

# **With the Armies of Menelik II**

## **Journal of an Expedition from Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf. An Eye-Witness Account of the End of an Era**

**by Alexander Bulatovich**

**translated by Richard Seltzer**

With diagrams and photographs by the author and Lieutenant Davydov

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Photos from the original edition are included in this one.

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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

A young Russian cavalry officer witnessed as Ethiopia vied with Italy, France, and England for control of previously unexplored territory in east-central Africa. His books are an important source of historical and ethnographic information from that little-known but critical and exciting period.

Almost all official Ethiopian documents from the 1890s were destroyed during the war with Italy in 1936. The historical record depends largely on the observations of European explorers and visitors, of whom Alexander Bulatovich was one of the very best. This book covers the second of his four trips to Ethiopia (1897-98). Companion volumes cover his first (1896) and third (1899-1900) trips. He did not write about the fourth.

Bulatovich sensed that Ethiopia was in a delicate state of transition, that what he was seeing would not remain or even be remembered in a generation or two. He had the instincts, although not the training, of an anthropologist, trying to preserve some record of fast-disappearing cultures. But he was not a scientist who observed with cool detachment. Rather, he was actively involved in the events he described, particularly on the expedition to Lake Rudolf. He ambivalent, torn between his military duty (as an officer attached to the army of Ras Wolda Giyorgis) and his personal values and sense of justice. Time and again, he found himself party to the decimation of the very people whose culture he wanted to preserve.

He approached his subject with enthusiasm, fascination, and, at times, with almost

religious respect. He did not presume that European culture and technology were morally superior. Nor did he romantically prefer the "primitive."

Empathizing with many of the peoples he encountered, he witnessed the tragedy of the clash between traditional ways and modern technology. He considered modernization inevitable, but preferred that it be done humanely. He thought that conquest and gradual change under the Amharic rulers of Ethiopia was preferable to the total destruction which would be likely in case of conquest by a European power.

Bulatovich's interest in military and religious matters was at the heart of his respect for these people. From his perspective, the Abyssinian military recently went through a golden age of cavalry charges and individual heroism, which called to mind the by-gone days of medieval Europe. Alos, he saw the Ethiopian Church as close to the Russian Orthodox Church and the origins of Christianity. He respected all the details of their belief and practice, as well as their unique legends and saints.

He was, however, a product of his time: the time of Kipling and the Berlin Conference. In those days, it was common for Europeans to make judgements about cultures, based on a scale with their own culture at the top. He respected Amhara, Galla (Oromo), and several other Ethiopian peoples with whom he had prolonged contact and whose languages he learned. But he used strong negative terms to describe the people and cultures of what is now Southern Ethiopia. In part, this prejudice was due to ignorance — he had little contact with these people and did not understand their language. It was also a reflection

of the attitudes of his comrades-in-arms — Amhara and Galla warriors — who also were encountering these people for the first time, and for whom they were just as foreign and incomprehensible as they were to Bulatovich.

His works should appeal to anyone interested in the history or anthropology of Africa and Ethiopia. They also provide a clear picture of the relations between Russia and Ethiopia in the 1890s, which planted the seeds of their present-day relations. In addition, these accounts can help fill in historical details regarding events and individuals during that era.

Up until now, the main source in English about Russian activities in Ethiopia and their observations of that country at the end of the nineteenth century has been *The Russians in Ethiopia: An Essay in Futility* by Czeslaw Jesman. That is an amusing collection of rumors and anecdotes, based primarily on Italian sources. Unfortunately, it is often wrong; but, in the absence of better information, its errors have often been repeated.

One speech by Bulatovich to the Russian Geographical Society was translated into Italian and French and is frequently cited. But his books, up until now, were available only in Russian. Hence his observations and contributions have remained virtually unknown in the West.

Bulatovich's first book, *From Entotto to the River Baro*, published in 1897, consists of journals of two excursions he went on during his first trip to Ethiopia 1896-97, plus a series of essays based on what he heard and observed during his year-long stay with the

Russian Red Cross Mission. The essays deal with various peoples of Ethiopia (Galla/Oromo, Sidamo, Amhara) — their history, culture, way of life, beliefs and languages; the governmental system and its historical background; the army, commerce, and the Emperor's family.

*With the Armies of Menelik II*, published in 1900, is the journal of Bulatovich's second trip to Ethiopia in 1897-98, during which he served as an advisor to the army of Ras Wolda Giyorgis as it conquered the previously little-known southwestern territories from Kaffa to Lake Rudolf. In this book, he built on his previous knowledge of the country and also recounted an exciting personal story of military adventure, which built to a climax in the final chapters.

Both those books, edited and with an introduction by Isidor Savvich Katsnelson, were reissued by The Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow in 1971.

I first discovered Bulatovich in the *London Times* of 1913, while looking for another story, on which I wished to base a novel. The article described how Russian troops had besieged two monasteries at Mount Athos in Greece and exiled some 660 monks to remote parts of the Russian Empire for believing that "The Name of God was a part of God and, therefore, in itself divine." Bulatovich — a former cavalry officer who had "fought in the Italo-Abyssinian campaign, and afterwards in the Far East" — was the leader and defender of the monks. ("Heresy at Mount Athos: a Soldier Monk and the Holy Synod," June 19, 1913).

News was a more leisurely business then than now. The reporter drew an analogy to characters in a novel by Anatole France and sketched the background and motivations of the main figure. I got the impression of Bulatovich as a restless man, full of energy, chasing from one end of the world to the other in search of the meaning of life. Eventually, he sought tranquility as a monk at Mount Athos, only to find himself in a battle of another kind.

I was hooked by this new character and new story. What would a Russian soldier have been doing in Ethiopia at the turn of the century? What war could he have fought in the the Far East? What was it that compelled him to go from one end of the world to the other, and then to become a monk?

After getting out of the Army, I moved to Boston, where my future wife, Barbara lived. There I tracked down all available leads to this story, but could find very little additional information. There was a poem by Mandelshtam about the heresy. The philosopher Berdyayev had nearly been sent to Siberia for expressing support for the heretics. But that was it.

Then in the spring of 1972, the "B" volume of the new edition of the official Soviet Encyclopedia (Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia) appeared. The previous edition had mentioned an "Alexander" Bulatovich who died about 1910. The Bulatovich in the Times article was named "Anthony" and was very much alive in 1913. The new edition made it

clear that Alexander and Anthony were the same man. (In the Russian Orthodox Church, when becoming a monk, it is common to adopt a new name with the same first letter.)

The new article corrected the date of his death (1919) and referenced books that Bulatovich had written about his experiences in Ethiopia. This encyclopedia item was signed by Professor I.S. Katsnelson, from the Institute of Oriental Studies, in Moscow.

I wrote to Professor Katsnelson, and to my delight, in his reply, he sent me a copy of a recently published reprint of Bulatovich's Ethiopian books, which he had edited, and also gave me the name and address of Bulatovich's sister, Princess Mary Orbeliani, who was then 98, and living in Canada.

Katsnelson offered to help me gain access to Soviet archives that had some of Bulatovich's unpublished notes and other related materials. But my Army security clearance prevented me from travel behind the Iron Curtain. (I was then in the Army reserves.)

Instead, in the summer of 1972, I traveled to Mount Athos, where I spent two weeks, mostly doing research in the library of St. Pantelaimon, the one remaining Russian monastery there.

Meanwhile, I corresponded with Princess Orbeliani, and the following summer I visit her for two days in Penticton, British Columbia. In long tape-recorded conversations and in letters before and after that visit, she provided me with valuable information about her

brother's life and insight into his character. At 99, she was very articulate, lucid, and helpful. She was delighted that someone was showing an interest in her brother's work and beliefs. She was a remarkable and inspiring person — unassuming, warm and open. Living in a nursing home, she continued to pursue her artwork, specializing in water colors. Although her fingers were swollen from arthritis and she had difficulty even unwrapping a piece of candy, she could still play Chopin on the piano from memory, smoothly and without hesitation. Her own tale would make an interesting book: flight during the Revolution by way of Baku to Yugoslavia, and hardship there under the Nazis; sending her son to engineering school in Louvain, Belgium; his career in the Belgian Congo; and then eventually joining him in British Columbia. (She passed away in 1977 at the age of 103).

I got caught up in the research, carrying it far beyond what one would normally do to write an "historical novel." Each new piece of information raised more questions and pulled me in even deeper.

At Harvard's Widener Library, I was able to follow up references and find related materials. In this manner, I found and photocopied numerous books and articles about Ethiopia, as well as the heresy, and the Manchurian campaign of 1900.

I was fascinated by Bulatovich's character and wanted to work out the puzzle of his motivations, and what might have led to the shifts and twists of his life: from Saint Petersburg, to Ethiopia, to Manchuria, then back to Saint Petersburg where he became a

monk, and on to Mount Athos, becoming the champion of the "heretics" there, then a chaplain at the Eastern Front in World War I, surviving the Revolution and Civil War, and returning to preach on what had been his family's estate in the Ukraine, only to be murdered by bandits.

What drove him to do the things he did? How could I present all these facts I had uncovered in a way that they seemed plausible?

Eventually, I wrote *The Name of Hero*. Intended as the first part of a trilogy, this novel focuses on Manchuria, with flashbacks to his childhood and to Ethiopia.

While I was researching my novel, I translated portions of Bulatovich's Ethiopian books for my own use. The more I read about Ethiopia, the more it became clear to me that experts in the field were unfamiliar with these works and could benefit from them, and also that they contain much that would interest the general reader and lover of history. Finally, with the prompting of Professor Harold Marcus of Michigan State University, I made the time to translate both books in full.

Professor Katsnelson died in 1981, the year that *Hero* was published. He was a professor at Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., in Moscow, a specialist in ancient Egypt and Nubia, best known for his monograph *Napata and Meroe — the Ancient Kingdom of Sudan* published in 1971. He had a personal interest in Ethiopia and Bulatovich in particular. In 1975, together with G. Terekhova, he published

a popularized biography of *Bulatovich* entitled *Through Unknown Lands of Ethiopia*. He also edited and, in 1979, published a book by another Russian explorer of Ethiopia, a contemporary of Bulatovich, L. K. Artamanov, entitled *Through Ethiopia to the Banks of the White Nile*. In addition, he uncovered in the Soviet Archives a series of previously unpublished documents by and about Bulatovich in Ethiopia. Organized and prepared for publication by his colleague Apollon Davidson, that book was published in Russian in Moscow in 1987. The third part of this collection is my translation of that — *My Third Journey to Ethiopia*.

I am now returning to the story of Bulatovich, rewriting *The Name of Hero*, after over forty years and finally telling the rest of the story. At this point, I call it *The Bulatovich Saga: Soul Survivor*.

## Translation Notes

Up until the Revolution, Russia used the Julian or "old style" calendar, which in 1898 lagged 12 days behind the Gregorian calendar, which was used by the rest of the world. Since Bulatovich used the "old style" and celebrated religious holidays, such as Christmas, in accord with that calendar, I've retained his usage in this translation.

I have not anglicized the names — except Bible ones in a church or historical context (e.g. the Queen of Sheba), and Bulatovich's middle name Xavriyevich (instead of Ksaviyevich), to indicate the Roman Catholic origins of his father, Xavier.

Ethiopian words in the text posed a particular problem. Bulatovich rendered what he heard in Cyrillic characters. Strictly following standard Cyrillic-to-English transliteration practice would lead to confusion, making it difficult to recognize when he was writing about well-known people, places, and events. For instance, the general he accompanied on the expedition to Lake Rudolf is commonly rendered in English as "Wolda Giyorgis," but direct transliteration from Bulatovich's Cyrillic would yield "Val'dye Gyeorgyis." And the common title "dajazmatch" in direct transliteration would be "dadiazmach."

To avoid this problem, where the Amharic original is obvious and the person, place, or thing is well-known, I follow the spelling in *The Life and Times of Menelik II* by Harold G. Marcus.

In other cases, I deviate from standard transliteration to yield spellings consistent with well-known ones. For instance, the Russian letter "U" at the beginning of a word and before a vowel is rendered "W" in this text (as in Wollo and Wollaga). Also, the Russian character that is normally rendered with the two-letter combination "kh" is transcribed here as "h" when it falls at the beginning of a word (as in Haile). And the combination of two Russian letters — "d" and the letter normally rendered as "zh" — is here treated as the single letter "j" (as in Jibuti and Joti). Also, the series of titles ending in -match, such as dajazmatch, are rendered consistently with "tch" rather than just "ch" as in Bulatovich's usage.

For convenience, when Bulatovich uses Russian units of measure for distance (verst),

length (vershok, arshin, sagene), temperature (Réamur), weight (pood), I provide a direct translation and immediately follow with the conversion to common American units of measure [in brackets].

The paragraph breaks are the same as in the original (for easy comparison of one text with the other).

Ellipses (...) are used here as they appear in the original. They do not indicate that material has been omitted.

Thanks to the dozens of people from the Internet newsgroups soc.culture.soviet and k12.lang.russian who took the time to help me decipher obscure and obsolete Russian terms and to identify literary quotations. Alexander Chaihorsky deserves special thanks for his insight into the meaning of "sal'nik," based on his experience as an explorer in northern Mongolia. Thanks also to another Internet contact: Zemen Lebne-Dengel, who explained for me the Amharic words t'ef and dagussa.

## **A. X. Bulatovich — Hussar, Explorer, Monk by Isidor Saavich Katsnelson**

*This is the introduction to the Russian edition of two of Bulatovich's Ethiopian books — **With the Armies of Menelik II**, edited by I. S. Katsnelson of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. "Science" Publishing House, Chief Editorial Staff of Oriental Literature, Moscow, 1971. The numbers refer to footnotes at the end of the essay.*

Africa has hidden and still hides much that is unknown, unexplored, enigmatic. Even today there are regions of Africa where the foot of an explorer has never trod. Kaffa (now one of the provinces of Ethiopia) remained a legendary country up until the very end of the last century — "African Tibet" — having fenced itself off from the outside world. Foreigners were strictly forbidden access to this country. Even now, we know less about it, its history, morals, customs, and the language of the inhabitants and the neighboring tribes to the south and west than about any other region of Ethiopia. The first traveler and explorer who crossed Kaffa from end to end and compiled a detailed description of it was the Russian officer Alexander Xavieryevich Bulatovich.

The life path of A. X. Bulatovich was truly unusual. Having begun in one of the most exclusive educational institutions of tsarist Russia and in the fashionable salons of Saint Petersburg, in the circle of brilliant guard officers, he dashes across deserts, mountains, and plains of the least known regions of Ethiopia; across the fields of battle and hills of Manchuria; a solitary monastic cell and monasteries of Mount Athos embroiled in fanatic

scholastic arguments; across First World War trenches soaked with blood, saturated with stench; and tragically, senselessly comes to an abrupt end in a little hamlet in Ukraine.

The posthumous fate of A. X. Bulatovich was no less amazing.

At the very end of the last century and before the First World War, he repeatedly found himself at the center of attention of the Russian, and, at times, also of the foreign press. But then he was completely forgotten.

To a considerable extent, the cause of this was the October Revolution and events of succeeding years. But, however it came about, up until recent times almost nothing was known about A. X. Bulatovich. Even the year of his death given in the second edition of the Big Soviet Encyclopedia — "around 1910" — was incorrect. (1) His discoveries and observations did not receive full appreciation. In any case, no one who wrote about him indicated that he was in fact the first man to cross Kaffa. (2)

Only now, when searches have been begun in the archives and some people who knew A. X. Bulatovich or were related to him have responded, (3) his image has become more distinct and the great significance of his journeys and of his scientific work is becoming clearer.

However, this research is still far from complete. Much apparently needs to be amplified, and also, possibly to be made more accurate. For instance, we now know almost nothing

about the last three to four years of his life, and the circumstances of his death are known only in the most general way. We will try here to sum up briefly all that we have learned about him in recent years.

A. X. Bulatovich was born September 26, 1870 in the city of Orel. (4) At that time, the 143rd Dorogobuzhskiy Regiment, which was stationed there, was commanded by his father, Major-General Xavier Vikentyevich Bulatovich, who was descended from hereditary nobles of Grodno Province. X. V. Bulatovich died around 1873, leaving a young widow, Evgeniya Andreyevna, with three children.

The childhood years of Alexander Xavieryevich and his two sisters were spent at their wealthy estate known as "Lutsikovka" in Markovskaya Volost, Lebedinskiy District, Kharkov Province. (5) Already at that time some traits of his character and world view took shape: courage, persistence, passionate love for his native land, and deep religious piety.

In 1884, Evgeniya Andreyevna moved with the children to Saint Petersburg. It had come time to send them to school. The girls entered the Smolny Institute. The elder daughter soon died of typhus. A. X. Bulatovich, who was then 14, began to attend the preparatory classes of the Alexandrovskiy Lyceum — one of the most exclusive educational institutions. (6)

Having passed the entrance examinations, A. X. Bulatovich was admitted to the Lyceum.

His only difficulty on the exam, strange as it may seem, was in geography, which he just barely passed. Subsequently — right up to graduation — he studied excellently, advancing with prizes from class to class. (7) Future diplomats and high government officials received their preparation at this Lyceum. Therefore, the pupils mainly studied foreign languages — French, English, and German — and jurisprudence. In other words, A. X. Bulatovich received an education in the humanities, but that didn't prevent him from becoming a capable mathematician, as indicated by the geodesic and cartographic surveys he conducted.

In 1891 A. X. Bulatovich finished the Alexandrovskiy Lyceum as one of the best students and went to work in May of that same year in "His Majesty's Personal Office in the Department of Institutions of the Empress Mary," which directed educational and beneficial institutions. He was awarded the rank of the ninth class, which is "titular councilor." (8) However, a civil career did not entice him; and following the family tradition, he submitted an application and enlisted on May 28, 1891 as a "private with the rights of having volunteered" in the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment of the Second Cavalry Division, (9) which was one of the most aristocratic regiments. Only a select few could become officers of such a regiment.

After a year and three months, August 16, 1892, A. X. Bulatovich received his first officer's rank — cornet. (10) After another year, he made his way onto the fencing team, formed under the command of the Horse Grenadier Guard Regiment, with the task of becoming a fencing instructor. He stayed there for a half-year, then on April 10, 1894,

was sent back to his regiment, where he was first appointed assistant to the head, and then, on December 24, 1895, head of the regimental training detachment.

Although A. X. Bulatovich was taught in a civil educational institution, he acquired riding skills in childhood and youth; and through persistent training at riding school and at race courses, he became an excellent horseman — possibly one of the best of that time. That was not an easy accomplishment: Russian cavalry and Cossack regiments always had a reputation as first-class horsemen. According to trainer I. S. Gatash, who served in the stable of A. X. Bulatovich, (quoted by V.A. Borisov who found the old man), "For Alexander Xavieryevich, the horse he couldn't tame didn't exist."

Thus, interrupted only by races and other horse competitions, the years of service in the regiment passed rather quietly, until events which at first glance did not have any relation to A. X. Bulatovich suddenly broke the settled tenor of life of the capable, prospering officer.

At the end of the nineteenth century the colonial division of Africa among England, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal was completed. Only Ethiopia had preserved its independence, together with the almost unexplored regions adjacent to it on the south and southwest, plus some difficult-to-reach regions of the central part of the continent. Italy, which had joined in the division of Africa later than the other European imperialistic powers, felt that it had been done out of its fair share. Only at the end of the 1880s did it settle in Somalia and Eritrea. Now, according to the plan of its leaders, should come the

turn of neighboring Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia itself and around it at this time arose a very complex situation — a true Gordian knot of conflicts, interlaced from the struggles of the colonizing powers, with unavoidable diplomatic intrigues, threats, bribes, lying promises and punitive expeditions. The ruling emperor, king of kings of Ethiopia, Menelik II, continuing the efforts of his immediate predecessors, secured the unification of previously fragmented independent and half-independent principalities into a single centralized state that in the given concrete circumstances undoubtedly had led to progress and had answered the aspirations of various sections of the population and, above all, of the governing class. Those close to Menelik II hoped to get lucrative and esteemed posts and appointments, with associated revenue; and merchants and artisans hoped to be able to safely conduct their business, without fear of the constant civil strife which the peasants were subject to. The reforms carried out by the Negus benefitted the economic development of the country. The penetration of foreign capital and the invitation of various specialists from Europe — basically engineers to improve roads and repair communications — and also the establishment of a single monetary system, to a significant degree, helped make that happen. For the first time in the history of feudal Ethiopia, there arose relations characteristic of the beginning stage of capitalist society. (11) It was natural that the strengthening of Ethiopia was not welcomed by those who were striving to take control of this country, considering its key position on strategic lines of communication, and the fact that it was liberally endowed by nature and offered vast opportunities for the sale of industrial products. England and Italy acted actively and purposefully. England strove at

this time to realize plans that it had not up until then been able to carry out — to seize the regions of Central Africa that separated its colony in Uganda from the Sudan, which it controlled, and thus to unite all the possessions and zones of influence from the Mediterranean Sea to the Cape of Good Hope. The realization of those plans would help establish reliable lines of communication. They wanted to stretch telegraph wires from Cape Town to Cairo through the nominally independent Congo which by decree of Germany refused to give permission for this work.

From Mombasa on the shores of the Indian Ocean, they intended to extend a railroad line past Lake Victoria and Lake Albert to Khartoum. (12) But on that path lay Ethiopia, which had preserved in full measure its independence and which was not at all interested in this railroad line. This is why England, having tried to take possession of the western regions of Ethiopia necessary for building that line and having tried to penetrate neighboring areas, not only did not stand in the way of the aggressive intentions of Italy, but even encouraged them, (13) having signed with them in 1891 two protocols (March 24 and April 15) about the demarcation of spheres of influence in countries adjacent to the Red Sea. The protocol of May 5 1894 recognized the predominance of the interests of Italy in Harar, where the penetration of France was making matters difficult. France was a stronger colonial power with which it would be far more difficult to come to an understanding. A significant part of Ethiopia, according to this predatory secret deal, would go to Italy, (14) which England by all means strove to keep out of the Sudan. By the terms of this deal, the sphere of influence of the Italians included the western lands bordering Ethiopia that were populated by the Sidamo people, although the English

themselves showed far from platonic interests in that territory.

Having negotiated with England, Italy stirred up its own political action in Ethiopia, to which they sent supposedly scientific expeditions, consisting solely of active duty officers. Such were, for example, two expeditions of artillery officer V. Bottego. (15) However, as you can easily conclude from reading the work and the reports of A. X. Bulatovich, neither the Italians nor the English succeeded in gaining control of that territory. (16)

The attempts of Italy to make Ethiopia a protectorate were unsuccessful. Then, throwing off the mask of sham friendship, Italy turned to open aggression and in July 1894 occupied Kassala, by this act starting the Italo-Abyssinian War, disgracefully ending with the crushing defeat of Italy at Adwa on March 1, 1896. (17) This brilliant victory had important consequences for Ethiopia. Above all, the victors obtained valuable trophies, of which the most important were up-to-date weapons: a large quantity of rifles and cartridges, all kinds of artillery with a large quantity of ammunition and all kinds of transport. (18)

The victory at Adwa played a major role in the history of Ethiopia. It not only united its indigenous population, but also to a great degree helped strengthen and unify this feudal state, significantly bolstering its international authority. Its military power increased. Ethiopia, by its very existence, first demonstrated to the imperial powers that the people of Africa can stand up for their independence and have the right for independent

existence. This historical lesson had lasting importance in the struggle of African peoples against colonial oppression, as Bulatovich realized very well when he wrote, "... Menelik engaged with Italy in a desperate struggle for the existence of his state, its freedom and independence, and prevailed over his enemy in a series of brilliant victories and by doing so demonstrated irrefutably that in Africa there is a black race that can stand on its own and has all the qualities needed for independent existence."

But removal of danger from the east did not at all indicate a weakening of the danger looming on the south and south-west. The implementation of the claims of England could have far-reaching consequences. As the current conditions showed, its appetite was insatiable, and historical experience attested how multifaceted and dangerous were the means that it would use for its gratification.

In 1899 Menelik stopped all hostile action against the Sudan, which was temporarily striving for independence under the Mahdi. He correctly thought that he should not distract the Mahdi from his struggle with the English, and by so doing scatter his forces. He needed to focus on repulsing the enemy that was more dangerous at that time — Italy, which by all means was striving to make Ethiopia clash with the Sudan. (19) In the victory of the Mahdi, the Negus rightly perceived a guarantee that Europeans would not penetrate to his own land, (20) for to him it was quite clear that, having seized Khartoum and Omdurman, the English would advance on Ethiopia; and, moreover, they would not hesitate to use armed force. (21)

In the Sudan, from the Egyptian border to Khartoum, the twenty-thousand-man corps of General Kitchener slowly but steadily advanced. From the south, from Uganda, Kitchener was supposed to be joined by the detachment of Major MacDonald, who had been ordered to take possession of the upper reaches of the Nile, the Jubba River, and the mouth of the Omo River, flowing into the recently discovered Lake Rudolf. This way, the English would have seized not only all the land adjacent to the upper and middle reaches of the Nile, but also regions directly bordering Ethiopia.

However, these plans were not realized, and not only because MacDonald's soldiers mutinied. The possible strengthening of England in this region did not at all please the French, who for a long time had been rivals with England in Africa. The Sudan, in the opinion of the French government, ought to recognize the possessions of Turkey, to turn over the eastern part of the Equatorial Province to Ethiopia, "confirming its right to independent existence," and to annex the western part of that province to the French Congo. Thus the southern possessions of England in Africa would have been cut off from the northern possessions. (22) Taking into account that given the then existing arrangement of forces in Africa, there was nothing more the French could succeed in taking in hand, which was subsequently confirmed by the famous, not at all pleasant for French prestige, Fashoda Incident. They preferred to have as their neighbor the Ethiopian and not the British lion. Therefore, the French representative to the court of Menelik II let him know that France would not at all be displeased if he extended the boundaries of his possessions even as far as the Belgian Congo.

