

SOME RECORDS  
OF ETHIOPIA,  
1593-1646

C. F. Beckingham and  
G. W. B. Huntingford



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

# Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646

Being Extracts from The History of High Ethiopia or  
Abassia by Manoel de Almeida Together with  
Bahrey's History of the Galla

Edited by  
C.F. BECKINGHAM and G.W.B. HUNTINGFORD

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Founded in 1846, the Hakluyt Society seeks to advance knowledge and education by the publication of scholarly editions of primary records of voyages, travels and other geographical material. In partnership with Ashgate, and using print-on-demand and e-book technology, the Society has made re-available all 290 volumes comprised in Series I and Series II of its publications in both print and digital editions. For information about the Hakluyt Society visit [www.hakluyt.com](http://www.hakluyt.com).

ISBN 13: 978-1-4094-1473-5 (hbk)

WORKS ISSUED BY

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

---

SOME RECORDS OF ETHIOPIA  
1593-1646

SECOND SERIES  
No. cvii

ISSUED FOR 1954

COUNCIL AND OFFICERS  
OF  
THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY  
1954

---

PRESIDENT

MALCOLM LETTS, Esq., F.S.A.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Professor E. G. R. TAYLOR, D.Sc.  
JAMES A. WILLIAMSON, Esq., D.Lit.  
TRACY PHILIPPS, Esq., M.C., Hon. D.C.L.

COUNCIL (WITH DATE OF ELECTION)

Miss E. M. J. CAMPBELL (1953)	WALTER OAKESHOTT, Esq., F.S.A., Hon. LL.D. (1954)
Rear-Admiral A. DAY, C.B.E. (1951)	J. PACKMAN, Esq. (1951)
Professor E. W. GILBERT, M.A., B.Litt. (1952)	N. M. PENZER, Esq., Litt.D., F.S.A. (1952)
H. V. LIVERMORE, Esq. (1953)	Professor D. B. QUINN (1952)
C. C. LLOYD, Esq. (1951)	Lord RENNELL, of RODD, D.L. (1954)
Sir HARRY LUKE, K.C.M.G. (1954)	Royal Geographical Society (G. R. CRONE, Esq.)
F. B. MAGGS, Esq. (1951)	W. S. SHEARS, Esq. (1953)
G. NICHOLSON, Esq., M.P. (1951)	Sir RICHARD WINSTEDT, K.B.E., C.M.G., F.B.A. (1953)

TRUSTEES

J. N. L. BAKER, Esq., M.A., B.Litt.  
E. W. BOVILL, Esq., F.S.A. MALCOLM LETTS, Esq., F.S.A.

TREASURER

J. N. L. BAKER, Esq., M.A., B.Litt.

HON. SECRETARY

R. A. SKELTON, Esq., B.A., F.S.A., British Museum, London, W.C. 1

HON. SECRETARIES FOR OVERSEAS

*Australia*; Professor R. M. CRAWFORD, University of Melbourne,  
Melbourne, N. 3.  
*British West Indies*; Professor C. Y. SHEPARD, Imperial College of  
Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad.  
*Canada*; Professor J. B. BIRD, McGill University, Montreal.  
*India*; Dr N. P. CHAKRAVARTI, Director-General of Archaeology,  
New Delhi, India.  
*New Zealand*; C. R. H. TAYLOR, Esq., M.A., Alexander Turnbull  
Library, Wellington, N.Z.  
*South Africa*; DOUGLAS VARLEY, Esq., South African Library, Cape  
Town.  
*U.S.A.*; W. M. WHITEHILL, Esq., Ph.D., F.S.A., Boston Athenaeum,  
10½ Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

CLERK AND ASSISTANT TREASURER

Mrs B. BAYLES, c/o British Museum, London, W.C. 1



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Historiade Ethiopia a alta,  
ou Abassia:

Imperio do Abexim, cujo Rey  
uulgarmente he chamado  
Preste Ioam.

Trata da natureza da terra, e da gente, que apouoa;  
dos Reys, que nella ouue; da Fé, que tiueram, e tem;  
edomito, que os Padres da Companhia de  
IESUS trabalharam, e os reduzir a  
uerdadeira, e sanctã Te da Igreja  
Romana.

Dedicada à Magestade d'El Rey  
D. Ioam o 4.º Nosso senhor.

Composta pelo Padre Manoel de Almeida  
da Companhia de IESUS natural de Viseu.



SOME RECORDS OF ETHIOPIA  
1593-1646

Being Extracts from  
*THE HISTORY OF HIGH ETHIOPIA OR ABASSIA*  
by MANOEL DE ALMEIDA

Together with  
BAHREY'S *HISTORY OF THE GALLA*

Translated and Edited by  
C. F. BECKINGHAM  
AND  
G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD

PRINTED FOR THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY  
LONDON  
1954

G 161 HIS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY ROBERT MACLENOSE AND CO. LTD  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS GLASGOW

## PREFACE

**T**he texts translated in this volume consist of thirty-seven chapters from the *History of High Ethiopia or Abassia* (*Historia de Ethiopia a alta ou Abassia*), written in Portuguese by the Jesuit Father Manoel de Almeida between 1628 and 1646, and a short *History of the Galla*, written in Ethiopic by an ecclesiastic named Bahrey in 1593. The selections from Almeida's book describe either the country and its inhabitants or the journeys of the Jesuit missionaries attempting to enter or leave it. These chapters are printed in the order in which they occur in the original; the descriptive extracts precede the narratives of travel. As it seemed appropriate to place together two very early accounts of the Galla, one by a European and the other by an African, Bahrey's work has been inserted immediately before Almeida's chapter on the same subject.

Almeida's history was not published in full until this century when it was included in Beccari's collection, *Rerum aethiopicarum scriptores occidentales inediti*. In making this translation, however, we have followed a manuscript in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London (MS 11966), of which Beccari did not know; he used a slightly inferior manuscript in the British Museum (Add. MS 9861) which we have also consulted. The translation of Bahrey is based upon Guidi's edition and his translation into French.

Bahrey and the first of the travel narratives from Almeida are largely concerned with what is now south-west Ethiopia. The complex ethnological and political history of this area is recorded in a number of rather inaccessible books, of which the most important are in Italian; very little information is available in English. We have therefore summarised what is known of the subject in an essay which is printed immediately after the Introduction, for the use of readers who may wish to appreciate more fully the significance of these texts. For convenience of reference our attempts at identifying place-names in north-east Africa are collected in a separate Gazetteer, instead of being given in the footnotes. The full titles of books mentioned in an abbreviated form in the Introduction and notes will be found in the Bibliography, which is no more than a list of such books. The reader requiring a

more adequate bibliography is referred to Fumagalli's *Bibliografia etiopica* and the supplements by Zanutto, and to the shorter but more recent *Ethiopica & Amharica. A List of Works in the New York Public Library*, by G. F. Black.

