event under consideration had actually taken place in another year, though only a few weeks or months earlier or later than the landmark. For example:

4 The years 1847, 1848, 1863, 1865, 1877, 1900, 1910, 1919, and 1935 are not accompanied by the relevant evangelists. Insofar as the preceding and subsequent years are supplied with evangelists, whose sequence is constant, the omissions were presumably caused by negligence rather than by lack of knowledge on the part of the author. 1870 and 1881 are entered twice with different facts, first in the wrong sequence and a second time in the correct chronological order. '1925' is noted without a factual entry.

5 Almost all Ethiopian chroniclers have persistently coupled an evangelist with a given year, but the purpose is rather obscure. The names of the four evangelists are used in the traditional Ethiopian calendar-reckoning to mark four consecutive years, thus forming an ever-recurring short cycle which also served as the lowest common multiple for a few of the higher cycles. If the chroniclers employed the system in this sense, then its historical role is minimal in that it was merely confirmatory in the writer’s opinion to the accuracy of the given date. It is doubtful whether it was meant for calculation purposes which the chroniclers scarcely applied. They noted the evangelists even for the coronations which they themselves attended. Perhaps an explanation should be sought in the deeply-rooted tradition of associative interpretation of history. The evangelists (who are represented in the likeness of a human being, a lion, an ox and an eagle respectively) have been associated with natural forces. Matthew and Mark have been associated with fruitfulness and abundance; hence, the dictum: 'bāmatēwos erās; bāmareqos efās' = 'Cultivate in [the year of] Matthew, harvest in [the year of] Mark.' Luke is identified with drought and epidemic, and John with war, hail, flood, and thunderstorm.

6 The date pertaining to the foundation of Feché cannot of course be included under this explanation. It is an error due to ignorance. Cf. n. 18 below.
During Passion Week in the month of Mäggabit 1863 A.M., *ato* Dargé left Bulga and entered Feché in Sälälé. On Monday, 9 Nähäse of the same year, Dämessé Särše was born. In the month of Hämle of the same year, *ašè* Täklä-Giyorgis died. *Ašè* Yohannes was crowned in the same year.

Here, the appointment of a governor, to whose family the author was to be attached, is the landmark in relation to which other facts must be arrayed.

The birth of a kinsman is given priority over the political change in a remote area, and the fall of an emperor has apparently led to the presupposition that the vanquished was dead and the victorious crowned. Actually, Yohannes assumed the imperial crown early in the next year, and Täklä-Giyorgis died in captivity sometime thereafter. Such errors appear mainly in the period prior to the time of the author; and astonishingly enough, he has miscalculated by hardly more than a year.

The author, *Liqä-Ṭábbäht* Abbäbä Yeräfu (1902–75) was, as his title indicates, a *däbtära* (precentor) closely attached to the Gännätä-Giyorgis church in Feché, approximately 110 km. to the north of Addis-Abäba where I made my acquaintance with him in 1971. His father, *mähherë* Yeräfu (1856–1938) who was also a cleric, came originally from the Amara area of Shäwa and settled in Sälälé in the 1870s. With the exception of a few brief sojourns in the imperial capital, Abbäbä spent his life entirely in Sälälé. His notes are, therefore, predominantly related to the events pertaining to this area. Strictly speaking, this compilation does not represent a diary. It comprises select dates, names and facts from the reminiscences of the elderly and the author’s own observations, supplemented by extracts from books and newspapers. It covers a period of about ninety years (1855–1944), more than half of which preceded the life of the author. Over 250 particulars are mentioned which can roughly be categorized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of entries</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government officials and members of the royal house</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian geographical names</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian titles, epithets, technical terms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations, acquaintances, and colleagues</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches and monasteries</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy days</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign nations and states</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign personalities</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Foreign titles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian ethnic groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International treaties</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Publications</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Most of the entries are related to local history, preference being given to matters which concerned the author within the context of his extended family, his home region in the narrowest sense, together with the ruling aristocracy and the church. This very aspect underlines the essence of the document, which may contribute, however modestly, toward the writing of well-founded history. A few events of national and international significance are noted; these are none the less better served elsewhere. Several of the other entries are unique, and as such they are of special interest to historians. The contributions of this brief document are to be sought not only in the accurate new facts and dates, but also in the author’s viewpoint imparted explicitly through the manner of his
selection of particular historical clues. Evidently, he held some historical developments in high esteem and pursued them with keen interest over a long period of time. One which captured his attention was, for example, the process for the collection of the tithe-taxation innovated by Menilek’s decree of October 1892 to replace the old system of billeting soldiers on the peasantry. Our author leads us through a period of about four decades, giving glimpses into the inconsistencies of the government’s methods of exacting and administering the tithe, as well as into the trustworthiness of the populace when they were given the responsibility. His opinion on the latter point contrasts sharply with that held by the two senior officials who have dealt with the subject. Another matter which captured his attention was the atrocities committed by the Italian Fascists during their occupation of Ethiopia in 1936–41. Unfortunately, for some unexplained reason he cut off his writing at a point shortly after the liberation. That he owned no other notebook was stated categorically in the course of interviews, and there is little justification for doubting his assertion; but his refusal to explain the reason for discontinuing his account may arouse the suspicion that the reason lay beyond lack of interest or want of time.

Finally, a word on the structure of the article. The entire text is reproduced here. The translation, which immediately follows it, is supplied with adequate footnotes intended to clarify vague points, define technical terms, describe institutions, document statements, compare dates and question allegations. The very local events (e.g. Dargé’s activities in Sâlalé) are of course not comparable in that, to our present knowledge, no records have survived. Personal and place names are not commented upon, as most of them are entered in the standard reference works. For the biographies of the persons mentioned in the article, see: Heruy Wäldä-Sellasë, Yä heywat Tarik (Addis-Abäba, 1915 A.M.); Giuseppe Puglise, Chi è? dell’ Eritrea (Asmâra, 1952); Mahtämä-Sellasë Wäldä-Mäsqâl, ‘A study of the Ethiopian culture of horse-names’, Journal of Ethiopian Studies, vii, 2, 1969, 195–303; The encyclopaedia Africana: dictionary of African biography, i: Ethiopia-Ghana (New York, 1977); Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, Historical dictionary of Ethiopia = African historical dictionaries, 32 (Metuchen, N. J. and London, 1981). For the place names, see: Carlo Conti Rossini, Catálogo dei nomi propri di luogo dell’Etiopia contenuti nei testi g’iz ed amharînä finora pubblicati = Estratto dagli Atti del primo Congresso Geografico Italiano (Genova, 1892); A. Bombaci et al., Elementi per la toponomastica etiopica (Napoli, 1937); Guida d’Italia della Consociazione Turistica Italiana: Africa Orientale Italiana (Milano, 1938); U.S. Defense Mapping Agency, Gazetteer of Ethiopia: names approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (Washington, D.C., 1982).

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THE HISTORICAL NOTES OF LIQĀ-ṬABBĀT ABBĀB YERĀFU
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[Page 275]
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THE HISTORICAL NOTES OF LIQA-ṬABBĀT ABBĀBĂ YERĀFU

[7]
THE HISTORICAL NOTES OF LIQÄ-ṬABBÄT ABBĀBĂ YERÄFU

[9]
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THE HISTORICAL NOTES OF LIQĀṬ-ṬABĀṬ ABBĀṢ YERĀFU
[16]
III. *Translation*

[fol. 1] Transfer of government from Gondár to Sháwa: 8 Nágasi begat 9 Sebestyanos; Sebestyanos begat Abbeyé; Abbeyé begat Ameha-Iyyásus; Ameha-Iyyásus begat Asfa-Wásan; Asfa-Wásan begat Wásan-Sággád; Wásan-Sággád begat Sahlá-Sellásé; Sahlá-Sellásé begat negus Haylá-Málákok, märed-azmach Haylé, Sáfyu, Dargé Zánnábá-Wárq, Tánaññá-Wárq. 10 Haylá-Málákok begat Menilek II; Sáfyu begat Mástáhsáhá; Tánaññá-Wárq bore Mákwanñen; Zánnábá-Wárq 11 married *qoq-mariw* 12 Abboyé and bore negus Wáldá-Giyorgis, *dájáj Láma* and *máribáté Del-Nássaw;* 13 märed-azmach Haylé begat Gulléláté.

On 5 Yákkatit 1847 A.M. [11 February 1855], *ásé* Téwodros was crowned.