But Menelik did not need hints, encouragement ,or incitements. A wise and far-sighted ruler, he already for a long time followed with alarm the intrigues of the colonial powers and how they gradually enslaved free tribes and peoples. Already in 1891 the Negus very firmly and determinedly expressed that he would not be a detached and passive observer, if European colonial powers began to divide among themselves lands that had never belonged to Ethiopia. Menelik decided to restore the old boundaries of his country on the west and the south — right up to the right bank of the White Nile and Lake Victoria. It was evident that if he let the English have freedom of action in this region, he would by so doing put at risk the independence of his native land.

Advancing the boundaries of his country to the Congo and to French possessions, Menelik would forever frustrate English plans to merge Uganda and the Sudan. Victory over Italy on the one side and on the other side the real threat in the west in consequence of British military operations in the Sudan precipitated Menelik's decision to go from words to action. He began with annexing to Ethiopia states that bordered his to the south — lands of the Galla, Konta, Kulo and a series of other tribes. But there were also other reasons determining this decision.

In case of success, the Abyssinian plateau would be the only administrative and economic entity that matched the geographic, natural and ethnic conditions. Also, do not forget that Ethiopia was a typical feudal state; and in a feudal environment, wars and the attendant spoils of the conquerors were the usual means for filling the state coffers and were a vital source of feudal enrichment. Rumors of the fabulous wealth of Kaffa and the incalculable

treasures of its king kindled their imagination and greed. Besides, territorial concessions to England could ruin Menelik's prestige in the eyes of his vassals, who recognized the power of the Ethiopian emperor only so long as they felt his strength. (23) Beginning in 1881, the predecessors of Menelik and he himself tried seven times to conquer Kaffa, wanting to establish their rule over it and to obtain payment of tribute. But those attempts failed.

The situation changed abruptly after the victory of Ethiopia over Italy, when excellent weapons fell into the hands of the Ethiopians. Two thirds of the members of Menelik's army were armed with rifles, while Kaffa had altogether only three hundred old guns. Keep in mind that the Negus, animated with success and urged forward by the impending threat from the side of the colonial powers, acted boldly and decisively.

At first Menelik intended to annex Kaffa as a vassal state, so its king, Gaki Sherocho, would keep his rights and prerogatives. However, the long and fierce resistance of the populace, extending the war for seven months — from March to September 1896 — aroused the fear that the people of Kaffa would revolt at the first opportunity. Therefore, the Negus annexed Kaffa to Ethiopia, naming its conqueror, Wolda Giyorgis , as its ruler. Gaki Sherocho was separated from the other prisoners and sent to Addis Ababa, and would not be allowed to leave there. The country was almost totally devastated.

Thousands of warriors fell in battle, defending their native land. (24) In Europe these events went completely unnoticed. Very few geographers, ethnographers and specialists even knew of the existence of Kaffa. Only the Parisian newspaper *Le Temps* published a

small notice, which included inaccuracies. (25) A. X. Bulatovich was the first to describe these events in detail, as F. Bieber mentioned in his work. (26)

Thus vanished an independent state, which had existed for almost six centuries. However, from the point of view of the objective development of the historical process, in spite of all the brutality permitted the conquerors, regardless of poverty and hunger which reigned in Kaffa after the invasion of the armies of the Negus, the annexation of Kaffa to Ethiopia had a progressive character. A. K. Bulatovich clearly realized this: "Striving to expand the limits of his domain, Menelik is fulfilling the traditional mission of Ethiopia as the disseminator of culture and the unifier of all those inhabiting the Ethiopian plateau and the neighboring related tribes. That was a new step in the establishment and development of the power of a black empire ... We Russians cannot help sympathizing with his intentions, not only because of political considerations, but also for humanitarian reasons. The consequences that the conquests of wild tribes by Europeans lead to are well known. Too great a difference in the degree of culture between the conquered people and their conquerors has always led to the enslavement, corruption, and degeneration of the weaker race. The natives of America degenerated and have almost ceased to exist. The natives of India were corrupted and deprived of individuality. The black tribes of Africa became the slaves of the whites. Clashes between nations more or less close to one another in culture lead to very different results. For the Abyssinians, the Egyptian, Arab, and, finally, European civilizations, which they have gradually adopted, have not been pernicious."

Indeed, in Kaffa not only did many primitive and barbaric customs and ceremonies

disappear (including even human sacrifice), but also opportunities opened for the production of up-to-date weapons and for progressive social-economic relations. Finally, the conquest put an end to centuries-old isolation and made possible the penetration of western capital, and it undoubtedly played a positive role in the revival of the economic life of the country and the rise of more progressive forms of ownership.

Such was in general outline the situation in Ethiopia when A. X. Bulatovich first went there, attached to the Red Cross mission, which was under orders of the Russian government in the spring of 1896. (27)

The struggle which Ethiopia was carrying out for its independence elicited a lively response in Russia, especially in its progressive circles. This much was known: the Ethiopian people fought for their freedom. It is important to keep in mind that Russians considered Ethiopians to be brothers in faith — a circumstance which then had no small significance. The Russian press greeted the victory at Adwa with rejoicing. But there were also more prosaic reasons why the Russian government was ready to provide real help to Ethiopia.

At the end of the 19th century in Russia pre-political capitalism was swiftly growing into imperialism (though not at the pace of Europe or America) — with all its inherent peculiarities, such as striving to seize markets and sources of raw material, expansion, and bitter conflicts with other imperialist powers. In particular, conflicts with imperialist powers impelled the Russian government to support Ethiopia in its struggle with Italy,

and even more so in its struggle with England, a long-time dangerous rival of Russia in Asia. A strong, independent and united Ethiopia (28) would limit the free movement of the English in Africa and would weaken their position on the sea routes leading to the Suez and the Red Sea. Finally, Ethiopia represented a potentially vast market for many Russian goods. (29) Contemporaries knew this well and made no secret of it: "What is Abyssinia to us? Why is it necessary to Russia? ... Remember that it will play an important role for us in the future in Asia. England is such a serious rival to us there and so everything relating to England that takes place in Africa matters. In case of future losses in India, England will hasten to establish a New Empire, trying to unite under its rule a conglomerate of lands from Cape Town to Cairo." (30)

Therefore, in the face of menacing danger, Menelik, not without reason, counted on help from Russia, the one large European power which did not recognize the secret 17th article of the Ucciali Treaty about Ethiopia becoming a protectorate of Italy. (31) This circumstance made the Negus more guarded in relation to France, which took a significantly sharper and more painful political position in Africa. France strove not for the well-being of Ethiopia, but rather to cause as much annoyance as possible to its long-time rival — England.

In Russia, a collection of goods was organized to help the sick and wounded Ethiopian soldiers [from the Battle of Adwa], (32) and a detachment of the Red Cross was sent. The decision to do this was made in March 1896, and 100,000 rubles were allocated for expenses. (33) In addition to the leader (Major General N.K. Shvedov) 61 men joined.

It is hard to say what directly prompted A. X. Bulatovich to apply for inclusion in this detachment to which he was assigned March 26, 1896. (34) One of his fellow travelers, F. E. Krindach, wrote a book that was published in two editions but which is now very rare, *Russian Cavalryman in Abyssinia* (second edition, Saint Petersburg 1898). It was "dedicated to the description of the 350-verst trek, outstanding in difficulty and brilliant in accomplishment, which was carried out under the most extraordinary circumstances by Lieutenant A. X. Bulatovich in April 1896." In the introduction, Krindach considered it necessary to "first of all to establish the fact that A. X. Bulatovich was assigned to the detachment at his own request, as a private person."

A. X. Bulatovich strove to prepare himself as thoroughly as possible for the journey. We know about this not only from his first book, but also from other sources. For instance, Professor V. V. Bolotov, historian of the early church, a man with great and deep knowledge in this area, having mastered many new and ancient eastern languages, including Geez and Amharic, on March 27, 1986 wrote "... an Abyssinian Hierodeacon Gebra Hrystos [Servant of Christ] told me that he wanted me to see Hussar Guard Bulatovich who is going to Abyssinia. It turned out that Bulatovich wanted to know which grammar and dictionary of the Amharic language to get ..." (35)

Apparently, his progress was considerable, because a year later when A. X. Bulatovich had extended his theoretical preparation and supplemented it with practice, this same V.V. Bolotov reported to another addressee "... in March there was no one in Saint Petersburg

who knew Amharic better than I did. Now Life-Guard Kornet A. X. Bulatovich, who has returned from Abyssinia, speaks and even writes some in this language." (36)

The trip to Ethiopia turned out to be longer than anticipated, due to obstacles put in their way by Italians who hadn't given up hope of consolidating their position in Ethiopia. Naturally, any help to Ethiopia, even medical, was undesirable to them.

The detachment was denied entrance to the port at Massawa, despite previously obtained permission, and a cruiser was dispatched to keep watch on the steamer carrying the Russian doctors. (37) Therefore, N.K. Shvedov and his companions sailed from Alexandria to Jibuti, where they arrived on April 18, 1896, as indicated in the book by F.E. Krindach. We now let him tell the story, since Bulatovich himself doesn't mention anywhere the events of the first days of his stay in Africa.

"While the caravan was being formed, circumstances (38) made it necessary to send ahead to Harar an energetic, reliable person, because the rainy season was rapidly approaching. One of the prerequisites for successfully completing this mission was to travel as fast as possible. To carry out this difficult and dangerous mission, they asked for a volunteer. Kornet (now Lieutenant) A. X. Bulatovich accepted the offer. The small Jibuti settlement buzzed with the most diverse rumors and speculation relating to the possible outcome of undertaking such a journey, which would be immense for a European. Not knowing the language and the local conditions, being totally unprepared from this method of travel — on camelback — and the change of climate — all this

justified the skepticism of the local residents, the majority of whom did not admit the possibility of a successful outcome. It is 350-370 versts [233-247 miles] from Jibuti to Harar. Almost the whole extent of the route runs along mountainous and, in part, arid desert, and permits only travel with a pack animal." (39)

The decision to dispatch A. X. Bulatovich as a courier was finally made on April 21. Taking a minimal quantity of the simplest provisions and only one skin of water, A. X. Bulatovich set out on the route, in spite of the fact that on the way he could count on only two springs, of which one was hot and mineral.

On that very day, April 21, at 10 in the evening, A. X. Bulatovich, accompanied by two guides, left Jibuti. Even though he had only had a few hours to practice riding on "the ship of the desert," on the first leg of the journey he went for 20 hours without stopping. By the end of the following day, they had covered 100 kilometers. It is impossible to describe all the troubles of this fatiguing and monotonous journey. A. X. Bulatovich managed to cover the distance of greater than 350 versts [233 miles] in three days and 18 hours, in other words about 6-18 hours faster than professional native couriers. (40) In the course of 90 hours spent on the road, the travelers rested no more than 14 hours. No European up until A. X. Bulatovich ever achieved such brilliant results. This trek "made an enormous impression on the inhabitants of Ethiopia. Bulatovich became a legendary figure. The author [that is F.E. Krindach] had occasion to hear enthusiastic accounts of this trek." (41)

However, Alexander Xavierevich couldn't stay long in Harar. The detachment, having arrived after him, intended to continue to Entotto when orders came from the Negus to wait. Since the rainy season was approaching, which threatened to complicate making further progress, N. K. Shvedov decided to once again send A. X. Bulatovich ahead, so he could, in person, explain the situation and have Menelik change his order. "The distance from Harar to Entotto is about 700 versts [466 miles], but despite the difficulty of the route, Bulatovich covered it in just eight days. It turned out that Abyssinians, who were accustomed to Europeans coming to Abyssinia for personal profit, couldn't understand the unselfish purpose of this detachment. Therefore, several rases opposed the arrival of our medical detachment in Entotto. Bulatovich's explanation not only convinced Menelik to expedite the permission, but also made him impatient for their rapid arrival. ... On July 12 the detachment reached the residence of the Negus and was met by Bulatovich..." (42)

This mission nearly cost Bulatovich his life. The road from Harar to Entotto went through the Danakil Desert. The small caravan (Bulatovich was accompanied by seven or eight men) was set upon by a band of Danakil bandits who took all their supplies and mules. By chance, on June 2, 1896, they were met by N.S. Leontiev, (43) who was going from Entotto to Harar. This was the first meeting of two Russian travelers in Africa. Judging by the words of N.S. Leontiev's apologist Yu. L. Yelts, Leontiev furnished A. X. Bulatovich with all necessities and gave him letters of recommendation to Frenchmen who were living in Entotto in the service of Menelik. (44)

A description of the work of the Red Cross Detachment is a separate subject which has been sufficiently covered in works and publications cited above, and in the stories of individuals who were members of it. (45)

Even several Englishmen, who were forced to accept the presence of Russians in Ethiopia, couldn't help but note that the mission rendered help to the wounded "unselfishly and with good will." (46) At the end of October 1896, the detachment finished its work and in the first days of January of the following year, they returned to Saint Petersburg. As for A. X. Bulatovich, through N.K. Shvedov, he applied for permission to go on an excursion "to better understand of the circumstances in Abyssinia at the time the Red Cross Detachment left the country" and to go to little known and unknown regions of western Ethiopia. He wanted to go into Kaffa, which in its last days of independent existence.(47) This request was supported by the Chief of the Asiatic Bureau Chief of Staff Lieutenant General A. P. Protseko, who noted the energy of A. X. Bulatovich in striving as much as possible to become better acquainted with the country, and that his knowledge of the language and also that the information he collected would be very helpful for the further development of relations with Ethiopia.

Menelik categorically forbade crossing the borders of his realm, since that would mean unavoidable death for the traveler. (48)

On Oct. 28, 1896 A. X. Bulatovich was received by the Negus. Having obtained all necessary permissions, on the following day, he left the capital and, with his fellow

travelers, set out for the River Baro. (49) This expedition lasted three months. He returned on Feb. 1, 1987 and then just two weeks later on Feb. 13 again set out on a trip, this time to Lekemti, and then to Handek — a region in the middle course of the River Angar and its left tributaries and also the valley of the River Didessa. Here A. X. Bulatovich took part in an elephant hunt and learned about the country, its people and the natural conditions. On his return on March 27, a ceremonial reception was prepared for him at the residence of the Negus. On the following day Menelik gave him a private audience. Leaving the capital on March 25, A. X. Bulatovich arrived at Harar on April 4, in Jibuti on April 16, from on April 21 he sailed from there to Europe.

On December 6, 1896, A. X. Bulatovich was promoted to lieutenant with seniority dating back to August 4. (50) For helping the Red Cross Detachment and for his successful expedition he was awarded the Order of Anna in the third degree. (51)

The material he gathered during his trip, he put into the form of a book, entitled *From Entotto to the River Baro. An account of a journey in north-western regions of the Ethiopian Empire*. It appeared in September of that same year, published on orders of the General Staff. (52)

A. X. Bulatovich wrote it in a very short time.

The region that Bulatovich went through and described lies west of Addis Ababa, roughly between 8 and 10 degrees northern latitude. The terrain in this part of the Abyssinian

plateau is very complex. Mountain ranges branching off from the heights of Kaffa and Shoa alternate with deep river valleys. These mountain ranges represent the watershed of tributaries of the Blue Nile, the Sobat, and the Omo.

Bulatovich was the first to put on the map a significant part of the river system of the south-western Abyssinian plateau. He described it and indicated the sources of many rivers. He made two mistakes: he identified the upper reaches of the Gibye River with the upper reaches of the Sobat River and thought that the Baro and Sobat Rivers joined. He corrected those errors during his second expedition. (53)

The reader can see for himself how diverse and instructive is the information contained in that first book of A. X. Bulatovich. Of course, not everything he describes is the result of his own observations. Some he gleaned from the works of other travelers and historians. But many of the facts in this book have lasting value for the study of the history and of the way of life of several peoples of Ethiopia, such as the Galla. He accurately recorded the formation among them of feudal relationships.

Naturally, A. X. Bulatovich was interested in the state of the Ethiopian army. He dedicated many pages to military organization, armaments, and tactics, which given the political situation at the time, were, of course, pressingly important. And they are still of interest to historians today.

Prior to publication of A. X. Bulatovich's book, the General Staff commissioned Colonel

S. V. Kozlov to do an analysis of it. This review, published as a separate brochure, not intended for sale and now very rare, (54) is worth looking in detail. It's difficult to avoid the impression that this is one-sided and excessively critical possibly, the work of a reviewer with a well-known prejudice, far from just and fair. Rather than evaluate the present-day personal observations and discoveries of the author, (only mentioning those in passing), S. V. Koslov dwelt at length on the fact that this book by far was not the most important and complete study of the ancient period of Ethiopian history. He pointed out chronological errors, and mistakes in transcription of Ethiopian words and proper names. Incidentally, in these matters, the reviewer himself was far from strong. S. V. Koslov energetically blamed the author for ignorance of the literature and for mistakes on matters that even today are still far from being resolved, such as the ethnogenesis of the ancient Egyptians, Ethiopians (Cushites), and Semites. S. V. Kozlov himself cited literature that even at that time was not the last word of science. (G. Ebers, F. Lenorman and others). On the other hand, he didn't mention serious specialized studies that had been released not long before and that directly touched on those questions. (55)

Of course, A. X. Bulatovich, not having specialized in this field of study and not having at his disposal free time to deepen his knowledge of ancient history (he was getting ready for his next expedition) made some mistakes and inaccuracies. But those should not have been the focus of the reviewer. S. V. Kozlov failed to notice what was most important — the contribution of the author made to the study of the orography [physical geography dealing with mountains] of the southwestern part of Ethiopia, several regions of which he put on the map for the first time.

Nevertheless, S. V. Kozlov in his "conclusion" admits that "in view of his personal talents and his great power of observation," the author managed in a relatively short time "to gather some interesting information ..." (56)

After the annexation of Kaffa, Menelik did not stop striving to secure the southern and southwestern borders of his possessions. He declared that that included the territory north of 2 degrees north latitude. (Today it extends no farther south than 4 degrees north latitude). And it reached to the right bank of the Nile. (57) In order to strengthen the claim of Ethiopia, the Negus, counting on the support of Russia and France and hoping that Britain had its hands tied in its war with the Boers, began to actively prepare an expedition to seize disputed regions. Three armies equipped by him planned to set out at the beginning of 1898.

At the end of 1897, Russia and Ethiopia reached an agreement for establishing diplomatic relations. An extraordinary mission, under the leadership of P. M. Vlasov set out from Saint Petersburg to Addis Ababa. Attached to this mission, Colonel of the General Staff L. K. Artamonov was commissioned to compile a military-statistical description of Ethiopia. (58) The convoy, consisting mostly of Cossacks, (59) was commanded by A. X. Bulatovich. Aside from him, the staff of the mission only included a few officers. The head of the Red Cross mission General Shvedov gave his positive testimonial in a personal letter to A. P. Protenko. And Protenko, by his own acknowledgement, used "the personal explanations and reports of Lieutenant Bulatovich" for outfitting the military

part of the mission (60)

To safeguard the reception of the mission and to notify the Negus of its imminent arrival, A. X. Bulatovich left Saint Petersburg earlier than the others — September 10, 1897. (61)

A. X. Bulatovich was accompanied, at his request, by Private of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment Zelepukin, a devoted and courageous companion who shared with him all the burden and adversity. (62)

On his arrival in Addis Ababa A. X. Bulatovich learned of Menelik's intention to annex to Ethiopia regions lying to the north of Lake Rudolf. For that, Ras Wolda Giyorgis was setting out with his army from recently conquered Kaffa. Menelik expressed the desire that the Russian officer accompany that army.

Meanwhile, the mission of P. M. Vlasov, which set sail from Odessa on October 19, because of procrastinations and complications provoked by the malevolence of colonial European powers, was detained in Jibuti. A. X. Bulatovich, in order to take part in the expedition to Lake Rudolf, needed to obtain permission from the head of the mission whose arrival in the capital had been delayed. Therefore of his own volition and enterprise, Alexander Xavierevich decided to go to meet the mission, not fearing the difficult and long route, which, however, he already knew. Here is what he wrote on his return to Addis Ababa on December 26, 1897, to the head of the Asiatic Section of the General Staff Lieutenant General A. P. Protsenko: "The only obstacle ... was that I could not go without the permission of our envoy, and at that time there was no information

about where he was. I had no choice but to go to meet him as quickly as possible even if I had to go all the way to Jibuti, which I did. I decided to make this trip on November 26, by which time I had worked out the plan of the whole campaign. On November 27 I left for Harar, where I arrived in six days. The embassy was already in Jibuti. I stayed in Harar for twenty-four hours, changed men, hiring two servants, bought two fresh animals and, setting out on the next day, after four days met the embassy six hours outside of Jibuti, from which they had already started. This was December 8. Having stayed with them for two days, on December 10, with two fresh mules and three fresh servants, I started back to Addis Ababa, with the permission of the envoy. On December 20, after 10 days, I delivered this letter to Menelik, who was startled by how quickly I had made the trip and called me 'a bird.' In 23 days I had gone to Jibuti and back of which three days were for stop-overs; in other words in 20 days I went 1600 versts [1060 miles].

Tomorrow, December 27, I will set out to catch up with the army of the Ras." (63) A. X. Bulatovich gave P. M. Vlasov a thorough and rich-in-content written report about the political situation in Abyssinia and the intrigues of England, Italy, and France. (64)

After a long and exhausting trip, the diplomatic mission finally arrived on February 4, 1898 in Addis Ababa. Menelik was impatiently awaiting them, having arranged for the Russian diplomats a ceremonial reception such as no other embassy had ever been awarded. (65)

A. X. Bulatovich had to move very fast: the detachment of Wolde Georgis was getting ready to set out any day, and the route to Andrachi — the capital of Kaffa — where the

residence of the race was located, was not short. In spite of exhaustion, A. X. Bulatovich, had to get on the road again right after his audience with the Negus. He tells about this trek in detail in his book. There is very little left to add to his narrative. But to understand the importance of the study he did of Kaffa and of the regions that bordered it to the southwest, one must briefly take note of what was known about this country up until that book by A. X. Bulatovich was published.

The state of Kaffa arose probably at the end of the 13th century. It was founded by the Gonga people, which from that time started to call itself Kaffa. About the ancient history of this people, the place of their original residence and the paths they wandered, all that is known are vague legends in the oral tradition. The king was considered the supreme owner of all land and property and everyone was his subject. Therefore, we can say that in Kaffa, as in several other medieval states of Africa, there existed an early-class society with the despotic rule of a deified king. Slavery was wide-spread, especially among the nobility. Rulers and princelings of tribes and nationalities subdued by the king of Kaffa considered themselves his vassals and paid a fixed tribute. Without the influence of neighboring Ethiopia, they adopted feudal relationships in the most primitive form .

Striving to strengthen the existing order, government workers headed by the king and the council of seven elders —representatives of the most distinguished families (the so-called "mikirecho) — opposed with all their strength the penetration of any outside influence. Trade could only take place in the city of Bonga, which was specially designated for that, and only with the permission of the king. The whole country was surrounded by a fence

with watch towers.

This is why it was only in the sixteenth century that the first information about Kaffa. In fact, "Cafa was only the name of the capital. The Portugese Balthasar Tellez wrote about it in a history of Ethiopia published in 1660. He used the reports of his compatriot Jesuit missionary Father Antonio Fernandez, who in 1613 visited lands that neighbored Kaffa, but did not go to its borders. After that, Europeans forgot about Kaffa. The silence lasted a hundred and thirty years. At the end of the eighteenth century the well-known English traveler James Bruce, having discovered the area of the sources of the Blue Nile, mentioned Kaffa and described his travels and reported some details about it.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the location of Kaffa was more or less accurately indicated on maps. The Frenchman T. Lefevre, who lived for many years in Ethiopia, tried to gather all that was up to that time known about Kaffa, primarily from asking Ethiopians who had been there. But, in truth, that amounted to very little.

Finally, in 1843, Antoine d'Abbadie, a prominent French explorer of Ethiopia, who traveled for 12 years in that country and made many discoveries about it, crossed the secret borders of Kaffa. His stay in the forbidden kingdom lasted eleven days, and he never penetrated beyond Bongo. But in this brief time he made valuable geodesic observations. In addition, he gathered additional information about Kaffa during his long travels in Ethiopia. (66)

For almost two years (from October 1859 to August 1861) a monk of the Cappuchin order lived there. He later became Cardinal G. Massai, the head of a Catholic mission. However, the excessive zeal he showed in trying to "save the souls" of the local people prompted the then reigning king to kick Massai out of the country. After he became cardinal, Massai wrote twelve volumes about his stay in Ethiopia. Of those only one was devoted to Kaffa, its inhabitants, and their customs and ways of life. (67) These writings, done from memory (the journals of Massai were lost), have significant value, as they tell of years before Kaffa lost its independence.

Capitan A. Chekki and Engineer Kyarini, after an exhausting, very dangerous journey, arrived at the region of Gera to the north of Kaffa. Here they were detained. With difficulty, combining cleverness and force, they succeeded in freeing themselves. In June of 1879 they, over the course of a week, walked through the northern region of the country and, avoiding Bonga, penetrated to the region of Kor, in the northwest of Kaffa. Not able to endure the difficulties of the trip, Kyarini died in October of that year. As for A. Chekki, he published a description of Kaffa and its inhabitants. The account even included a grammar of the Kaffa language. (68)

One of the few Europeans who succeeded in visited this almost legendary country in the last years before the end of its independence was the Frenchman P. Soleillet. But his stay in Kaffa lasted only ten days (in the middle of December 1883) and was limited to just the northern outskirts. Nevertheless, P. Soleillet was lucky enough to catch sight of something that after him no one else saw — Kaffa in all its ancient splendor. He

published his impressions and observations in the journal of the Geographic Society of Rouen, and then published a separate book which today is very rare. (69)

So, at the end of the nineteenth century only five Europeans had managed to visit Kaffa: three Italians and two Frenchmen. Only G. Massai was able to stay there more than two weeks, and no one managed to penetrate to the depth of the country. They could only acquaint themselves with the outskirts, primarily the northern outskirts.

This is why A. K. Bulatovich could for good reason call himself "the first to pass through" Kaffa. It is true that he saw this amazing country after it was devastated and ravaged, with wounds that had not yet scarred, inflicted on them by their conquerors. They had not yet forgotten the events of war — only a few months had passed since the Kaffa were subjugated by Menelik. And the memories of the old traditions, customs, and the way of life were still vivid. Therefore, Bulatovich was able to gather information which later travelers couldn't because it was no longer in existence. This is why the material gathered by him is one of the basic sources of knowledge about the history and ethnography of Kaffa.