We have found it convenient to distinguish between Abyssinia and Ethiopia, using the former name to denote the historic kingdom of the plateau, and the latter, which is the official name of the empire, for the much larger area incorporated in it after the conquests of Menilek II. In the translated texts we have, of course, followed the practice of our authors.

In preparing this volume we have received much assistance from a number of scholars and travellers to all of whom we offer our cordial thanks. We have particular reason to be grateful to Mr T. P. Waldron, of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies in the University of Manchester, who gave much time to discussing the difficulties in Almeida's text and made very many helpful suggestions. On specific questions we have received generous help from Dr L. D. Barnett, C.B., Litt.D., F.B.A., Mr H. R. Beard, Dr A. Cortesão, Mr A. W. Exell, Deputy Keeper of the Department of Botany in the British Museum (Natural History), Dr W. O. Howarth of the Department of Botany in the University of Manchester, Professor H. W. Janson, of the Department of Fine Arts, New York University, the Rev. A. F. Matthew, of Addis Ababa, Professor Dr R. P. G. Pichi-Sermolli, of the Istituto Botanico in the University of Florence, the Rev. J. B. Primrose, I.C.S.(Retd), Dr Virginia Rau, of the Faculty of Letters in the University of Lisbon, Dr Hugh Scott, Sc.D., F.R.S., Dr R. B. Serjeant, Reader in Arabic in the University of London, the Rev. Professor Jean Simon, S.J., Professor of Ethiopic and Coptic in the Pontificio Istituto Biblico, and Mr Alan Villiers, D.S.C. For the great care with which the photographic reproductions have been made we are very much indebted to Miss Sneath, Photographer to the School of Oriental and African Studies. We should also like to express our thanks to Mr J. D. Pearson, Librarian of the School, for permission to reproduce the title-page of Almeida's manuscript and the accompanying map. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge much courteous assistance and a wide variety of useful suggestions which we have received from Mr. R. A. Skelton.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	page v
ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS . . . . .	xi
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	xiii
ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	xix
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	xxi
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION . . . . .	xlviii
THE ETHNOLOGY AND HISTORY OF SOUTH-WEST ETHIOPIA	1
ALMEIDA'S REMARKS ON HIS MAP OF ETHIOPIA . . . . .	xciii
ETHIOPIA AND ITS PEOPLE. From <i>The History of High Ethiopia or Abassia</i> , by MANOEL DE ALMEIDA, Books I-III . . . . .	
	I
BOOK I	
CHAPTER	
1. The name Prester John . . . . .	3
2. What countries and kingdoms are comprised in the Ethiopia which we are considering, and what part of it is controlled by the Emperor of the Abyssinians . . . . .	8
3. The kingdoms and provinces which at the present time are subject to the Emperor of the Abyssinians: an account of their position is given . . . . .	13
4. The Climate and Characteristics of Ethiopia, winter and summer . . . . .	20
5. The River Nile; its source and why it rises in the months of August and September . . . . .	22
6. The Rivers Zebee, Haoax, Tacazee, Mareb . . . . .	29
7. The great Lake of Dambeâ which the Abyssinians call a sea . . . . .	34
8. Mountains, Valleys and Mountain Ranges of Ethiopia. Description of Lamalmon . . . . .	37
9. Mines and minerals: gold, silver, iron, sulphur, saltpetre and salt . . . . .	42
10. Fertility of the country in different kinds of food: its fruits and trees . . . . .	45

<b>CHAPTER</b>	
11. Domestic and Wild Animals . . . . .	<i>page</i> 49
12. The different races inhabiting this Empire . . . . .	54
13. Appearance, Qualities and Dress of the People of Ethiopia . . . . .	57
14. Communal Customs of the Abyssinians about Circumcision and the Table . . . . .	62
15. Weddings and Burials . . . . .	65
16. The Women whom the Abyssinian Emperors marry and the ceremonial they observe in receiving and proclaiming them as such . . . . .	68
17. Government of the Abyssinian Empire . . . . .	72
18. Soldiery of the Abyssinians . . . . .	76
19. Cities, Towns and Buildings of Ethiopia. . . . .	82
20. Revenue and Tribute of the Abyssinian Empire . . . . .	84
21. Acçum and its Antiquities . . . . .	89
22. How the Emperors are crowned in this place . . . . .	92
 <b>BOOK II</b>	
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
22. The Fortress of Ambâ Guexen; how and upon what the Emperors' sons used to live there, and whether some of their descendants still live there . . . . .	97
Extract from BOOK III, Chapter 2, describing the Church at Martula Maryam . . . . .	103
<b>HISTORY OF THE GALLA. By BAHREY</b> . . . . .	109
Table showing the reputed descent of the Galla tribes . . . . .	111
 <b>THE GALLA. From Almeida's <i>History</i>, Book IV</b>	
 <b>BOOK IV</b>	
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
25. A brief Account of the Gallas is given: what race they are, from what countries they came, their customs and habits, and how they conquered and became rulers of the biggest and best part of the Abyssinian Empire . . . . .	133
 <b>TRAVELS OF THE JESUIT FATHERS. From Almeida's <i>History</i>, Books VII-VIII</b>	
<b>(1) <i>The Journey of Antonio Fernandes, 1613-14</i></b>	
 <b>BOOK VII</b>	
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
13. How Father Antonio Fernandez left for Gojam, and thence for Narea with the Ambassador, and what happened to them till they arrived . . . . .	143

CHAPTER	
14. The Kingdom of Nareâ and what happened there to Father Antonio Fernandez and the Ambassador Fecur Egzy . . . . .	page 149
15. The Journey Father Antonio Fernandez and the Ambassador made from Nareâ to Cambate . . . . .	153
16. The Kingdom of Gingirô and the barbarous customs of the people that inhabit it . . . . .	157
17. How Father Antonio Fernandez left the Kingdom of Gingirô and reached that of Cambâte . . . . .	162
18. The Vexations and Troubles that Father Antonio Fernandez and the Ambassador Fecur Egzy endured in Cambat . . . . .	163
19. How the Father and the Ambassador were arrested in Alabâ by the Moor Alicô and compelled to return whence they had come . . . . .	166
(2) <i>Almeida's Journey from India to Abyssinia, 1622-24</i>	
BOOK VIII	
CHAPTER	
1. How we four Fathers left for Ethiopia and wintered in Dofar . . . . .	172
2. How we left Dofar, reached Suaqhem and Macuâ, and from there went into Ethiopia as far as Debaroâ . . . . .	178
3. How we left Debaroâ and reached Maegogâ: the town of Fremonâ is described . . . . .	184
4. How we arrived at the Emperor's court and camp and how we were received by him . . . . .	187
(3) <i>The Journey of Francisco Machado and Bernardo Pereira, 1623-24</i>	
BOOK VIII	
CHAPTER	
8. How eight of our Fathers were sent to Ethiopia by different routes, and what happened on their journeys. . . . .	191
9. Martyrdom of Fathers Francisco Machado and Bernardo Pereira . . . . .	195
APPENDICES	
I. The Gada System of the Galla . . . . .	205
II. The 'Malêg' Problem . . . . .	213
III. List of Kings of Abyssinia, A.D. 1268-1769 . . . . .	218
IV. Note on Maps of Ethiopia . . . . .	220
V. Gazetteer of Place Names . . . . .	226
INDEX . . . . .	247



