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THE ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF 1902¹

By EDWARD ULLENDORFF

The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902 was designed to determine the frontier between the Sudan and Ethiopia. In an annex to this treaty the British, Italian, and Ethiopian Governments embodied a number of agreed modifications to the frontier between the Sudan and Eritrea (Italy's *colonia primogenita*) as well as to that between Ethiopia and Eritrea. While the latter survived until the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935–6 (and was re-established, in substance, by the British Military Administration in 1941 subsisting until the Ethiopian-Eritrean federation in 1952), the Sudan-Ethiopian frontier has remained substantially unchanged to the present day. The treaty was the culmination of protracted negotiations² between the Emperor Menelik and the British Agent in Ethiopia, Lt.-Col. J. L. Harrington.

Before the end of 1902 a British Officer had arrived to assist in the demarcation of the Sudan-Ethiopia border—as provided under articles I and II of the Treaty. Article III achieved a long-standing British aim to safeguard the unimpeded flow of the waters from the Blue Nile and Lake Tana, while under article IV an area of 400 hectares was to be leased to the Sudan Government for the establishment of a commercial station near Gambela. Article V provided for the construction, through Ethiopian territory, of a railway line to connect the Sudan with Uganda. Menelik's principal gain from this agreement was the expansion of his territory towards the Nile Valley.

The tripartite annex to this treaty was exclusively concerned with adjustments to the Ethiopian-Eritrean and Sudan-Eritrean frontiers and superseded a provisional agreement entered into by Britain and Italy in 1900–1.

The provisions of article IV of the Treaty were to remain in operation only as long as the Sudan was under Anglo-Egyptian control. The change in the international status of the Sudan as well as the omission of the Sudan Government in the Amharic text of article III (see notes below) have led to some complications in recent years which have now brought about fresh frontier negotiations and agreements between the governments of the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Amharic documents of the period in question are far from being plentiful, and from a linguistic point of view this treaty is not without interest. The Amharic flows easily and smoothly and shows no obvious traces of 'translationese'. In fact, the provisions of the treaty appear to have been explained to the Amharic draftsman who was then allowed to find his own linguistic level without being forced into a narrowly literal rendering. His Amharic equivalent of 'ratification' is particularly successful.

¹ FO 93/2/4/5. This unpublished Crown-copyright material in the Public Record Office has been reproduced by kind permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

² H. G. Marcus, 'Ethio-British negotiations concerning the western border with Sudan, 1896–1902', *Journal of African History*, iv, 1, 1963, 81–94.

Article I.

The frontier between the Soudan and Ethiopia agreed on between the two Governments shall be : the line which is marked in red on the map annexed to this treaty in duplicate and traced from Khor Um Hagar to Gallabat, to the Blue Nile, Baro, Pibor and Akobo rivers, to Melile thence to the intersection of the 6th degree north latitude with the 35th degree longitude East of Greenwich.

Article II.

The boundary as defined in Article I shall be delimited and marked on the ground by a Joint Boundary Commission, which shall be nominated by the two High Contracting Parties, who shall notify the same to their subjects after delimitation.

Article III.

His Majesty the Emperor MENELEK II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, engages himself towards the Government of His Britannic Majesty not to construct or allow to be constructed any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana or the Sobat, which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile except in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Soudan.

፬ተኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

ጃገሆይ፡ ዳግጫዊ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ገጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡
 ለብሪታንያና፡ ለሱዳን፡ ሙገሥት፡ ከባር፡ ወገዝ፡ ላይ፡
 ከኢታን፡ አጠገብ፡ በዩ፲፱፳፬ዘን፡ ፬፻፲፯፡ ጫትር፡ የጫህን፡
 ፩ በታ፡ የገገጽ፡ ከተማ፡ አገዳሰሩበት፡ ያውሰሉ፡ በዚህ፡
 በታ፡ የጫናሩ፡ ሰዎች፡ የአገገሊዝ፡ ሙገሥት፡ ሱዳንን፡
 አሰባሰቀ፡ ድረስ፡ በሱዳን፡ ገዛት፡ ሥራት፡ ተጻገተው፡
 ይኖራሉ። ይህ ነገሥት፡ የተዋሉትን፡ በታ፡ የጦርና፡ የጸሊ
 ቲባ፡ ነገር፡ አገዳይገባበት፡ ሁለቱ፡ ሙገሥት፡ ውል፡
 አድርገዋል።