In 1848 A.M. [1855–56], Haylá-Málákok died. He was buried at Dábrá-Bág’e. In Òeqqemt [October–November], *ásé* Téwodros came to Sháwa and took Menilek with him. *Asé* Téwodros doubted his [Haylá-Málákok’s] death, exhumed the body from the grave and viewed it. 14

On 23 Säné 1848 A.M. [29 June 1856], *mämmeré* Yerfu was born.

In 1854 A.M. [1861–62], the year of St. Mark, *ras* Dargé was imprisoned. On 29 Òeqqemt [7 November 1861], *ato* Sáfyu entered Ankóbbá and installed himself in the throne of his father. 15 *Ras* Dargé was imprisoned, because he had fought Bázzabheb. *Asé* Téwodros became victorious in the same year, and the following was composed:

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8 Literally, ‘When the government was transferred from Gondár to Sháwa.’ This incomplete sentence was probably intended to serve as the heading for the genealogical list of the dynasty which eventually took over the imperial power, though not directly from Gondár. Sháwa writers generally assumed that Téwodros II (1855–68), Tákká-Giyorgis II (1868–71) and Yohannes IV (1872–89) did not actually belong to the Solomonic Dynasty which was supposed to have branched into the Sháwa and Gondárán houses. Cf. aláqa Gábá-Sellásé, Tárká Zámán Zádámgawi Ménilek, Negusá-Nággási Zá`ityopeya (Addis-Abába, 1959 A.M.), 44, 67, 165; Heruy Wáldá-Sellásé, Wáźéma (Addis-Abába 1921 A.M.), 50; Bairú Táffa. Aasma Giyorgis and his work: *History of the Galla and Sawa* (Wiesbaden, 1985) 457, 565, 697.

9 The verb which should have followed either the first or the last name in the list is missing from the original. The general context as well as the Amareña particle ‘n’ make it none the less clear that ‘wálládā’ (= beget), or ‘wálládáč’ (= bear), as the case may be, is the relevant verb to be supplemented.

10 The original had ‘Táffásá-Wárq’, but the author insisted without explanation that we adopt ‘Tánaññá-Wárq’. He made no adjustment in his notebook during our presence.


12 Literally, ‘He who is merciful to a partridge’. This epithet was probably a nickname applied on account of the humaneness of Abbyéyé, the son-in-law of Sahlá-Sellásé, whom Téwodros appointed representative governor of Sháwa with the title of *aʃa-negus*.

13 = ‘Del-Nássaw of Márhabétá’. He was perhaps referred to as such by the people of Mánz and Tágalát on account of his life-long attachment to that particular region.

14 The same alligation is also made by Aasma-Giyorgis and Heruy. Cf. Bairú, 1985, 553; and, Asfa-Wossén Asserate, *Die Geschichte von Sawa* (Athiopien) 1700–1865. *Nach dem Täríka Nagáis des Belátten Gétá Heruy Walda Sellásé* (Wiesbaden, 1980) 60. The emperor’s suspicion was allegedly motivated by the superb morale of the army in his opponent’s camp, an attribute seldom manifested in the absence of a leader. Chronicler Gábrá-Sellásé who asserts (cf. p. 47) that Téwodros was impressed by the Sháwa army, does not mention this curious incident. The three chroniclers of Téwodros also mention nothing of the kind. One of them recorded that the emperor arrived at the burial place shortly after the funeral, and that he mourned the death of Haylá-Málákok. Cf. Enno Littmann, *History of King Theodore* (Princeton, 1902) 23. Except for the purpose of translating the remainder of the text, the practice of exhumation to prove anything was apparently uncommon in Ethiopia. It is, therefore, not clear whether the story was malicious propaganda against the conqueror, or whether it was one of the idiosyncrasies of the sovereign.

15 In fact, this event took place in 1859–60. Cf. Littmann, 1902, 46; Casamir Mondon-Vidalheil, *Chronique de Théodores II*, roi des rois d’Ethiopie 1853–68 (Paris, 1904) i, 20; Gábrá-Sellásé, 1959, 53; Chris Prouty Rosenfeld, *A chronology of Menilek II of Ethiopia, 1844–1913: Emperor of Ethiopia, 1889–1913* (East Lansing, 1976) 23. For some obscure reason, the author has employed at this point the Amareña familiar form of address in reference to *ato* Sáfyu in contrast to his brothers, who are consistently referred to in the respect form.
Asé Tewodros was indeed degraded, 
Bowing to all the people of Shäwa, he withdrew.16

In 1857 A.M. [1864–65] the year of St. Matthew, Menilek escaped from the hands of asé Tewodros at Mäqdâla, arrived in Shäwa, defeated ato Bäzzabeth on the day of St. George of Nähäsé,17 and entered Ankôbär on 27 Nähäsé [1 September 1865], the day of the Redeemer of the World. The Battle of Gadiło took place on 23 Nähäsé [28 August 1865].

In 1858 A.M. [1865–66], the year of St. Mark, ato Sâyfu founded the town of Feché.18 The rule of Galla balabbatoch ended. [fol. 2.]

On Easter Monday, 6 Miyayza 1860 A.M. [13 April 1868], the year of St. John, the English defeated asé Tewodros, and he died. In the same year, ras Dargé went to Bulga over which he was appointed.

During Passion Week in the month of Mäggabit 1863 A.M. [March–April 1871], ato19 Dargé left Bulga and entered Fëchë in Sâllâle. On Monday, 9 Nähäsé [14 August 1871], of the same year, Dämessê Sârsé was born. In the month of Hamlé [July–August] of the same year, asé Täkla-Giyoqgis died. Asé Yohannes was crowned in the same year.

On 23 Hamlé 1865 A.M. [29 July 1873] ras Dargé founded Fëchë-Giyoqgis. On Thursday, 12 Miyayza 1870 A.M. [19 April 1878], Shenkurq-Mika’él was founded.20 At the time asé Yohannes and asé Menilek made peace between them on the mountain above the river, it is alleged that asé Yohannes said: ‘Build [a church] of St. Mika’él on this spot and name it on my behalf “Däbrä-Sâlam” [“Mount Peace”].’

On 22 Miyayza 1868 A.M. [29 April 1876], the year of St. John, negeistänägästat Zäwditu was born.21

In 1869 A.M. [1876–77], the year of St. Matthew, the kánter22 disease raged. In 1870 A.M. [1877–78], smallpox exterminated the Galla and the Guragé.23

16 Originally the author had recorded only the first line of the couplet and he dictated the rest in the course of the copying. The couplet was at any rate widely known for its pun: ‘ëj näsä’ = ‘greeted by prostrating himself’ can equally mean ‘render a person handshake’. In this expedition the sovereign punished hundreds of captives by the mutilation of the hands and feet. Cf. Littmann, 1902; 46; Mondon-Vidalibet, 1904, 20 f.; Bairu, 1985, 575.

17 The available sources differ on the date of this battle. Gãbrâ-Sellâsé, 1959, 59 and Asfa-Wossen, 1980, 64 give 16 Nähäsé while Asmä-Giyoqgis (cf. Bairu, 1985, 587) prefers one day later. Only the last source specifies a date for the arrival of Menilek in Ankôbär which concurs with that of our present text. Rosenfeld, 1976, 31 mentions only the month in connexion with the battle and places the so-called coronation of the negus in September.

18 This date is incorrect not only because the death of Sâyfu had already occurred in June 1860, but also because the town was much older. As early as 1848 Sâyfu had used it as his centre during a campaign against the Oromo of Sâllâle. Cf. Bairu, 1985, 543.

19 The original had ‘ras,’ an anachronism which the author noticed and he insisted that we adopt ‘ato’. Other similar cases have, none the less escaped his attention.

20 This date is rather perplexing, because most of the available sources assert that Yohannes and Menilek left Sâllâle (the former for Dârra and the latter for Dârra-Behan) several days earlier. Chronicler Gãbrâ-Sellâsé states (cf. pp. 83–5) that Yohannes left for Dârra on 26 Mäggabit (2 April) and that Menilek accompanied him for some distance before he returned to his capital Leché. Asmä-Giyoqgis reckons (Bairu, 1985, 677) the accomplishment as far as Qaroda near Fëchë to nine days. See also Rosenfeld, 1976, 79. But this brings us only to 11 April. The foundation stone must have, therefore, been laid either a week earlier than the given date or one must assume that it was executed through a royal representative.