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- The titlepage of Almeida's manuscript . . . *Frontispiece*  
From S.O.A.S. MS 11966.
- Ethiopia in the sixteenth century . . . *opposite p. xxi*
- Almeida's map of Ethiopia (S.O.A.S. MS 11966)  
superimposed on a modern map . . . *opposite p. xciii*  
This map was constructed by taking Massawa (long.  
39° 28' E) as the point of coincidence. The meridians  
of longitude refer to the modern map and were not  
drawn by Almeida, who gives latitude only.
- Almeida's map of Ethiopia . . . . . *opposite p. xcvii*  
From S.O.A.S. MS 11966. Reduction about  $\frac{3}{4}$ . The scale  
is drawn at the bottom of the original map; here, since it  
was not practicable to reproduce the whole map, a  
tracing of the scale is reproduced at the top of the map.
- Almeida's sketch of the source of the Blue Nile  
(Abay) . . . . . *p. 25*  
Brit. Mus. Add. MS 9861, fol. 11. Reduction about  $\frac{1}{2}$ .
- The Church at Martula Maryam . . . . *opposite p. 103*  
From *Archaeologia*, vol. xxxii (1847).
- Cecchi's map of the Gibē States . . . . *opposite p. 149*  
From A. Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (1885).
- The Kafa method of seating rafters . . . . *p. 161*  
Redrawn from F. J. Bieber, *Kaffa*, Bd. I (1920), p. 219.
- Sketch map to illustrate the 'Malêg' problem *opposite p. 213*
- Profile of the country between Sarka and Monkorer  
*opposite p. 225*  
Redrawn from Cecchi, *op. cit.*



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE following list gives further particulars of books which are mentioned elsewhere by the author's name only, or with an abbreviated title.

### I. CLASSICAL AUTHORITIES

#### Cosmas Indicopleustes

Texts: Montfaucon, *Nova Collectio Patrum et Scriptorum Graecorum*, vol. ii, 1706.

E. O. Winstedt, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes*, Cambridge, 1909.

Translation: J. W. McCrindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, Hakluyt Society, 1897.

#### Periplus of the Erythraean Sea

Texts: C. Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. i, Paris, 1855, pp. 257-305.

Hjalmar Frisk, *Le Périphe de la Mer Erythrée*, Göteborg, 1927.

Translations: W. Vincent, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Part I containing an account of the navigation of the ancients from the sea of Suez to the coast of Zanguebar*, London, 1800.

J. W. McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythraean Sea*, Bombay, 1879.

W. H. Schoff, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, New York, 1912.

#### Ptolemy

Texts: C. Nobbe, *C. Ptolemaei Geographia*, Leipzig, 1881.

C. Müller, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, Paris, 1883-1901.

### II. NATIVE SOURCES

#### 1. Ethiopic Inscriptions

Littmann, E. *Deutsche Aksum Expedition*, vol. iv, Berlin, 1913.

Kammerer, A. *Essai sur l'histoire antique de l'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1926.

#### 2. Ethiopic Chronicles

Basset, R. *Études sur l'histoire d'Éthiopie*, Paris, 1881. (Contains the work cited as the 'Paris Chronicle' up to 1729.)

- Blundell, H. Weld. *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840*, Cambridge, 1922.
- Conti Rossini, C. *Historia Regis Sarša Dengel, CSCO*, Scr. Aeth. ser. alt. iii, Paris, 1907.
- Conzelman, W. E. *Le Chronique de Galawdewos*, Paris, 1895.
- Guidi, Ignazio. *Annales Iohannis I, Iyasu I, Bakäffä, CSCO*, Scr. Aeth. ser. alt. v, 2 parts, Paris, 1903, 1905.
- *Historia Gentis Galla, CSCO*, Scr. Aeth. ser. alt. iii, Paris, 1907. (In the same volume as Conti Rossini's edition of the history of Sarša Dengel.)
- 'Strofe e brevi testi amarici' [Storia dei Meçčä.] *MSOS*, vol. x, 1907, pp. 180-184.
- *Annales Iyasu II, CSCO*, Scr. Aeth. ser. alt. vi, Paris, 1912.
- Pereira, F. M. Esteves. *Historia de Minas*, Lisbon, 1888.
- *Chronica de Susenyos Rei de Ethiopia*, Lisbon, 1892, 1900.
- Perruchon, J. *Histoire des guerres de 'Amda Syon*, Paris, 1887.
- *Vie de Lalibala*, Paris, 1892.
- *Les chroniques de Zar'a Ya'eqôb et de Ba'eda Mâryâm*, Paris, 1893.

### 3. Other Languages

- Basset, R. *Histoire de la conquête de l'Abyssinie (XVIe siècle), par Chihab ed-din Ahmed ben 'Abd el-Qader surnommé Arab-Faqih*, Paris, 1897. (The text, French version from Arabic, is referred to as *Futuh* or *Futuh al Habashah*, the notes as Basset, *Conquête*.)
- Cerulli, E. *Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia*, Harvard African Studies, iii, 1922. (Galla texts with translation.)

### III. MODERN EUROPEAN WORKS

- Abbadie, Antoine d'. 'Sur les Oromo', *Annales de la Société Scientifique de Bruxelles*, vol. iv, 1880, pp. 175 et seqq.
- *Géographie d'Éthiopie*, Paris, 1891.
- Alvares, F. *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia. . . . By Father Francisco Alvarez*, Hakluyt Society, 1881.
- Azaïs, R. P., and Chambard, R. *Cinq années de recherches archéologiques en Éthiopie*, 2 vols., Paris, 1932.
- Beccari, C. *Rerum aethiopicarum scriptores occidentales inediti*, 15 vols., Rome, 1905-17. (Vol. I is entitled *Saggi e Documenti*; the series title first appears in vol. ii. The history of Páez occupies vols. ii and iii, of Almeida vols. v-vii, and of Mendes, vols. viii and ix.)
- Beke, C. T. 'Abyssinia—being a continuation of Routes in that country', *JRGS*, vol. xiv, 1844, pp. 1-76.