On June 5, 1898, Bulatovich returned to Addis Ababa and after nine days set out by courier to Saint Petersburg, where he arrived at the end of July.

According to his words, during the time of his second trip to Ethiopia, not counting crossings by railroad and steam ship, he covered about eight thousand versts (5300

miles), over the course of which there were only four extended stops amounting to a total of 69 days. He was on the go for 211 days, having spent a significant amount of his own money — about five thousand rubles. (70)

The reports of Bulatovich, which only partially — together with diplomatic considerations — were represented in the book *With the Armies of Menelik II*, contained valuable historical information about the political and military situation that arose in Ethiopia in the closing years of the nineteenth century. P. M. Vlasov more than once used those reports in his communiques to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Not without reason, Vlasov wrote that "the full report of Lieutenant ... Bulatovich about his nearly five-month stay in the southern detachment of the Ethiopian army, in which he succeeded in going to Lake Rudolf and shared all the burdens, hardships, and dangers of that journey, undertaken in completely unknown, and never before discovered country ... The said officer ... had to deny himself all of the most necessary things, even including normal food and submitted himself to a regimen extremely difficult for Europeans. It is important to give Lieutenant Bulatovich credit: over the course of this journey he showed himself as a Russian officer of the best kind, and clearly demonstrated to the Ethiopians, how capable the valiant Russian army could be, selflessly devoted to its duty, a brilliant representative of which he appears among them..." (71).

And A. X. Bulatovich managed all his commissions, including diplomatic ones, superbly. In the spring of 1898, P. M. Vlasov noticed some cooling of Menelik toward Russia, not without basis, which he attributed to intrigues of European advisors (such as A. Ilg), who

were not at all interested in the strengthening of the influence of Russian diplomats. Then A. X. Bulatovich, in his next audience with the Negus, using his knowledge of the Amharic language, in the absence of A. Ilg, cleared up the situation and convinced him that that it was Ilg who was hindering the mission's activities. (72) As testimony to the prowess of A. X. Bulatovich and his service to Ethiopia, Ras Wolda Giyorgis gave him a golden shield and saber that he had received from the Negus. This was was the highest military honor. The gift was approved by the Negus, who in an official announcement to P. M. Vlasov on June 14, 1898 said of the Russian officer: "I sent Alexander Bulatovich to war with Ras Wolda Giyorgis. What Wolda Giyorgis wrote to me about his conduct delighted me. The content was as follows: 'going there and returning he [i.e., Bulatovich] thought of everything for the journey. I gave him men, and he, crossing all lands and all mountains, never said "I am tired today and have to rest. If he left in the evening, he returned that night. He was surrounded by enemies. What he had to do was difficult ... I thought with grief that he would die, but the Lord of Menelik returned him safely. I never saw such a man as he, strong, indefatigable ...' Ras Wolde Georgis wrote that he would be happy to give Bulatovich his good saber, and I permitted him to give Bulatovich this saber, and I will be very happy if you officially confirm that permission from his native land." (73) And his native land valued him as well, as witnessed by the award of the Order of Stanislaw in the second degree. Besides which he was promoted to staff-rotmister with seniority dating from April 5 1898. (74)

As soon as he arrived in Saint Petersburg — July 30, 1898 — A. X. Bulatovich presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Count M. N. Muraviev a detailed written report in

which he characterized the situation in Ethiopia and pointed out the benefits that Russia could reap from permanent friendly relations with that country. (75) M. N. Muraviev found that the information provided by A. X. Bulatovich "can have serious significance in the future," and ordered that this written report to be sent to War Minister A. N. Kuropatkin, and likewise to the Russian ambassadors to Paris, London, Constantinople and the diplomatic agent in Cairo. (76) Kuropatkin, although he found the report "interesting," did not agree to support its suggestions, thinking that Russia should "for a long time avoid interfering in African affairs." (77)

A. X. Bulatovich stayed in Saint Petersburg until March 10 1899, when he was once again sent to Ethiopia at the personal request of Minister of Foreign Affairs M. N. Muraviev, who wrote about this to A. N. Kuropatkin: "... the named officer succeeded in proving himself in the most brilliant way during his journeys to the borders of Ethiopia ... he completely familiarized himself with the local customs and ways he learned the language of the country with which he is fluent, and he shows rare powers of endurance, bravery, and presence of mind, and ... finally, with all his qualities he managed to earn the respect of Abyssinian commanders and the trust of the Negus himself, who was especially well disposed toward him and for whom the choice of Lieutenant Bulatovich would be above all agreeable." (78) But before his departure on January 13 1899, at the general meeting of the Russian Geographical Society, A. X. Bulatovich delivered an "interesting report," entitled "From Abyssinia Through the Country of Kaffa to Lake Rudolf," which was subsequently published in "News of the Russian Geographical Society." (79) Then he finished his principal work *With the Armies of Menelik II*, which

was published in 1900. In the opinion of the well-known learned geographer Yu. M. Shokalskiy, as a result of the discoveries made by A. X. Bulatovich "there appeared not only geographical descriptions of localities and ethnographic collections, but a new map of the countries traversed, establishing on the basis of surveys, carried out by the traveler himself, based on 34 astronomical points, determined by the traveler." (80) By declaration of the Division of Geographical Mathematics and Physical Geography, A. X. Bulatovich was awarded the small silver medal. (81)

Thus, the works of A. X. Bulatovich immediately received the recognition of specialists. As for the opinion of the press, by two reviewers differed in their judgement. *Russian Thought* (82) one of the most solid and widely circulated "thick" journals, spoke out about the scientific contributions of the author, recognizing the value of his discoveries and observations in the area of geography and ethnography: "The descriptions of the actions of Abyssinian armies and A. X. Bulatovich's observations about them as a military specialist are of significant interest." The reviewer furthermore mentions that the author chose the form of a diary account and with "documentary truth ... goes into detail, reporting a mass of uninteresting information and petty facts." It is difficult to agree with this judgement. The accuracy and documentary nature of the account significantly raises the scientific importance of A. X. Bulatovich's book. But this anonymous reviewer approaches the book as if it were a work of fiction.

Another journal *God's World* gave instead of providing a serious critique of the book, published, under the initials of A. B. Podmeniv, a light-weight mocking and cheap

demagogic piece, that shows a complete absence of feeling for history and scientific objectivity. He only takes notice of "the work of Menelik in the destruction of peoples surrounding Abyssinia," the description of which supposedly "makes up the full content" of A. X. Bulatovich's diary. The reviewer does not consider the historical meaning of the events, despite the fact that the author clearly explained that at the very beginning of the book. In the reviewer's opinion, "Bulatovich not only approves" the "simplified politics of Menelik" but "also contrasts it to the 'corrupting' politics of the English and other civilizing peoples." Thus, a weak critic who did not understand anything, actually praises the colonizing politics "of the cultured imperialist powers, who were striving to take in hand not only the tribes who are neighbors of Ethiopia, but Ethiopia itself. The reviewer doesn't even mention the discoveries of A. X. Bulatovich and what he did for science This is "shameful" not for "Russian readers, who the author ... asks to sympathize with the intentions of Abyssinian politics," but for the reviewer himself , who is so limited and silly.

The work of this Russian traveler was also valuable to specialists in the West. Friedrich Bieber, who was and remains the most profound expert on the exploration of Kaffa, wrote: "The first European who entered the country of Kaffa after it was conquered and annexed and who could freely travel in it was a Russian, A. X. Bulatovich, a captain in the Tsar's Life-Guard Regiment. A. X. Bulatovich published a book about his journey, with many rare illustrations and a large map. Unfortunately for non-Russians, it is inaccessible. In it, he provides detailed reports about the country and the population of Kaffa." (84) F. Bieber directly acknowledges that he borrowed information from A. X.

Bulatovich, for example regarding the conquest of Kaffa. (85) However, F. Bieber was primarily interested in Kaffa itself, and therefore his evaluation is one-sided. The work of the Russian traveler contains valuable and abundant material for the history and ethnography of all of Ethiopia. Besides, A. X. Bulatovich made a series of geographical discoveries, the priority of which, in several instances, were disputed in detail in Italy. (86)

The regions that A. X. Bulatovich visited in two journeys were very little known and studied, above all Kaffa and the lower course of the Omo River. His first work — *From Entotto to the River Baro* — contains a detailed orographic hydrographic characterization of the southwest part of the Abyssinian plateau; such as several mountain ranges located in the regions of Didessa and Gaba, where the heights of Kaffa become the plateau of Shoa. He was the first to make a detailed map and to describe the region of the basin of the tributaries of the Blue Nile — the Gudar and Didessa Rivers, and likewise the Baro River, a tributary of the Sobat. He accurately showed their sources.

Actually, right up to the last decade of the nineteenth century the region to the southwest from Kaffa to Lake Rudolf remained almost unexplored, and the representations of the River Omo were confused and vague. The expeditions of D. Smith in 1894-1895 and V. Bottego in 1896 did not bring clarity.

A. X. Bulatovich was the first to compile a detailed map of this extensive area and determine astronomically a series of points that showed conclusively that the Omo River

does not have any relationship with the Sobat River, nor with the basin of the Nile. The sources of the Omo are located on the eastern slopes of the mountain range which he named Nicholas II. (87) Up until A. X. Bulatovich, only A. d'Addadi, P. Soleillet, and A. Chekki observed it from afar, but none of them reached it. I. V. Bottego at the time of his second journey, from which he was not destined to return, followed the left bank of the Omo and saw these mountains. However, he didn't cross them, despite the assertions of D. Ronkali, as Krahmer correctly explains. (88) Ronkali incorrectly made note of "separate false remarks of Rotmister Bulatovich — as a result of his ignorance of the history of the discovery of these regions." However, the Russian explorer, as we just saw, was familiar with the latest literature. Of course, working on his book, he could not have known about the results of V. Bottego's journey, the description of which was published at the same time as his. (89) However, this doesn't change anything. A. X. Bulatovich was well informed about the route which V. Bottego and his fellow-travelers followed, and also one of them, Kh. Kavendish, compiled a map on which he noted their route. (90) Thus A. X. Bulatovich was not only sufficiently knowledgeable about specialized literature, but also took account of the accomplishments of other travelers, the contributions of whom, as is clearly visible on the map, he did not want to and could not ascribe to himself.

V. Bottego reached the mouth of the Omo on August 30, 1896, (91) in other words half a year before A. X. Bulatovich, on March 26 1898, saw Lake Rudolf at the place where that river flows into it. But if you compare the maps compiled by both travelers, the result will by far not be helpful to the Italian: the mountains on the right (western) bank are

indicated on his map in the most general outlines, noting the closest northern bank of Lake Rudolf. (92) The route of V. Bottego differs from the path taken by A. X. Bulatovich. Having proceeded to the south along the western shore of the lake, V. Bottego and his fellow travellers turned back north to the Shashi River and went along it to the Sobat River, indicating all this on the map very generally and schematically. Besides — and this is essential — A. K. Bulataovich was the first to cross the northern spurs of the mountain range between the Umom and Didessa Rivers on November 16 1896/ (93) He then crossed these mountains in different directions, having established a series of astronomical points, and produced a survey of the route, which made it possible to establish the first detailed map of this extensive and almost unknown region. His observations and map showed that the designated mountain range served as the watershed between the basin of the Nile and Lake Rudolf, and that the northern spurs form the watershed of the Didessa, Gaba, Baro, and other rivers. A. X. Bulatovich discovered several new mountain peaks and defined more precisely the location of others, that had been mistakenly located by D. Smith. That is why he had every reason to declare in his lecture: "I was the first European to proceed through these regions and to discover the actual mountain range. I crossed that mountain range at several places, climbed to several of its peaks, and walked along its crest." (94) Thus, having explored a region that no one else had described, which lies between 7 degrees north latitude and Lake Rudolf and between the Omo River and the Nile, A. X. Bulatovich made a large contribution to the physical geography of the southwestern part of Ethiopia. In addition, he gathered data valuable for the characterization of the climate of that region, for which he "carried out a vertical zonal analysis of the climate and the change of climatic zones depending on the

height of the relief." (95)

The works of A. X. Bulatovich have no less significance for the history and ethnography of Ethiopia, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. (96) It is extraordinarily important that A. K. Bulatovich wrote not from memory, and that he systematically kept a diary. Of course, it would be foolish not to evaluate his opinions, his decisions, his descriptions, his method of exposition from the point of view of the present-day level of science, and to criticize him for methodological mistakes. A. X. Bulatovich was by his world view an idealist. But he was intelligent, observant, totally honest. He soberly evaluated the facts and was able to analyze them. He sometimes arrived at conclusions that would bring honor to a present-day Marxist historian. Moreover, he correctly realized the historical necessity of the conquest of Kaffa and the neighboring regions. A. K. Bulatovich recognized that the unification of the country cost thousands of human lives. And if he, at times, because of insufficient specialized knowledge and preparation, and likewise as a result of methodological weakness, simplified the ancient and medieval history of Ethiopia; nevertheless he accurately and penetratingly explained the goals and political missions of the colonial powers in Africa and, in particular, in Ethiopia. (97)

Everything that A. X. Bulatovich wrote is imbued with a true sympathy for Ethiopians. He emphasized their bravery, their love of their native land, their pride. True, sometimes he got carried away and excessively idealized some statesmen, for instance Wolda Giyorgis, who for all his wisdom, administrative abilities, and political farsightedness,

was an eastern despot.

Particularly interesting are his remarks about the nature of slavery, which had been abolished by Menelik II, but in fact still existed at the end of the nineteenth century, in particular among the Galla, where the sphere of application of the work of slaves was not limited to the household. The books of A. X. Bulatovich clearly show the peculiar social-economic and state structure of Ethiopia at that time. Here, in the centralized feudal state that had been formed, were interwoven survivals of a communal-clan structure and eastern slave-owning despotism. If, as it is shown in the book *From Entotto to the River Baro*, the process of feudalization had not yet finished, then among the more advanced people (for instance the Amhara), it had already almost come to an end. Of course, one must take into account the author's terminology. For example, when he spoke of "republican" and "monarchic" social structures among individual Galla tribes, he had in mind various stages of development of the clan-tribe system. But what is important, of course, isn't the terminology, but the facts he presented and the logical conclusions he makes on the basis of them. The historian and the ethnographer will find information about the status of artisans and peasants, and about the origin of a new social stratum of merchants as a result of the influence of European capital, and about the religion and way of life of various tribes. In particular, he includes curious material showing the influence of folklore on Ethiopian hagiography and describes little known tribes living in the region of the lower course of the Omo and the northern banks of Lake Rudolf, as well as much more. All of this gives A. X. Bulatovich's book the significance of an indispensable first source, as was recognized by such authorities as Academic I. Yu. Krachikovskiy: "A.

Bulatovich ... left a large footprint in science with a series of printed works, connected with multiple journeys through Abyssinia. His vivid observations have undoubted importance, and the ethnographic material collected by him has been highly valued in our day, all the more so since Bulatovich visited regions which had been inaccessible to other travelers ... His advantage relative to many other Russian travelers derived from his fluency in the spoken Amharic language ... In his books Bulatovich included considerable information about the spoken languages of Ethiopia." (98)

Having relentlessly suppressed the uprising of the Mahdi in the Sudan, the English continued to push forward to the north, approaching the recently established western borders of Ethiopia. The English did not abandon their plan to unify by railroad its possessions in South Africa and in the Sudan. To accomplish this they would need to seize the region of Beni-Shangul, which had been annexed to the possessions of the Negus after the campaign of Wolda Giyorgis, and also regions adjacent to Lake Rudolf, and a significant part of the basins of the Sobata, Baro, and Juba Rivers. The English did not even try to hide their intentions, as is evident from a conversation on February 19, 1899 between P. M. Vlasov and Harrington, the representative of Britain in Addis Ababa. (99) However, to bring these plans to reality, they had to strengthen themselves in the Sudan, without which they could not begin a war with Ethiopia. Such was the firm opinion of the Russian diplomat, who plainly told that to Menelik, advising him to stand firm and not submit to the threats of the English. However, the Negus himself was sufficiently decisively deposed and answered the threats and blackmail of Harrington telling him that that with weapons in hand he would defend his possessions. (100) The

French supported him in this: at the end of February 1899 the mission of Major Marchand arrived in Addis Ababa.

At the height of these events, A. K. Bulatovich was on the way to Addis Ababa, where he once again was supposed to act under the orders of Addis Ababa. A. X. Bulatovich arrived at the capital on May 14, 1899. On the road there, at 20 versts [33 miles] from Harar, he met Marchand, who was making his way to Jibuti with his fellow travelers. Marchand told A. X. Bulatovich that the English intended to attack Ethiopia in 1900. A. X. Bulatovich later reported that to P. M. Vlasov. (101)

When the English pushed ahead toward the region of Beni-Shangul, Menlik sent Dajazmatch Demissew, the ruler of Wollega, there with a detachment of five thousand men, ordering him to advance to Fazogli. On June 26 1899, (102) A. X. Bulatovich went to the Dajazmatch, having received instructions from P. M. Vlasov.( 103) and also with a letter from the Negus, in which he instructed Demissew to show the Russian officer complete cooperation in carrying out his assignment of organizing the defense of the border. On July 6, A. X. Bulatovich arrived at the residence of the Dajazmatch, the city of Desetu, where a ceremonial reception had been prepared for him, with an honorary guard of fifty men. Then A. X. Bulatovich, with letters to all the garrison commanders in Beni-Shangul, and accompanied by a detachment of porters, advanced further. Reports sent on the way provided him with information that enabled him to quickly and accurately orient himself to the political situation, so he could work out an effective plan for protecting the integrity of Ethiopia territory from the claims of the English, who were using tribes

inhabiting Beni-Shangul to advance their aims. A. X. Bulatovich considered measures taken on site and the plans in case of invasion of an aggressor were insufficient. He so informed P. M. Vlasov. A. K. Bulatovich insisted that to reinforce the border against invasion by the enemy, it was important to move troops to the area, to seize the main strategic points, to strengthen garrisons, and to improve the communications and the security of the border army, because the English had at their disposal convenient waterways. (104)

Going from place to place, A. X. Bulatovich continued to study the situation in Beni-Shangul, and the regions of Fazogli and Dul, combining purely military observations with scientific research, making a systematic map of the area and determining astronomical points, for which he managed to climb to mountain tops. So, for example, on October 23, 1899, he climbed Mount Bochacha. This trek abounded in difficulties and dangers. It took place during the rainy season. At a time when the Ethiopians themselves recognized the impossibility of travel, A. X. Bulatovich and his fellow-travelers "succeeded in struggling with the most difficult climatic conditions, with disease, and even with starvation." During an elephant hunt, an enraged she-elephant attacked A. X. Bulatovich. His gun misfired. (105) His life was saved by soldier-hussar Kapnin who kept his head, and whose bravery and exemplary conduct Bulatovich emphasized, petitioning for a decoration for him. (106)

P. M. Vlasov received both written reports and oral ones delivered at audiences to the Negus, who "went into raptures and was amazed by the work of A. K. Bulatovich, whose

iron-like energy, power of endurance and familiarity with every hardship, knowledge of military matters and extraordinary courage overcome all obstacles and dangers." (107) P. M. Vaslov reported to the ministry in Saint Petersburg: "... it is impossible not to notice that this officer in his latest mission, as in the two previous ones, retained among the Abyssinians the fully deserved reputation of a splendid dashing cavalryman, indefatigable, fearless, and selflessly devoted to his duty. Furthermore, he demonstrated in the most brilliant way, not only to the Abyssinians but also to Europeans who are here, that an officer reared in a Russian school and having the high honor of being in the ranks of the imperial guard is capable of such feats of selflessness." (108)

A. X. Bulatovich returned to Addis Ababa on October 24, 1899. (109) His dispatches caught the attention of Menelik, and he asked P. M. Vlasov to present to him a detailed report about the military and political situation on the western border. This report, compiled by A. X. Bulatovich and translated to the Amharic language, was personally given to the Negus in November. (110)

This detailed, circumstantial and wise memorandum of A. X. Bulatovich thoroughly considered and analyzed many aspects of the way of life of the peoples who inhabited the western border region of Ethiopia — their social order and style of life, their temperament and tendency for further development, which in the given political situation was essential for defense and in the future could have great significance for the strengthening the internal position and consolidating the country. In this report he unequivocally emphasized that the most dangerous and fundamental enemy of the

country was England, which had already in the time of Negus Tewodros tried to take possession of Ethiopia. Now it once again, from the southwest, from Uganda, and from the northwest, from the Sudan, threatened Beni-Shangul and the lands of the Galla, which by agreement with Italy belonged to the regions of Shoa, Gojjam and Tigre, according to the amicable partition of the country. The Negus must not believe evidently suborned advisors who whisper to him that the English have the peace-loving intentions and would not fight against anyone. He must prepare for war. For this, first of all he had to reorganize the army, where feudal order still reigned. He had to regulate the system of collection of taxes with the aim of increasing them. He had to separate local military administration from local civil administration, in order to weaken the local rulers. In addition, he needed prohibit them from maintaining personal troops above a strictly established number of soldiers. All these measures would significantly strengthen the military, political and financial power of the Negus. And undermining the foundation of the feudal order would benefit the establishment of a single, strong, central government, capable of defending its independence from the encroachments of colonial powers.

The conversation of Menelik with A. X. Bulatovich, in which they discussed his report, took place face-to-face, in the presence of only the personal secretary of the Negus, Gabro Sellassie, (111) since Menelik prudently sent away his retinue. Immediately understanding the significance of the proposed reforms, he ardently thanked Bulatovich, saying: "Your advice comes from the heart." (112)

Some of the measures proposed by A. X. Bulatovich, were already in place, for example

the reorganization of the civil administration and the strengthening of the borders. Other advice Menelik urgently made use of. In particular, he increased the strength of the army.

A. K. Bulatovch used his stay in the western regions of Ethiopia for new geographical and ethnographic studies, the results of which up until now, unfortunately, have not been published. A. X. Bulatovich never succeeded in putting them into shape. However, from the materials preserved in the archives of the All-Union Geographical Society, he made more than 80 observations to determine astronomical points between Addis Ababa and Fazogli, evidently with the aim of making maps of this region, judging from the sketches of maps and quick notes that accompany them. (113) Extremely interesting, based on his own observations, was his report about slavery in the eastern regions of the Sudan, where, in his opinion, it was the basis of the economic structure; and in the western regions of Ethiopia, where slavery was preserved as a surviving structure of gradually displaced feudal relations. The work of slaves was employed primarily in the households of the aristocracy. (114)

Returning to Russia, A. X. Bulatovich intended to pass through the Sudan and Egypt. But the English Resident in Egypt, Lord Cromer, at first absolutely refused to grant permission for passage, claiming this was because of "disorder in the region." However, the true reason was different: Harrington, the representative of England in Addis Ababa, "had already for a long time considered Staff-Rotmister Bulatovich as a very energetic and knowledgeable man whom the English should beware of." Naturally, they didn't want to let into the Sudan this wise, experienced, and observant traveler, who could bring back

any information he gathered for the use of Ethiopia. Only under pressure of the Russian general consul in Cairo, T.S. Koyander, was Lord Cromer forced to give permission for the passage of A. X. Bulatovich through the Sudan. But it was already too late. He set out for his native land by the route he had taken previously, intending to visit Jerusalem and then Iran and Kurdistan. (115) However, he was forbidden to travel to those countries by the Minister of War, A.N. Kuropatkin. (116)

Stopping by at his mother's residence in Lutsikovka, A. X. Bulatovich returned to Saint Petersburg at the beginning of May 1900. But this time, too, his stay in his native land turned out to be brief — even shorter than before. On June 23, 1900, in accord with personal instructions of the Tsar to the Chief of Staff, he was sent to Port Arthur to the command of the Commander-in-Chief of Kwantung Province, for attachment to one of the cavalry or Cossack units operating in China. (117) What gave rise to this assignment is not known. Probably, the hurried departure prevented A. X. Bulatovich from reworking and publishing his notes from his third journey that he had brought back with him from Ethiopia. Subsequently, he never returned to those notes, and one must suppose that a significant part of them perished together with the rest of his papers.

At the completion of military activities, on July 8, 1901, A. X. Bulatovich returned to his regiment. After a month, he was assigned, at first temporarily, and then permanently, (118) to command the Fifth Squadron. On April 14, 1902, he was promoted to the rank of "rotmister" [Captain of cavalry]. He was also awarded the Order of Anna of the Second Degree with Swords and the Order of Saint Vladimir of the Fourth Degree with Swords

and a Bow. (119) On August 21, 1902, there followed permission to accept and wear the Order of the Legion of Honor (120) that had been conferred on him by the French government. At that time, too, he finished, with first-class grades, an accelerated course at the First Pavloskiy War College.

A brilliant military career awaited the intelligent, talented, courageous guard officer. But after returning from Manchuria, the life of A. X. Bulatovich suddenly changed. The events of the last decade of his life are still far from clear. A few separate episodes and dates show through more or less distinctly, but even those were established only recently. It remains to hope that subsequent research will be crowned with success, and we will be able to get a fuller and clearer idea of this unusual man.

December 18, 1902, A. X. Bulatovich was released from command of his squadron; and, as of January 27, 1903, he was discharged into the reserves "for family reasons." (121) Apparently, it was at this time that he made the decision to take monastic vows.

What led to this act that amazed not only all of fashionable Saint Petersburg, but even his closest friends? We can only guess. A deeply religious man, honest, kind, inquisitive, he fell under the influence of a preacher and mystic who was well-known at that time — Father Ioann of the Kronstadt Cathedral. By other accounts, he was oppressed by unreciprocated feelings for the daughter of the commander of the the regiment, Prince Vassilchikov. Undoubtedly, his experiences in the field of battle, the bloody brutalities of war played a large role.

Apparently, it is more correct to speak of the sum of all these causes, but, for the present, it is impossible to give a precise answer.