፭ተኛ፡ ክፍል፡፡

ዳግጫዊ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ገጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡ ለብሪታ
 ንያ፡ ገጉሥ፡ ሙገሥትና፡ ለሱዳን፡ ሙገሥት፡ የሱዳንና፡
 የዑጋንዳን፡ የምድር፡ ባቡር፡ ለጫጋጠም፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡ ገዛ
 ት፡ ላይ፡ የምድር፡ ባቡር፡ ሙገገጽ፡ ለመዘርጋት፡ ፈታድ፡
 ሰጥተዋቸዋል። ነገር፡ ገን፡ ባቡሩ፡ የጫዘረጋበትን፡ መረ
 ት፡ ፬ቱ፡ ሙገሥት፡ ተሰጣጥተው፡ ይመርጣሉ።
 የብሪታንያ፡ ገጉሥ፡ ውሉን፡ ወደድሁ፡ ይሸና፡ ብለው፡ ለኢ
 ትዮጵያ፡ ገጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ያሰታውታሉ። ባሰታውቀበት፡
 ቀን፡ ዘመር፡ ውሉ፡ ይረጋል።

Article IV.

His Majesty the Emperor Menelek, King of Kings of Ethiopia engages himself to allow His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Soudan, to select in the neighbourhood of Itang on the Baro river, a block of territory having a river frontage of not more than 2000 metres, in area not exceeding 400 hectares, which shall be leased to the Government of the Soudan to be administered and occupied as a commercial station so long as the Soudan is under the Anglo Egyptian Government. It is agreed between the two High Contracting Parties that the territory so leased shall not be used for any political or military purpose.

Article V.

His Majesty the Emperor MENELEK, King of Kings of Ethiopia grants His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Soudan the right to construct a railway through Abyssinian territory to connect the Soudan with Uganda. A route for the railway will be selected by mutual agreement between the two High Contracting Parties.

The present Treaty shall come into force as soon as its ratification by His Britannic Majesty shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia.

ይህ ነገሥት፡ ውል፡ ደግሞ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ገገሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢ
 ትዮስ፡ ስለመገገሥታቸው፡ ሆነው፡ ወደው፡ ጸገሞ፡ ሊፍተነ
 ገት፡ በሉኒል፡ ጾገ፡ ሊገ፡ ሐሪገተገሥት፡ ስለብሪታንያ፡
 ዩኤርላንድ፡ በባሕር፡ ወድያ፡ ያለው፡ ዩኤንግሊዝ፡ ገዛት፡
 ገገሥ፡ ኢድወርድ፡ ፒተኛው፡ ዩህገድ፡ ገገሠ፡ ነገሥት፡
 ሆኖ፡ ወሪ፡ ውሉገ፡ በአጣርኛ፡ በአንግሊዝ፡ ቋንቋ፡ በ፲፮፡
 ላይ፡ ትክል፡ ሆኖ፡ ተጽፎ፡ በዩኤንግሊዝ፡ ገዛት፡ ገዛት፡
 በገንቦት፡ በ፲ ተገ፡ በ፲፱፻፺፱፡ ዓመተ፡ ምሕረት፡ በዲ
 ስ፡ አበባ፡ በተሞ፡ ተጻፈ፡፡