21 Rosenfeld, 1976, 68 has ‘July 1876’.

22 Dásta Täkla-Wâld, Addis Yamareqâh Mägäbä Qatâ (Addis-Abâba, 1964, A.M.) 662 defines this epidemic as ‘a disease which kills swiftly’. Epidemic diseases were given names in traditional Ethiopia in accordance with their symptomatic manifestations and/or consequences. Cf. R. Basset, Études sur l’histoire d’Ethiopie (Paris, 1882) 26, 45, 52–3; Littmann, 1902, 27; Mondon-Vidalibet, 1904, 18; Bairu, 1977, 62. This particular epidemic is not mentioned by name in Menilek’s chronicle; but Rosenfeld, 1976, 73, notes for the same year: ‘Menilek’s campaign is plagued by disease, lack of food and poor morale.

23 Visitation of this ravaging epidemic was rather frequent in traditional Ethiopia, and royal chroniclers as well as foreign travellers often noted its outbreak and devastation. Apparently, this one was not regarded by the contemporary chroniclers as significant perhaps on account of its occurrence in the secondary regions of the empire.
In this year, i.e. the year of St. Mark, aşe Yohannes came to Shawa. He made peace with aşe Menilek, paid reverence to Dabrá-Libanos, and departed.

In 1871 A.M. [1878–79], the year of St. Luke, a military expedition against Därра was launched by aşe Menilek and ras Dargé.

In 1872 A.M. [1879–80], the year of St. John, Jelta-Täklä-Haymanot was founded.

On 3 Hedar 1873 A.M. [11 November 1880], the year of St. Matthew, lej Kasa Haylu was born of wäyỹāro Tessämüm Dargé in Lasta.

On Tuesday, 30 Genbot 1874 A.M. [6 June 1882], the year of St. Mark [fol. 3] the Battle of Embabo was fought. In the same year, four bishops came to aşe Yohannes.

In 1875 A.M. [1882–83], a star with a tail was seen over the tent. In this year, aşe Yohannes appointed män̄hér Akalá Wäld, and founded the Sellasë [Church] at Boru-Méda. On 5 . . . of the same year of St. Luke, abunā Matéwos came to Shawa. In Teqqemt [October–November] a star with a tail appeared at dawn. Seré-Mädhånë-Allám was founded, as the result of a vow made at the campaign of Embabo.

In the rent of 1877 A.M. [1885], ras Dargé led a military expedition against Mareko. Entótto-Maryam and Ragu’el were founded in the same year.

In Genbot 1878 A.M. [May–June 1886], the year of St. Mark, both aşe Menilek and ras Dargé led a military expedition against Arusi. On 3 Pagumén of the same year [7 September 1886], the Arusi were defeated. His Majesty returned, whereas ras Dargé spent the rainy season there. While staying in Arusi, ras Dargé defeated the mobilized Arusi on Tuesday, on 3 Pagumén, and flogged all his officers for fighting before he gave the order. On Thursday, 29 Tahsas [6 January 1887] of the same year, aşe Menilek and ras Dargé defeated Abdullahi and returned.

In 1879 A.M. [1886–87], the year of St. Luke, the military expedition against Harär was launched. Balambaras Mäkwänñen was appointed over Harargé on 1 Ṭer [8 January 1887].

In 1881 A.M. [1888–89], the year of St. Matthew, the Dervishes burnt Gondär.

In 1880 A.M. [1887–88], the year of St. John, a military expedition was launched to Armacého. Ras Ar’aya Sellasë died. The reconstruction of the great church of Feché-Giyorgis began in this year. On his return from Armacého in Sänë [June–July], aşe Menilek visited the newly begun work of reconstruction. [fol. 4] On 4 Nähäsë [9 August 1888], lightning struck the unfinished edifice. On 21 Máskäräm [1 October 1887] of the same year, the tabot of Entótto-Maryam was installed.

24 This date is not given in any of the usual reference works; but the same date is contained in a mimeographed lengthy biography of the notable issued by the family on the occasion of his funeral in 1959, a copy of which is preserved at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis-Ababa.

25 The formulation of this statement, as well as the one pertaining to abuna Matewos in the next entry, betrays the author’s prejudice against Emperor Yohannes IV who actually strove to bring the dignitaries from Egypt. He assigned them to the various parts of the Empire.

26 Such a natural phenomenon was regarded ominous by the Ethiopian society and usually the chroniclers recorded it as a prediction of a disastrous future. Cf. Gähṛ-Sellasë, 1959, 109; Mondon-Vidaihi, 1904, 18; Bairu, 1985, 745.

27 According to Gähṛ-Sellasë, 1959, 113, Yohannes assigned the dignitary to the Kingdom of Shawa on 8 February and he arrived in his diocese on 2 March 1883.

28 This expedition is not entered in Rosenfeld’s chronology.

29 Among the victims of his anger were two of his sons: Tasāmma and Asfaw (Bairu, 1985, 769).

30 Rosenfeld, 1976, 128, gives 27 January as the date of his appointment.


32 Rosenfeld, 1976, 131 has 10 June 1888.
In 1881 A.M. [1888–89], the year of St. Matthew, cattle perished.\textsuperscript{34} Asé Yohannes died in the month of Mäggabbit of the same year. \textit{Qānhazmach} Ashené was born on 11 Mäskärām [20 September 1880] of the same year. Asé Yohannes died on the 1st of Mäggabbit [9 March 1889] of the same year.\textsuperscript{35} On Friday, 27 Sāné [3 July 1889] of the same year, ras Gobānā died.\textsuperscript{36}

On 25 Teqqemt 1882 A.M. [3 November 1889], the year of St. Mark, asé Menilek was crowned King of Kings at Enṭōṭjo, and he became the \textit{jahnjoy}.\textsuperscript{37} In the same year, a great many volleys were fired and feasts given in Feché, as the beam of the burnt church was erected. In the rainy season, ras Dargé underwent \textit{weshba}\textsuperscript{38} treatment at Qerēt in the month of Hamlē [July–August 1890].

On 25 Mäggabbit 1883 A.M. [2 April 1891], the year of St. Luke, \textit{etégo} Mānān was born.\textsuperscript{39} In the same year, ras Dargé led a military expedition to Balé in the month of Teqqemt [October–November 1890] and returned on 12 Hamlē [18 July 1891].\textsuperscript{40} Upon his return, he spent the rainy season in Feché. In the same year, ras Māngāša Atikām led a military expedition against Wālamo, but returned without conquering it.

In 1884 A.M. [1891–92], the year of St. John, the \textit{nāfas-bāṣhit}a broke out.\textsuperscript{41} The \textit{kefu-qān} worsened.\textsuperscript{42} On 30 Genbot [6 June 1892] of the same year, the \textit{tabot} of St. Mary came from Azāzo, Gondār, and entered Dābrā-Libanos ceremoniously. On 16 Hamlē [22 July 1892] of the same year, asé Haylā-Sellasē was born.\textsuperscript{43} His Majesty [Menilek] came\textsuperscript{44} to Ankōbār where he spent the rainy season.

In 1885 A.M. [1892–93], the year of St. Matthew, the decree of grain tithe was issued.\textsuperscript{45} In the month of Teqqemt [October–November 1892] of the same year, Addis-Abābā was renovated.\textsuperscript{[fol. 5]} This year was named ‘a glimpse’, because grain could be harvested. In the same year, asé Menilek gave wāyzāro Shāwā-Rāggā to ras Mika’ēl in marriage.\textsuperscript{46} In the same year, land was granted to the


\textsuperscript{35} Rosenfeld, 1976, 136 has 10 March 1889.

\textsuperscript{36} Asmā-Gyorgys (Bairu, 1985, 803) also gives the same date, and states correctly that it was Wednesday.

\textsuperscript{37} Literally, ‘His Majesty’. In this context it is obviously used in the sense of ‘the Emperor’ or ‘the King of Kings’.

\textsuperscript{38} A traditional method of treating rheumatic or syphilitic patients through heat and medicinal ointment. Cf. Dāstā, 1964, 467 f.

\textsuperscript{39} This event is not mentioned in Rosenfeld, 1976, E. Ullendorff, \textit{The autobiography of Emperor Hailé Selassie I: My life and Ethiopia’s progress} 1892–1937 (Oxford, 1976) p. 41, n. 1 dates it around 1890.

\textsuperscript{40} This is briefly mentioned in Menilek’s chronicle, but it is not entered in Rosenfeld, 1976.