After taking monastic vows (probably in 1906, because on March 30, 1906, he retired from the army), "Father Anthony," as A. X. Bulatovich now called himself, set out for the "Holy Mountain" of Athos. According to his own account, up until 1911 his life was "secluded, silent, solitary." He was entirely occupied with his own religious activities, and never went beyond the walls of the monastery. "I kept myself away from all business and did not know what happened in the outside world, for I read absolutely no journals nor newspapers." In 1910 he was made a hieromonk, and at the very beginning of 1911, Father Anthony set out for the fourth and last time to Ethiopia.

In 1898 by Lake Rudolf, Alexander Xavriyevich had found a badly wounded boy named "Vaska," had nursed him back to health, and then had taken him back to Russia, baptized him, taught him Russian, and looked after his education. According to M. X. Orbeliani [sister of Bulatovich], Vaska was a "kind, gentle, and unfortunate boy," who had suffered much from his mutilation. Entering the monastery, A. X. Bulatovich took Vaska with him as a lay brother, but Vaska suffered from constant mockeries. Finally, when an opportunity arose, Bulatovich sent him back to his native land. Missing his ward, after a three-year separation, Father Anthony, in his own words, "wanted to see him and give him the Holy Eucharist." So, Father Anthony went for a year to Ethiopia. (122) What he did there, aside from "giving the Holy Eucharist," was determined quite recently from the

report of the charge d'affaires in Ethiopia B. Chermerzin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 15, 1911. (123) [See *My Third Journey*, part 3 of this collection.] It appears that it was not just anxieties about saving the soul of Vaska that attracted Father Anthony to Ethiopia.

On his arrival in Ethiopia, Father Anthony was sick for the first two months.

At this time, the Emperor Menelik had been severely ill for a long while. He didn't appear at official ceremonies and received no one, which led to rumors that he had really died and that his death was being concealed by those in court circles.

Using his old connections and his relationship with the Emperor, Father Anthony not only obtained an audience but even got permission to "treat" the royal patient. Praying, Anthony massaged the body of the Emperor and sprinkled it with holy water and oil. He also applied wonder-working icons. But, of course, he did not succeed in bringing about any improvement in Menelik's health. As a result, B. Chermerzin notes with irony, it was established that the Emperor was alive and that rumors that someone resembling him had been substituted for him were absolutely false.

Next, A. X. Bulatovich tried to found a Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical mission and an Athonite monastery in Ethiopia. On an island of Lake "Khorshale" [Lake Shala?] he wanted to found a monastery with a school, where the children of local inhabitants could get an elementary education. He assumed that the money to do this could be collected by

voluntary contributions, of which he himself would collect the greater part. However, the impracticality of such a project and the lack of sympathy both in Ethiopia and also at Mount Athos for the proposed undertaking prevented its accomplishment. On Dec. 8, 1911, A. X. Bulatovich left Addis Ababa forever, "taking with him only hopes and not a single firm pledge from the wealthy," as B. Chermerzin expressed it.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of this fourth and last visit by the Russian traveler to the country he so loved is limited to this general description. Almost all documents of the period of Menelik's reign were destroyed at the time of the war with Italy in 1936. As for the papers of the Russian Embassy, in 1919 tsarist diplomats gave them to the French Embassy "for safekeeping"; and in 1936, they were taken to Paris, where they were burned along with other archives in June 1940. (124)

In 1912-13, A. X. Bulatovich got caught up in a conflict between two groups of Athonite monks, known as the "Name Fighters" and the "Name Praisers." (125) (Father Anthony sided with the latter.) This affair took such a sordid turn that Father Anthony was forced to leave Mount Athos. The scandal at Mount Athos received wide publicity, and from January 1913 stories about the mutinous monks and their leader appeared from time to time in newspapers. Over the course of 1913-14, the name of A. X. Bulatovich didn't leave the pages of the press, giving occasion for wild tales, often based on gossip and the desire of petty reporters to snatch fees. (126)

Having taken on the role of defender of the "Name-Praisers," A. X. Bulatovich was

caught up in a storm of activity: he wrote and published polemical articles and brochures, sent letters to his followers, recommended that they stand fast and not give in to their opponents. The Synod assigned him to residence in the Pokrovskiy Monastery in Moscow. But, instead, he lived first with his sister, M. X. Orbeliani, in Saint Petersburg, until he attracted the attention of the police to her and her husband; then at his mother's house in Sumy; and next at Lutsikovka.

As soon as the war began, A.S. Bulatovich left Lutsikovka. On August 21, 1914, he went to Sumy and from there to Moscow and Petrograd where he obtained an appointment in the active army. "Holy wars are defensive. They are God's work. In them miracles of bravery appear. In offensive wars, there are few such miracles," he had written a year before that. From 1914 to 1917, Father Anthony was a priest in the 16th Advanced Detachment of the Red Cross.

Judging by the stories of people who met him, here he once again exhibited "miracles of bravery," in spite of his age, his eye disease, and the cassock of an ecclesiastical pastor.

After the end of the war and the disbandment of his detachment, in Feb. 1918, A. X. Bulatovich sent requests from Moscow to Patriarch Tikhon and the Synod for permission to retire to the quiet of the Pokrovskiy Monastery, to which he had been assigned before, because his situation was "quite disastrous." The request was granted, but without the right of religious service, apparently because of the "heretical" beliefs in which the applicant continued to persist.

In the summer of 1918, A. X. Bulatovich applied to the "Holy Council" with a new petition, for removal of this restriction and for transfer to the Athonite St. Andrew Monastery in Petrograd. The answer to this request is unknown, but could scarcely have been positive, because at the end of November 1918 Tikhon and the Synod looked into the application of "the excommunicated Hieromonk Anthony (Bulatovich)," who "professing 'God-making' reverence for the Name of the Lord, rather than agreeing to revere the Name of the Lord relatively, as today's church authority requires, has separated himself from all spiritual contact, henceforth until the Holy Synod has held a trial on the substance of the matter." The issue was passed along to the authority of the Moscow Diocese for "further consideration."

Apparently, not waiting for a decision, A. X. Bulatovich preferred to go to Lutsikovka, where he spent the last year of his life, about which almost nothing is known. Only very recently was it established that he was murdered by bandits on the night of December 5-6, 1919.

The great and terrible years of revolution obliterated the memory of A.S. Bulatovich. And even more, the fanatical Father Anthony almost completely overshadowed the courageous traveler of unknown African lands. (127)

Indeed, this affair that absorbed all the thoughts and motivated all the deeds of A. X. Bulatovich at the end of his life seems to us unwarranted and even bad. But it was also a

manifestation of discontent with existing reality, of inner discord. Raised and educated as he was, he could not surmount the errors and prejudices of his time and his circle.

However, even amid these errors, let it be said that honor, straightforwardness, stoicism, sincerity, and courage were in the highest degree inherent in A. X. Bulatovich. These characteristics, in combination with ardent patriotism and sense of duty, impelled the young hussar officer to accomplish in four years the deeds that glorified his name and placed him in the ranks of the most outstanding Russian travelers.

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This book includes all of the published works of A. X. Bulatovich. They are presented without changes, with minor corrections. The proper names, the geographical names and terms, as a rule, are preserved in the transcription of the author. Elaboration, correction, and additional information is presented in notes at the end of the book. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of the photographs from the book of A. K. Bulatovich *With the Armies of Menelik II*, and also the maps for technical reasons cannot be reproduced.

Therefore this edition uses photographs and sketches (basically unpublished), taken by other Russian travelers in Ethiopia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. They were kindly provided by the Museum of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

*[Translator's note — Technology has improved since the time when Katsnelson wrote this introduction. This edition does include the original photos.]*

## Footnotes to "A. X. Bulatovich — Hussar, Explorer, Monk" by I. S. Katsnelson

[Ts.G.V.I.A. and G.I.A.L.O. are references to Soviet Archives.]

1. *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, second edition, volume 6, page 258.
2. For example: M.P. Zbrodskaya, *Russian Travelers in Africa*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 62-66; M.V. Rayt, "Russian Expeditions to Ethiopia in the Middle of the 19th and the 20th Centuries and their Ethnographic Materials" in *African Ethnographic Collection*, volume 1, Moscow, 1956, pages. 254-263.
3. V.A. Borisov worked strenuously on such searches, and graciously shared the results with me. The sister of A. X. Bulatovich, Mary Xavieryevna Orbeliani, who now lives in Canada, answered and sent her recollections of childhood and youth, which contain information which, naturally, no other source could provide. S. A. Tsvetkov, who from 1913-14 was secretary of A. X. Bulatovich, and who died several years ago in Moscow, turned over some interesting material. G. F. Pugach, president of the Belopolsky Regional Office of the Society for the Preservation of Natural and Cultural Monuments, let me know the exact date of death of A. X. Bulatovich.
4. Service Records of Staff- and Ober- Officers of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment on January 1, 1900 (Ts.G.V.I.A., P. S. 330-463, line 149). In any case, he was christened in

Orel in the church of the 143rd Dorogobuzhskiy Regiment. See: GIALO, f. 11, op. 1, document 1223, line 76. In the reference sent from there (No. 499 from Dec. 9, 1962), apparently, the year of birth — 1871 — was erroneously indicated. Compare, in the same source, document 1185, lines 12-13; Ts.G.I.A. U.S.S.R., f. 1343, op. 17, document 6777, line 12.

5. Now the Lutsykovsky Village Soviet of the Belopolsky Region of the Sumskiy Area ("Sumsky Area, Administrative-Territorial Divisions," Sumy, 1966, page 15).

6. G.I.A.L.O., f. 11, op. 1, document 1166, line 258 — petition of E. A. Bulatovich.

7. G.I.A.L.O., f. 11, op. 1, document 441, lines 10, 188-189, 264, 351, 415, 441.

8. G.I.A.L.O., f. 11, op. 1, document 1223, lines 77, 80.

9. Ts.G.V.I.A., P.S. 330-463. Service Records of Staff- and Ober-Officers of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment on January 1, 1900, lines 149-155. A copy of the service record of A. X. Bulatovich is likewise in the files of the commander of the armies of the Kwantung Region (Ts.G.V.I.A., P.S. 308-178). Data about his military service were determined from these records, which go as far as 1900. Dates are given in the "old style."

10. *Government Herald* from August 19, 1892.

11. V.A. Trofimov, *The Politics of England and Italy in North-East Africa in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, Moscow, 1962, page 189.

12. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 146, line 243 — report of P. M. Vlasov, head of the Russian Diplomatic Mission, from April 29, 1899, number 375: "You can conclude a priori that England should be chosen for the route of its railway from Alexandria to Cape Town in the following directions: Kassala, Tumat, Famaka, the Baro River, the western part of Lake Rudolf with outlet to Unass on Lake Victoria Nyanza, where such a junction of railway line, leading to the port of Mombasa on the Indian Ocean, for which is required to get from Emperor Menelik, either by diplomatic agreement or by the more certain and faster path of force, i.e., war, concessions: the whole country of Beni-Shangul, the three rivers: Sobat, Baro and Juba and the land adjacent to Lake Rudolf to the north."

13. Yu. L. Eletskiy, *Emperor Menelik and his war with Italy. According to documents and the field diary of N. S. Leontyev*, Saint Petersburg, 1898, page 5.

14. V. A. Trofimov, *The Politics of England and Italy*, page 158.

15. V. Bottego, *Viaggi di scoperte nel cuore dell'Africa. Il Giuba esplorata*. Roma, 1895, L. Vannutelli e C. Ceiterni, *Seconda Spedizione Bottego. L'Omo. Viaggio d'esplorazione nell'Africa orientale*, Milano, 1899.

16. D. Smith, *Through Unknown African Countries. The First Expedition from Somaliland to Lake Rudolf and Lamu*, London,

H. S. H. Cavendish, *Through Somaliland and Around South of Lake Rudolf*, *Geographical Journal*, 1898, XI, number 4. About the French expeditions of Bonchamps, Liotar, Marchand and Clochette, operating in Ethiopia, see the report of A. K. Bulatoivch from November 27, (A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2029, lines 7-14).

17 V. Popov, *The Crushing defeat of the Italians at Adwa*, Moscow, 1938.

18. Ibid., page 109.

19. V. A. Trofimov, *Politics of England and Italy*, page 192.

20. G. N. Sanderson, The Foreign Policy of Negus Menelik, 1896-1898. *The Journal of African History*, 1964, volume V, number 1, pages 87-98.

21. Report of P. M. Vlasov from October 30, 1898 (A.V.P.R., Politarkhov, op. 482, document 143, lines 310-311, and likewise document 144, lines 33-36). See: I. I. Basin, *Russo-Ethiopian relations in the 80-90 years of the 19th century* "Scholarly notes of the Moscow state corresponding pedagogical institute. Department of general history.," Moscow, 1962, page 459.

22. See the article "The meaning of the English expedition to the Sudan" in the Journal *Scout*, 1896, number 287, page 325. It is signed with the initials O. O.

23. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 146, line 244.

24. With words of the local inhabitants an account of the conquest of Kaffa written by F. Bieber: "Geschichte der Kaffaisch-Athiopischen Krieg. Ene Ueberlieferung der Kaffitscho oder Gonga. Ubersetzt und erlautet von F. J. Bieber," *Mittheilungen des Seminars fur Orientalischen Sprachen an der Friedrich-Wilhelms Universitat zu Berlin*, Jahrg. XXIII-XXV, Berlin, 1922, 2, Abt, pages 18-43.

25. C. Mondon-Vidailhet, Lettres d'Abyssinie, *Le Temps*, October 28,

26. F. J. Bieber, *Kaffa. Ein altkschitisches Volkstum in Inner-Arika*, Bd I, Modling am Wien, 1920, page 100.

27. "Materials of the Arkhiv of external politics of Russia. New documents about Russo-Ethiopian relations (end of the 19th to beginning of the 20th century)." Publication of V. A. Krokhina and M. V. Rayt, *Problems of Eastern Studies*, 1960, number 1, pages 150-163.

28. For example, at the time of the intervention of Russia, the conflict between two influential rulers, both vassals of Menelik — Ras Makonnen and Ras Mangasha — was

reconciled. (The latter at one time held a pro-Italian orientation).

29. I. I. Vasin, *Russo-Ethiopian relations*, page 398.

30. Yu. L. Elets, *Emperor Menelik*, page 11. See also the article "The importance of Abyssinia" signed S. D. M. (i.e., S. D. Molchanov) in *The Saint Petersburg Gazette*, from Novembr 13, 1896, number 315.

31. Yu. L. Elets, *Emperor Menelik*, pages 17-18. In the Abyssinian original the point was made that Ethiopia *could* use the mediation of Italy for its relations with other powers. In the Italian text the word *could* was changed to *agreed*, which transformed a friendly agreement of alliance into a form of protectorate, i.e., the Italian government interpreted that formulation as an obligation.

32. About the sending of the sanitary mission to the Abyssinian-Italian theater of war see: Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, p. 261/911, document 19/1897, lines 1-2; see also publication of R. A. Krokhnin and M. V. Rayt "Materials of the archive of the external politics of Russia...", page 151.

33. M. V. Rait, "La mission de la Croix-Rouge russe en Ethiopie," *La Russie et l'Afrique*, Moscow, 1966, page 177.

34. Ts.G.V.I.A., P. S. 330-463. The basis and correspondence on this question see:

Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 19/1897, lines 7, 18, 19, 31, 33.

35. M. Rubtsov, *Vasilii Vasilyevich Bolotov*, Tver, 1900, page 78.

36. Ibid., page 79, footnote 1.

37. Note by the head of the Asiatic section of the headquarters staff Lieutenant General A.

P. Prosenko, composed on the basis of reports of A. X. Bulatovich from July 31, 1896.

(Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 68/1896, lines 1-2).

38. This "state of affairs" consisted of obstacles created by the English, who were likewise striving to prevent the establishment of direct contacts between Russia and Ethiopia. For example, they in every way made it difficult to obtain camels for the caravan. The railroad from Jibuti to Addis Ababa was then only beginning to be built.

39. F.E. Krindach, *Russian Cavalryman in Abyssinia. From Jibuti to Harar*, Saint Petersburg, 1898, pp. 12-13.

40. Ibid, p. 95.

41. Ibid. p. 103.

42. Note of the president of the Russian Society of the Red Cross M.P. Kaufman

(A.V.P.R., Political Archives, document 2015, lines 2-9).

43 Nikolai Stepanovich Leontyev (Oct 26, 1862 - about 1914) — from the gentry of the Kherson Governate, studied at the Nikoayevkiy Cavalry School, which because of illness he did not complete. He then served in the Ulan Life-Guard Regiment. From 1891, he was a lieutenant in the reserves (Ts.G.V.I.A., V.U.A. f. 452, document 30, line 31). In 1894, he financed the expedition of A. V. Elseyev to Ethiopia and himself took part in that venture. Subsequently, he entered into service to Menelik, was named ruler of the Equatorial province, and was elevated to the post of dajazmatch. Judging by the reports of Russian diplomats, he was an adventurer, interested only in personal gain, but not lacking ability. (I. I. Vasin, *Russo-Ethiopian Relations*, pp. 446, 450).

44. Yu. L. Elets, *Emperor Menelik*, p. 266.

45. For example: N. K. Shvedov, *Russian Red Cross in Abyssinia in 1896*, Saint Petersburg, 1897; D. L. Glinskiy, *Life of the Russian Medical Detachment in Harar*, Grodna, 1897.

46 A. N. Wydle, *Modern Abyssinia*, London, 1901, p. 417.

47. "While I was in Africa, I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity for exploring the still very little known Galla tribes and the lands that lie along the upper reaches of the Nile, in particular Kaffa...", — Ts.G.I.A U.S.S.R., f. 277, 1896-1898, document 2876,

lines 186-188.

48 Ts.G. V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 68/1896, line 4.

49. In a letter from January 14, 1896 from Leka, addressed, possibly, to A. P. Protsenko, A. K. Bulatovich writes: "I succeeded in penetrating beyond the Baro River, the main tributary of the Sobat. I passed through part of Mocha and Kaffa and made a map of the territory I passed through. I reached the southwest border of the Galla tribe and caught sight of the outermost Bako negro tribes ... Now I am presented with the possibility of penetrating the basin of the Dabusa and Tumat, and I ask for help with authorization for me to extend my leave to four months. The possibility of penetrating there — this is a rare occasion and this territory is of the upmost interest and completely unknown." By petition of the War Minister P. S. Vannovskiy, Nicholas II on April 8, 1897 permitted that extension of leave (op. cit., lines 13-16 and 19).

50. *Government News*, December 8, 1896 (Ts.G.V.I.A. P. S. 330-463).

51. "The roll of rotmisters of the Guard Cavalry by seniority for May 1, 1902" (Saint Petersburg, 1902, p. 23.

52. Here is how Lieutenant General A. P. Protensko assessed the value of the book on its publication on July 26, 1897: "This work presents very interesting and valuable material, concisely presented, but embracing the geography of the country, its history and

governmental structure, military forces, descriptions of the administration, the court of the Negus and the chief present-day public figures." (Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 44/1897, line 7). They sent the book to many government agents and to Nicholas II, who ordered a proclamation of thanks to the author (op. cit., lines 35, 36; A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2029, line 4).

53. M. P. Zabroodskaya, *Russian travels in Africa*, pp. 61-61.

54. S. V. Kozlov, Remarks on some parts of the work of Bulatovich *From Entoto to the River Baro*, Saint Petersburg, 1897, pp. 1-36.

55. For example, the monograph: W. M. Muller, *Asien und Europa nach altagyptischen Darstellungen*, Leipzig, 1893.

56. S. V. Kozlov, Remarks... p. 27.

57. See the report of P. M. Vlasov from December 31, 1897, (A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 139, lines 52-55) and from February 15, 1898. In a personal audience, Menelik told Vlasov that he always considered and would continue to consider that the legal state boundaries of Ethiopia are all the lands lying between 14 degrees latitude north and 2 degrees latitude south, the right bank of the Nile in the west, and an 80-mile distance from the banks of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the east, and that these borders in its full extent and contents, he will protect from incursions by anybody with all

the powers and means that he has." (Ibid, document 142, line 32).

58 Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 1, lines 13, 14, 38, 52;

A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2075.

59. A.V.P.R., Politarkhov, op. 482, document 2074, lines 31-32.

60. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 1, lines 5, 20.

61. Ibid., lines 22-23, A.V.P.R., Politarkhov, op. 482, document 2068, lines 2-4, 8, 11-18.

62. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 1, line 28.

63. Ibid., part 2, lines 49-52. Compare with the report of P. M. Vlasov from December 31, 1897.

64. A.V.P.R., Politarkhov, op. 482, document 140, lines 59-60; Ibid, document 2029, lines 7-14. Together with other unpublished memoranda and letters of A. X. Bulatovich relating to his travels in Ethiopia, this is being prepared for publication. [It is included in *My Third Journey to Ethiopia*, the third part of this collection.]

65. About the stay of the mission in Ethiopia and its activities exhaustive material was collected by I. I. Vasin ("*Russo-Ethiopian Relations*", pp. 433-534).

66. A. d'Abbadie, Notice sure le Kafa, es Woratta Limmou, etc., *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, 2 series, volume 19, 1843.

67 G. Massaia, *I miei trentacinque anni di missione nell'alta Etiopia. Memorie storiche*, vol. 1-12, Roma, 1885-1895.

68. A. Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa*, volumes 1-3, Rome, 1886-1887.

69. P. Soleillet, *Obock, le Choa, le Kaffa. Une exploration commerciale en Ethiopie*, Paris [1886].

70. Report of P. M. Vlasov from June 14 898 (A.V.P.R., Poliarkhiv, op. 482, document 2074, lines 77-79).

71 A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2029, lines 19-23; Ibid. document 2074, lines 77-100.

72. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 143, lines 16-17; I. I. Vasin, *Russo-Ethiopian Relations*, page 445.

73. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 2, lines 169-170.

74. "Roll of rotmisters of the guard cavalry by seniority of May 1 1902," Saint Petersburg, 1902, page 23; Ts.G.V.I.A. P. S. 330-463; A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2074, lines 125, 126.

75. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2029, lines 26-30.

76. Ibid., line 25.

77. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 2, line 216.

78. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 2074, lines 125, 126; also see lines 117-118, 156, 162-164; Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, part 3, line 65, on March 5 Nicholas II received A. X. Bulatovich "outside the rules" in the winter palace (Ibid., lines 65, 66).

79. A. X. Bulatovich, "From Abyssinia through the country of Kaffa to Lake Rudolf," (Read at a general session of the Russian Geographical Society, January 13, 1899.), *News of the Russian Geographical Society*, volume 35, 1899, issue 3, pp. 259-283. A handwritten copy of this lecture is preserved in the archives of the Geographical Society (category 98, op. 1, 1899, document 23). As one English historian expressed it, this lecture "with sour commentary" was soon almost completely published in Italy (A. X. Bulatovich, "All'Abissinia al lago Rudolfo per il Caffa. Con note di G. Roncagli," — "Bollettino della Societa Geografica Italiana," series IV, 1900, volume 1, Number 2,

pages 121-145. A report on the results of the journey, illustrated with a map was included in *The Russian Invalid* from September 7 1899, number 195.

80. Cited in the book by M. P. Zabrodsky *Russian travelers in Africa*, page 63.

81. *Report of the Russian Geographical Society for 1899*, Saint Petersburg, 1900, page 36.

82. *Russian Thought*, 1900, book 8, section 3, pages 291-292 (unsigned review).

83. *God's World*, 1900, August (number 8), section 2, pages 100-02.

84. F. Bieber, *Kaffa...*, page 19.

85. *Ibid.*, page 100.

86. See, for example, the introduction to the remarks of D. Ronkai to the Italian translation of the article of A. X. Bulatovich ("Bolletino della Societa Geografica Italiana," series IV, 1900, volume 1, number 2, page 121 and following).

87. For correspondence about this see: Ts.G.V.I.A., V.U.A., f. 452, document 34; A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, docuemnt 2019, lines 44-50 (rescript of Menelik II).

88. Krahmer, *Der Bergrucken Kaiser Nikolaus II*, (Pettermann's Mitteilungen, Bd. 45, 1899, page 243, prim. I.

89. L. Vannutelli e C. Citerni, *Seconda spedizione Bottego*.

90. These maps are attached to "About the newly discovered by Staff-Rotmister Bulatovich western side of the Omo River in the central African mountain range," where is also found his lecture notes, in which he directly refers to the work of V. Bottego and X. Cavendish (Ts.G.V.I.A., V.U.A., f. 452, document 34, line 11a).

91. L. Vannutelli e C. Citerni, *Seconda spedizione Bottego*, page 330.

92 Ibid., table 5.

93. Ts.G.V.I.A., V.U.A., f. 452, document 34, line 6.

94. Ibid., f. 451, document 34, line 7.

95. M.P. Zabrodskaia, *Russian Travelers in Africa*, page 65.

96. M.V. Rayt, *Russian Expeditions in Ethiopia*, pages 254-263, 270-272; L. E. Kubbel, "Materials on the social-economic relations of inhabitants of Ethiopia in the works of A. X. Bulatovich (expeditions 1896-1897)," *Soviet Ethnography*, 1967, Number 3, pages

109-112.

97. See A. X. Bulatovich's introduction to his book "*With the Armies of Menelik II.*"

98. I. Yu. Krachkovskiy, *Introduction to Ethiopian philology*, Leningrad, 1955, pages 99-100.

99. I. I. Basin, *Russo-Ethiopian Relations*, page 482.

100. "Menelik for fear of ruining the prestige of his name and the authority of his reign in the eyes of vassals, rases and the people, now maintained by him with significant difficulty, resolves not to agree to any territorial concessions to England ... voluntarily. So he explains to us openly and decisively that he could only be forced to such concessions by force, i.e. by war, and that he is ready to fight to last extremity ..." (AVPR, Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 146, lines 243-245).

101. A. X. Bulatovich described in detail his journey from Zeila, a port on the Red Sea, to Addis-Ababa in a report to P. M. Vlasov from May 26, 1899. (Ibid., lines 289-298) He thoroughly communicated his meeting with Marchand and his conversation with him he in that same report, and also in a separate letter from June 29, 1899 (addressee not known), excerpts from which are preserved in Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261-911, document 92/1897, part 3, lines 152-153.

102. Report of P. M. Vlasov from June 28, 1898 (A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 145, lines 80-82).