- Beke, C. T. 'On the languages and dialects of Abyssinia and the countries to the south', *Proceedings of the Philological Society*, vol. ii, 1845, pp. 89-107.
- 'A description of the ruins of the Church of Martula Mariam in Abessinia', *Archaeologia*, vol. xxxii, 1847, pp. 38-57.
- 'An essay on the Nile and its tributaries', *JRGS*, vol. xvii, 1847. (Quoted from reprint, separately paged, pp. 84.)
- 'Mémoire justificatif en réhabilitation des Pères Pierre Paez et Jérôme Lobo', *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, Paris, avril-mai 1848. (Quoted from reprint, separately paged, pp. 72.)
- Bent, J. Theodore. *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, London, 1893.
- Bermudes, J. See below, Whiteway, R. S.
- Bieber, F. J. *Kaffa, ein altkuschitisches Volkstum in Inner-Afrika*, 2 vols, Vienna, 1920-23.
- Blundell, H. Weld. 'Exploration in the Abai Basin, Abyssinia', *GJ*, vol. xxvii, 1906, pp. 529-53.
- Borelli, J. *Éthiopie Méridionale*, Paris, 1888.
- Bruce, James. *Travels to discover the source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773*, 5 vols., Edinburgh, 1790. (On the frontispiece Bruce is described as 'Lord of Geesh'.)
- ——— Second edition, corrected and enlarged, 7 vols., Edinburgh, 1804.
- Bryan, M. A. *The distribution of the Semitic and Cushitic languages of Africa*, International African Institute, London, 1948.
- Budge, Sir E. A. Wallis. *History of Ethiopia*, 2 vols., London, 1928.
- Burton, Sir Richard F. *First Footsteps in East Africa*, London, 1856.
- Castanhoso, M. See below, Whiteway, R. S.
- Cecchi, A. *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa*, 3 vols., Rome, 1885.
- Cerulli, E. *Etiopia Occidentale*, 2 vols., Rome, 1933.
- *Etiopi in Palestina*, 2 vols., Rome, 1943, 47.
- 'Note su alcune popolazioni Sidama dell'Abissinia meridionale', *Rivista di Studi Orientali*, vol. x, 1925, pp. 597-692.
- 'Per la toponomastica etiopica', *Oriente Moderno*, vol. viii, 1928, pp. 328-36.
- *Studi Etiopici: II. La Lingua e la Storia dei Sidamo*, Rome, 1938.
- *Studi Etiopici: La Lingua Caffina*, Rome, 1951.
- Cheesman, R. E. *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, London, 1936.
- Conti Rossini, C. 'Catalogo dei nomi propri di luogo dell'Etiopia, contenuti nei testi gi'iz ed amarifa finora pubblicati', *Atti del primo Congresso Geografico Italiano*, vol. ii, 1894, pp. 387-439.
- *Etiopia e genti d'Etiopia*, Florence, 1937.

- Crawford, O. G. S. *The Fung Kingdom of Sennar*, Gloucester, 1951.
- Dalgado, S. R. *Glossario Luso-Asiatico*, 2 vols., Coimbra, 1918-21.
- Dillmann, C. F. A. *Lexicon linguae aethiopicæ*, Leipzig, 1865.  
 — *Ueber die Regierung, insbesondere die Kirchenordnung des Königs Zar'a-Jacob*, Abhand. d. Kön. Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, 1884, pp. 79. (Published 1885.)
- Foot, E. C. *Galla-English and English-Galla Dictionary*, Cambridge, 1913.
- Grottanelli, V. L. *Missione di Studio al Lago Tana*, vol. ii, Rome, 1939.
- Guida dell' Africa Orientale Italiana* (ed. G. Vota), Milan, 1938.
- Guidi, Ignazio. *Vocabolario Amarico-Italiano*, Rome, 1901.
- Harris, W. Cornwallis. *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, 3 vols., London, 1844.
- Hobson-Jobson. A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words*. By Sir H. Yule and A. C. Burnell. Second edition, London, 1903.
- Krapf, Rev. J. L. *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an eighteen years' residence in Eastern Africa*, London, 1860.
- Le Grand, Joachim. *Voyage historique d'Abissinie du R. P. Jérôme Lobo*, Paris, 1728.
- Ludolf, Hiob. *Historia Aethiopica*, Frankfurt a. M., 1681.  
 — *Lexicon Aethiopico-Latinum*, London, 1661.
- Mendes, A. See above, Beccari, C.
- Montandon, G. *Au Pays Ghimirra*, Neuchâtel, 1913.
- Páez, Pedro. See above, Beccari, C.
- Parkyns, Mansfield. *Life in Abyssinia*, London, 1853.
- Rassam, Hormuzd. *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore*, 2 vols., London, 1869.
- Rey, Sir C. F. *The Real Abyssinia*, London, 1935.
- Routes in Abyssinia*, London, 1867. Cmd. 3964. (An official compilation of information on routes in Abyssinia from travellers between 1809 and 1867, by Lt.-Col. A. C. Cooke, Topographical and Statistical Dept., War Office. Referred to as *Routes*.)
- Rüppell, E. *Reise in Abyssinien*, 2 vols., Frankfurt a. M., 1838-40.
- Salt, H. See below, Valentia, G.
- Salviac, Martial de. *Les Galla*, Paris, 1901.
- Schweinfurth, G. *Abyssinische Pflanzennamen*, Berlin, 1893.
- Scott, Hugh. *Journey to the Gughé Highlands (Southern Ethiopia), 1948-9; Biogeographical Research at high altitudes, Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London, Session 1950-51*, vol. 163, pt. 2, London, 1952.
- Soleillet, P. *Explorations éthiopiennes*, Rouen, 1886.
- Telles, B. *Historia geral de Ethiopia a alta*, Coimbra, 1660.

- Telles, B. *The Travels of the Jesuits in Ethiopia*, London, 1710.  
(Translation by John Stevens.)
- Thesiger, W. 'The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate', *GJ*,  
vol. lxxxv, 1935, pp. 1-23.
- Thiene, Gaetano da. *Dizionario della lingua Galla*, Harar, 1939.
- Trimingham, J. Spencer. *Islam in Ethiopia*, London, 1952.
- Tutschek, K. *Dictionary of the Galla Language*, Munich, 1844.
- Urreta, Luis de. *Historia ecclesiastica, politica, natural y moral de los grandes y remotos Reynos de la Etiopia*, Valencia, 1610.
- Valentia, George, Lord. *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt*, 3 vols., London, 1811. (The narrative of Salt's journey to Abyssinia is contained in vols. 2 and 3.)
- Whiteway, R. S. *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia, 1541-3*, Hakluyt Society, 1902. (Translations of the narratives of Castanhoso and Bermudes.)