በሐዘን፡ በ፫ተገ፡ በ፲፱፻፺፱ ዓመተ፡ ምሕረት፡ በኢርትራ፡
 ገዛት፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡ ገዛት፡ ወሰን፡ በተጻፈው፡ ውል፡
 ላይ፡ ጸገሞ፡ በገንቦት፡ በ፲ ተገ፡ በ፲፱፻፺፱ ዓመተ፡
 ምሕረት፡ የተጻፈው፡ በሉዲገና፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡ ወሰን፡ ውል፡
 ላይ፡ ይህ፡ ዘረ፡ የተዋዋሉት፡ ውል፡ ይጠመርበታል፡፡
 ደግሞ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ዩኤንግሊዝ፡ ገገሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ በመገዳ፡
 ተረ፡ ፈደሪክ፡ ጣጅር፡ ንብረታ፡ የ፫ተኛ፡ ቢክተር፡
 አጣኝኢል፡ ዩኤንግሊዝ፡ ገገሥ፡ በሉዲገና፡ ምሕረት፡ መልክተ
 ኛ፡፡ ጸገሞ፡ ተገንቷ፡ በሉኒል፡ ሐሪገተገሥት፡ የብሪታንያ፡
 መገገሥት፡ በሉዲገና፡ ምሕረት፡ መልክተኛ፡፡ ይህ ነገ፡ ተዋሉ፡
 የተጻፈው፡ ውል፡ ተሰማሞተው፡ ተዋውለዋል፡፡

In faith of which His Majesty MENELEK II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name and Lieutenant Colonel John Lane Harrington on behalf of His Majesty King EDWARD VII, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India have signed the present Treaty, in duplicate, written in the English and Amharic languages, identically, both texts being official and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at ADIS ABABA, the 15th day of May, 1902.

(sgd) John Lane Harrington

Lt. Col.

Note

Nota—aggiunta al trattato del 10 Luglio 1900 per la frontiera fra Etiopia ed Eritrea ed al trattato del 15 Maggio 1902 per la frontiera fra Sudan ed Etiopia.

Annex to the Treaty of 10th July, 1900, regarding the frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the Treaty of 15th May, 1902 regarding the frontier between the Soudan and Ethiopia.

Di comune accordo fra S.M. l'Imperatore di Etiopia Menelik II, il Maggiore Com^{re} Ciccodicola Ministro d'Italia in Etiopia ed il T^{te} Colonnello Harrington Agente diplomatico del Governo Britannico in Etiopia è stato convenuto quanto segue :

His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelek II, Major Ciccodicola, Italian Minister in Ethiopia, and Lieutenant Colonel Harrington, His Britannic Majesty's Agent in Ethiopia have mutually agreed that :

መዘመኔ፡ ክፍል ።

በኢርትራ፡ ገዛትና፡ በኢትዮጵያ፡ ገዛት፡ መከበል፡ በቶማት፡
 እስከ፡ ተደሉክ፡ ድረስ፡ የነበረው፡ ወሰን፡ ተርቶ፡ ተጥሎ፡
 የተጻፈው፡ ወሰን፡ ድምቦር፡ ይሁን፡ ብለው፡ በዚህ፡ ውል፡
 የተሰማውት፡ ሰሰቱ፡ መንግሥቶች፡ ውል፡ አድርገዋል። ይኸው
 ም፡ አዲሱ፡ ወሰን፡ ከክር፡ እምሀገርና፡ ከሰቲት፡ ወንዝ፡
 መገናኛ፡ አገሥቶ፡ የሰቲትን፡ ወንዝ፡ ይዞ፡ የጣኢተንና፡
 የሰቲት፡ ወንዝ፡ መገናኛ፡ ድረስ፡ ነው። በዚህ፡ መገናኛ፡
 አገሥቶ፡ አላቱኩራን፡ ወደ፡ ኢርትራ፡ ገዛት፡ አድርጉ፡
 ወሰኑ፡ መረብና፡ ጣይ፡ አገበሰ፡ መገናኛ፡ ድረስ፡ ይሄልል።
 በጣኢተንና፡ ከሰቲት፡ መገናኛ፡ እስከ፡ መረብና፡ ጣይ፡
 አገበሰ፡ መገናኛ፡ ያለውን፡ ወሰን፡ የኢጣልያ፡ መንግሥት
 ና፡ የኢትዮጵያ፡ መንግሥት፡ የመረጧቸው፡ ሸጣገሎች፡ አይ
 ተው፡ ተሰማምተው፡ ይወሰኑታል። ይህ ነገም፡ የጣወሰኑ፡
 ሸጣገሎች፡ የኩናጣን፡ ጉሣ፡ ሸገቀሎች፡ ወደ፡ ኢርትራ፡
 ገዛት፡ እንዲሆኑ፡ አድርገው፡ ይወሰናሉ።