\textsuperscript{41} This is a reference to the ravaging cholera which accompanied the famine and drought of 1888–89. The phrase literally means, ‘wind disease’. Wind was believed to have been the spreading agent of heat and cold, drought and fertility, disaster and blessing, devastation and happiness depending on the direction from where it came. The Book of Hēnok (Inoch) distinguishes some twelve such winds. Cf. chs. 18, 56, and 76. See also Dāstā, 1964, 868; Kidanā-Wāld Kefflē, \textit{Māś’ahafā Sāwasew Wāges Wāmmāgdā Qalat Haddis} (Addis-Abābā, 1948 A.M.) 647. There appear to have also existed local or regional winds with particular attributes. Cf. Bairu, 1985, 823.

\textsuperscript{42} Literally, ‘wretched day(s)’. This phrase is a descriptive name for the drought, rinderpest, and cholera which prevailed in the years 1888–92. Cf. n. 22 supra.

\textsuperscript{43} Rosenfeld, 1976, 156 and Ullendorff, 1976, 14 have 23 July.

\textsuperscript{44} This verb, which could suggest the author’s location at the time of writing, may in this context imply the source of our author who was then not yet born.

\textsuperscript{45} Gābrā-Wāld, 1948, 16 dates it 3 Teqqemt 1885 A.M. (= 12 October 1892). Rosenfeld, 1976, 157 gives 13 October.

\textsuperscript{46} Rosenfeld, 1976, 155 gives January 1892, and states that the first issue from this marriage was born (p. 158) in December of the same year.
clergy of Feché-Giyorgis. The wārāb\textsuperscript{47} pertaining to it was performed on 6 Nāhase [11 August 1893]. In the same year, dājjazmach Dāsta Dargē died on 4 Hamlē [10 July 1893] and was buried at Dābrā-Libanos on the 5th [11 July 1893].\textsuperscript{48} In the same year, ras Emmeru was born on 15 Hedar [23 November 1892].\textsuperscript{49} In the same year, the following were imprisoned: fitawradi Gullelatē, dājjazmach Māshāsha Wārqē, alāqa Admasu.\textsuperscript{50} Fitawradi Gābrā-Māsqāl was flogged. The main scribe who was named Abbāba was punished by [the mutilation of] his tongue. Qānnāzmach Habāt-Mika'ēl died on 6 Hedar [14 November 1892] of the same year. Fitawradi Bayyu too died.

In the same year the Gānnātā-Giyorgis church of Fechē, whose construction was complete and its painting begun, caught fire from a lamp [candle?] and burnt down on 11 Yākkatit [17 February 1893]. Ras Dargē sent word from Addis-Abēba saying: 'Mourn just as if Dāsta has died today.' Restoration work of Fēche-Giyorgis began with the removal of the coal in Nāhasē [August] of the same year.

In 1886 A.M. [1893–94], the year of St. Mark, an expedition was launched to Zway.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1887 A.M. [1894–95], the year of St. Luke, a military expedition was launched against Wālama.\textsuperscript{52} He [Menilek] returned in Ṭer [January–February]. In the same year, wag-shum Berru was imprisoned.\textsuperscript{53} Wag-shum Gwangul was appointed over Wag. In Pagumē [September], ato Berhanē Heywāt was born.

In 1888 A.M. [1895–96], the year of St. John, aṣē Menilek led a military expedition to Adwa in Tegrē, fought and defeated the Italians. In this year, ras Dargē remained behind to guard the capital. [fol. 6] Ras Tāsāmma, ras Wālda-Giyorgis, and dājjach Le'ul-Sąggād participated in a military expedition under the command of wāhmi-azzāż Wālda-Ṣadeq against Awa, and they were victorious. On 28 Hedar [7 December 1895], the Battle of Amba-Alagē took place.

On Wednesday, 27 Ṭer A.M. [3 February 1897], the year of St. Matthew, lej Iyyasu was born.\textsuperscript{54} His mother, wāyzāro Shāwa-Ragga, died, as the result of labour.

On Friday, ... 1890 A.M. [1897–98], the year of St. Mark, ras Mākwānēn led a military expedition against the country of Sheh-Hojālē.\textsuperscript{55} Three years and six months after its commencement the building of Fechē-Giyorgis was completed in this year and the tabot entered ceremoniously on Saturday, 23 Miyazya [30 April 1898].

\textsuperscript{47} An extract of the zemmarē and māwā'et hymns sung and danced to the accompaniment of the drum as an expression of satisfaction and gratitude. Cf. Māngstū Lāmma, Mās'hāsa Tezzeta Za'llāga Lāmma Haylu Wālda-Tarīk (Addis-Abēba, 1959 A.M.) 159 and 253.

\textsuperscript{48} The last entry for this notable in Rosenfeld, 1976, is 6 February 1890 when he was with Menilek in Wāllo.

\textsuperscript{49} The birth of this prominent notable is omitted from Rosenfeld, 1976. In his autobiography, Emperor Haylā-Sellāsē asserts that Emmeru was born four months after himself, a fact which agrees with the statement of our author. Cf. Ullendorff, 1976, 14.

\textsuperscript{50} Chronicler Gābrā-Sellāsē mentions only these three notables in connexion with the treason and the trial that followed. According to Rosenfeld, 1976, 159, the treason was made public on 11 March and the trial took place on 21–26 May 1893.

\textsuperscript{51} This expedidtion was undertaken in December–January 1893–4. Rosenfeld, 1976, 162 and 164 asserts that he set out on 14 December and returned in January.

\textsuperscript{52} The expedition was announced in August 1894, but actually took place between 15 November 1894 and mid-January 1895. Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 167–9.

\textsuperscript{53} The arrest was made in May 1895 on grounds that the official had received bribes from Italy. Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 171.

\textsuperscript{54} Rosenfeld, 1976, 175 records this date with a query, but does not mention the death of the princess. This date is also inscribed on the façade of the Church of the Redeemer at Dāsē built by negus Mika'ēl.

\textsuperscript{55} According to Rosenfeld, 1976, 186 and 188, Mākwānēn departed on 14 December 1897 and returned on 6 May 1898.
In 1891 A.M. [1898–99], the year of St. Luke, a forced military expedition to Ashângê, Tegrê, was undertaken and ras Mângâsha Yohannes was arrested.\textsuperscript{56} In the same year, \textit{liqā-mākwas} Adenâw and \textit{dājjach} Haylâ-Maryam Wâldâ-Mika’êl died.\textsuperscript{57}

In 1892 A.M. [1899–1900], the year of St. John, the town of Korâmash which was named Salayesh was built. On Saturday, 15 Maggabit [23 March 1900] of the same year, ras Dârge died twenty-nine years after his entry in Sâlalê.\textsuperscript{58} It was on the eve of \textit{dâbrâ-zâyrt}. In the same year, the right portion of Sâlalê and Ensaro were given to \textit{dājjach} Täsâmâm Dârge, and the left portion of Sâlalê and Yayya-Gullâllê to \textit{dājjach} Asfaw Dârge. Arusi and Balê were given to \textit{dâjjach} Le’ul-Sâggâd. Later, the whole of Sâlalê and Yayya-Gullâllê were given to \textit{dājjach} Täsâmâm.

In 1893 A.M. [1900–01], the year of St. Matthew, the town of Addis-Âlâm was founded.\textsuperscript{59} In the same year, \textit{dājjach} Asfaw Dârge was imprisoned at Mâqdâlâ. On 3 Ţer [11 January 1901] of the same year, \textit{negus} Tâklâ-Haymanot died.\textsuperscript{60}

In 1894 A.M. [1901–02], the year of St. Mark, Sâlalê was ordered for the construction of Addis-Âlâm. [fol. 7] and, hence, \textit{dājjach} Täsâmâm went over to Mérâñê, Ada-Bârga, had limestone loaded and went up to Addis-Âlâm. On 24 Maggabit [1 February 1902] of the same year, Abbâbâ Yerâfü was born. \textit{Dâjjach} Wâñd-Wâsän Kasa was born on Hamlê . . . [July? . . .].\textsuperscript{61}

In 1895 A.M. [1902–03], the year of St. Luke, the town of Holota-Gânnât was built.\textsuperscript{62} The construction of the road from Addis-Abâba to Addis-Âlâm commenced. On 1st Nâhâsè [6 August 1903] of the same year, Säyfâ-Sellasé Säyfu was born in the country of Jerru.