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AII</i>	Annales Iyasu II. (Guidi.)*
<i>AJIB</i>	Annales Johannis I, Iyasu I, Bakāffā. (Guidi.)*
<i>BM</i>	British Museum.
<i>BSOAS</i>	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
<i>CA</i>	Histoire des guerres de 'Amda Syon. (Perruchon.)
<i>CB</i>	Chronique de Ba'eda Māryām. (Perruchon.)
<i>CGA</i>	Le canzoni geez-amariña in onore di Re Abissini. (Guidi.)
<i>CM</i>	Historia de Minas. (Pereira.)
<i>CS</i>	Chronica de Susenyos. (Pereira.)
<i>CSCO</i>	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium.
<i>CZ</i>	Chronique de Zar'a Ya'eqôb. (Perruchon.)
<i>DAE</i>	Deutsche Aksum Expedition.
<i>GJ</i>	Geographical Journal.
<i>HGG</i>	Historia Gentis Galla. (Guidi.)
<i>HSD</i>	Historia Regis Sarša Dengel. (Conti Rossini.)*
<i>JRGS</i>	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society.
<i>KN</i>	Kebra Nagast.
<i>MSOS</i>	Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen.
<i>PC</i>	Paris Chronicle. (Basset.)
<i>PME</i>	Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.
<i>RC</i>	The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840. (H. Weld Blundell.)
<i>SOAS</i>	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

\* References are to the pages of the French version of the *CSCO* texts.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

## INTRODUCTION

### I

**T**he Abyssinian plateau is difficult of access even to its immediate neighbours. Much of it is protected by deserts, tangled, barren hills, equatorial forests or malarial swamps, inhabited by tribes differing profoundly from the Abyssinians and from each other in race, language, religion and culture; it has never been easy and not often safe to travel among them. On the east where the plateau is nearest to the much frequented trade routes of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, it rises to an average height of 8,000 feet and a very steep escarpment divides it from an arid coast. The tableland itself is furrowed by deep gorges which are often impassable in the rainy season. It is not surprising that European knowledge of the country should have grown spasmodically and should still be very imperfect, or that its relations with the outside world should have resembled those of a remote archipelago. In some ways, indeed, Abyssinia's history is remarkably like Japan's. In both countries a long period of comparative isolation ended with the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century; after the navigators and traders came the missionaries of the Society of Jesus to win spectacular but short-lived successes and soon to find themselves proscribed as both empires withdrew into deliberate and almost complete seclusion.

Ever since the time of Prince Henry the Navigator the Portuguese had associated their explorations with missionary work, and this was vigorously stimulated by the foundation of the Jesuits. It was directed not so much to the Moslems, who were usually regarded as unteachable, as to the 'heathens', that is, all who were neither Christians, Moslems nor Jews, and also to the heretical eastern Christian communities, of which the Abyssinians were one. Almeida draws a chronological parallel between the discovery of Abyssinia and the origins of his order, observing that St. Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491, about the time that Pero da

Covilhã, the agent of the Portuguese King John II, reached the country in search of Prester John, that Loyola received the wound that led to his conversion in 1521, the year after the first Portuguese embassy had landed at Massawa, and that Dom Cristovão da Gama disembarked there to assist the Emperor against the Moslems in 1541, the year after the Pope had confirmed the Society's constitutions.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the Jesuit mission has often been told and need not be repeated here. When Almeida himself arrived in 1624, it was already two years since Susneyos, the reigning Emperor, had publicly made his submission to Rome. This triumph, one of the greatest in the Society's annals, had largely been due to the patience, tact and versatility of the Spanish missionary, Pedro Páez, who had died shortly afterwards. Almeida came, therefore, to a country which was nominally converted already. When reading his 'History' it should be remembered that the first part was written under these conditions, but they had been reversed long before it was finished. In the summer of 1632 Susneyos became convinced that there would be incessant revolts unless he permitted the traditional practices of the national church. In spite of the opposition of the Jesuit Patriarch Afonso Mendes, he issued a proclamation restoring the old religion and directing that the churches should again be occupied by the Monophysite clergy. In his personal beliefs he remained a Catholic and not long before his death on September 16th he confessed to a Jesuit, though he died without receiving Extreme Unction. He seems to have intended to permit freedom of conscience to members of both communions, but his son and successor Fasiladas at once excluded the Jesuits from the capital and then sent them to Kolala in Gojam, perhaps thinking, as Almeida conjectured, that they would be a long way from the coast and unable to send for help from India. Soon afterwards he banished them to their headquarters at Fremona in the north. In 1634 he exiled them altogether

<sup>1</sup> Almeida, bk IV, c. 1. The history of these early Portuguese contacts with Abyssinia will be found in two works published by the Hakluyt Society, *Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia. . . . By Father Francisco Alvarez*, ser. I, no. 64, and *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541, as narrated by Castanhoso and Bermudez*, ser. II, no. 10.

though a few stayed behind under the protection of local chiefs. The last of them were hanged in 1641.

It is usual for historians to attribute these events to the conduct of the Patriarch, contrasting him with Páez and representing him as an arrogant and stupid bigot.<sup>1</sup> This is unfair. No doubt he was a very different man from Páez but they were both pursuing the same ends in circumstances rendered dissimilar by the Emperor's public conversion just before Páez died and three years before Mendes reached Abyssinia. That the latter was not an irresponsible fanatic is suggested by his petitioning the Viceroy of Portuguese India to allow the rebuilding of Hindu temples in Diu. Remarkable as it was the triumph of Páez had been more apparent than real. The depth and bitterness of the opposition to the Jesuits is shown by the story of the attempt made in 1613-14 by Father Antonio Fernandes and the Emperor's ambassador to travel to Malindi by land, which is translated in this volume (pp. 143 seq.). It failed, and for geographical reasons alone, it would have been very surprising if it had succeeded, but the persons who turned back the embassy were not Moslems or pagan Galla, but Christians and subjects of the Emperor. When the envoys came to Enarya its Christian ruler, who was, Almeida tells us, so loyal a subject that he paid of his own free will a tribute which the Emperor was in no position to exact, was persuaded by a Christian priest to refuse to allow them to proceed through Kafa as they wished and forced them to turn eastward. The independent pagan King of Janjero, on the other hand, received them courteously and sent them on their way. In Kambatta and Alaba they were foiled by the intrigues of a Christian and a representative of the Emperor who preferred Moslems and Galla to the Portuguese as allies. Probably the Jesuits, like many other observers of oriental monarchies, were so impressed by the ruler's arbitrary power over the property and lives of his subjects that they did not see that in some respects his authority was far more limited than that of many contemporary European princes. Their missionary method was to concentrate on making converts among the political and

<sup>1</sup> e.g. 'a cruel and intolerant bigot' (Sir Charles Rey, *In the Country of the Blue Nile*, p. 258).