103. P. M. Vlasov suggested that he "strictly obey" the Emperor's instruction. That he should avoid any clashes with the English. In no circumstance should he cross the border of the possessions of Abyssinia or take part in any military action. In other words, he should show complete loyalty to Menelik with respect to England. A. X. Bulatovich should only clarify the situation in the border regions. (Ibid., lines 83-87).

104. Reports of P. M. Vlasov from July 8, 1899, from Desta (Ibid., document 147, lines 151-156), July 27 and 29, 1899 (Ibid., lines 185-186, 189-196, 200-206, 209-211), August 12 and 21, 1899, (Ibid., lines 270-284, 313-317), October 7 and 22, 1899 (Ibid., document 148, lines 17-22; document 147, lines 386-387). The first of these reports established very interesting new information revealing the circumstances of the death of the well-known Italian traveler Captain V. Bottego.

105. From a report of A. X. Bulatovich from October 22, 1899 (Ibid., document 147, line 387).

106. Ibid., line 386.

107 From a report of P. M. Vlasov from September 30, 1899 (Ibid., lines 309-312).

108. Ibid, document 147, line 312; also lines 8-10.

109. Ibid., document 148, line 16.

110. Ibid., document 150, lines 18 and following.

111. Gabro Selassie (born around 1850/55, died in 1912), from 1908 Minister of the Pen, author of memoirs, is a direct source for the history of the reign of Menika II. The ambassador of France to Ethiopia, M. de Coppet, added valuable notes to this work. (Guebre Sellasie, *Chronique du règne de Menelik II, roi des rois d'Ethiopie*, publiée et annotée par M. de Coppet, tt. I-II, Paris, 1930-1932).

112. A.V.P.R., Politarkhiv, op. 482, document 150, line 18.

113 Arkiv VGO, series 98, op. 1, document 23. Having left together with some Galla and Ethiopians on July 27, 1899 from Addis Ababa, A. K. Bulatovich on August 17 reached the region of Dul, from which on the 20th he set out for Beni-Shangul, and then to the Blue Nile and on September 1 almost arrived at Fazgoli. On October 10 he stayed in Lekamte. A. X. Bulatovich returned to Addis Ababa through the mountains of Tuku, Konchi, Dzibati, Roge, Dende, and Bochach (A.V.P.R., Politarkiv, op. 482, document 148, line 17). All the materials of the third journey of A. X. Bulatovich are being prepared for publication. [They appear in part 3 of this collection.]

114 Ibid., lines 19-21.

115. Letter of A. X. Bulatovich from February 8, 1900 (Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 400, op. 261/911, document 92/1897, chapter 4, lines 8-10).

116. Telegram of A.N. Kuropatkina to the Russian Consul in Jerusalem from April 4 1900 (Ibid., line 11).

117. In accord with the reply of the General Staff from June 23, 1900 for Number 33673 (Ts.G.V.I.A., P. S. 308-178).

118. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 3591, op. 1, document 157. Order of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment from December 8, 1901.

119. "Record of Rotmisters of the Guard Cavalry by Seniority on May 1, 1902," Saint Petersburg, 1902, p. 23.

120. Reference of the State Regional Kharkov Archive, No. 15 (187), from June 16, 1962.

121. Ts.G.V.I.A., f. 3591, op. 1, document 160, line 57.

122. Hieromonk Anthony (Bulatovich), *My Conflict with the 'Name-Fighters' on the Holy*

*Mountain*, Petrograd, 1917, pages 10-11.

123. A.V.P.R., "Greek Department," document 678.

124. Czeslaw Jesman, *The Russians in Ethiopia*, London, 1958, page 150.

125. The Synod in a decision from August 27, 1913 for Number 7644 conferred on the adherents of this "heresy" the designation "Name Idolaters" (Ts.G.I.A. U.S.S.R., f. 797, op. 86, document 59, line 80.)

126. Namely in the supplement to *Russian Word* — the weekly of *Spark* (Number 9 for 1914) there appeared photographs of Alexander Xaverevich with captions, which were used by I. Ilf and E. Petrov in *Twelve Chairs* as the source for the story of "Hussar-Heretic" Count Aleksey Bulanov.

127. Thus, for example, A. X. Bulatovich isn't even mentioned in an essay on the history of geographical discoveries in Ethiopia by N.M. Karatayev. See: *Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Collection of Articles*, Leningrad, 1936, pages. 1-83.

## **Preface to *With the Armies of Menelik II* (1)**

[Numbers refer to footnotes which are at the end.]

This book is the journal of my second expedition to the interior of Africa in 1897-98.

I made my first trip to Ethiopia with the Medical Detachment of the Russian Red Cross, ordered to the theater of the Italo-Abyssinian military actions in 1896. At the end of 1896, the Detachment returned to Russia, but I undertook an independent expedition to the western regions of Ethiopia. That time, I reached the western boundaries of Abyssinia and crossed the River Baro, hitherto unexplored by any European. On the return trip, I visited the lower reaches of the Didessa River, the valley of the Blue Nile, and, in the first days of May 1897, returned to Russia. (2)

In September 1897, an Extraordinary Diplomatic Mission, headed by Acting State Councilor Pyotr Mikhailovich Vlasov, was sent to the court of Emperor Menelik II. The Envoy Extraordinary was accompanied by his wife and the following:

Secretary of the Mission — Titular Councilor Orlov.

Officers attached to the command of the Envoy Extraordinary:

Lieutenant of His Majesty's Life-Guard Hussar Regiment Bulatovich;

Lieutenants of the Imperial Family's Infantry Guard Battalion Kokhovskiy and Davydov;

and

Lieutenant of Her Majesty the Sovereign Empress Mariya Feodorovna's Cavalry

Regiment Chertkov.

The escort of the Envoy Extraordinary:

Commander of the escort, Sotnik of His Imperial Highness the Sovereign Heir

Tsarevich's Ataman Guard Regiment Krasnov; (3)

and 21 soldiers of lower rank (18 Cossacks of the Cossack Guard Brigade, two Cossacks of His Majesty's Don Guard Battery, and one private of His Majesty's Life-Guard Hussar Regiment).

From the War Ministry:

Colonel of the General Staff Artamonov(4) and

Lieutenant of the Izmailovskiy Guard Regiment Arnoldi.

The medical staff of the mission:

Doctor State Councilor Lebedinskiy,

Doctor State Councilor Brovtsyn,

Pharmacist Lukyanov,

Functionary First-Class Sasson, and Doctor's Assistant Kuznetsov.

The Extraordinary Mission left Saint Petersburg at the end of September and arrived in the capital of Abyssinia, Addis Ababa, in February 1898. Acting State Councilor Vlasov, his wife, the Secretary of the Mission Titular Councilor Orlov, the entire medical staff of the Mission and some of the lower ranking soldiers of the escort are in Abyssinia to this day [1899]. The rest have returned to Russia.

A courier had to be sent ahead to inform Emperor Menelik that His Highness the Sovereign Emperor [Tsar Nicholas II] was pleased to send an Extraordinary Mission to him. In view of my knowledge of the Abyssinian language and my familiarity with travel conditions in that country, the choice of courier fell on me.

On September 9, 1897, I left Saint Petersburg accompanied by Private of His Majesty's Hussar Guard Regiment Zelepukin; and on October 5, I arrived in Addis Ababa at the court of the Emperor.

At the end of November, an important expedition of Abyssinian troops was being outfitted with the aim of annexing to the Ethiopian Empire as yet unexplored southern territories, lying between Abyssinia and Lake Rudolf. I took advantage of the opportunity that was offered me to travel with this expedition across unknown lands. On June 5, 1898, I returned to Addis Ababa; on June 14, I left for Russia; and on July 19, I arrived in Saint Petersburg.

Almost immediately after my return, I fell ill. As soon as I recovered, I started processing the materials I had gathered. Scarcely had I finished this work, when again I was ordered to Abyssinia.

Bringing this preface to a close, I consider it my duty to thank the Chief of the Military Printing Office Lieutenant-General Otto von Stubendorf, the Chief of the Geodesic Office Major-General Iliodor Ivanovich Pomerantsev, the Chief of the Cartographic

Department Major-General Andrey Alexandrovich Bolshov, and Colonel of His Majesty's Life-Guard Hussar Regiment Sergei Dmitrievich Molchanov. Owing to their enlightened cooperation and valuable advice, I was able to bring the present work to a satisfactory conclusion. I want to express my deep and respectful gratitude for their help.

March 20, 1899, the Black Sea, aboard the Steamship "Tambov".

## Introduction to *With the Armies of Menelik II*

At the end of 1897 and the beginning of 1898, events were in the making in Africa which were destined to be of the greatest importance for its future. The time had come to answer the long urgent question: Which of the two great powers competing for predominance in Africa — England or France — would get the upper hand in this unequal, but decisive struggle? Would England succeed in realizing her cherished dream — to cut through all of Africa from north to south, from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope, to take in her hand the inexhaustible wealth of Africa's central lands, and thus to create a second India for herself — or would France prevent her?

The position of England was much stronger.

The twenty-thousand-strong, excellently equipped corps of Anglo-Egyptian troops under Kitchener was already on the way to Khartoum, the fall of which seemed inevitable. The detachment of Major MacDonald was supposed to advance from the south, from Uganda, toward a rendezvous with Kitchener and take the whole upper course of the Nile, the course of the Jubba River and the mouth of the River Omo emptying into Lake Rudolf.

To thwart the plans of her opponent, France, in turn, equipped several expeditions which were supposed to cut off the path of the English, hoisting the French flag on the banks of the Nile.

With this aim, from the west, from French Congo, the insignificant Marchand expedition advanced toward the Nile, and from the east across Abyssinia, the expedition of Clouet and Bonchamps set out to meet it. (5)

But aside from France and England, there was also a third power interested in the question of the possession of the middle course of the Nile — Ethiopia. And her emperor, in the spring of 1897, openly announced to the British Envoy Extraordinary Reynold Rhodes that he considered his boundaries "2 degrees and 14 degrees north latitude, the shore of the ocean on the east, and the right bank of the Nile on the west," and that he would support those claims with all his might.

What position should Ethiopia have taken?

Africa has long attracted Europeans who seized and divided among themselves all of its coastal lands. But the interior long remained a huge park where they hunted for men and obtained slaves to work for their colonists. The abolition of slavery, however, put an end to this state of affairs.

With the development of trade and navigation, the colonies of the Europeans began to spread out. Daring explorers penetrated and crossed Africa from all directions. After the explorers came missionaries and traders. The Europeans developed commercial and political interests which the mother countries encouraged in the newly opened lands.

Little by little, the Europeans conquered more and more territory.

At the Conference of Berlin, all of Africa was partitioned by the interested powers into "spheres of influence," that is, regions where they could carry out their aims of conquest and colonization. The rights and interests of peoples living in these "spheres of influence" were completely disregarded; and Abyssinia, in this manner, fell under the protectorate of Italy.

If such treatment of the populace of Africa was justified to some degree by their low level of culture, it was completely unjust and arbitrary in regard to the Abyssinian people, who professed Christianity much earlier than any European nation (in the fourth century A.D.) — a people with a rich historical past. And although this country had recently lagged behind Europe in its development, it had all the makings for a brilliant future.

In the history of the black continent, Abyssinia has played an important role. Because it came into contact with ancient Egypt and because of Semitic immigration, Abyssinia early became the only enlightener and propagator of culture in the Ethiopian mountains and the regions adjoining them. In the Middle Ages, Ethiopia was a powerful state. All the tribes who inhabited the Ethiopian mountains were united under the rule of the Abyssinian emperor.

By the beginning of the 16th century, Ethiopia had attained the zenith of its greatness. According to well-preserved legends, the Abyssinian Empire was at that time so great and

powerful that one of its emperors, King of Kings Lyb-on-Dyngyl (or David II) (6) prayed God to grant him enemies, regretting that he had none. (7)

The enemy was not slow to appear in the person of Gran, (8) who at the head of fanatic Moslem hordes of Galla and Adaltsevs struck heavy blows at Abyssinia. Also, at that time, the southern regions of Abyssinia were subjected to invasion by wild nomadic Galla tribes, who, crowded in their own lands, invaded Abyssinia in an irrepressible stream and took the best lands along the rivers Gibye, Didessa, the Blue Nile, and Awash Rivers. The Ethiopian Empire was cut in two, and the southern part, Kaffa, remained isolated from the northern part for several centuries.

As a result of these invasions, internal dissensions arose and civil wars, which weakened the imperial power and reduced Abyssinia to decay.

In the middle of the 19th century, Ethiopia was restored to life. The Emperors Tewodros, Yohannes, and, finally, Menelik II reunited Abyssinia. Emperor Menelik entered into a desperate struggle with Italy for the existence, freedom and independence of his state, and won a series of brilliant victories over his enemy. In so doing, he demonstrated irrefutably that there is in Africa a black nation capable of standing up for itself and having all the makings for independent existence.

Of course, at the beginning of 1898 Emperor Menelik could not remain an indifferent spectator to all that was happening in Africa. Possessing in his army a tremendous

strength, having put the internal and external affairs of the state in good order, he did not stay indifferent at this decisive moment, but rather moved armies to the western and southern regions to which he had laid claim.

Striving to expand the limits of his domain, Menelik is fulfilling the traditional mission of Ethiopia as the disseminator of culture and the unifier of all those inhabiting the Ethiopian plateau and the neighboring related tribes. This only amounts to a new step in the establishment and development of the power of a black empire

These are the motives which led Menelik to aggressive acts; and we Russians cannot help sympathizing with his intentions, not only because of political considerations, but also for purely humanitarian reasons. The consequences of conquests of wild tribes by Europeans are well known. Too great a difference in the degree of culture between the conquered people and their conquerors has always led to the enslavement, corruption, and degeneration of the weaker race. The natives of America degenerated and have almost ceased to exist. The natives of India were corrupted and deprived of individuality. The black tribes of Africa became the slaves of the whites. Clashes between nations more or less close to one another in culture bring completely different results. For the Abyssinians, the Egyptian, Arab, and, finally, European civilizations which they have gradually adopted have not been pernicious. Borrowing the fruits of these civilizations, and in turn conquering and annexing neighboring tribes and passing on to them such cultures, Abyssinia did not obliterate from the face of the earth, did not destroy the uniqueness of the conquered tribes, but rather gave them the possibility of preserving

their individual characteristics.

Thus Christian Abyssinia plays an important role in world progress as a transmission point of European civilization to wild central African peoples.

The high civilizing mission of Abyssinia, its centuries-old, almost uninterrupted struggle for faith and freedom against the surrounding Moslems, and the nearness of her people to the Russian people in creed, won for her the favor of the Russian people.

Not just educated Russians know of her and sympathize with her, but also the common folk who saw black Christians, devout and often living in poverty, in Jerusalem. (9)

We see much in common in the cultural problems of Abyssinia with our affairs in the East; and we cannot help but wish that our co-religionist nation would assimilate the best achievements of European civilization, while preserving for itself freedom, independence, and that scrap of land which its ancestors owned and which our greedy white brothers want to take.

In the autumn of 1897, I was in the capital of Abyssinia at the time when the decision and preparations were made for expeditions of Abyssinian troops to be sent to the valley of the Nile and to Lake Rudolf. At the beginning of November, Menelik's military commanders arrived in Addis Ababa one after another, and councils of war were held in the palace, with the Emperor himself presiding. On October 20, a partial mobilization of

Menelik's own regular troops was declared; and by the beginning of December the plan was finally worked out.

Three main expeditions were proposed:

1) Ras Makonnen (10), the governor-general of Harar and Somaliland, was to move west with a thirty-thousand-man detachment and conquer the gold-region of Beni Shangul, and, if possible, reach the banks of the Nile. (11)

2) Dajazmatch Tessema, governor-general of the extreme south-western regions of Abyssinia, with an eight-thousand-man detachment, had orders to take possession of the lower course of the Sobat River and the upper course of the Nile. (12)

3) Ras Wolda Giyorgis, governor-general of Kaffa and of the southern region of Abyssinia, was to advance from Kaffa to the south-southwest, to annex all free lands found in that direction, and to establish a foothold at Lake Rudolf. (13) The extreme limit for his conquests was set at 2 degrees north meridian and the source of the Nile from Lake Albert. (14)

I was offered the chance to participate in one of these expeditions. In light of the enormous ethnographic, scientific, and military interest which the journey at hand could offer, I decided to join an expedition which would be going through as yet completely unexplored regions. From this perspective, the expedition of Ras Wolda Giyorgis was the

most interesting and promising. No European had yet succeeded in penetrating south from Abyssinia farther than the northern boundaries of Kaffa, a powerful state which was closed to Europeans not long ago and which was just conquered by the Abyssinians in 1897.

A whole series of unsolved scientific questions stood before me. Where does the main river of southern Ethiopia — the Omo — flow to? Does it empty into Lake Rudolf, or, rounding Kaffa from the south, does it flow into the Sobat and then into the Mediterranean? If the Omo is not the upper course of the Sobat, but rather empties into Lake Rudolf, then where is the source of the Sobat?

No one had ever succeeded in going to Lake Rudolf from the north. Up until 1897, only four Europeans had visited its shores: 1) Teleki and Hohnel, who had discovered the lake, 2) Donaldson Smith, 3) Cavendish, and 4) Bottego.

The regions to the northwest of Lake Rudolf were until very recently "terra incognita" in the full sense of the term.

I was extremely interested in the solution of these questions as well as one of the numerous as yet undeciphered geographical mysteries on the globe: does the River Omo empty into Lake Rudolf or into the Nile? But before undertaking anything, I had to request permission from Acting State Councilor Vlasov, the head of our diplomatic mission in Abyssinia, to whose staff I belonged. Acting State Councilor Vlasov and his

mission had by that time only reached Jibuti.

Because of the distance and difficulty of the journey and the brief time which remained at my disposal, it was very risky to rely on the accuracy of postal connections. So I set out to meet our mission in person. I left Addis Ababa on November 27, having, at an audience the day before, received from the Emperor a letter from him to Acting State Councilor Vlasov.

On December 2, Menelik set out with all his troops and marched to Mount Managash. There, having appointed Ras Makonnen commander-in-chief of the first expedition, he blessed him on his upcoming journey and returned to the capital.

The commanders of the other expeditions, Dajazmatch Tessema and Ras Wolda Giyorgis also set out to the assembled detachments in their lands.

The departure of Ras Wolda Giyorgis from Kaffa, his main residence, was set for the first days of January. I had just a month and a half to get to Jibuti, return to Addis Ababa, organize a caravan, and arrive in Kaffa. In this time, I had to cover nearly 2000 versts [1400 miles]. (Jibuti to Addis Ababa — 750-800 versts x 2 = 1500-1600 versts; Addis Ababa to Andrachi in Kaffa — 400-500 versts.)

I started on November 27; and on December 8, having changed men and animals in Harar, I arrived in Bayad (the first stop from Jibuti with water; 50 versts from Jibuti.) I

met our mission there, spent two days with them, got permission to take part in the expedition, and, having again changed men and animals, on December 10 I set out on the return trip. On December 20, I arrived in Addis Ababa, having covered nearly 1500 versts [1050 miles] in 23 days (from November 27 to December 20), including three days of stop-overs.

This "run," which only set the stage for the trip to follow, did not come easily to me. Equipped for cavalry-raid or reconnaissance conditions, I was constrained to content myself with only the necessities I could carry on a saddle. Any convenience, such as a tent, was out of the question. The food was scanty. Three times I had to change my numerous traveling companions and animals. Furthermore, it happened to be the season of nighttime cold spells (15). These were particularly severe at the tops of the passes of the Chercher Mountains. Along with other difficulties of the journey, those cold spells gave me acute rheumatism in the legs. This illness caused me such suffering that, for a while, I was in no condition to sit in the saddle without outside help.

Having arrived in Addis Ababa in such a state, I presented myself to the Emperor that very day, then proceeded with the organization of the caravan, which took me seven days. Having bought 18 mules and some horses and packsaddles, and having adjusted the packs, I began to recruit men.

For the traveler, the question of the personnel of the caravan is of the utmost importance. The outcome of a sometimes arduous expedition often depends on this or that choice of

men. But this time my problem proved to be not particularly difficult. Many of my future traveling companions were already known to me, having taken part in my travels in Abyssinia in 1896-97. Having heard of my return to Abyssinia, they came and brought their relatives. I was particularly pleased with these recruits — most still quite young, 16-18 year-old boys, obedient, diligent, still unspoiled by city life. From among them, I chose weapons bearers, bearers for the instruments, and one for a knapsack with papers and documents. I note with particular pleasure that these boys never left me. In all the difficulties of the journey, they stayed with me, remaining faithful to their duty.

My retinue consisted of 30 men. There were 19 guns altogether, including my personal one. (16)

In command of my *ashkers* (soldiers), I placed Wolda Tadika, a man extremely devoted to me. While still a soldier for Ras Makonnen, he had accompanied me on my first trip from Harar to Addis Ababa in 1896. Then, in the most trying circumstances, he showed great energy and resourcefulness. From the moment when he came to me for work, we didn't part, sharing all the difficulties and dangers of the journey. I was also accompanied by Private Zelepukin of His Majesty's Life-Guard Hussar Regiment, who had been attached to me.

Consisting of only the most necessary items, my baggage was not very large: I had two pack-loads of cartridges and two trunks (containing my clothes, linen, gifts, money and books) which also served me as a bed; a medicine chest adapted so it could be carried by

hand if necessary; another similar chest with dining and cooking equipment and canned food ("Magi" dried broth), tea and sugar; a chest with wine; a chest with photographic equipment; and in addition, two packs with miscellaneous items. I brought food stuffs for five days, counting on replenishing the stock on the way. Thanks to these measures, half of the mules went without packs, considerably facilitating the journey to Kaffa.

On December 26, I had a farewell audience with the Emperor. I set my date of departure for the next day.

My journey is of interest not only because of the actions of the detachment I accompanied and the final results it achieved, but also because of the ethnographic and geographical conditions in which the events took place. Beginning the description of the journey, I consider it my duty to note that, not allured by generalization, I confine myself to documentary truth. Every day I noted in my diary all events, facts, and observations which, for one reason or another, seemed characteristic.

## **I. From Addis Ababa to Jimma**

**December 27 and 28.**

After long, but necessary musters, we finally set out. The mules, in high spirits, wouldn't let themselves be saddled. One of them even broke loose and dashed away with a pack on its back. With some difficulty, we caught the runaway and put it back in line. Everything was settled. The caravan was ready. With loud and joyful songs, at noon we left the city. A little later, the city disappeared behind us and, in front, boundless spaces spread. There, in the distance, lay unexplored regions full of unsolved riddles. I kept the aim of the trip a secret. I told my ashkers that we probably had an elephant hunt in store for us.

We walked very quickly. The people sang, not falling silent. The animals were getting excited. The detachment was cheerful, happy, like a young thoroughbred horse which, when led onto first snow, breaks into the open with a neigh. The surplus of energy overbrims. God grant that this state of mind last! I knew by experience how you shouldn't count on these first invigorating impressions, how fast this energy abates, if squandered. The time was perhaps not far off when both man and beast would be counting every step. On this first day, we made a short five-and-a-half hour march and set our bivouac at the foot of Mount Wochech, near a Galla farmstead. On December 28, we went down the valley of the Awash River; and after an eleven-hour march with an hour and a half break on the bank of the River Berga, we camped for the night in the village of Gura.

The valley of the Awash is very beautiful and relatively densely populated. It is fertile,

abounding in water, but completely treeless. Cow dung, which is piled around each farmstead in regular heaps, serves as fuel here. The inhabitants are Galla who, apparently, have recovered after their recent conquest. They stand up strongly for their property. For instance, one Galla raised a racket and came to me to complain that my cook, Ikasu, had taken three stones for our hearth from a heap that lay near his house.

The village where we stopped is called "Gura." There are about 20 farmsteads in it. The houses are large, round, with conical straw roofs. Near the houses are low, wattled-brushwood storehouses, slightly elevated above the ground to protect against termites, the dreadful enemies of all who live here.

In their way of life and in their clothing, the inhabitants are noticeably influenced by Abyssinian culture. The men wear trousers of abujedi (English shirt cloth) and shammās, (17) and the women wear long Abyssinian shirts. A black silk lace, a matab — a sign of christening — appears on the necks of all of them.

Twenty years ago, the beautiful wide plain of the Awash, on the horizon of which mountains of enormous mass are visible, was the scene of the bloodiest cavalry battles.

The Galla who inhabit it were famous for their horsemanship and bravery, and the subjugation of them cost the Abyssinians much trouble and sacrifice. Not so long ago, it was a rare and remarkable feat for an Abyssinian to water his horse at the Awash River. But blow after blow struck by Ras Gobana, Menelik's celebrated commander, broke the

resistance of the brave tribe. Ras Gobana is by birth a Shoan: his father was a Galla, and his mother an Abyssinian. All the best fighting elements of Shoa thronged under his banners. Where Ras Gobana was, there too were success and plunder. At the call of Gobana, tens of thousands of warriors assembled. In the field, the celebrated Ras was courageous and indefatigable. His time was the epoch of the flourishing of the cavalry spirit and of mounted battle in Abyssinia. Firearms were almost unknown at that time. The lance, the ardent steed, the impact and the speed of the raid, numerical superiority — that is how Gobana triumphed.

He usually invited the Galla to submit, threatening to destroy them if they did not. Gobana sent such admonitions to all the neighboring tribes, but few of them submitted voluntarily. Then Gobana launched raids on the unsubmitive. He didn't take caravans of transport carts with him — these were raids of ten-thousand-man detachments. No one knew when the Ras would set out, where he would go, or when he would return. At night, the order was given to set out, and by morning all communications between the detachment that had moved into the field and the base was severed. Finally, after a long wait, those who stayed at home would see a column of dust on the horizon and say that Gobana was returning ...