፬ተኛ፡ ክፍል ።

የኢጣሊያ፡ መንግሥት፡ መልክተኛና፡ የአገገሊዝ፡ መንግሥት፡
 መልክተኛ፡ የሱዳንና፡ የኢርትራ፡ ገዛት፡ ወሰን፡ ይሁን፡
 ብለው፡ በጣያዝያ፡ በ፲ ተን፡ በ፲፯፻፺፫ግመተ፡ ምሕረት፡
 የጻፏት፡ ውል፡ ተርቶ፡ በኢሪትራ፡ ገዛትና፡ በሱዳን፡ መከ
 በል፡ ያለው፡ ወሰን፡ ከሰብድራት፡ አገሥቶ፡ እስከ፡ አቡ
 ገመል። ከአቡገመል፡ እስከ፡ ክር፡ እምሀገርና፡ ሰቲት፡ ወንዝ፡ መገ
 ናኛ፡ ይሁን፡ ብለው፡ ዘረ፡ የተጥጥሉት፡ ፫ቱ፡ መንግሥቶች፡ ውል፡
 አድርገዋል።

Artº I

Il tratto di frontiera fra l'Etiopia e la Colonia Eritrea, determinato finora dalla linea Tomat-Todluc, di comune accordo, viene modificato nel seguente modo :

A cominciare dalla confluenza del Khor-Um-Hagar col Setit la nuova frontiera segue questo fiume fino alla confluenza del Maiteb, si tiene lungo il corso di esso lasciando alla Eritrea il M^{te} Ala-Tacura e si dirige al Mareb alla confluenza del Mai Ambessa.

La linea compresa fra la confluenza del Maiteb col Setit e quella del Mai Ambessa col Mareb sarà determinata sul terreno da appositi delegati, italiani ed etiopi, in maniera che la tribù dei Cunama rimanga alla Colonia Eritrea.

Artº II

La frontiera fra il Sudan e l'Eritrea invece di essere quella delimitata dai delegati, inglese ed italiano, con la convenzione del 16 Aprile 1901, sarà la linea che da Sabderat per Abu-Gamal va alla confluenza del Khor-Um-Hagar col Setit.

Article I

The frontier Treaty between Ethiopia and Eritrea previously determined by the line Tomat-Todluc is mutually modified in the following manner :

Commencing from the junction of the Khor Um Hagar with the Setit, the new frontier follows this river to its junction with the Maiteb, following the latter's course so as to leave Mount Ala Tacura to Eritrea and joins the Mareb at its junction with the Mai Ambessa.

The line from the junction of the Setit and Maiteb to the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa shall be delimited by Italian and Ethiopian delegates so that the Canama tribe belong to Eritrea.

Article II

The frontier between the Soudan and Eritrea instead of that delimited by the English and Italian delegates by the Convention of the 16th April, 1901, shall be the line which from Sabderat, is traced via Abu Jamal to the junction of the Khor Um Hagar with the Setit.

Gli accordi sopraindicati, accettati da S.M. l'Imperatore d'Etiopia Menelik II, avranno esecuzione quando questa Nota sarà stata ratificata dai Governi Inglese ed Italiano.