intellectual leaders, hoping that if this were done the common people would follow their example. Susneyos was quickly converted and his emphatic submission to Rome in 1622 made the adherents of the old church into rebels as well as heretics; yet he was unable to suppress the practices to which the Jesuits objected, circumcision, the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath, temporary marriages, the commemoration of Epiphany in a ritual which they interpreted as a second baptism, and others. Formally the most important issue was the Monophysite doctrine, the belief that Christ had only one nature, which the Abyssinians and the Copts of Egypt share with the Jacobites of Syria and the Armenians. The implications of this dogma are not easily explained without the use of the Greek terminology in which it was originally formulated; it need hardly be said that Ethiopic is not a satisfactory language in which to discuss a problem of this kind. Bruce remarks of the words for Nature and Person: 'Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. . . . The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity. . . . are all wrapt up in tenfold darkness, and inextricable from amidst the thick clouds of heresy and ignorance of language. Nature is often mistaken for person, and person for nature; the same of the human substance. It is monstrous to hear their reasoning upon it. One would think that every different monk, every time he talks, purposely broaches some new heresy.'<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that the ordinary Abyssinians, like other peoples of similar culture, were more concerned with practice than dogma. The principle '*cujus regio ejus religio*' was as familiar to them as it was to the subjects of the Holy Roman Empire. Mansfield Parkyns says: 'I have known instances of their turning Turk for the time of their sojourn in the land of Islam, and returning to their Christianity and bigotry as soon as they set foot in their own country. . . . It is a fact that the Abyssinian is not usually difficult in matters of religion except at home.'<sup>2</sup>

Mention must be made of Bruce's account of these events, for after the expulsion of the Jesuits he was the next important explorer of Abyssinia and his book, eminently read-

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, bk V, ch. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Parkyns, vol. ii, p. 93.

able and written in a language more widely known than Portuguese and, unlike Almeida's, published in its author's lifetime, has had immense influence. A Protestant laird, Bruce was as hostile to the Jesuits as they had been to the Monophysites. He was often very unfair to them but it can be said in his excuse that he knew almost nothing of their writings except for three unsatisfactory works. The first was the rather absurd and partly incomprehensible Latin translation of Páez's chapter on the source of the Nile by Athanasius Kircher, who seems to have had an imperfect knowledge of both Portuguese and Latin; the second was the *Travels* of Jeronimo Lobo. They were accessible to him in Le Grand's French version and Dr Johnson's English translation of Le Grand. Lobo's own text has never been printed, but if his translators have not done him an injustice he is the least reliable of the Jesuit writers on Abyssinia. The third work was an English paraphrase of a compilation made by the Jesuit Baltasar Telles, who relied principally though not exclusively on Almeida. Some of Bruce's distortions of names can be traced to this version of Telles (see p. 148 n. 1, p. 159 n. 1 and p. 238,) but many of his statements are merely ludicrous. He alleges that the aim of the Catholic hierarchy was 'to reduce Abyssinia to a Portuguese government';<sup>1</sup> by no means all the Jesuits in Abyssinia were Portuguese, and from the point of view of the Portuguese authorities it is difficult to think of a more expensive, hazardous and futile undertaking than this would have been. It is true that some of the Jesuits wished to introduce Portuguese troops but only to ensure the success of their mission, and in this Susneyos supported them, but the scheme was not favoured by the Holy See. Bruce also charges them with having tampered with the text of Alvares which, he says, 'contains many things very difficult of belief, which seem to be the work of the Jesuits.'<sup>2</sup> Alvares's book was published less than a month after the Pope had confirmed the Jesuit constitutions! Bruce's most absurd comment, however, is his sinister hint that Telles 'says not a word' about three Catholic priests who were stoned to death during the reign of David IV.<sup>3</sup> Even the

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, bk III, 'Socinius'.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 'David III'.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 'David IV'.

English version of Telles, which Bruce used, was published in 1710, four years before the date he himself gives for David's accession and these executions; the first, the Portuguese edition of Telles appeared in 1660.

Nevertheless Bruce is surely right in contending that the Emperor, though a sincere convert, did not realise all the implications of his submission and expected it to be rewarded with practical help which he never received. Indeed his whole account of this reign is valuable. His prejudices are obvious and easy to discount; his opportunities were unique. His two years' residence in the country, his experience of the Moslem countries with which the Abyssinians have had most contact, his study of their history and his intimate knowledge of their politics, all gave him an understanding of their mentality and of what he quaintly but significantly calls their 'constitution'. He saw the events of 1632 as an Abyssinian 1688, a Glorious Revolution which had preserved national independence, the national church and the constitution from the machinations of an alien hierarchy. When allowances have been made for incongruity, this shows more insight into the character of the native reaction than do those historians who ascribe what happened to theological disagreement or to the tactlessness of the Catholic Patriarch.

## II

The life of Almeida was laborious but, except for his journeys to and from Abyssinia, far less adventurous than those of many of his brethren. He was born in the last weeks of 1579 or the first quarter of 1580,<sup>1</sup> the year in which Camões died and in which Philip II united the crowns of Spain and Portugal. His native place was the small cathedral town of Viseu in central Portugal; he speaks of it as a 'noble city' on p. 201. He became a novice in the Society of Jesus in 1594, studied at Coimbra and was sent to India in 1602. He continued his studies at St Paul's College in Goa and professed the final four vows of the Society in 1612. He became a Reader in Holy Scripture and Prefect of Studies at the Col-

<sup>1</sup> The date usually given is 1580. The documents quoted by Beccari, vol. V, pp. v-vi, in his introduction to Almeida's 'History', show that he was seventeen in April, 1597, and twenty-five by December 15th, 1605.

lege and had experience of pastoral work in Salsette. In 1616 he was chosen to lead an abortive mission to Ceylon which the native ruler refused to receive. He returned to Salsette for a while and in 1620 was made Rector and Master of the Novices at the Probationers' House in Goa. Next year he became Rector of the College at Bassein and in 1622 was nominated Visitor to the Abyssinian mission; his brother Jorge, who was also a Jesuit, was to have been one of his three companions had not his bad health prevented it. Almeida's own account of their journey from India to the Emperor's court at Dancaz will be found on pp. 172-190.

They sailed from Bassein on November 28th, 1622, in company with a fleet which was protecting a convoy. The warships temporarily left them at Daman to shadow Dutch ships which had been sighted heading for Goa. Tired of waiting at Daman they chartered a native boat to take them to Gogha. They narrowly escaped pirates by taking refuge in the Purna river and, as the pirate vessel was waiting for them at the river mouth, they disembarked and went overland to Bagwa, taking care to avoid Surat with its English factors. From Bagwa they crossed the Gulf of Cambay to Gogha. They had intended to go thence by land to Diu, where they could find a ship bound for Suakin, but the roads across Kathiawar were too dangerous, being infested by marauding Rajputs. They were forced to wait for the fleet after all and it finally brought them to Diu two months after they had left Bassein. Here there were difficulties with the secular authorities, who were not always sympathetic to the Society. At last, on March 24th, 1623, they sailed in an overloaded ship with a Hindu captain. The monsoon wind failed them, a very strange circumstance, and although they sighted Socotra they were not able to anchor there. They next tried to reach Qishn, which belonged to the same Sultan as Socotra, as it still does; he was normally friendly to the Portuguese. Failing in this too the ship was forced to shelter off Dhufar, which was subject to the Sultan of Shihr, an unfriendly princeling owing allegiance to the Turkish Pasha in the Yemen. The Jesuits had the appalling experience of spending the whole summer, from May 18th to October 16th, in a small ship off south Arabia, living on rice, brackish