Approaching the domain of an unsubmitive tribe, the Ras surrounded the border by night. At dawn, his huge horde was already flying like the wind in all directions, destroying everything that fell in its path. This was the time of personal heroism, of epic warriors, when guns and smokeless powder had not depersonalized the soldier — when

enemies met face-to-face to measure strength. Here each warrior sought glory and plunder for himself. The Ras was situated with the reserves, somewhere on a high central hill, from which a view of the horizon opened up. At the decisive moment, he set his reserves in motion. The Galla used temporizing tactics. They retreated and escaped from the onslaught of the Abyssinians. But when the Shoans returned to the rallying point, burdened with plunder, tired, on exhausted horses, entire cavalry detachments of Galla, who had hidden in the rough terrain or in empty cattle pens, unexpectedly darted out of ambush. Singing "Joli Aba Rebi" — "I the son of Aba Rebi" (the leader of the tribe) — they attacked the Abyssinians, retaking the plunder from them. Many Abyssinian and Galla bones lie in this valley.

The essence of Gobana's style of warfare is expressed by his two favorite words: "Hid bellau!" — "Off with you, get going!" This remarkable fighting cavalryman died several years ago, having badly hurt himself in a fall from a horse. With his death, cavalry activity in Abyssinia began to die out. However, there were other reasons for this. Everyone acquired guns; and, owing to the loss of livestock and constant wars, many no longer had horses. Meanwhile, the theater of military operations shifted: rocks and narrow, wooded mountain ridges replaced the plateaux and plains which formerly were the scene of mounted battles.

My guide, a participant in the expeditions of Ras Gobana, showed me the place from which the Ras unleashed his detachment in one of his many raids. This was at the foot of Mount Wochech. Many from the Ras's detachment reached the Chobo Mountains that day

and managed to return to the rallying point by evening. Fighting and seizing plunder, they covered 80-100 versts [53-66 miles] in a single day.

### **December 29.**

Crossing the Barbari-Medyr land, which is densely settled by soldiers of Menelik, we climbed Mount Dendi. At the summit of one of the spurs of this mountain huddles a small town, or rather, the fortified residence of the governor-general of this region — Dajazmatch Haile Maryam.

Strongholds of this type are very characteristic. They are usually built on some hard-to-reach hill which commands the surrounding area and on which the Abyssinian ruler builds his eagle nest. The strongholds are surrounded by a high palisade, in front of which is a deep ditch. The interior of the stronghold is divided into several separate courtyards, built up with all sorts of structures related to the household economy, and a large square where court is held. In the center is located the elfin, or inner chambers of the leader. On a neighboring hill, in the shade of huge fig trees is hidden a round church with a conical roof and a star made of reed sticks, with ostrich eggs stuck on the ends of the sticks. The low little houses of numerous clergy and soldiers are huddled around the church and the little town.

Governor-general Haile Maryam was away. He and his soldiers had taken the field with the detachment of Ras Makonnen. A significant part of the male Galla population had also gone with him.

By eleven in the morning, we climbed the crest of the former crater of Mount Dendi (3,000 meters above sea level), inside which is found the lake of the same name. The foot of the mountain is completely built-up with Galla farmsteads, buried in the verdure of banana plantations. Its very steep slopes are overgrown with huge coniferous trees — teda, a type of cypress — and leaf-bearing kusso trees. (18) From the crest of the mountain there opens up a view that is rare in beauty and in the combination of colors. Far below sparkles the sky-blue, brilliant surface of the lake, surrounded by the dense green of huge trees. Around it, wild, plantless, forbidding gray rocks cluster. This lake seems to consist of two little lakes which touch each other at their circumferences. It may be that there used to be two craters here. From the southern lake flows the River Uluk, a tributary of the Blue Nile. Dendi in Galla means "great water," and Uluk means "passing through." Not far off from Dendi towers another mountain — Chobo — with a lake at the summit named "Wonch," from which flows Walga, a tributary of the River Omo. According to local inhabitants, Walga flows some distance under the ground then, piercing the crater, appears outside.

On the shores of the Dendi, stuck to the foot of a cliff, stands the farmstead of Fitaurari Abto Giyorgis, commander of the entire guard of Menelik II.

My path to Jimma went through his possessions; and, by order of the Emperor, Abto Giyorgis was supposed to give me guides. The General came to meet me and invited me to his home where dinner was already prepared for us. We sat on spread carpets and in

front of us servants stretched a wide curtain that hid us from outside eyes. One of the ashkers brought a copper wash-stand of intricate form (with the brand of a Moscow factory), and we, in accordance with Abyssinian custom, washed our hands before the meal. One of the cooks, a beautiful young Galla girl, having washed her hands and having rolled the sleeves of her shirt to the elbow, kneeled in front of our basket and from little pots began to take out on slices of injera (a flat cake) all kinds of foods and to put them on bread which was spread out on the basket. What an array of foods: hard-boiled eggs cooked in some unusually sharp sauce, and ragout of mutton with red pepper, and chicken gravy with ginger, and tongue, and ground or scraped meat — all abundantly seasoned with butter and powdered with pepper and spices — and cold sour milk and sour cream ... In the corners of the fire in front of us, cut into little pieces, tebs meat was roasting. And the chief of the slaughter-house held over our basket a huge piece of beef. We ate with our hands, tearing off little petals of injera and collecting with them large amounts of all sorts of food. My mouth burned from the quantity of pepper. Tears came to my eyes. My sense of taste was dulled. And we devoured everything indiscriminately, cooling our mouths, from time to time, with sour cream or by drinking a wonderful mead — tej — from little decanters wrapped in little silk handkerchiefs. They also invited Zelepukin to dinner. When we were full, they called the officers of the Fitaurari and my ashkers. They sat in close circles around ten baskets with injera, over which servants held large pieces of raw meat. Wine bearers served mead to the diners in large horn glasses. All ate decorously and silently. At the end of the meal, just as decorously, they all got up and left at the same time, not bowing to anyone.

General Abto Giyorgis is one of the most outstanding associates of Menelik today. He is the son of the chief of a small tribe. When the Abyssinians subdued this tribe, in accordance with custom, they took the children of the best families of the conquered tribe to educate them. Among the pupils was Abto Giyorgis, who found himself at the court of Menelik. He spent all of his childhood and youth in the suite of the Negus. Here he went through the entire course of Abyssinian sciences, studied Holy Scripture and legislation; and, thanks to his intelligence, uprightness and knowledge of laws, Menelik made him one of the chief lecturers on judicial affairs. In the recent war with Italy, he distinguished himself at Adwa, and Menelik assigned him to replace a guards leader who was killed in that battle, Fitaaurari Bobayu, now glorified by bards as an Abyssinian hero. Abto Giyorgis now has the post of personal fitaurari attached to the person of Menelik and commander of all his guard. Under his command there are an eleven-thousand-man regiment of snayder-yaji (i.e., bearers of "Remingtons"), and several thousand of his own soldiers. These troops are deployed (due to the convenience of supplies) in a long band, from Chabo along the left bank of the River Gibye-Omo, then along the shores of Lake Abasi, or Walamo, southward to Lake Stephanie and the lands of Boran. The latter were conquered by Abto Giyorgis in 1897.

The origin of the armies of Menelik is interesting. At the beginning of his reign, the Emperor had a severe shortage of both guns and soldiers. The nucleus of his armed forces consisted of the armies of Emperor Tewodros, known as gondari — men of Gondar — who had gone over to his side. They are still called gondari and are stationed along the borders of the empire. They are about twenty thousand men strong. This army is divided

into thousand-man regiments distributed among various leaders. Soldiers who mustered under the banner of Menelik at another later time were known by a name that corresponded to their armament. Those armed with muzzle-loaded guns were called neftenya. Those who had flint-lock guns were tabanja-yaji. Those with breech-loaded guns were snayder-yaji.

At first, Menelik supplied his personal guards with breech-loaded guns. They were subsequently divided into a separate corps and transformed into the Guard of Menelik. The snayder-yaji, as a select army, is supposed to stand in front of all the armies of the Emperor in campaigns and battles. The tabanja-yaji number over five thousand. They are under the leadership of Likamakos (adjutant general) Adenau. The neftenya number ten regiments distributed among various leaders. They are now all armed with breech-loaded guns although they keep their old names. Abto Giyorgis holds the very important post of "personal fitaurari." In a march, he is always in front. In battle, he is obliged to attack the enemy first and always from the front. The men appointed to this high post are usually outstanding for their bravery.

### **December 30.**

At eight o'clock in the morning, we set out again. At parting, I gave the Fitaurari a gold-hilted blade that he liked very much.

The morning was exceptionally cold. A strong west wind blew, and the temperature was only 5 degrees Réamur [43 degrees F], and clouds quickly swept past over the peaks of

Dendi. Unaccustomed to this temperature, our arms became numb. To warm up, my bare-footed and half-naked, shivering ashkers ran in line with my mule.

The General gave me guides to Jimma: some soldiers and the son of the former Galla King Cholye-Byru (which means literally "ardent silver.") This was an elderly, gray Galla of enormous build, with a masculine, but at the same time naive-childish face. In a picturesque white cloak, with a straw hat on his head, a small straw parasol in his hand, and a long spear on his back, he accompanied me on the back of a little mule. For him, a boy servant carried on his head a little bag with provisions.

The road followed the valley of the River Walga — along the region of Amaya, which is rich and densely populated by Galla, and which was recently subdued by the Abyssinians. The large number of streams flowing from Mountains Rogye and Tobo give this locale a rare fertility. The fields are completely under cultivation, and farmsteads stretch along the entire road, uninterrupted by any street.

The Galla of Amaya are very beautiful, of large build, well formed. Their women are especially beautiful — some have a perfectly Gypsy type of beauty. They dress in an ox-hide that girds the hips like a skirt, trimmed from above with little frills. Huge bracelets of copper and ivory are displayed on their arms and legs. Their pierced ears have earrings. Around the neck, they wear beads. Men wear trousers and shammās. In its domestic structure, this tribe differs very little from other Galla tribes. It surpasses them only by its trade and industrial development. Amaya abounds in markets at which one can

get excellent cotton fabric.

Along the road, I killed a jackal. The bullet pierced both forelegs above the knee, completely breaking the bones. At this time, a Galla who turned out to be the son of the former king of Amaya-Moti, Bonti-Maya, came up to me . The strong action of the small-looking bullet from my 3/8-inch-caliber rifle surprised my new acquaintance and seemed supernatural to him. He looked over the gun for a long time with wonder, praising it.

Crossing the River Walga, which flows in rocky, sheer banks, we set up camp after a nine-and-a-half-hour crossing. At night there was a powerful storm. Two mules and a horse broke away from the convoy; and by morning, Galla from the neighboring village were already trying to steal them. My ashkers, however, overtook the malefactors and turned them over to the local judge. To my consternation, the judge considered it necessary to arrest not only the guilty parties, but also the animals, thus lessening my already insignificant caravan.

### **December 31.**

We set out onto an almost uninhabited plain, which stretches in a wide band along the River Gibye and is overgrown with acacias of a type which is rarely seen in Abyssinia. These are small trees with light bark, almost without leaves. The upper part of their trunk is very branched, and the branches are studded with thorns which, at its base, are swollen into complete little balls, almost all of which have little wormholes. When the wind blows, these little balls give out a strange noise like a whistle. This plain, which is rich in

game, bears the name "Mocha," which means "thicket."

At noon, we stopped for rest near a small Galla farmstead. A young good-looking Galla girl came out to meet us. She lived at the home of her parents, having recently run away from her husband.

I asked her, "But your husband can take you back. Didn't he pay your parents a ransom for you? What will you do then?"

"What's there to do? I am his slave ... Against my wishes, I will submit myself," she answered. "Then I will run away again."

I cite this conversation because it seems to me characteristic of the position of women among the Galla.

Having thus accomplished a twelve-hour march, we bivouacked at the Galla farmstead. At this bivouac, Zelepukin killed a wild goat with a Winchester rifle. Thanks to that, we greeted the New Year with an excellent supper, consisting of soup cooked from the dead goat and good coffee with a glass of liqueur. However, having turned our attention to our future business, we meanwhile noticed on one of the pack animals a sore which my ashkers cauterized that very evening.

**January 1, 1898.**

We for the second time crossed the River Walga, which in this place flows through a deep and narrow ravine. There was a lot of game on the plain leading to the river. Not leaving the path, I killed four wild goats. (19)

Along the River Walga stretches the settlement of Adale, bounded from the side of the Mocha by a wide thick fortification (abattis), built by the Galla for defense against cavalry raids from the Gurage.

This warlike tribe lived on the banks of several lakes on a plateau which lies between the Rivers Gibye and Awash, . The Gurage are Semitic in origin and believe that they come from Gura in Tigre. The Galla invasion in the sixteenth century, when the Galla conquered the entire basin of the Gibye and the Awash Rivers, isolated the Gurage from other tribes who were related to them and forced them to wage for three centuries an unequal but desperate battle for independence against the Galla. (20)

They preserved their uniqueness, language, and Christian faith. Even today, subdued by Menelik, they have not lost their warlike spirit. During the war with Italy, when Menelik was in Tigre with his armies, the Gurage carried out a series of attacks on neighboring Galla, and also, among others, on the inhabitants of Adale. The people of Adale met them with the above described fortification, which is very awkward for mounted battle. The skirmish which took place here ended with the retreat of the Gurage.

The leader of the region, Basha Metaferya, was away. He is commander of a regiment of

snayder-yaji which is posted here. The temporary commanding officer came to meet us, accompanied by a crowd of Abyssinians and Galla. With low bows, he begged us to take honorary gifts (durgo) — bread, honey, butter, rams, hens, eggs, milk and salt (customarily brought together by order of the Emperor as a gift for an honored traveler who is passing through) — and to stay at the home of the Basha. It was much too early to stop for the night. (There were still three hours of daylight left). So we had to decline this kind invitation.

Passing the village, we went down a difficult path from a high steep plateau, rising 800 meters above the River Gibye. An inexperienced person could get dizzy from such steepness, which all the more seemed impassable for a loaded mule. But the mules demonstrated their agility and hardiness. For them, such slopes are an ordinary matter. Stepping quietly and carefully, only rarely squinting toward the abyss spread out almost under its feet, a mule confidently steps from rock to rock. But here it stops ... An obstacle appears on the road. A moment ... The mule makes a bold, strong jump and safely makes its way to an apparently unreachable spot. From the edge of the plateau, a remarkably beautiful view of the river opens up. Somewhere deep below, it twists among the enormous stone masses which press in upon it, framed with a thick green leaf-bearing forest, a narrow ribbon running away along its banks far, far ... The valley of the river is uninhabited. Around it reigns a dumb silence, only rarely disturbed by the loud snorting, almost roar of hippotamuses playing in the water.

The Gibye begins in the Guder Mountains, which stretch across the left bank of the Blue

Nile. Near the place where we passed, the Gibye takes, to the right, two of its main tributaries — Gibye-Enerea and Gibye-Kake, and to the left — the River Walga. Here, squeezed from both sides by mountains, it flows in a narrow channel. Farther on, as if digging through the mountain range, it runs to the south by a wide low-lying valley. Here already it takes the name not of Gibye, but of Omo.

We had to cross the river. The guides showed us the place, and we forded there. Here the Gibye has a width of 180 paces, and a depth of one arshin [28 inches]. It flows at a speed of greater than eight versts an hour. On the other bank of the river we hunted large chamois bulls (orobo), which from the mountain we mistook for buffalo. For the first time since my illness, I tried to walk and run during this hunt. My ashkers got excited, shot quickly and therefore missed. Finally, only one orobo was killed, hit by two shots of mine from an express (21) rifle at a distance of 50 paces. The first bullet hit it in the thigh, and the wounded beast, making several steps forward, stopped, and turned halfway around toward me. I shot it with a second bullet, which pierced its cheek, and the orobo fell.

There were many hippopotamuses in the river. Shooting them turned out to be a fine training exercise. This is because hippopotamuses commonly luxuriate themselves in the water, sticking their heads out of its surface. A bullet which doesn't reach a hippopotamus or that flies beyond it, falls in the water and throws up spray and, only if you hit the target do you not leave a trace on the surface of the water. Thus, you get a clear indication of whether the sight of your rifle is true.

That evening, the leader of Adale came to our bivouac at the head of a long file of Galla, carrying durgo; and looking forward to an abundant dinner, my people rejoiced.

The place where we spent the night teems with predatory animals. As a precaution, we set large campfires for the night and placed sentries at the ends of the convoy.

## II. Jimma

Jimma is situated on a long narrow ribbon of land that stretches from the southwest to the northeast along the course of the Gibye-Kake River. It is surrounded by mountains, from which many streams and rivulets run into the Gibye. These streams irrigate Jimma and make it one of the most fertile regions. The tops of the mountain ranges are hidden by thick ancient forest. The climate of the valleys is particularly moist. (There are two rainy seasons here — one in March and April, and another in July and August). The equable climate favors the growth of the coffee tree, which in the Ethiopian highlands is found only in the southwestern region, in places contiguous to Kaffa. These excellent natural conditions have made Jimma one of the most populous and productive regions of Ethiopia. In addition, its central position among other rich regions have made it a major commercial center. Arabs, Abyssinians, and Galla throng here to exchange their foreign merchandise (cloth, weapons, and beads) for coffee, musk, elephant tusk, honey, wax, bread and horses from Jimma and its neighbors — Kaffa, Kulo, Konta, and Limu. From here, valuable merchandise is sent through Gojjam and Tigre to Massawa; and through Harar to one of the ports of the Gulf of Aden, on the shore of the Indian Ocean.

Jimma is well known for its cotton and its iron artifacts. Their agriculture is very intensive. The area under cultivation is extensive because it is intended not only to meet local needs and to pay taxes but also for the export of bread. There is almost no fallow land. Contact with foreigners has had an influence on the development of industry and the prosperity of the region, as well as its mode of life and religion.

Unfortunately, along with the commercial-industrial growth of Jimma came the flourishing of the slave trade and the triumph of Mohammedanism. For three centuries, the reigning dynasty and the whole people have zealously professed Islam.

The population of Jimma belongs to the Galla or Oromo tribe. The people consider "Kake" as their ancestor — probably having come from Boranye, the cradle of all Galla. In general, by type or by morals, manners, and customs, the inhabitants of Jimma are almost indistinguishable from their other fellow tribesmen. The Galla of Jimma are of large build, of exceptionally fine physique, with regular facial features. The women are renowned for their beauty. The color of their skin is chestnut. The men wear "shammas." (22) A woman of distinction wears a leather skirt and a brown jacket. A slave girl wears just a small leather skirt. Women's hairstyles are very unique. Wealthy women wear wigs made of human hair, which resemble a large cap, plaited with parallel rows of horizontal slender braids.

Thanks to their wealth and commercial spirit, the people of Jimma do not distinguish themselves for warlike qualities. Prizing their prosperity, they have always been a tributary of their strongest neighbor — at first the King of Kaffa, then the Negus of Gojjam, and, finally, since 1886, the Emperor Menelik. Today, Jimma is autonomous in its internal government, pays tribute to the Empire, and observes the laws and edicts that are required for the whole empire. The highest court and the right of capital punishment belong to the Emperor of Abyssinia.

When the slave trade was suppressed by Menelik under pain of death, Jimma was one of the main centers of this business, and its prosperity was dealt a considerable blow. The Emperor likewise made it a criminal offense to turn convicts into slaves. (That used to be a wide-spread form of punishment in Jimma.) Formerly, those who underwent this punishment became the property of the king and furnished him with a source of considerable income. Now the duration of prisoner-of-war status is limited to seven years, at the end of which the slave/prisoner-of-war becomes free. Thanks to these beneficial laws, slavery should be considered abolished, once and for all. But, in actuality, the descendants of former slaves find themselves still in a dependent condition today, analogous to the status of our peasants in the time of serfdom. Settled on lands of the king, they are obliged to work for him for eight days a month, then their labor belongs to the local chief, and the rest of the time they work for themselves. Out of economic necessity, some former slaves stay at the court of the king, presenting themselves as a kind of manor serf.

At the head of the state government of Jimma is the hereditary king from the Kake dynasty, Aba Jifar, who inherited the throne from his father, Aba Dula.<sup>(23)</sup> The kingdom of Jimma used to be in feudal dependence to Kaffa. When Aba Jifar ascended the throne, he acknowledged himself first as a tributary of the Negus of Gojjam and then, eight years later, of the Negus of Shoa — Menelik. <sup>(24)</sup> Two years later, when Jimma was annexed to Abyssinia, Menelik punished Jifar (for inspiring excessive enthusiasm in his own standing army and trying to entice Abyssinian soldiers to his own service) by imprisoning

him in Ankober for a year. When he was freed, Aba Jefar again received the throne of Jimma from Menelik, and after that lesson became one of the most obedient of vassals and one of the most regular in paying tribute to the Emperor.(25)

Near the King there is a high council made up of his relatives and representatives of prominent families. The King, with the elders, administers justice in all important matters, aside from serious crimes, which are scrutinized by the Emperor himself. But more or less minor offenses are decided by criminal courts or by local chiefs. From an administrative point of view, Jimma is divided into 60 small areas, governed by an aba koro — a duty entrusted to the oldest line of the oldest family in a given location. The aba koro names an assistant, aba genda, who has a small staff of lower functionaries, known as aba langa. It is interesting to note the special legal protection of merchants, who, by the way, control the king himself. Land is set aside for merchants, on which they erect their farmsteads. In short, for the development and maintenance of the commercial spirit in the country, merchants are given all imaginable privileges.

The duty to maintain the roads is considered very serious. Each landowner is entrusted, under penalty of serious punishment (in former times, that could even mean sale into slavery) with the obligation to keep the road in order. Thanks to this law, I never before saw any road like those here: wide, even, lined with trees, with bridges across ditches and swampy streams. On all roads that lead to Jimma, gates have been set up for surveillance of the movement of caravans, which are allowed free entry, but which cannot go back out without the permission of the King. After having arrived with his wares, a merchant

informs the King of what he has brought with him, presenting gifts that are within their means.

Wishing to leave, a merchant requests royal permission for passage of his caravan. He is then escorted to the gates by specially designated people, armed with a unique spear with two blades. The tribute levied from merchants usually does not exceed ten percent of the value of the goods. At roadside bazaars, a passing caravan should bring as a gift several flat cakes made of bread, and boiled guderu (a kind of potato).

To the south-west of Jimma along the mountain range that divides it from the River Omo, resides the Janjero tribe, who formerly lived as an independent kingdom. On annexation to Jimma, the last king of this tribe acknowledged suzerainty to Menelik, but his successor in 1890 broke away from the Emperor. As a result of that, Ras Wolda Giyorgis together with the King of Jimma marched on the Janjero and annexed this territory to Jimma once and for all.

Janjero, both by its customs and its language, is sharply distinguished from neighboring tribes. Remarkable hunters and trappers, the Janjero are brave, hardy, and extremely fierce. It is said that they even have human sacrifices.

## **January 2.**

We entered Jimma. Crossing the border forest, which stretches along the Gibye River, we

climbed the high bank, on the steep ascent of which, in a ravine, was built an outpost, guarded by several Galla. The rock of Ali-Kela, a huge stone monolith, towers nearby, as if torn away from the high bank of the Omo River. Its sides are very sheer. On the summit is seen a small grove, in which the natives say there is a lake. Here, another rock rises almost in a row. This one resembles an obelisk and is called Tulu-Saytana, in other words "Mountain of the Devil."

Having on this day made a twelve-hour march with a short halt at noon, we made camp. It was already getting dark. Having stopped near the farmstead of a wealthy Galla, we hoped to obtain from him grain, hay, or straw for the mules. But the host, a Mohammedan, was not particularly friendly to us. He refused us grain, hay or anything else, claiming that he had nothing. The grass in the immediate vicinity had all been burnt, and only the grass on the bank of the stream was still intact. It was too dark to pick grass from among thorny bushes. I decided not to send my people to do this work. Anyway, they were exhausted from the march. The mules, consequently, had to stay hungry until morning. But my ashkers showed themselves to be fine fellows. On their own initiative, with the oldest member of the detachment at the head, they set out along the stream and gathered enough grass for the night. As was to be expected, this excursion did not turn out well. They returned bruised and badly scratched. But this action of my ashkers, better than anything, gave witness to the good morale in my detachment.

### **January 3.**

We went along a beautiful, heavily populated and well cultivated area. The road went

along the high right bank of the Gibye-Kake River, crossing its numerous tributaries. The surroundings differed sharply from the lands we had passed through earlier on the left bank of the Gibye River. In plant life, soil and in the wealth of nature it vividly reminded me of Leka, with which I had acquainted myself in my previous expedition (1896-97). Here I almost didn't see any mimosa or acacia, which are often encountered in Shoa and between Addis Ababa and Gibye. A species of small trees, similar to peach trees, with bright green leaves, predominates. The soil is red clay; but in the valleys, lush black earth is found. As regards rocks, I most often observed reddish sandstone, and, here and there, granite. Basalt, which is often found in Abyssinia, I didn't see here at all.

On the way, we out-distanced and met commercial caravans, for the most part carrying cloth into Jimma and returning primarily with coffee. Heavily loaded mules (26) and horses walk in a herd, surrounded by drivers; behind them the owner, with an air of importance, sits on his mule with a felt hat, which he, on occasion, willingly sells to an Abyssinian, and with a straw parasol in his hands. Behind the caravan slowly walk the female slaves or wives of the drivers, loaded with all kinds of baggage. Caravans proceed very slowly, going not more than 12-15 versts [8-10 miles] a day. They set out early in the morning, and at noon set up bivouac, forming a picturesque scene. Somewhere in the valley, on the banks of streams, under a canopy of immense fig trees, the merchants' tents are pitched. The cargo is laid out in piles. Unsaddled and glittering with bright red padding on their backs, the mules graze on the sunny meadow. Here the drivers, half naked, their black skin and strong musculature shining, cut grass for the night with sickles. Around the campfires, women swarm, preparing food. For the night they take

care of the animals on horse lines. The travelers, having dined on fresh flat cakes, seat themselves in a close circle around the campfire and spend the evening in endless conversation. Someone brings out a musical instrument that resembles a three-string harp, and, to the accompaniment of a monotonous rhythmic chord, draws out a sad and quiet song. The campfire is extinguished, and with it the melancholy melody dies down. The caravan arranges itself for the night's shelter. Here silence reigns. All that is heard is the regular chewing of the animals and the cry of a night bird.