In 1896 A.M. [1903–04], the year of St John, wâjzâro Ehetâ the wife of ras Dârge died.\textsuperscript{63}

In Genbot and Sané 1897 A.M. [May–July 1905], the year of St. Matthew, locusts devoured the crops.\textsuperscript{64}

On Thursday, 3 Ţer 1898 A.M. [11 January 1906], the year of St. Mark, \textit{dājjach} Täsâmâm Dârge died. The death of \textit{dājjach} Asfaw Dârge also occurred on Thursday, fifteen days thereafter.\textsuperscript{65} Ras Mâkwânnâm died on 13 Maggabit [21 March 1906].\textsuperscript{66} In Genbot [May–June], \textit{dājjach} Täfârî Mâkwânnâm was

\textsuperscript{56} This expedition took place between September 1898 and March 1899. Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 190–4.
\textsuperscript{57} Rosenfeld, 1976, 194 dates the death of the latter on 6 March 1899, while that of the former is not mentioned at all.
\textsuperscript{58} With the exception of the death of this notable, none of the facts in this entry are included in Rosenfeld’s chronology. ‘Dâbrâ-zâyrt’ (= ‘Mount Olive’) refers to the Sunday marking the middle of Lent.
\textsuperscript{59} Construction of the town began in November 1900. Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 200. The imprisonment of Asfaw Dârge and the participation of Täsâmâm Dârge in the construction of Addis-Âlâm are not included in Rosenfeld’s chronology.
\textsuperscript{60} Rosenfeld, 1976, 201 dates his death ‘c. 10. January’.
\textsuperscript{61} The author has left the date open, and none of the available sources mention any particular date for his birth. Wâñd-Wâsän or Bâwâsän is the only one of the Kasa family mentioned in this respect, probably because he was the same age as our author. According to Ulendorf, 1976, p. 84, n. 21, his dates are 1903–36.
\textsuperscript{62} The construction began in January 1903. Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 211.
\textsuperscript{63} This fact is not entered in any of the available sources.
\textsuperscript{64} This fact is not entered in any of the available sources.
\textsuperscript{65} According to Rosenfeld, 1976, 203 and 223, Asfaw died in June 1901 and Täsâmâm on 14 January 1903. On the other hand, the autobiography of Mâkwânnâm ‘Egâlkhâw Mâlkâm Bēta Sâboch’ (Asmārā 1948 A.M.) and the reminiscences of the old in Sâlalê affirm that the two brothers died at Mâqdâlâ in January 1906.
\textsuperscript{66} Rosenfeld, 1976, 224 gives 22 March 1906.
appointed to the office of shalāqa of Sālālē. He governed Sālālē for eight months. Fitzwarrari Defabachāw and qārīnazmah Qwāllāch, as well as the judge, ato Molla, spent the rainy season watching out for the country.

In 1899 A.M. [1906-07], the year of St. Luke, one of every sixty head of cattle was levied. On 5 Ter [13 January 1907], the whole painting of Fecē-Giyorgis was completed. Both dājjach Bāshah as the mēslānē and azzaż Balcha Gābré in his original post governed Sālālē for a year and a half.

On 29 Māskārām 1900 A.M. [10 October 1907], dājjach Yelma Mākwānēn died. A ber was levied for every head of cattle of any sort, and an alad for every pack animal. A ber was paid per tail. Dājjach Bāshah Ashkārū was dismissed from office, and lej Kasa Haylu [fol. 8] accepted the appointment to the office of mēslānē of Sālālē. He was appointed in Hamlē [July–August] and he arrived in the town of Fecē in Nāhasē [August–September]. On Friday, 4 Hamlē [11 July 1908], a dānqārā-cat was found on the alga of janho.

In 1901 A.M. [1908–09], the year of St. Matthew, Menilek II fell ill and came to Dābrā-Libanos for the holy waters. Māmrē Pawlos Dāsta was born in the town of Fecē on 24 Genbot [1 June 1909]. In 1902 A.M. [1909–10], the year of St. Mark, ras Abatā fought dājjach Abraḥa [of] Tegre at Korām, defeated and brought him back. In the same year, lej Kasa Haylu was promoted to dājjach.

Appointment of the future Emperor Haylā-Sellasē is not included in Rosenfeld’s chronology. The proclamation was released on 2 Genbot 1898 (= 9 May 1906) and retained the office until his next appointment to part of Sidamo on 27 Māggabīt 1900 (= 4 April 1908). In actual fact, he remained in the capital and went to school. Cf. Ulendorff, 1976, 26 and 28. ‘Shalāqa’ or ‘yāshahāqa’ was any governor of a province or district acceding to the office usually as an outsider and for a temporary period. Later, the term was applied exclusively to the military rank corresponding to major. Cf. Dāsta, 1964, 1226.

The practice of exacting a certain number of cattle as a government tax was apparently an old tradition in Ethiopia, but the rationale behind the number ‘60’ in this context is rather obscure. The Portuguese Jesuit Fathers asserted in the early seventeenth century that cattle owners had to submit one in ten heads every three years. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, Introduction to the economic history of Ethiopia (London, 1961) 188. The asrat ‘tithe’ system was also applied to other agricultural products. The government may have preferred the number ‘60’ as it was traditionally the optimal size of herd known as ‘māng’ in Amareņa and ‘māgarva’ in Tegreņa, as a herd whose size was supposed to be ideal for control by herdsmen. Throughout north-east Africa such units existed, but the numbers constituting a unit varied in different regions from 25–300. Cf. Hans Georg Schinkel, Haltung, Zucht und Pflage des Viehs des Nomaden Ost- und Nordostafrikas (Berlin, 1970) 116 f.; Werner Münziger, Über die Sitten und das Recht der Bogos (Winterthur, 1859) 77; Paulitschke, 1893, 131.

Literally, ‘on my behalf’. A general term referring to a proxy or representative governor or administrator.

Rosenfeld, 1976, 232 gives the same date.

A coin worth half a taler.

This statement belongs logically to the first sentence of the entry. ‘Čera’ is actually more specific than the English term ‘tail’ and refers mainly to the hairy tip of the tail of a cow or horse. Traditionally, it was used as a whisk for chasing flies. Here it is apparently used as a technical term of taxation. Cattle are referred to in Amareņa as ‘yāqānd kābi’ = ‘horned animals’; but instead of the horn is not necessarily a universal attribute of head of cattle and because of its appearance in pairs, the ‘čera’ was probably preferred as a metonymy for cow, ox, steer, heifer, calf, etc. Rosenfeld, 1976, 161 mentions that in September 1893, oxen, horses, donkeys and some land were taxed in Maria Theresa taler, but specifies no amount.

Neither this appointment, nor his promotion to a higher status some time later, nor his diplomatic mission to England in 1911 is mentioned in Rosenfeld’s chronology.

Rosenfel, 1976, 237 has 12 July 1908.

Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 237. The Amareņa term is a derivative of dānqārā and signifies ‘to block, to be a stumbling block’. Cf. Dāsta, 1964, 371. The term is used for any slaughtered animal or object intended for an ominous purpose. One version for the explanation of Menilek’s illness was, therefore, that he enemies exercised magical power over him.

A bed, divan or throne. When compounded with particular terms, it also signifies ‘prince’. According to Rosenfeld, 1976, 240, Menilek left his capital for the monastery together with the empress and his French physician on 28 November 1908.

Cf. Rosenfeld, 1976, 250. The battle was fought at Korām in September 1909, and the prisoner was sent to the capital in November; Abatā himself, however, did not return until March 1910.
On 3 Miyazya 1903 A.M. [10 April 1911], the year of St. Luke, ras Mängäsha Atikäm and ras Täsämma Nadäw died. In the same year, Tullosa-Mika’ël was nominated as negus of the church of Adäre-Čeqqo. On 4 Miyazya [14 April 1911], the Sellasé [church] of Adäre-Čeqqo was founded. On the next day, Saturday, the sun was eclipsed for about an hour. [It happened] when the people were going to the market.

In 1904 A.M. [1911-12], the year of St. John, lej Iyyasu went to Däse, visited negus Mika’ël, came to Däbrä-Libanos in Genbot [May–June], celebrated Abunä-Täklä-Haymanot, and spent the rainy season in Holota. In Genbot [May–June] of the same year [1912] lej Iyyasu went to Girma. He returned to Addis-Abäba and fought against fitawrari Gäbrä-Maryam. Ras Abatä was also imprisoned in the same year.

On 22 Ṭer A.M. [30 January 1913], the year of St. Matthew, le’elt Tänaňña-Wärrq Hayläl-Selläsé was born.


On 5 Sänë 1907 A.M. [12 June 1915], the year of St. Luke, lej Iyyasu went to negus Mika’ël in Däse.