In fede di quanto sopra, S.M. l'Imperatore di Etiopia, Menelik II, per se e pei suoi successori, il Com^{re} Maggiore Ciccodicola, Ministro d'Italia in Etiopia in nome di S.M. Vittorio Emanuele III Re d'Italia, per lui e pei suoi successori, ed il T^{te} Colonnello Harrington in nome di S.M. Edoardo VII Re dei Regni Uniti di Gran Bretagna ed Irlanda, dei domini Britannici d'oltre mare, Imperatore delle Indie, per lui e pei suoi successori, hanno sottoscritta questa Nota, scritta in 3 copie in lingua inglese, italiana ed amarica, identicamente e dello stesso valore e vi hanno apposti i loro sigilli :

Scritta nella città di Addis Abeba
il 15 Maggio 1902.

(sgd)

Maggiore . . . Ciccodicola

The present agreement shall come into force as soon as its ratification by the British and Italian Governments shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia.

In faith of which His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, MENELEK II, in his own name and that of his successors, Major Ciccodicola in the name of His Majesty VICTOR EMANNUEL III King of Italy, and his Successors, and Lieutenant Colonel Harrington in the name of His Majesty EDWARD VII, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and his successors, have signed the present note in triplicate, written in the Italian, English and Amharic languages, identically, all texts being official, and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Adis Ababa
this 15th day of May, 1902.

(sgd)

John Lane Harrington

Lt. Col.

NOTES

Article I. In መዠመረ the form ረ represents not only the usual *rwa* but also *rya* for which ረ is, in fact, the more obvious alternative (cf. Cohen, *Traité*, tableau II, C).

The sentence division in the two versions differs, but the substance of the English text is adequately conveyed in the Amharic part.

In ደምበረኝ፡ the personal suffix imparts, perhaps, a more personal aspect than the coldly legal language of the English text warrants; the suffix is likely to refer to Menelik rather than to both countries.

For the place-names mentioned cf. *Guida dell' Africa Or. Ital.* and *Indice dei nomi contenuti nella 111 edizione della carta dell' AOI* (Bergamo, 1940).

ጥቁር : ዓባይ : suggests the hand of the translator, for usually ዓባይ : is sufficient indication. Guidi, *Suppl.*, 239, ጥቁር : ' anche : bleu scuro '.

' Intersection ' = መገናኛ : i.e. ' meeting point '.

' North, latitude, longitude, and East of Greenwich ' are not expressed in the Amharic version.

Article II. This article is materially different in expression and construction—partly also in substance—in the English and Amharic texts.

' Joint ' may possibly correspond to ተሰማምተው though there are subtle distinctions here : ተሰማምተው may connote prior agreement about the boundary delineation, while the idea of a ' joint commission ' simply appears as ' they shall send men '. The phrase ' valid for ever ' (as applied to the boundary delimitation) is an addition in the Amharic text without equivalent in the English version. ይህም ወሰን : is an extraposition.

Article III. The principal difference between the two versions in this article concerns the omission, in the Amharic text, of ' the Government of the Sudan ' (although in article IV the Sudan Government is specifically mentioned alongside H.M.G.). This omission might well become the source of potential disagreement between the contracting parties, and it is surprising that so obvious a discrepancy should have been allowed to pass.

The general term ' Nile ' is specified in Amharic as ' White Nile '. ' From one bank to the other ' is the equivalent of ' across '.

Article IV. For the geographical and historical aspects of this article see *Guida*, 510. Itang is a few miles west of Gambela.

The English version is a good deal more specific, though by and large the Amharic text adequately conveys the gist of the agreement. The Amharic omits the idea of ' selecting ' the territory in question and appears to leave the initiative of determining the precise location to the Ethiopians—contrary to the English text.

The measurements of the area to be leased to the Sudan are given in the Amharic text as ' 2000 metres each in each of the four corners ' which, I believe, amounts to 4,000,000 sq. metres corresponding to the 400 hectares of the English version.

The passage 'so long as the Soudan is under the Anglo Egyptian Government' is rendered in Amharic 'until the English Government gives up (ለቀቀ) the Sudan'.

Article V. This article tallies very closely in the two versions.

Ratification and signature. The term 'ratification' is neatly rendered as ወደደሀ፡ይጽና፡በለው፡

ሆኖ፡ and ወደ፡ refer, of course, to Lt.-Col. Harrington and *not* to King Edward.