Along the road small marketplaces are often encountered. A dozen women sit under the shade of a large tree and wait for buyers. They sell bread (small round flat cakes) and thick sour beer.

Among the sellers you run into very good-looking young women, but they all have an oppressed, sullen look, the like of which I never saw among the Galla girls of other tribes. Was this gloominess a result of Mohammedanism?

#### **January 4.**

We forded the Gibye River and in the evening, having marched for eleven hours, reached the capital of Jimma — the town of Jeren. (27)

As we got closer to Jeren, the countryside became more beautiful and brighter. Trees, which were planted close together on both sides of the road, were in flower and filled the air with fragrance. Zelepukin, to his great joy, found in the bushes his old favorite —

blackberry plants with ripe berries. The town of Jeren lies at the foot of a mountain range that serves as the watershed of the Rivers Gibye-Kake and Gibye-Enareya. The palace of the feudal lord, Aba Jefar, stands in splendor on one of the highest hills. A wide street leads to the main gate of the palace. The farmsteads of relatives and retainers of the king, alternating with thick plantations of banana-like trees (28) extend on both sides of that street. In the valley, several versts from here, you see dense settlements of local merchants and a large square, where twice a week the famous marketplace of Jimma is held.

The sun had already set when I arrived at the gates of the palace. On crossing the Gibye River I sent a rider to let Aba-Jefar know of my arrival, but the messenger somehow lingered on the way and got there almost at the same time we did. Our unexpected arrival caused some commotion. The chief azzaj (steward) ran out to meet us and apologized that because of the late news of our coming, he had not been able to prepare a lodging for us. In the name of Aba Jefar, he asked us to come and visit him.

Leaving the pack mules and some of the servants in the square, I and the other ashkers went to the palace, which was surrounded by a high and beautiful fence, made of split trunks of bamboo which were intricately interlaced, and divided into many separate courtyards. Each of these dwellings had its own special purpose: either for some section of the palace staff, or as reception rooms of the king, or for his inner chambers.

Passing through a series of outer courtyards, we went into the inner chambers. Here we

had to leave our mules and continue on foot. Finally, they led us into the courtyard where were located the sleeping chamber of Aba Jifar and the house of his harem — the place of incarceration of his two wives and two favorite concubines. The harem is a two-story building, of complex architecture, with narrow latticed windows and gaudily painted carved galleries. It is concealed behind a high wall and huge banana-like trees. Here I met Aba Jifar. The Moti (King) of Jimma sat on a folding chair near a large bonfire surrounded by several dozen of his retainers. Greeting me with a European-style handshake, he began to question me in broken Abyssinian about my journey, what I wanted to know, didn't I get tired, etc. Behind his throne, his body guards and retinue sat on the grass, spread out in a picturesque group. My ashkers stood in a half circle behind my chair with their guns at their feet. (By Abyssinian custom, servants should not sit in the presence of their master.)

Aba Jifar is still a young man — handsome, well-built, and somewhat in his prime. He has a typical face: a straight thin nose; bright, handsome eyes which shift suspiciously from side to side; a thick black beard; and black, short-cropped, curly hair. His hands are graceful. He wears large gold rings on all his fingers. Dressed in a white shirt and trousers, he has draped over his shoulders the thinnest white shamma. His feet are also very small and handsome, clad in leather sandals.

After a few minutes of conversation, Aba Jifar asked me to wait awhile, apologizing because this was the time for evening prayer. Accompanied by his retinue, he walked a few steps to the side and started to perform the required ablutions. A slave boy brought a

large silver pitcher with water, and Aba Jefar began to wash his hands, feet, chest, head, and shoulders in accord with all the rules of the Moslem ritual, at the same time uttering prayers in a low voice. Having finished the ceremony, he went up on a small white stone quadrangular patio, covered with a mat, and, turning to face the east, began to pray.

It was already quite dark ... A marvelous, fantastic picture was presented by the prayer of a half-savage Mohammedan ruler in these circumstances so unusual to the eyes of European. The blazing bonfire lit up with its changing flames the intricate and fanciful harem building, through the latticed windows of which the imprisoned beauties now looked out in curiosity. It also lit up a picturesque group of men draped in white shammās, and the huge shape of the king sharply prominent against the somber background of night. Aba Jefar zealously prayed, fingering beads and bowing down to the earth. There was total silence. Only random gusts of wind, rippling through the huge foliage of the banana-like trees and rustling their green garments disturbed the reverential silence that reigned around.

Having finished his prayers, Aba Jefar, apparently satisfied that he had had the opportunity to show off to a European his knowledge of all the Moslem rituals, once again settled into his chair.

We renewed our interrupted conversation. The king asked me about Stambul (Turkey) and Mysyr (Egypt). He wanted to know if it was true that Stambul was the most powerful state in the world. Of course, I had to, to some degree, disillusion him and refute the

biased tales that Arabs had told him.

Servants brought a large earthenware pot of coffee and sat down near us on the grass to pour it. From a wicker straw basket in the form of a column embroidered with beads, they took out about ten small cups without handles, wrapped in red calico, and spread them out on a wooden tray. They offered coffee to us first; and then, in order, the whole retinue and my ashkers were served.

Having drunk coffee, I asked Aba Jefar to order his retinue to lead me to my house. I sat on my mule and, surrounded by the retinue and by my ashkers, set out for the place that had been prepared for us. Our way was lighted by a torch made of a piece of bamboo trunk, the inside of which was completely filled with wax, with a thick paper wick.

At our house, a whole detachment of slaves was waiting for us, with the oldest housekeeper in charge. They had brought us as a gift from Aba Jefar abundant *durgo* (honorary gifts), consisting of 130 pieces of *injera* (bread), six buckets of *tej* (mead), four rams, butter, hens, honey, milk, salt, and firewood, as well as hay and barley for our mules. My boys forgot both their weariness and the pain of feet worn out by the long journey and rejoiced anticipating abundant refreshments.

## **January 5.**

A day's rest in Jeren. About nine in the morning, Aba Jefar sent to invite me to his

quarters and sent along a guard detachment of 500 men to accompany me. Apparently, he wanted to compensate in this way for the ceremonial reception that had been planned for the day before but which hadn't taken place because of the suddenness of my arrival.

The detachment formed a front in several ranks before the gates of my house. Officers who had dismounted from mules stood before it. In response to my greeting, the detachment bowed to the ground and then quickly reformed in two units that took their places — one in front of me and the other behind. In this order we, quietly and with ceremony, headed toward the court, accompanied by a crowd of people and children. I was very pleased with the warriors — mainly Abyssinians — who served as my convoy. They were well dressed and well armed. Almost all of them had signs of distinction in battle: gold earrings, sabers mounted in silver, shields decorated with silver, cloaks made of leopard skins, and ribbons on the head.

They led me to a large interior court of the palace which had two purposes: as the place of the main court of justice and at the same time as the reception hall. The court was built in a semicircle, which could easily accommodate several thousand people. A wooden pavilion, trimmed with motley colored decorations and covered with a tiled roof, was constructed in the middle. Its architecture is reminiscent of Indian buildings. The pavilion was erected by foreign experts — Arabs and Hindus. Three sides of it, facing the courtyard, were open, and on the fourth, in a solid stone wall, a bay was arranged, curtained off with multi-colored fabrics. The throne of Aba Jefar stands here, all covered with carpets. A small wall clock stands near one of the walls of the bay, on a little table.

A long, low wooden colonnade, covered with thatch was erected along the side opposite to the pavilion. A crowd of people, who had gathered in the palace, ceremoniously sat on low stools made out of a single piece of wood.

Aba Jifar received me, sitting on the throne cross-legged, Turkish-style. An Arab mullah — the most influential person in the kingdom — sat on the step of the throne. Old men — chiefs of Galla tribes — were seated on each side of the throne, in two rows, likewise on low stools. A well-built Europe chair was set out for me, opposite the throne.

To my greeting, Aba Jifar replied in Arabic, imitating the guttural Arabic pronunciation and piously rolling his eyes. Then he animatedly began to question me in Arabic, incessantly smiling for the whole time of the conversation. Aba Jifar translated my answers to Galla for the old men, who represented a complete contrast from their intelligent and progressive king. Wrapped up in their long cloaks (shammas), they sat majestically and silently, listening with distrust to the stories about ships, iron roads etc., which sounded improbable to them. They looked with complete indifference at the white man, who was brought by fate to their distant land as if from another world. It seemed that it was all the same to them whether the alien who was before them spoke the truth or lied.

Aba Jifar hurled me questions about European states that he knew of — about their comparative size, population, etc. The King had heard that the largest of them was

Russia, and when I mentioned that in an entire year one would not be able to walk across it from west to east, he was startled.

Knowing that I had a medicine chest with me, the king asked me to show it and to share with him some remedies, and also to treat his sick mother. I fulfilled the first request: I gave him soda for heartburn, iodoform and sublimate for treating wounds and copal balm. As regards his mother, I said that I had to examine her before I could treat her. They sent to warn the sick woman that I would be coming, and after several minutes I went, accompanied by the head eunuch, to the apartment of the harem which the mother of the king occupied. They led me by a narrow, little court, enclosed with high fences, past a row of low little houses which were covered with thatch and locked. At all the gates, menacing and silent guards of the harem stood — beardless eunuchs, armed with long whips. Here and there beautiful slave girls appeared. They looked at us with curiosity and then quickly hid themselves. The whole situation had the smell of mysterious eastern bliss ...

The house where the mother of Aba Jefar lived was found in a separate little court and was a little bit larger than the others. The entrance to it was hung with white cloth, which hid the mistress of the house from our view. A chair was set for me on this side of the curtain, and, at first, our conversation, with the help of a translator, took place through the curtain. The patient complained of heartburn, cough, and headache. I had to see her and listen to her, so I went beyond the curtain.

On a divan covered with carpets, the queen mother sat, dressed in a black silk burnoose embroidered in gold; thrown over it was a white jacket, decorated with silk. The color of her skin was quite light. The features of her face were regular. Her eyes were remarkably beautiful. Despite her 40 years of age, she still seemed like a youthful woman. Her forehead, neck and chest were tattooed. Her fingers were painted red. Her arms and legs, on which were worn gold bracelets, were so small that any Chinese woman could envy them. The queen mother was heavily scented with attar of roses and sandalwood. A crowd of pretty maids of honor in original little brown leather skirts and white cotton blouses, adorned with silver links, necklaces, copper and bone bracelets and rings, surrounded the queen mother. Several of the maids of honor were positively beautiful. My unexpected appearance produced on them diverse impressions. Some stood, with downcast eyes and did not dare to look at me. Others stared with curiosity at the white man, the likes of which they had never seen before, and whispered to one another and exchanged looks among themselves.

To the horror of all except the patient herself, I listened to the queen mother's chest. She had a little bronchitis, and I gave her some cough powder.

I had already made up my mind to leave, but the patient stopped me, proposing refreshments. They gave me honey mixed with water in a large horn glass. We began to talk. The queen mother surprised me with her intelligence, and the remarkable dignity and ease with which she conducted herself. It was evident that in spite of her closed life inside the walls of the harem, she did not remain a stranger to current events and, no less

than her son, she knew both about the political position of nearby countries and also about distant European states. Animatedly and intelligently, the queen mother questioned me about our way of life and our governmental system. She was especially interested, of course, in the position of women. The freedom of women seemed to her quite incomprehensible, and the possibility of noble couples — husband and wife — appearing in public with uncovered faces surprised her extremely.

"Does this mean that in your country there are no budas," (werewolf, evil eye, that causes illness and bad luck), she asked, "since your noble people do not fear to show their wives to outsiders?"

I responded that among us the time has long since passed when we believed in budas. To that, the queen mother with a deeply convinced tone said, "But among us, even up until now, they still exist."

Taking my leave, I photographed the queen mother and her maids of honor, but the photo, unfortunately, did not come out.

In the evening of that very day, Aba Jefar visited me with his numerous retinue, having arrived at a gallop on a marvelous gray horse, glittering with rich silver, densely gilded gear and a gold chain on its neck.

The king asked me to show him instruments, photographs and such and asked about the

significance and use of each of the articles he examined. Of course, above all he liked the weapons: a 3/8" caliber rifle and a saber, which he examined long and lovingly.

### **January 6.**

We set out into Kaffa. Aba Jefar gave me several bags of meal for the road and promised to send to Kaffa another ten, which should make up my food supply for the subsequent campaign. We went down from the hills on which was located the town of Jeren and passing several thickly settled settlements of merchants and a large market square, went into the valley of the Gibye-Kake River. At noon we halted on the bank of this river, in the shade of a huge sycamore, and toward evening, crossing the upper river, set up bivouac at the foot of the watershed mountain range between the Gibye and Gojeb Rivers.

A crowd of Galla cheerfully worked on the road near where we lodged for the night. With an inspired refrain and flying into a rage: "Ashana, ada, kho, kho, kho" ("Strengthen honey, ho, ho, ho.") — ten strong Galla deeply dug the earth, using wooden pitchforks with iron tied to the end. They chopped large clods of earth in time to the song. A woman with a large pitcher in her hands sat near those who were working the earth. She poured beer into horn glasses for them. When we approached, the Galla crowded round us, entreating us to drink beer. At first I, then my ashkers took a large glass, which contained more than half a bottle. One glass was not enough to go around, so they brought another from the neighboring house; and only after they had treated all of us did they let us go, parting with cordial wishes. They seemed to me in the highest degree likable — these

wild, half-naked, remarkably cordial and hard-working people.

### **January 7.**

We crossed a mountain ridge, overgrown with enormous, marvelous forest, inhabited by many birds and monkeys. Trees of uncommon size are interwoven with lianas and overgrown with white moss, which hangs from the branches in long threads. The natives call this moss yazaf shebat, which means "gray hair of the tree." The road was very busy. We met unending files of bearers — tall and strong Galla, carrying big skins of grain on their heads to Kaffa, or returning from Kaffa loaded with coffee and mead. Since a great shortage of grain has been felt in Kaffa after the recent war, all the surplus of bread from Jimma is now sent here, where it is exchanged for coffee and mead. For one piece of salt (20 kopecks) a bearer conveys a load ranging from one to one-and-a-half poods [36 to 54 lbs.] to Kaffa and back. Going at a quick pace and making frequent stops, he easily goes 20 to 30 versts [14 to 20 miles] a day. The entire clothing of the bearers consists of a little leather apron on the hips. For weapons they have a dagger, which they wear on the waist. In their arms they hold long pipes, made of two hollow reed stems (the small one is filled with tobacco and the long one is the mouthpiece), stuck into a hollow little gourd half filled with water. I had observed this prototype of a hookah among all of the Galla tribes I had met up until then.

In addition to commercial caravans, we often passed soldiers of Ras Wolda Giyorgis who were going to the muster point. The most prosperous of them set out to war with their whole families. Several donkeys carry the household goods of the soldier and reserve

rations. The wife carries field kitchen utensils in a sack on her shoulders. A boy who is a son or stranger is pressed under the weight of a gun that is one and a half times longer than he is tall. And the master himself, with a straw parasol in his hands and a saber at his waist, who has probably already gone more than his first hundred versts [70 miles], light-heartedly and cheerfully walks toward troubles and deprivation, singing battle songs all the way. Soldiers who have assembled for the march treat the local populace rather impetuously. For example, they consider it their undisputed right to take everything edible from those they meet. So complained a Galla who had been robbed: Adera Menelik ("By the God of Menelik"), the soldier took from him a gourd of mead and a piece of bread — in a word, everything that caught his eye. And the soldiers' wives kept pace with their husbands in this behavior. I happened to see how one of them, a small and frail Abyssinian woman, for some offense hit in the face a big, strong Galla, who in response only mournfully lamented: Abyet, abyet, goftako ("Forgive me, forgive me, madam.")

Even my ashkers became imbued with this military spirit ... Finally I had to take strict measures to curb their impetuous outbursts, which were expressed, however, in rather harmless forms. For instance, I noticed that straw parasols had suddenly appeared in the hands of all my boys. In response to my question of where they got them, they answered me in the most open-hearted tone, "Galla gave them to us."

At about noon, we saw a large crowd of people at one house. It turned out that the brother of Aba Jifar, General (Fitaaurari) Aba Diga, was carrying out an order of Menelik to the

effect that prisoners who had been captured in Kaffa in the last campaign should be returned there.

Learning that I was passing by, Aba Diga sent to ask me to visit him, and I complied. The Fitaurari treated me to a good lunch, for which he ordered one of my slaves, a Christian, to slaughter the ram that had been designated for me. (29)

Aba Diga is elderly, but he is handsome and intelligent. His whole figure has the imprint of aristocracy. The general conducted himself simply and with dignity, conversing intelligently and he only seemed like a savage was in the way he begged.

"What do you bring with you? Do you have a watch? I need a watch. Give me one! Do you have silk, perfume, soap? Give me some!"

He rained such questions and requests on me constantly, despite the fact that I answered no. Finally, Aba Diga was satisfied by my promise to give him a watch when we returned from the expedition. On his side, knowing that Europeans are interested in local articles which might have significance for an ethnographic collection, the general proposed on my return to collect some of the things which are known in Abyssinia in the simple style of the Italians by the name of "antiques." We parted as friends.

Having crossed the mountain ridge, we went along the northern slope, crossing, along the way, many streams and brooks which flow into the Gojeb. At first, the road went through

a densely populated area, but the closer we got to the Gojeb, which constitutes the border between Jimma and Kaffa, the more rarely we encountered settlements.. Along the left side stretched a dense forest, which serves as a place reserved for the buffalo hunts of Aba Jefar, who built a hunting house near the road.

Having crossed the Gojeb River, we spent the night in a deserted place, on the bank of a beautiful brook, overgrown with date palms, the first of that kind of tree that I had seen in Abyssinia.

The Gojeb River begins in the mountains of Guma and flows into the River Omo. At this place its width is about 40 paces; its depth is one and a quarter arshins [35 inches]. Its current is so swift that fording it is difficult. The valley of the Gojeb, surrounded by mountains of Kaffa, constitutes the border zone between these two regions and is uninhabited. It abounds in wild goats and antelopes. Leopards and lions are encountered here. Larger animals, such as elephants and rhinoceroses, stay lower on the river's course, near to where the Gojeb flows into the Omo.

### **January 8.**

Passing a series of frontier posts with various fortifications in the form of abattis, wolf-holes, and palisades, we entered the land of Kaffa.

From the Gojeb Valley, which was overgrown with high grass and sparse small trees, we climbed the mountains that surrounded it and entered a dense forest, the trees of which

are striking for their enormous size. At the summit of the mountain range, we saw bamboo groves; and in the foothills in the valley of rivers and streams, there were clusters of beautiful date palms. The forest abounded in flowers which filled the air with fragrance. The sky was cloudless. The sun was almost at its zenith, but in the forest there was a cool breeze. The eye rested on the green of the surrounding thick foliage. In nature some kind of joy of living was felt — a surplus of strength hidden within it. The charming beauty of the place carried one off to some place far away, to a magical world. It seemed as if you heard and saw a marvelous tale while awake ... It was as if in front of you stood the enchanted forest from Sleeping Beauty. All that was missing were the princess, her palace, and her subjects. But instead of the poetic circumstances of a fine story, before us appeared the dreadful signs of death and destruction. Amid the green grass, the white of human bones shone here and there. Settlements were nowhere to be seen — only thick weeds, growing on plots of recently cultivated earth, bore testimony of the people who once lived here. An evil fairy of war destroyed them and scattered their bones across the fields. The closer we came to the capital of Kaffa, the more noticeable became the signs of recent battles. Near the town itself, clearings were completely strewn with human bones ...

At five o'clock in the afternoon, we entered the town of Andrachi. The Ras, having found out about my arrival shortly before, sent soldiers, led by his chief agafari (gentleman in attendance) to meet me.

Surrounded by his retainers and commanders of units, the Ras received me with

ceremony. Having exchanged the usual greetings, he reproached me for not having warned him of my arrival ahead of time, because he had no chance to meet me as he would have liked. By Abyssinian etiquette, it is considered impolite to weary someone who has just arrived from a journey with long questions. Therefore, after a few minutes of conversation, the Ras suggested that I go rest in the lodging which had been set aside for me. In the evening, the agafari of the Ras came to me to ask about my health, and one of his elfin ashkers (pages), Gomtes, a favorite of the Ras, brought me various dishes prepared in the European manner: chicken cooked in butter, and meat cooked in little pieces. For my ashkers, the Ras sent abundant durgo: a bull, several rams, bread, beer, mead, pepper sauce, etc. They slaughtered the bull immediately. Around the tent campfires shone, songs resounded, and it was as if the 70-verst [49 mile] march had never happened.

Today, I finished my separate, so to speak, mobilization. We had arrived on time. My men were cheerful and happy. Although the animals had lost weight on the way, they were still in condition to continue the journey. (By the way, their backs still seemed full). As for me, thanks to some conveniences I had managed to arrange for the crossing from Addis Ababa to Kaffa, despite the forced pace of the march, I had significantly recovered from the illness which I had come down with during the first difficult trek.

In the course of 42 days from the moment of my departure from Addis Ababa to meet our mission, I had traveled more than 2,000 versts [1,400 miles]. All this time, my strength was strained to the limit. Not to mention the physical weariness, illness, and deprivation,

it seemed inconceivable to have arrived at the sea coast, returned to the capital, equipped myself with full transport, and made a 500-verst [350-mile] crossing in such a short time. I had been oppressed the whole time by the disturbing feeling that all my work might go to waste if I didn't succeed in arriving at the mustering point on time. And only today could I fall asleep peaceful and satisfied ...

### III. Kaffa

Kaffa is located on the middle part of the eastern and western spurs of a mountain range that serves as the watershed between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. (30) The elevation of the mountain range makes Kaffa open to the southwest and northwest winds, which bring it abundant rain periodically twice a year (in February to March and August to September). Rain also often falls there the rest of the year. In all of Ethiopia Kaffa is the place with the greatest abundance of precipitation. They never have droughts here like in the northern part of the Ethiopian highlands.

The rivers are exceptional for having an abundance of water, and Kaffa itself is covered with rich vegetation. To the east from the mountain ridge flow the rivers Gojeb, Adiya, Gumi, Wosh and others which flow into the Omo, and from the western slopes the Menu, Bako, Baro and others, which serve as tributaries of the Jubba or the Sobat. (31) All the numerous rivers are fed by countless streams and small brooks that start in the main mountain range and its spurs. The water basin, serving for excellent irrigation, is distributed evenly across the whole expanse of Kaffa, which benefits the fertility of its soil, the like of which I have never seen. The moderate elevation of Kaffa above sea level — on the average not higher than 2,000 meters and not lower than 1,600 meters — also has a favorable influence on vegetation. However, separate summits, like Gida-Shonga, Gonga-Beke, Bacha-aki-Kila, Geshe, attain an elevation of 3,000 meters.

In the middle of rich black earth, clay is encountered in places. Whatever space is entirely

free of cultivation is covered with forest, which grows amazingly fast and mightily. Neglect some plot of ground, and in two to three years it turns into an impassable thicket. Here man must fight with the forest like those who live bordering on deserts must fight with sands covering the land.

The predominant kind of rock is a red porous sandstone. Granite appears only rarely.

With such an abundance of forests, one might presume that the country is likewise rich in their usual inhabitants — wild animals. However, there are almost no predatory animals here (which is explained by the standard of culture of the country and its former density of population). You rarely encounter wild goats, antelope, or chamois; and only in the royal forest reserves are buffalo and elephant found. It is strictly forbidden to hunt them. There are also very few birds in Kaffa. I never heard a single songbird. They say that predatory birds appeared only recently, with the arrival of the Abyssinians.

Related to the Abyssinians and similar to them, the populace of Kaffa, represents a mixture of Semites with the tribes which originally inhabited Ethiopia. Undoubtedly, the percentage of Semitic blood in the Kaffas is less than that in the Abyssinians. However, Kaffa people are not all of the same type. Rather, there are two varieties of Kaffa: the type which is purest and close to the Abyssinians — the aristocracy; and the lowest class — descendants of slaves from all the neighboring tribes, who resemble on the surface the Sidamo people, having mixed the least with other offspring of the original inhabitants of Ethiopia. (32)

Until recently, Kaffa was a powerful southern Ethiopian empire; but in 1897 it was conquered by Abyssinia.

It is very difficult to reconstruct the history of Kaffa since, aside from several legends, there is almost no data. From Abyssinian sources it is known that when the Ethiopian Empire was powerful, Kaffa formed with it one indivisible whole.

By legend, Kaffa was conquered in the fifteenth century by Atye (Emperor) Zara Yakob. The name of "Kaffa" is attributed to him. After his death, one of the sons of the Ethiopian emperor reigned in Kaffa. (33) Under Lyb-na-Dyngyl or David II, the king of Kaffa was considered the first vassal of the emperor of Ethiopia. At times when the King of Kaffa visited the court of the Emperor, he was shown the greatest honor: the Emperor himself went to meet him and the King of Kaffa sat on the right side of the throne.

The invasion of the Gallas and the wars of Gran (sixteenth century) separated Kaffa from the rest of Abyssinia and for many centuries isolated it. Because of this, Kaffa preserved domestic and cultural relationships in the same form as there were when the Galla invasion occurred. However, much was lost, including the Christian faith, which they had professed before the invasion, and literacy.

Populated by a strong people, imbued with love for their fatherland and an enterprising, war-like spirit, occupying an advantageous central position, protected by forests and

mountains, Kaffa subdued neighboring states, and formed out of them a powerful southern Ethiopian empire, known formerly under the general name of Kaffa. This empire included the following six main vassal kingdoms: Jimma, Kulo, Konta, Koshya, Mocha and Enareya.