In 1908 A.M. [1915–16], the year of St. John, it was declared that the cultivators themselves should under oath and threat of excommunication give in the tithe dues, and they paid in honesty to the government more tithe than any other year. Abba Wäldä-Maryam became a monk on 12 Genbot [20 May 1916].

On 7 Teqqemt 1909 A.M. [17 October 1916], the year of St. Matthew, the Battle of Tora-Mäsk was fought. Negus Mika’ël mobilized Säbat-Bêt-Wällo and came as far as Sagälä, Shäwa. The Shäwans also enthroned Zäwditu Menilek, nominated Täfäri Mäkwänne crown prince, appointed däjäjä Kasa Haylu ras, and gave him Därра and Midda; the whole of Shäwa mobilized and engaged in a battle against negus Mika’ël, and Shäwa won the victory on Friday, 17 Teqqemt, [27 October 1916], the day of St. Stephen. Lej Iyyasu resorted to Mägdäla in the same year, as the result of which le’ul-ras Kasa

79 Both notables died in the same Ethiopian calendar year; but the date given here pertains only to Täsämma. Mängäsha died in October 1910. Cf. Maurice de Coppet, Chronique du règne de Ménelik II, roi des rois d’Éthiopie (Paris, 1930–31) II, p. 538, n. 2.
80 According to the planetary chart of Steinbrückel, this phenomenon occurred on 17 April 1912, which was a Wednesday. A. Steinbrückel, ‘Tafel der Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse der Neu- und Vollmonde von 1265 v. Chr. bis 2345 n. Chr., mit erläuterndem Text’, Neujahrsblatt der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Zürich auf das Jahr 1937 (Zürich, 1937), 24f. The day of the week given by our author was, however, correct. Cf. D. Hans Lietzmann, Zeitrechnung der römischen Kaiserzeit, des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit für die Jahre 1–2000 nach Christus (Berlin, 1956) 74 and 84.
81 Aläqa Kenfé Haddisu, who included this event in his unpublished historical notes in the possession of his descendants in Addis-Abäba, adds that the prince avoided the capital where he was awaited by many people who, as a result, were very disappointed and offended.
82 After his abortive attempt to bring the crown prince under his tutelage in May–June 1911, this notable was arrested in December of the same year and taken to the prison of Mägdäla in January 1912.
83 Neither Ullendorf, 1976, nor Mosley give any date for the birth of the ‘eldest ’daughter of the emperor. Other available sources also have ignored it.
84 For the correctness of the day of the week given here, see Lietzmann, 1956, 74 and 85. Several dates were suggested by local and foreign speculators as that of the death of the sovereign who was incapacitated since 1909 as a result of repeated strokes. The date given by our author was the official one commemorated by his survivors.
85 This assertion is diametrically opposed to the allegation by Mahtämä-Selläsé, 1962, 331–40 and Gäbrä-Wäld, 1948, 16–21 who, probably in conformity with the government’s view, accuse the peasants of dishonesty.
86 Cf. Ullendorf, 1976, pp. 54–5. Negus Mika’ël won the battle, and ras Le’ul-Saggad, who commanded the army of Shäwa, and most of his men, were killed.
87 Cf. Ullendorf, 1976, 55. According to Mäšäfha Ge̱s̱aw (Addis-Abäba, 1945 A.M.) 24, at least 5 saints are celebrated on this day, including Stephan the Martyr; but it is not clear why the author preferred this particular saint.
started out from his home on the day of St. George of Miyazya [1 May 1917]. The whole of Shäwa left in Miyazya [April–May]. While they were besieging Mäqädäla, lej Iyyasu broke out from Mäqädäla and went to Däsé. Furthermore, lej Iyyasu mobilized Wällo and besieged the Shäwans at Däsé. [But] Wällo was defeated. The Shäwans returned and entered Addis-Abäba on the day of hedar-mika'ël, 1910 a.m. [21 November 1917], the year of St. Mark. In the same year, Boräna 88 was given to ras Kasa.

On 11 Mäskäräm 1910 a.m. [21 September 1917] Abbäbä Yeräfu presented for the first time a qené piece in Däbrä-Libanos.89 On 6 Teqqemt of the same year [16 October 1917], ras Abatä died. On 24 Yäkkätit [3 March 1918] [fol. 10] negus Wälädä-Giyorgis also died. On 1st Hedar of the same year [10 November 1917], Dästa Bädané was born of Sädalä Yeräfu. A daughter of ras Kasa, wäyzäro Man-Yahleshal, married däjjach Ayyalé Berru on 10 Òfer [18 January 1918]. Immediately thereafter, ras Kasa was given Däsé where he went and resided, and returning from there, he entered Feché on Sämé-Maryam [29 June 1918].

On the day of Hedär-Sellasé 1911 a.m. [16 November 1918], the year of St. Luke, infectious catarrh [sal-bäshita] broke out.90 The tithe dues were recorded by a scribe at the dictation of the dai-säläm-mälkäänä 91 and the zägi.92 In Hamlé [July–August], Abbäbä Yeräfu entered the service of ras Gêtachäw and remained there for two months and fifteen days.

On 2 Teqqemt 1912 a.m. [13 October 1919], the year of St. John, le'elt Sähay Haylää-Sellasé was born.93 The government tithe was recorded by a scribe at the threshing-floor.

In 1913 a.m. [1920–21], the year of St. Matthew, the tithe was recorded at the threshing-floor. In the same year, it was alleged that lej Iyyasu was arrested in Tegré and the whole of Shäwa departed; he spent the rainy season under arrest. On 24 Teqqemt [3 November 1920], Masrâsha Wälädä-Qirqos was born. In the same year, negestä-nägästat Zäwdittu and Crown Prince Täfäri commemorated remarkably the seventh anniversary of the death of Menilek II. The commemoration of Menilek II took place on 3 Tahsas [12 December 1920], and mourning was done on his behalf.94 In the month of Hedär [November–December] of the same year, Abbäbä Yeräfu received a salary of 2 ber.95

In the month of Hedär 1914 a.m. [November–December 1921], the year of St. Mark, one out of sixty head of cattle and one out of every ten sheep and goats was levied. In the same year, the tithe was recorded at the threshing-floor.

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88 Boräna of Wällo, bordering Amara-Saynt.
89 I.e. the first official presentation of his poetic composition. This was a turning-point in his life insofar as his effort to be accepted as a learned member of the clergy depended on the recognition of his composition as genuine, original, and impeccable. Cf. Menghistu Lamma, ‘Ethiopian classical poetry’, in Alaka Imbakom Kylewold, Traditional Ethiopian church education (New York, 1970) 33–8.
90 Cf. n. 22 supra. The date refers probably to the outbreak of the epidemic (influenza) in the area where the author then was. Various local sources give slightly different dates. Dästa, 1964, 208 asserts that the ‘hedar bäshita’ broke out on 5 Hedär 1911 a.m. (14 November 1918) ‘...after a disaster had reigned in the night of Thursday’ and that many young people died. For an account of this epidemic see R. Pankhurst, ‘The history of cholera in Ethiopia’, Medical History, 12, 1968, 262–9.
91 A dignitary of the lower rank appointed or elected in charge of a church precincts. Cf. Dästa, 1964, 777.
92 A minor dignitary or official in charge of the keys and gates of a church or palace. Cf. Dästa, 1964, 478.
93 Mosley, 1964, 298 has ‘1920’ as the year of her birth.
94 Cf. n. 84 supra.
95 In the course of our reading the author laughed heartily at this point and tried to explain to us how high the value of the ber (silver taler) then was in terms of purchasing power in relation to the inflated ber (paper dollar) of our time.
On Sunday, 2 Tahsas [11 December 1921], of the same year, lej Iyyasu entered the town of Feché as a prisoner.66 [fol. 11] Afaf-negus Estifanos died in the same year. In Náhásé [August–September] of the same year, dājjach Tafari Wäldä-Šädeq died.67

In 1915 A.M. [1922–23], the year of St. Luke, the crop in Sälalé was assessed according to the estimate of le'ul-ras Kasa. It was also announced that the tithe should be measured at the threshing-floor.