The Amharic version seems somewhat more democratic than the English: in the former Menelik approves and signs 'on behalf of his government (or kingdom)', whereas in the latter he does so 'in his own name'.

ትክል፡ = ትክክል፡ 'equal'.

7 Genbot 1894 = 15 May 1902.

On the seal Lt.-Col. J. L. Harrington is described as 'His (handwritten correction for 'Her') Britannic Majesty's Agent, Ethiopia' (agent = ወኪል).

Menelik's seal: ሞዳ፡ አንበሳ፡ ዘእምነገደ፡ ይሁዳ፡ ምኒልክ፡ ንጉሠ፡ ነገሥት፡ ዘኢትዮጵያ፡

Annex. Preamble. The first paragraph corresponds very closely in the Amharic, English, and Italian versions.

The last six words of the Amharic preamble envisage, perhaps, a somewhat more formal contractual arrangement than the expression 'mutually agreed' warrants.

There are a few minor oddities in the Amharic text of this paragraph: the Italian 'commendatore' is divided into two words in the Amharic transliteration. The Italian 'Maggiore' appears in Amharic according to English pronunciation, while the first part of Lt.-Col. Harrington's rank is transcribed in the Italian manner as 'Tenente' (in contrast to the transcription in the main treaty). Major Ciccodicola's Christian name, which does not figure in either the Italian or English text, is given as 'Federico' in the Amharic version. The 'Ministro d'Italia' in the European texts appears in Amharic in the much fuller 'envoy plenipotentiary of በከቶርኖ (it is hard to think of a more hybrid form) Emmanuel III, King of Italy'. Yet, Lt.-Col. Harrington, who is described as 'His Britannic Majesty's Agent' ('Agente diplomatico del Governo Britannico'), achieves no such direct relationship to his Sovereign in Amharic where he simply represents 'the British Government'. On the other hand, both Major Ciccodicola and Lt.-Col. Harrington are described as 'envoys plenipotentiary', although the former was a Minister, while the latter held the rank of Agent.

Annex. Article I. The idea of 'modifying' the frontier between Eritrea and Ethiopia is expressed somewhat circuitously in the Amharic version. In the Italian text Eritrea is described as 'Colonia', but not so either in English or Amharic. The Amharic refers expressly to a treaty between the 'three governments', though no such words are used in English and Italian.

For the geographical indications in this article see the works cited above as well as pp. 174 ff. of *L'Africa Orientale* (Bologna, 1936).

The Italian *appositi* has no English equivalent in the text ; the same applies to 'sul terreno', but the Amharic *aytāw* 'upon their inspection' (no doubt *in situ*) reflects this notion. The Cunama (in the English version wrongly Canama) are described in Amharic as 'the negroes of the Cunama tribe (*gwasa* or *gosa*)'.

Annex. Article II. The change of frontier described in this article is again expressed in Amharic as circuitously and longwindedly as was the case with the modification noted in article I.

Annex. Ratification and signature. The term 'ratification' is again rendered into Amharic as neatly as in the main part of the treaty ; for this reason the English and Italian 'governments' had to be personalized (ወደደግ) to 'Kings'.

The Italian 'per lui' (after the names of the English and Italian kings) is not paralleled in English but appears in Amharic as ለራሳቸው. There is generally some slight indication that the Italian text is more directly reflected in Amharic than is the case with the English version. This would not, of course, be surprising after more than a decade of direct Italian involvement in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia.

ወደጎዋል ገለጻ ፡ 'we have approved it' is an addition in the Amharic text, not warranted by the English and Italian versions. In the identical context, at the end of the main part of the treaty, no such addition has been made.³

³ For the treaty of friendship and commerce, negotiated by the Rodd mission to the Emperor Menelik in 1897 and intended to regulate the eastern frontiers of Ethiopia and to prevent the passage of arms to the Mahdists, see my article in *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* for 1966 (forthcoming).