water and a little fish, hiding whenever Arabs from the land came aboard and in constant alarm at reports that their presence had been discovered, or that Dutch or Turkish ships were approaching. It is not surprising that they suffered severely from skin disease. When at last they left the wind was not strong and they were slow to reach the entrance to the Red Sea. They passed through at night, choosing the channel between Perim and the African side; though it was shallower and more dangerous to navigation there was less risk of their meeting Turkish ships. The voyage up the Red Sea was difficult and when the wind dropped they spent ten or twelve days sailing about twenty-four miles through the maze of islands, reefs and shoals. Not until December 4th, fifty days after leaving Dhufar and over eight months since their embarkation, were they able to go ashore and pay their respects to the Pasha at Suakin.

They were well received for the Abyssinian Emperor was on friendly terms with the Pasha and was an energetic soldier whom it was not wise to offend; in these circumstances a bribe was a sufficient inducement for him to let them pass. They hired a small native boat and sailed for Massawa on December 21st. The voyage lasted sixteen days as they cast anchor every night. At Massawa the Pasha's representative caused them no more than minor annoyance and on January 16th, 1624, they began their journey inland. A day and a half later they met an escort sent from the village of Zalot which the Emperor had given to the Society for such purposes. Early in February they reached the headquarters of the mission at Fremona and at the end of the month three of them, including Almeida, left again for Ganeta Jesus, the modern Azazo, the Jesuit residency nearest to the imperial court, then at Dancaz. The journey took them twenty days and almost as soon as they arrived they were summoned to the Emperor's presence and welcomed with great cordiality. Almeida himself then went on to the camp of the Emperor's brother, Ras Se'ela Krestos, Viceroy of Gojam and the most ardent of the Catholic party at court. Almeida brought him letters from the General of the Jesuits and from the Visitor and the Provincial of India. He then returned to Dancaz and assisted the Superior of the mission, Antonio Fernandes,

until the rains began when he withdrew to Gorgora and devoted himself to studying Amharic which is, as he tells us (p. 57), the most useful of the Abyssinian vernaculars. A year after his arrival he laid down the office of Visitor and was then sent to Damot where the Viceroy had asked for a Jesuit priest. He travelled by way of Kolala in Gojam and was received with enthusiasm at his destination. When in 1625 the Patriarch Afonso Mendes reached Abyssinia Almeida went as far as Kambilgē Maryam, north of Gondar, to meet him and then accompanied him on a tour of Wagara. They spent forty-three days there and never slept in the same place twice except on Sundays, when they did not travel, to avoid offending Abyssinian susceptibilities. After assisting the Patriarch to say mass each morning Almeida used to preach to the assembled crowd on the basic Catholic dogmas. 'I always tried', he says, 'to bring in some story in praise of the Virgin Our Lady, for the people of Ethiopia are very devoted to Our Lady and the friars had put it into their heads that we were enemies of her whom we keep as the apple of our eyes and in our inmost hearts.' Later in the day the Patriarch used to confirm while Almeida baptised; he baptised 1585 children during this tour.<sup>1</sup>

Almeida's later years in Abyssinia were spent mostly at Gorgora and it was there in 1628 that the earlier part of his 'History' was written. When in 1632 the Emperor decided to permit again the traditional practices of the Abyssinian church Almeida was one of three priests sent by the Patriarch to try to dissuade him. The attempt failed and after the accession of Fasiladas he and the other Jesuits of the capital were banished, first to Kolala and then to Fremona. On their way north they were robbed and pelted with stones. They arrived in April, 1633, and it was decided to send someone to India to inform the authorities of what had happened. Manoel Barradas was chosen for this task, and three others were sent with him, Damião Calaça, Giuseppe Giroco, who was ill and needed medical attention, and Almeida himself, who had been directed by the Provincial at Goa a year before to take the first convenient opportunity of returning. His journey lasted longer than when he had come and was even

<sup>1</sup> Almeida, bk IX, c. 17.

more dangerous. The Jesuits had not received the Emperor's permission to leave; he had only relegated them to Fremona, and so they dared not travel to Massawa by the ordinary and shortest way. Instead, they crossed the Bur peninsula, struck the coast at Arafali and then followed it for some thirty miles under the July sun over sand and rocks to Massawa. The permit to sail from there had already cost them a payment of 400 patacas<sup>1</sup> to the Pasha of Suakin, but he had died in the meantime and his successor asked for the same sum again; his deputy at Massawa added something for himself, and the priests, who had already been robbed of their more valuable possessions, were obliged to borrow another 600 patacas from Hindu merchants, repayable in Diu. They sailed on August 19th, 1633, the four European Jesuits, two Indian chaplains to the Patriarch, five or six Hindus and fourteen young Abyssinians. They left the Red Sea on the 29th and entered Aden harbour on the 31st. It was known that they were coming and the governor hoped to secure for himself part of the treasure he assumed they were taking away from Abyssinia. Their property was seized and, except for Giroco who was too ill to make the journey, they were taken to his residence outside Aden. Their baggage was ransacked in vain and the disappointed governor ordered that, whatever the risk to his life, Giroco should be brought to him as well. Finding that he too carried no gold he seized the young Abyssinians, who were constrained by 'hunger, blows and torture' to profess Islam, though some of them were later ransomed by the Jesuits. The lives of the priests were constantly threatened and it was six months before they were able to leave. Some of the time they spent at Khanfar, which they found most unhealthy, and for about three weeks they were at Lahej. The governor agreed to accept a ransom of 1200 patacas, which, again, was advanced by the Hindus. Barradas and the two chaplains left first in a small boat bound for Muscat, in the hope of picking up a ship for India before the rains began. They were disappointed, for it took them forty days to reach Muscat and there they had to remain until the September monsoon. Almeida, Calaça and Giroco sailed soon afterwards but the wind dropped and they

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 44.

were forced to spend two and a half months at Qishn. Giroco died at sea. Almeida and Calaça arrived in India in mid-September.

The remainder of Almeida's life was passed in India. He became Rector of St Paul's College, Provincial and Assessor to the Holy Office. He died at Goa on May 10th, 1646.