In 1916 A.M. [1923–24], the year of St. John, soldiers had the grain measured in Sälalé. On 5 Teqqemt [16 October 1923] of the same year, le'ul Mäkwännen Haylä-Selläsas was born.68 On 30 Mäggäbit [8 April 1924], wäyžāro Tessämäm Därge died.69 Crown Prince Täfäri and dājjach Wänd-Wäsän Kasa left for Europe on 16 Miyazya [24 April 1924] and returned to Addis-Abäba on 29 Náhásé [4 September 1924].100

In 1917 A.M. [1924–25], the year of St. Matthew, soldiers were granted the tithe in terms of a gasha in lieu of salary with the instruction that they should leave até-qolo,101 i.e. one-fifth of the tithe, in the hands of the zägi and use the rest, and so it commenced. On 23 Tahsas [1 January 1925], negestä-nägästat Zäwditu and Crown Prince Täfäri launched in Ethiopia the newspaper entitled, 'berhanenna-sälam'.102 On 19 Miyazya [27 April 1925], the Täfäri-Mäkwännen School in Addis-Abäba was opened.

In 1918 A.M. [1925–26], the year of St. Mark, the dry season became a rainy season, and crops spoiled. On 4 Yäkkättit [11 February 1926], Dämäqä Yeräfu died.

On 3 Tahsas 1919 A.M. [12 December 1926], fitawrari Habtä-Giyorgis died.103 Abunä Matéwos died on 25 Hedär [4 December 1926].104


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66 According to another source, the prince departed from Korámash on 29 Hedär (8 December 1922) and, hence, the journey lasted approximately four days. Cf. aláqō Kenfé, n.d., 100.
67 A son of Tessämäm Därge, and hence the author mentions him.
68 Ullendorff, 1976, p. 258, n. 2 gives '1922'. L. Mosley, Haile Selassie: the conquering lion (Liverpool, 1964) 298, gives the same date as our author.
69 This event is not mentioned in any of the available sources.
100 cf. Ullendorff, 1976, 81–123. A number of notable accompanied the Crown Prince and Regent Plenipotentiary on his visit to Europe; among them was Wänd-Wäsän whom the emperor lists down among secondary officials. The fact that our author pairs the official with the Crown Prince is explicable through the significance of the Därge family to himself.
101 I. Guidi, Vocabolario amarico-italiano (Rome, 1901) 76.
102 R. Pankhurst, Economic history of Ethiopia, 1800–1935, 679–80, dates the launching of this newspaper as 1923 and credits only the Crown Prince with its establishment.
103 The coincidence of the death of this notable with that of his royal master is taken in the reminiscences of the old as evidence of the cordial relationship between the two.
104 cf. Berhanenna Silám Gazétta, 30 Hedär 1919 A.M.
105 This detour was occasionally undertaken not only by the notables of Šemën and Tegray, but also by government envoys from Addis-Abäba. In the north, the journey began by mule to the border of Eritrea from where one went by vehicle to Massawa and then by ship to Djibouti and continued by train to the Ethiopian capital. Though an exciting experience for the hardy traders, travellers were often disappointed by the distance, the extreme heat and the enormous cost of lodging and transport, as well as by the passport and customs house control. Thus, the daughter of ras Kasa decided to journey the few hundred kilometres between Sälalé and Šemën by mule at the height of the rainy season.
106 The Kellog–Brand Pact, also known as the Pact of Paris, was a multi-lateral agreement attempting to eliminate war as an instrument of national policy. It was signed on 27 August 1928 by the United States of America, Japan and seven Western European powers including Germany and
Prince Tafari Mäkwänne was crowned negusä-nägäst. On 3 Teqqemt [13 October 1928], Abbäbä Yeräfu was imprisoned in Addis-Abäba and was released three months later. Let God reckon the maltreatments he suffered. On 17 Tahasil [26 December 1928] wäyäzo Sähay-Wäredio died in prison at Wusha-Gäddäl where she was confined and where she had become a nun.

In Maskäräm 1922 A.M. [September–October 1929], the year of St. Mark, Assälläfach came to Sälälé and I employed Akalnäš. We separated in Nähäse [August–September]. In the same year, ras Gusa Wälé rebelled in Gondär. Leul-ras Kasa sent dääjach Wänd-Bäwäsän Kasa together with his major officers. Negus Tafari also sent many mäkwänne with dääjach Mulugëta. They fought on Monday, 22 Mäggabiti [31 March 1930] and the Shähwans won the victory. Ras Gusa Wälé died the same day. On the Shäwani side, dääjach Kefäätäw died. His body was brought by an aeroplane to Addis-Abäba, and after it was viewed, ras Kasa took it down to Däbrä-Libanos where it was buried. Negest Zäwditú rested on Wednesday, 24 Mäggabiti [2 April 1930], and His Majesty, negusä-nägäst Tafari acceded to the alga [throne] on the same day. [The area] from Gondär to Saynt was given to leul-ras Kasa. Ras Kasa appointed his son, dääjach Wänd-Bäwäsän, over Gondär, and dääjach Wärqnhä Mulatu over Saynt. [fol. 13] On 21 Miyazyä [29 April 1930], ras Kasa went to Gondär; and having mourned the death of his men and having re-established those who survived, he returned and entered Feche on 3 Hamlé [10 July 1930].

On 23 Teqqemt 1923 A.M. [2 November 1930], the year of St. Luke, Haylä-Sellasë I was proclaimed the negusä-nägäst of Ethiopia. On the 1st of Yäkkätt [8 February 1931], abêto Sahlä-Sellasë Haylä-Sellasë was born.

On . . . Genbot 1923 A.M. [May . . . 1931], the year of St. John, lej Iyyasu escaped from the town of Feche and went to Gendäbärât. The whole of Shäwä went in search, and he was arrested in Gojjam on Saturday, 23 Sänë [30 June 1931]. On Sunday, a great deal of rejoicing took place. On account of having lej Iyyasu escape, ras Haylu forfeited all his wealth and was imprisoned. Many people who participated in the plan and realization of this matter were financially penalized. Many people perished as the result of flogging, incarceration and hanging. Among the many, two servants of ras Kasa named Yantä.

Italy, an irony which probably prompted the author to single out this particular international treaty as historically significant. The Soviet Union joined the signatories a few days later, and almost all nations of the world soon followed suit. Cf. D. H. Miller, The Peace of Paris: a study of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty (New York, 1928) 247–8, 260–1, 281 and passim.

Actually, he was proclaimed only negus (king), a success achieved after a protracted struggle for power. Cf. Ullendorff, 1976, 151–6; Mosley, 1964, 143–50.

The author refused to comment on the reasons behind his imprisonment, which refusal may suggest that he was implicated in the political power struggle at the capital. His patron, ras Kasa, was a potential candidate, though he quickly compromised with ras Tafari.

A daughter of ras Dargè who repeatedly ran into conflict with the regent in the 1920s and was eventually accused of treason.
Haylu and Wärqu Sänbäté were hanged at Aräré-Gäbäya. On 29 Hamlé [5 August 1932], Dämessé Fantayé died. On 4 Genbot [12 May 1932], of the same year, Abbábá Yeráfu was appointed with derreb, wärq-kabba and ságät-qámis to the office of aggafari of Feché-Giyorgis.

In 1925 A.M. [1932–33], the year of St. Matthew...

On 26 Tahsas 1926 A.M. [4 January 1934], the year of St. Mark, wireless was introduced in Ethiopia. On 27 Ter [4 February 1934], of the same year, ras Kasa was deprived of Saynt and Borána, and he was appointed over [the area] between Çaçháhó-Bár and Adal. It was ordered that até-qolo—one-fifth of the tithe exacted from Sálalé—should be paid in to the negus.


On 10 Mäskärám 1928 A.M. [21 September 1935], the year of St. John, māl’äkä-gännät Èṣtífanos died. On 22 Mäskärám [3 October 1935], the Italians began war on Ethiopia. Haylä-Sellásé I, the negusä-nägäst, issued the awaj of mobilization on 23 Mäskärám [4 October 1935]. On 24 October 1935, däjjach Abárra Kasa left via Semén for the Tegré campaign. On the 1st of Ṭeqqemt [12 October 1935], Ethiopia’s war on Italy was declared through an awaj. Assisted by däjjach Wánd-Wässän Kasa, däjjach Ayyaléléw, ras Emmuer and ras Seyyum, le’ul-ras Kasa fought the Italians on Ṭer-Mika’él [21 January 1936]. The chief military commander, Badolyo [Badoglio] and his army, arrived on trains. While in Salalé, däjjach Abárra Kasa ordered the country

121 A garment of honour, woven from a mixture of cotton and various coloured silk yarns. It was awarded together with the qámis and the kabba to state officials and ecclesiastical dignitaries. The quality of the cloth varied according to the rank of the recipient, that of the most distinguished being braided with gold. Cf. Dästa, 1964, 384; Gäbra-Wäld, 1948, 26; Guidi, 1901, 658 and suppl., 1955, 189.