### III

For the translator Almeida is an unrewarding author. His style, except for passages reminiscent of pulpit oratory, is at once colloquial and pedestrian. We have not thought proper to disguise the ambiguities caused by his indiscriminate pronouns, repetitive vocabulary, sagging syntax and occasional anacoluthon. It is probable that much of the work was dictated, perhaps in haste, certainly by a very busy man, and its composition was spread over not less than fifteen years. Part at least of Book I was written at Gorgora in 1628 (pp. 9, 26). Book II was also written in Abyssinia; there is a marginal note saying so in the British Museum manuscript of Book III, chapter 1. Book III, chapter 17, refers to a reigning Emperor who can only be Susneyos but he is mentioned in the past tense in Book IV, chapter 25 (p. 137). Yet Book VII, chapter 14 was written in August, 1632 (p. 150), when he was still alive. The latest date in the 'History' is 1643 and the Patriarch Mendes, writing to the General of the Jesuits on January 4th, 1646, speaks of it as a completed work and says that a copy is being sent to Portugal.

This copy has been lost. Three manuscripts are now known. One is in Lisbon but it is very incorrect and of no value for establishing the text. The others are in London, one in the British Museum (Add. MS 9861) and the other in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (MS 11966). Both these came from William Marsden's collection and seem to have been in the archives at Goa at some time. Beccari's edition, which is the only complete printed text, is based on the British Museum manuscript and includes a reproduction of the accompanying map. The second manuscript, which we have followed in this translation, was first described by Sir

Denison Ross in 1922.<sup>1</sup> He concluded from his examination that it represented a corrected version of the manuscript used by Beccari and we have found no reason to disagree with him. The differences are not considerable except for one additional chapter, Book VI, chapter 17, which is translated from an Ethiopic chronicle; the omission of this chapter from the other manuscript is clearly an error and was noticed by Beccari. Where divergences exist the School manuscript is superior. It is also accompanied by a map, which is more legible than the one in the British Museum; it is reproduced for the first time in this volume (p. xcvi). The School manuscript incorporates the corrections written in the margins or between the lines of the other copy, includes a few further alterations and is more liberally and more carefully punctuated. In consequence we have occasionally been able to improve on Beccari's text. We have commented on any such passages in the notes and have recorded any differences between the two manuscripts, both revised in autograph, other than insignificant changes in spelling and accentuation.

The School manuscript includes a dedication to King John IV of Portugal, a preface and a note on the use of the map. Sir Denison Ross published the texts of the dedication and the preface and a translation of the preface which, however, contains some mistakes.<sup>2</sup> The note on the map has never been published; a translation will be found on p. xciii seq below.

John IV became King of Portugal in 1640, after a coup d'état which brought to an end the union of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns. His house was favourably disposed to the Jesuits and Almeida's dedication reveals their hope that he would assist them to regain their position in Abyssinia. 'Your Majesty', he writes, 'has every title to the history of Ethiopia. Omitting other older titles, the King Dom João the Third of happy memory restored the Abyssinian empire, took it out of the power of the Moors of Adel and granted it to the Emperor Gladios or Claudius. He could with complete justice have taken at least a third of it for himself (for that is what the Emperor David, father of Gladios, offered him when he sent to ask his help), but he did not covet the temporal advantage, only the spiritual, which had also been

<sup>1</sup> *BSOAS*, vol. ii, pt 3, pp. 513-538.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii, pt. 4, pp. 783-804.

promised, namely, that the Abyssinians should submit to the holy apostolic faith and abandon the Alexandrian errors. So may the Most Serene Dom João the Third have the glory, title and renown of liberator of Ethiopia from the hands of the Moors. The Most Serene Dom João the Fourth shall have the other more glorious titles of Restorer of the holy Catholic faith and Destroyer and Extirpator of heresy in that vast and far-spreading empire. The Most Serene Dom João the Third conceded that empire to the King of the country. The Most Serene Dom João the Fourth shall grant it to the King of Heaven, subjugate it to his Vicar, the Pope of Rome, and deliver it from the cruel captivity of the Egyptian Pharaoh, I mean, of the schismatic Alexandrian Patriarch.'

The preface explains why he wrote his 'History' and the use he made of Páez's work on the same subject, and apologises for the inconsistencies caused by the changes that took place while it was being written. The most important passages are these.

'I particularly want it to be known that Father Pero Paez, of whom I shall later have much to say, began to write the History of Ethiopia. The Superiors in India sent him what Father Frei Luis Urreta<sup>1</sup> had published in Valencia a little while before, so that he should refute the great number of errors and lies that Ioão Baltezar<sup>1</sup> had put into that author's head. Father Pero Paez did so, but as his chief aim was refutation he did not make his history as coherent and orderly as was desirable. Besides, as he was a Castilian he had not a perfect command of the Portuguese language, in which he wrote; for he had largely forgotten Spanish, not having used it for many years, though often using Arabic, Turkish, Amharic and the other language, the language of the books of Ethiopia, which he had learnt.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons the Superior, who was then Father Antonio Fernandez, with the concurrence of the other Fathers at the assembly we held at Gorgorra at the beginning of the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-six, charged me to describe that Chris-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 5, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ross misunderstood the phrase 'e da outra dos livros de Ethiopia' which he translated 'the other languages of the books about Ethiopia'. Almeida refers to Ethiopic, sometimes called Ge'ez, which is still the liturgical language. In his time it was the literary language of Abyssinia.

tian state for the service of God and in order to make it widely known.<sup>1</sup> This I did, but I had many things to do and they compelled me to spend almost all my time in long journeys. Since then, during these years in India, I have not been without responsibilities. More particularly when I saw how badly Ethiopia fulfilled her great promise and became a squalid ruin, I took no pleasure in writing and not merely delayed but began to forget the work.

'However an order from our Very Reverend Father General Mutio Vitteleschi written in a letter of the 15th of December, 1639, compelled me to continue it. . . .

'Under this injunction I applied myself to the work with determination. As I say, I have profited greatly by what Father Pero Paez wrote; in the historical part I have added certain things which time has brought to light and I have supplemented it with everything that has happened since the Father's death. These events have been so many and so various that in the space of twenty years they have surpassed all those of many centuries past. . . .

'Now that the beams of the holy faith of Rome have illumined them (i.e. the Abyssinians), they have been so soon blinded by the great brilliance of the light that one almost loses hope of their ever seeing it again with open eyes. It must be apparent that such great and varied deformities cannot well be depicted in an even style. We shall not depict them as they are unless we depict a chimaera, not fictitious or imaginary but real, so that the whole world may know that this nation is the strangest monstrosity that Africa, the mother of monsters, has bred in her remote and savage jungles. . . .

'I want to give one warning lest the reader should be annoyed by the differences there are from time to time in expressions and ways of speaking, some of which presuppose that I am in Ethiopia, others that I am outside it. That is what happened; I began the work there and came to finish it in India. So in the earlier books I speak as one inside the

<sup>1</sup> 'Father Antonio called me up among the many padres who happened to be present' (Ross). The name Fernandez is abbreviated to 'f'ez'. Ross ignored the apostrophe indicating abbreviation and seems to have taken the word for a verb. Even if it were, his would still be an indefensible translation.