122 Also known as abdälla-känín: a flowing velvet gown or shirt braided geometrically with fine thread and worn by state officials and church dignitaries as an insignium of rank or honour. Cf. Dästa, 1964, 1077; Guidi, 1901, 248; J. Perruchon, Les chroniques de Zar’a Yaqeob et de By’eda Maryam, rois d’Ethiopie de 1434 à 1478 (Paris, 1893), 24.

123 Náfd-selk ‘literally means ‘wind-wire’. Later, such foreign terms as ‘radio’, ‘telegram’ and ‘telegraph’ were adopted in Amärifia. The phrase has, however, survived as the name of the southern outskirts of Addis-Abába, where the wireless station was first established. The second element is also used ultimately with ‘telephone’. With regard to the date, Pankhurst, 1968, 341 defers by stating that a temporary station was set up by a French and a Swedish engineer in the service of the Ethiopian government which was inaugurated in October 1933 and that a larger one was inaugurated on 31 January 1935.

124 It is not clear whether these names refer to one, or two or three persons. The verb hédu ‘went’ is a singular, third person, masculine respect form as well as third person, masculine and feminine plural. Judging it from the title, it must refer to one person, in which case the author knew two men with precisely the same personal and father’s names and hence he found it necessary to add the name of the grandfather of the one concerned.

125 The purpose of this visit is unknown. The emperor does not mention it in his autobiography. Traditionally, Ethiopian sovereigns visited particular monasteries or churches before they went on a military expedition.

126 According to Ullendorff, 1976, 227–30 the Italians crossed the Ethiopian border in the north on 2 October 1935 and bombarded the town of Adwa from the air. The Italian declaration of war was, however, issued in Asmára on 4 October.

127 Ullendorff, 1976, 227 has 22 Mäskärám = 3 October.

128 This proclamation has not been identified. It is perhaps a mistake for the imperial speech to the parading army on 8 Ṭeqqemt 1928 (= 19 October 1935), cf. Ullendorff, 1976, 235–7.

129 This prince was appointed commander-in-chief of the northern front in the summer of 1935, and most of the notables, including the minister of war, were placed under his command. Cf. Ullendorff, 1976, 233–5.

130 This is probably a reference to the Italian entry into Addis-Abába which took place on 5 May 1936. Cf. P. Badoglio, Der abessinische Krieg (Munich, 1937), 175.
to go up to Addis-Abāba and fight; he left toward evening on 16 Hamlé [23 July 1936], but the whole country failed to follow him.¹² He was defeated, fled from Addis-Abāba and entered Fché. On 27 Miyazya [5 May 1936], aggafari Abbābā resigned his office of aggafari at his free will and went to reside in Wândossa for fear of air raids. On 7 Yākkatīt [15 February 1936], bitwāddād Mākwānnān Dāmessāw fell on the battlefield. On 19 Yākkatīt [27 February 1936], ḏājjāch Bāyyānā abba-sābbes was held on the battlefield. On 11 Māggabīt [20 March 1936], the Italians threw poisonous gas on Korām.

On 27 Māskārām 1929 A.M. [7 October 1936], the year of St. Matthew [fol. 15], a battle between the patriots and the Italians took place at Jemmas-Gānnātē.¹²⁹ On 9 Tahsas [18 December 1936], ras Haylu [and] Colonel Garelli [Garelli] entered Fché together with an Italian army. On Monday, 12 Tahsas [21 December 1936], ḏājjāch Abārra and ḏājjāch Asfāsān... [surrendered] at eight o'clock in the evening.¹³⁰ To delude the people, the Italians commenced land tax and grain tithe. On 12 Yākkatīt [19 February 1937], many Ethiopians—women, children, men, the old and even babies—were indiscriminately killed in cruelty in Addis-Abāba on account of Grasiyani [Graziani]. This history of atrocity must be studied and learnt in detail. This has been named the commemoration of the dead, the year of atrocity. On 16 Yākkatīt [23 February 1937], ras Dāṣta and ḏājjāch Bāyyānā died. On 13 Genbot [21 May 1937] of the same year, the Italians exterminated the monks of Dābrā-Libanos.¹³¹ On 29 Genbot [6 June 1937], the Italians searched and destroyed Dābrā-Besserat.

On 19 Māskārām 1930 A.M. [29 September 1937], the year of St. Mark, a battle took place between the patriots and the Italians at Tamo-Ṣeyon. On 13 Yākkatīt [20 February 1938], a battle took place between the patriots and the Italians at Agāmsa. On 18 Māggabīt [27 March 1938], the patriots and the Italians fought a battle at Gufata.

On 9 Māskārām 1931 A.M. [19 September 1938], the year of St. Luke, blattēngēta Heruy died. On 6 Miyazya [14 April 1939], Fanaye Abbābā married. On 6 Genbot [14 May 1939] reassoufāfach and I were rejoined; Ĝannūtā-Giyorgis Qawlos was born on 10 Nāhāsē [16 August 1939].

On 22 Hedar 1932 A.M. [2 December 1939], the year of St. John, Russian soldiers invaded Finland.¹³² On Sunday, 5 Ťer [14 January 1940] of the same year, māmrē Yerāfū died in Abotē; his body was brought to Fché where it was prayed over the whole night and was buried in Dābrā-Libanos on Monday.

On 12 Ťer 1933 A.M. [20 January 1941], the year of St. Matthew, His Majesty Haylá-Sellasē I [reached] Omēdla. On 23 Miyazya [1 May 1941], Haylá-Sellasē I, the negus, arrived in Fché. He had hoisted the flag on the Ethiopian border.

¹²⁸ According to Salome, his men had become suspicious of his intentions, as a result of his friendly correspondence with the Italians. Cf. Salome Gabre Egziabher, ‘The Ethiopian patriots: 1936–1941’. Ethiopia Observer, xii, 1969, 70–1. It is, however, implied in this article that the massive desertion took place following his defeat in Addis-Abāba on 29 July.


¹³⁰ The author omitted the verb, which was perhaps the word of 'submitted'. The available sources do not agree on whether he and his two brothers surrendered or were taken captive. The former opinion is maintained by Salome and Rosenfeld. Cf. Salome, 1969, 72; C. Prouty and E. Rosenfeld, Historical dictionary of Ethiopia (Metuchen, N.J., 1981) 1. On the other hand, R. Pankhurst asserts that Wānd-Wāsān Kasa was captured on 10 December 1936, while Asfān-Wāsān and Abārra were taken captive on 21 December. Cf. Pankhurst, 1970, 345.


¹³² The relevance of the Finnish-Soviet war of the winter of 1939–40 to either the history of Ethiopia or the life of the author is unknown. At any rate, the war broke out on 30 November 1939.
On 27 Miyazya [5 May 1941], Haylā-Sellase I hoisted the flag in Addis-Abāba, and it was established through an awaj that it should be celebrated in the new era as independence day.\textsuperscript{133}

On 19 Hedar 1934 A.M. [28 November 1941], the year of St. Mark, General Nazi, the Italian, was defeated in Gondār and was brought as a prisoner. On 22 Sāné [29 June 1942], Wālāttā-Giyorgis Māsrāsha was born. On 7 Nāhasē [13 August 1942], Bātrā-Giyorgis was born. On 11 Nāhasē [17 August 1942], le'elt Šāhāy Haylā-Sellase died in the 22nd year after her birth.

On 23 Hamlē 1935 A.M. [30 July 1943], Abbābā Yerafu held the offices of nāggadras and chief of the tithe in Wārrā-Jarso.

On 7 Ţer 1936 A.M. [16 January 1944], the year of St. John, the inaugural service was held at the Mānbārā-Šāba’ot\textsuperscript{134} Holy Trinity Church.

\textsuperscript{133} Following the revolution of 1974, this holiday was changed to a date almost a month earlier on the grounds that the patriots arrived in Addis-Abāba four weeks before the emperor. Ironically, the anniversary of the revolution is celebrated not on 11 Yakkatit, the day of the general outbreak, but rather on 2 Māskāram, when the emperor was dethroned.

\textsuperscript{134} 'Seat of the Lord of the Hosts'. Cf. Isaiah 1: 24, 2: 12, 5: 7. Each of the full-fledged churches in Ethiopia has a high-sounding name related to the patron angel or saint.