Jimma was populated by Gallas. In Enareya, also known as Lima, lived tribes which were a mixture of Gallas with the original inhabitants of the country (34) (kindred of the Kaffa). Mocha has the same origin as Kaffa. In the kingdoms of Kulo, Konta and Koshya kindred tribes live, who are very similar in type, having a common language, culture and customs. Explorers of Africa have called these people "Sidamo." (This name is unknown to the people themselves.) I will adhere to this nomenclature. (35)

These subdued lands, however, did not lose their independence: Kaffa did not interfere in their internal affairs, demanding only payment of tribute and acknowledgment of their suzerainty. At the time of the death of Zara Yakob, his dynasty ruled in Kaffa. The kings of Kaffa — tato (from the word atye — "emperor" in Abyssinian) — styled themselves as Kings of Kaffa and Enareya. But discord, the time of which is difficult to determine even approximately, led to separation of their thrones. The ancient dynasty of Zara Yakob remained in Enareya, while in Kaffa the house of Manjo reigned. The disintegration of the empire did not destroy the ties between both states. On visiting Kaffa, the King of Enareya received greater honors than its own ruler: for instance, the King of Kaffa rose to meet his guest and had his guest sit with him on the throne to the right side.

After Enareya was subdued by the Limu Galla tribe, it lost its significance, having been made subject to the Galla prince who conquered it. But the dynasty of the king of Enareya continued to exist up until recent times, and up until the very end of the independent existence of Kaffa, Kaffa showed the kings of Enareya royal honors.

The dynasty of Manjo, apparently, did not differ from Kaffa in its governmental structure nor in court etiquette: as they are written in the ancient Abyssinian books *Kobyra Negest*, so exactly they remain. In its structure, culture, and class distinctions, Kaffa is indebted entirely to Abyssinia. (36) At the head of state stood the autocratic tato (king, emperor), who had unlimited authority. His person was considered holy and inviolable. He surrounded himself with great honors and was inaccessible for his subjects. At his court, the strictest etiquette was observed. With the exception of his seven advisors and several retainers, none of his subjects dared look their sovereign in the face. When he appeared, his subjects prostrated themselves, snapping at the earth with their teeth, and in this manner literally fulfilled the common salutation, "For you I gnaw the earth."

Special roads were built for the king, along which no one else could go. The tato had several residences in various places and lived in them for those times of year which for that particular place were considered the healthiest. The main capital was the town of Andrachi, in which an enormous palace was located. Each of the columns that supported it had the circumference of several sets of extended arms. The Abyssinians, having torn the city asunder, had to spend a long time trying to destroy this colossal building, until they finally succeeded in burning it down. In front of the palace, there was a large open

space. Those who came to court had to dismount there and go the rest of the way on foot.

Sometimes the tato would appear in the court of justice. There he sat silently, with his face covered, up to the eyes, with a shamma. Those who were being tried stood with their backs to him.

The dinner of the king was accompanied with great ceremonies. The only person allowed to go behind the curtains, where the tato made himself comfortable, was the one who had the responsibility to feed him and give him drink. The sovereign himself would not exert himself at all. The gentleman carver brought everything to him and placed it in his mouth. This post was considered very important in the court hierarchy. This dignitary had to be distinguished for the best moral qualities so as not to in any way harm the king. During the time when he was away from his main duties, his right arm was tied in a canvas sack, in order that this arm, which fed the king, not contract some illness or be bewitched.

Originally, the tato was Christian. But the last six kings formally renounced Christianity, having banned Christian priests from the palace and having replaced them with pagan priests. Each week the tato locked himself up in the temple together with the head priest of Merecho and spent several days there with him, telling fortunes and conjuring.

For discussion of the most important matters, the king appointed a high council, for which only representatives of five families could be selected: Hio (two people), Amara, Argefa, Machya and Uka. (37) From among the seven councilors (usually from the Hio

family) one, named katamarasha, was the main spokesperson and announced the will of the king. This council served as the highest court of law.

For administrative purposes, the whole country was divided into 12 regions: Bimbi, Gauta, Beshe, Bitu, Oka, Dech, Adda, Kaffa, Gobe, Shashi, Wata, and Chana. Each of these was entrusted to the management of a governor — waraba or rasha (this name derives from the Abyssinian word ras), who had an assistant — guda. Warabas were appointed by the king, independent of what family they belonged to. Their responsibilities included administering justice and inflicting punishment, and, in time of war, assembling and supplying provisions for the militia.

The regions, which derived their names from the families which inhabited them, were, in turn, divided into smaller parts or parcels. The eldest man of the eldest line in the family was considered the local chief. Consequently, at the foundation of the state there lay a tribal, aristocratic origin, on which class distinctions were also based. After the first subjugation of Kaffa by Abyssinians (in the fifteenth century), to consolidate his realm, the reigning king distributed to his fellow fighters both the conquered lands and the inhabitants, who had been made slaves. Those native families who voluntarily submitted or who performed some service for the Abyssinians kept their freedom and privileges. Thus the descendants of the Abyssinian newcomers who had settled in the country formed, together with privileged natives, a class which enjoyed the advantages of freedom and landownership, but which in return was obligated on the one hand to defend the state from external enemies and on the other hand to keep the subdued region in hand.

The closest advisors of the king were selected from several families who perhaps had blood ties with the ruling dynasty or whose ancestors distinguished themselves by outstanding deeds. As a consequence of the tribal nobility that emerged in this manner, the older lines constituted the ruling class, and the younger lines were free nobles, obligated only for military service.

My assumptions are confirmed by the existence up until now of a dependent populace which is conditionally free, which is not exempt from military service, and likewise the fact that among the names of the clans are found family names of Abyssinian and non-Abyssinian origin. For instance, "Amara" is undoubtedly an Abyssinian name, and "Hio" is probably local.

As a consequence of new conquests, captive slaves, merging with the subdued populace, increased the number of the dependent class.

In Kaffa, aside from these two basic classes, there also exist free merchants and pagan priests. The first are former local merchants and newcomers; the latter, in view of the strict succession of their religious order, also constituted a separate class. However, only one of the sons of a pagan priest was obligated to succeed to the profession of the father — the remaining children of this priest had free choice in this regard. Similar to Abyssinians in all other respects, Kaffa are lower than Abyssinians in the level of their culture: they are pagans and letters are completely unknown to them.

The Kaffa dress the same as Abyssinians. Men of the higher class wear the shamma — a wide piece of thick cotton material which is thrown over the shoulders, and the free ends of which fall back. They also wear short, very wide trousers which do not extend to the knees and are made of thick cotton material with beautiful patterns woven on the edges.

Those of the lower class do not have the right to dress themselves in cloth. They wear only leather. Their entire costume consists of a leather apron on the hips, and, in cold weather or rain, they throw over their shoulders a cape made of huge half-leaves of a banana-like (*musa enset*) tree, laid upon one another. The wide part of the banana-like tree leaf is like fringe attached to the main stem of the leaf and falls in long ribbons.

Women of the higher class wear long shirts, and those of the lower class wear leather skirts. Headgear is the same for both classes. In addition, cone-shaped caps made of those same banana-like tree leaves are also seen.

Men, as well as women, adorn their arms and legs with bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and beads.

The Kaffa differ from other tribes in their hair-style. Men grow long hair which, for instance on the king, stands up in a shock or is braided in plaits that hang down to the shoulders. Women have the same kind of hairstyle.

In former times, the food of the Kaffa consisted of meat, milk, and porridge made of the seeds of various bread-grain plants. Nowadays, they eat almost exclusively bread made from the roots of a banana-like tree (that same *musa enset*), since that is the only food stuff they can obtain after the general destruction.

This bread is prepared in the following manner: once a tree has attained four years of growth, they dig it up and strip off the leaves; then they bury the thick lower part of the trunk in the ground and leave it there for several months. After this time, it begins to rot and turn sour. Then they extract the buried tree from the ground, clean off the spoiled outer layer, and scrape and grind the part which has turned sour and soft. Then they bake it in large earthenware pans. This bread is not very nutritious. It is unsavory and has an unpleasant sour smell. Adding flour to it improves the bread somewhat.

As a supplement to this food, they serve various roots, cooked in water, and also coffee, which they drink several times a day, up until and after eating. They boil coffee in earthenware vessels and pour it out into little cups made of ox horn.

The favorite drinks of the Kaffa are mead and beer. The mead is very thick and strong, but prepared without the stupefying leaves of the *gesho*, in a single malt. The beer is also very thick and sour.

Household utensils are the same as those of the Abyssinians — except for earthenware jugs, which are oblong and similar to ancient Greek vessels, and are of a more beautiful

form than those of the Abyssinians.

The buildings of the Kaffa are very similar to those of the Abyssinians, but they are made more carefully and elegantly.

The Kaffa bury their dead in deep graves at the bottom of which they make a cave. They usually wrap up the corpse in palm branches, and, at the burial, lower coffee, money, and ivory together with it into the grave. Close relatives of the deceased, mourning his death, dress in rags, scratch their faces until they bleed, and tear out hair. They stay in mourning for a long time.

The Kaffa are bold, dashing horsemen. Their horses are rather tall and, judging by those which I saw, cannot be called bad, even though the climate and character of the place do not favor horse breeding. Only the upper classes have horses, and horses serve exclusively for military purposes. The Kaffa saddle differs from that of the Abyssinians in that it is smaller, covered with leather, and the pommel is much lower. The bit is the same as that of the Abyssinians. The saddle is adorned with metal decorations, but differently from the Abyssinian.

The weapons of the Kaffa include a throwing spear, which has a beautiful form and is sometimes decorated with an intricate point; and a dagger worn in the belt. Round leather shields serve for defense. There are no bows and arrows.

Women in Kaffa are in a more dependent position than in Abyssinia. Wives are bought and become the slaves of their husbands, and do not have the right to divorce.

Although the Kaffa language differs sharply from the Abyssinian, it has many roots in common with it.

Their religion is a strange mixture of Christian, Jewish, and pagan beliefs — a conglomerate of all possible superstitions. The highest deity is called Iero or Ier. (In all probability, this name derives from the Abyssinian word egziabeer, which means "god").(39) Deontos is honored in parallel with Iero. They make sacrifices to both deities. According to the beliefs of the Kaffa, in time of trouble, Christ, Mary, and Satan (the devil) can help, or simply a kalicha or bale — a pagan priest.

Very few traces of Christianity remained here. Only a few churches were left standing. Priests who came from Abyssinia sometimes served in them. And up until most recent times, the king and aristocracy observed several fasts. For example, they had a 50-day fast which coincides with the time of our Lent, and a thirty-day fast which falls in autumn. Of the Christian holidays, the Kaffa honor Holy Cross Day, which is Mashkala in their language (Maskal in Abyssinian) and shanbat (sanbat in Abyssinian) which is Saturday [Sabbath]. Friday is considered a holiday. And those are the only connections between the religion of the Kaffa and Christianity.

From Judaism, they adopted the ceremony of circumcision of babies and the method of

slaughtering cattle (which, as is well known, Jews perform in accord with strictly defined ritual). The paganism of the Kaffa appears most strikingly in the fact that, from their point of view, all success and failure in life, all disasters and averting of disasters depend on a deity who is in each separate case either merciful or inflicting punishment. In order to make this deity favorably disposed toward oneself and to propitiate him, one must make sufficient sacrifice. The mood of the deity and the answer to the question of which god one should address oneself to are only known to a pagan priest, a sorcerer — *bale*. He sacrifices an animal supplied to him for this, then tells fortunes by its innards and gives advice. But there are other means as well at the disposal of the *bale*: various incantations, medicines, etc. If prayers do not succeed, the pagan priest is never to blame, but rather the client was not able to propitiate the deity sufficiently, or did something contrary to the deity or was "bewitched" again by some evil man after the sacrifice.

Formerly, sacrifices were frequent and national and done in mass. These sacrifices were performed on days which corresponded with several of our holidays (for example, Holy Cross Day) and also on especially important occasions of state life. The place of sacrifice was Mount Bonga-Shanbata, i.e. Sabbath Bonga, on the summit of which a temple was built. According to old-timers, on days of national sacrifice, hundreds of bulls were slaughtered. Their blood flowed from the mountain in a stream, and tens of thousands of men ate the sacrificed animals.

However, despite the fact that Christianity is almost completely forgotten, there remain here several families who still firmly adhere to it and who therefore received with joy the

missionary Massai who visited the capital of Kaffa and the surrounding area. This missionary succeeded in converting several hundred people to Catholicism.

In the far distant past, before its destruction and conquest by the Abyssinians, Kaffa was the industrial and commercial center of Ethiopia. Thanks to its wealth, to the fertility of its soil etc., it had the reputation of being an almost fairytale country. It abounded in bread, mead, cattle, and horses, and, with its tributaries, it gathered a huge quantity of ivory.

A large part of the musk exported from Ethiopia was obtained in Kaffa. Excellent cloth and the best iron articles — spears and daggers — were made in Kaffa. But circumstances changed, and the once flourishing and busy state is now completely destroyed and an almost deserted country ...

During the time when Kaffa, isolated by the Gallas, regained its internal structure and got hardened in its old forms of life, Abyssinia recovered from the blow the Gallas had struck, grew quickly, got stronger, and developed. In its wars, Abyssinia acquired guns and subdued, one after the other, the peoples who surrounded it and under whose power it had temporarily fallen. Finally, expanding its borders, it became a neighbor of Kaffa. Having gone through so many revolutions in this time, tempered in heavy conflict both with external and internal enemies, once it had gotten stronger, Abyssinia really could not stop on its way to fulfilling its cultural-historical mission — the union and development of the Central African tribes who inhabit Ethiopia.

The collision of the two tribal states became inevitable, even though all the chances for victory were, evidently, on the side of Abyssinia. To Kaffa, as the weaker of the two, could only submit voluntarily or be subdued. But Kaffa decided to defend its independence to the very last. Wars began which struck a terrible blow to the prosperity of the country, gradually reducing it to complete collapse and destruction. Despite the desperate resistance, the wars ended in the complete subjugation of Kaffa and the annexation of it to the Ethiopian empire (1897).

The first campaign against Kaffa was carried out by Ras Adal, the ruler of Gojjam, in 1880. He ravaged one of its districts. At that time, Kaffa lost one of its vassal states — Jimma — the king of which recognized the power of Ras Adal over him.

The campaign into Kaffa, a warlike country which was inaccessible due to mountains and forests, was considered by contemporaries as an outstanding feat. As a reward for this success, Emperor Yohannes made Ras Adal the Negus of Gojjam and Kaffa. He reigned in Gojjam up until the present time, under the name of Tekla Haymanot. In 1886, conflict arose between Shoa under Menelik and Gojjam under Tekla Haymanot, over the division of southwestern Ethiopian lands.

Having utterly defeated the king of Gojjam in a battle at Embabo, Menelik took in his hands all the land to the south of the Abbay River, despite the fact that they were at that time independent. Kaffa was among the regions seized by Menelik. It was then that began

the gradual conquest of the Kaffa empire by Menelik's leaders.

Hard times now ensued for all the states which made up the southern Ethiopian empire. A new phase in their history began. Up until this time, they were isolated and closed off. Now they are gradually merging into a continuous whole with the entire united Ethiopian highland. Such revolutions don't happen easily.

Regions that did not want to submit voluntarily Menelik turned over to his most talented commanders, whom he let have the opportunity to conquer them and "feed off" them. However, once these regions had been completely destroyed by war, they could not supply provisions for all the troops that had conquered them. That led to the conquest of neighboring lands which were still free. Thus, little by little, the domain of Menelik grew, and the borders of Abyssinia expanded.

On the southwestern outskirts, three Abyssinian leaders operated: Dajazmatch Tesemma, Dajazmatch Beshakha, and Ras Wolda Giyorgis (at the time still a dajazmatch).

In 1887, Menelik turned over Goma to Dajazmatch Tesemma, Gera to Beshakha, and Lima to Ras Wolda Giyorgis. The tribes who inhabited these lands, especially the Goma, put up a desperate resistance against the Abyssinians. More than once, Tesemma had to turn to Wolda Giyorgis for help, and Wolda Giyorgis quickly gave that help. Once when Tesemma, with a small detachment, was besieged in his fortress by superior forces of Gallas and his military and food supplies were exhausted, the timely arrival of Wolda

Giyorgis with his army saved Tesemma from inevitable destruction.

In their military actions, these leaders stuck to a single tactic. When they arrived in a new land, each of them would choose the most advantageous strategic point and build a fortress or, more exactly, a camp there. Then they would begin to carry out raids on the surrounding area until the inhabitants who were bravely defending were finally convinced that further defense was unthinkable and useless, and submitted. Those who submitted retained their self-government and ruler. But the Abyssinians took the ruler's children and the children of prominent families to raise as hostages. The area was divided among units of the army for "feeding." They allotted parcels of land to those soldiers who wanted them and gave them defeated inhabitants as serfs.

To stay popular with the troops in peacetime, military leaders arranged endless abundant feasts. Bulls taken from the enemy were slaughtered daily by the tens, mead flowed in rivers. The fame of these leaders grew daily, and thanks to their fame, the quantity of their troops increased ... Of course, that drained the resources of the conquered region.

The most popular of these commanders was Ras, at that time still Dajazmatch, Wolda Giyorgis. Having received from Menelik permission to conquer Kulo and Konta, which are located on the other side of the Gojeb River, he carried out a single campaign, as follows. He smashed the feudal Kaffa states of Gofa and Kyshya, then crossed the River Omo and conquered Melo, Boko, and others, having extended his domain almost to Lake Stefanie.

At the same time, Dajazmatch Tesemma subdued all the lands which border Kaffa on the north, and likewise its ally Mocha. As a result, at the beginning of 1896, out of the large Kaffa empire only Kaffa itself still remained independent. And it was already surrounded on three sides by the domains of its bellicose neighbor. On the southeast was Ras Wolda Giyorgis with a fifteen-thousand-man army, half of which was armed with guns. On the east was the feudal king of Jimma. On the northeast was Dajazmatch Demissew, who after the Italian campaign had been made commander of the 8,000-man corps of men from Gondar who were stationed in Leka, Gera, and Guma, and who were armed with guns. On the north was Dajazmatch Tesemma with an 8,000-man army, also armed with guns.

These three leaders repeatedly tried to take Kaffa, but, acting separately, did not succeed/ The first campaign of Ras Wolda Giyorgis against Kaffa ended without result, and failure befell both Dajazmatch Tesemma and Dajazmatch Demissew.

Due to the belief that Kaffa was impregnable and the desperate bravery of its people, the Abyssinians set out on these campaigns reluctantly. The difficulty of mountain roads and the humidity of the climate had a disastrous effect on the health of people and horses. In addition, little plunder was expected there because dense forest and mountainous country made it easy to conceal livestock and property, as well as the inhabitants themselves.

Having decided to break the resistance of Kaffa and once and for all annex it to the

Ethiopian empire, Menelik in 1896 gave orders to attack it from three sides at once. He entrusted the overall leadership to Wolda Giyorgis, to whom he had granted the right of ownership of all the lands he conquered.

The King (Tato) of Kaffa at this time was Chenito, who had ascended the throne in 1887 on the death of his father, Tato Galito. (40) Young, brave, and energetic, he, knowing the people's love for their native land and devotion to him, decided to fight to the bitter end.

Foreseeing the burden of the upcoming resistance, Chenito prepared for it thoroughly and actively took measures for the defense of the country. Along the borders he built a series of frontier posts in order to get advance notice of a surprise attack. He considered the destruction of grain supplies to be the main means of fighting. Knowing very well that the Abyssinians during campaigns supplied themselves exclusively with the provisions of the region under attack, Tato Chenito issued an edict which prohibited producing any crops, even planting them. He hoped that the lack of provisions would force the Abyssinians to retreat, and that only the Kaffa, who were used to scarcity, could nourish themselves. To this end, word was spread among the people that a revelation had come to the high priest that by this means the Kaffa would defeat the Abyssinians.

The fact that the king only intended to defend in the upcoming war was evident from the fact that he himself taught his beloved wife to ride on horseback in case of flight.

The character of their main enemy, Ras Wolda Giyorgis, was well known to the Kaffa.

And they didn't entertain any illusions with regard to the battle that was in the making and its possible outcome. The anxiety which reigned among them gave rise to several rumors. For example, it was said that, at one of the dinners in the presence of Menelik, Ras Wolda Giyorgis solemnly swore that he would subdue Kaffa and take its king prisoner; and that to confirm his oath, he in one swig drank a huge goblet, which he then threw up with such force that it broke into smithereens when it struck the ceiling.

Nevertheless, neither the evident inequality of forces, nor the insignificance of the chances for success, nor the undoubted destruction of the country in case of their likely defeat could deter the king and his people from their unshakable determination to fight to the very end.

In November 1896 Ras Wolda Giyorgis, the first of the three participants in the campaign, marched into Kaffa from Kulo with 10,000 men and, putting to fire and sword everything on the way, arrived at the city of Andrachi, the capital of Kaffa, where he built a fortified camp. Tato (King) Chenito retreated, continually harassing the rear and flanks of the Abyssinians with his cavalry detachments. Thus the first days were marked by continuous skirmishes of small parties, in which the Abyssinians, thanks to fire-arms, always had the upper hand.

Having consolidated his position in Andrachi, Ras Wolda Giyorgis divided his army into large detachments, and sent them out in various directions. These detachments laid waste the country, ravaging it for a radius of many tens of versts [verst = seven miles], taking

prisoner the women and children who were hidden in the forests, and setting fire to everything that could burn.

But the destruction of the country by far still did not lead to its submission. As long as the king was alive and free, the Kaffa cause was not yet lost. Previously, the Abyssinians had destroyed parts of Kaffa many times, but in the end almost always the conquerors had to retreat because of the fatigue of the of the troops, the lack of provisions, and the bad climatic conditions (two rainy seasons per year). When the enemy left, the king, who had been hiding, again appeared in the capital; women and children came out of the dense forest and caves; and the cattle were driven home again. The people made sacrifices of thanksgiving, rebuilt houses that had been burned down, and ... Kaffa healed as before.

In order to avoid this, Ras Wolda Giyorgis decided to exert all his force and use all possible means to either kill the King or take him prisoner. With this aim, he organized secret reconnaissance and espionage, mainly by means of prisoners. He paid the spies large sums and set the prisoners free.

As soon as he received word of the location of Tato's sanctuary, Wolda Giyorgis quickly set out for there with significant forces. The king fled to another place, but Wolda Giyorgis found this place as well and pursued him in this manner, indefatigably, five times.

The position of the king became even more difficult when the detachments of Tesemma

and Demissew appeared and began to take action on the western and northern borders. Demissew entered Kaffa from Guma in February and in March joined forces with Wolda Giyorgis and set up camp in the town of Bonga.

The forces of Tato Chenito were soon completely shattered. Scattered and deprived of their leader, finding themselves in complete ignorance regarding his fate and not knowing where he was, the Kaffa could not rally for his defense. The survivors only thought about saving themselves.

Staying in the center and moving from there in all directions with "flying detachments," Wolda Giyorgis with part of his army surrounded the area where the King was located. He seized with separate detachments all the main routes to the south, to the Negro lands, and put a series of guard posts in place on all paths and tracks. Each guard post set up an abattis at the narrowest place on a protected route — narrow gates and beside them a small fortification in the form of a high fence surrounding a guard house. This system worked.

The wives of the King, all his property and regalia fell into the hands of the Ras at the very beginning. The only wife who was still free was Chenito's favorite, who had not parted from him; but in the sixth month of the blockade she, too, was taken prisoner.

The King did not give up his freedom easily. The rest of his retinue was scattered; he even lacked horses, but, in spite of this, he continued to skillfully hide himself,

accompanied only by several faithful servants.

Now the life of the King was not at all like the pampered and luxurious life he had led up to then. Surrounded on all sides by both secret and obvious enemies, forced to suffer all possible deprivations, with difficulty obtaining scanty food for himself, even not having shelter for several months (and that at the very worst time of year), Chenito, however, displayed so much will power and courage, amounting to daring, that he astonished his enemies. According to stories, he sometimes appeared in the very camp of the Abyssinians in rags, dressed as a simple Kaffa, and successfully passed through their hands.

But the Ras did not easily give up the pursuit. When at the end of February, the first rainy season started, mud became deep, and roads impassable. The troops began to feel the absence of provisions and, as a result of poor food, an epidemic of dysentery began, which claimed many victims, especially among the irregular forces, consisting of Galla and Sidamo. To all this was added the loss of livestock, and the fact that corpse flies appeared in abundance in the vicinity of the camp.

A murmur arose among the troops, and all those around the Ras began to insist that he go back to Kulo. They told Wolda Giyorgis that hope for capturing the King was lost and that to stay longer in the plundered and exhausted region was pointless and disastrous. The Ras answered evasively, promised to leave, but delayed fulfillment of his promise from week to week and strongly, in his soul, decided to not leave Kaffa until it was

completely subdued. In order to in some way entertain the troops, he undertook a small raid on Geshe, a Kaffa region which had been previously untouched. (It lies on the summit of a mountain ridge that rises up to 3,000 meters above sea level). And Dajazmatch Demissew decided to move against the southern Gimiro territory. Meanwhile the guard posts and a small reserve stayed in place to continue to blockade the place where the king was located.

This was the time of the spring rainy period, and the troops suffered greatly from the cold.

The invasion of Geshe helped the situation, raising the spirits of the soldiers. It also made it possible for them to obtain food supplies. Returning to Andrachi, the Ras ordered his soldiers to plant pepper seeds and cabbage sprouts.

After Easter, which arrived in the most difficult circumstances, the summer rainy season arrived, there was no talk either about the pursuit of Chenito nor about leaving. The king was still free. The troops of the Ras were totally worn out by hunger and disease. There arose an intolerable stench from the quantity of corpses in Andrachi. It appeared that the Ras, despite his strength of spirit, would have to give up his well-conceived plan. But fate decided otherwise. On August 14, 1897, in the main camp of Wolda Giyorgis, a message was received from Fitaurari Atysye (41), who occupied the southern guard posts with his regiment — they had taken Tato Chenito prisoner.

Chenito, for whom staying among the Abyssinian guard posts was becoming every day more dangerous, had intended to flee to the southern lands belonging to the Negroes. He decided to break through the guard posts, at night, dressed as a simple Kaffa, accompanied only by a single servant. The guards noticed him and raised the alarm. Chenito ran into the nearby forest, which the Abyssinians quickly surrounded. In the morning, they passed through it several times in a chain, but did not find King. Then at night, one soldier, searching in a thicket for a missing mule, accidentally stumbled upon Chenito. The king threw two spears at the soldier — silver and copper — but missed, and having no hope of escaping, gave himself up. The Ras ordered the captured Chenito to dress in his best clothes and showed him royal honor. The first meeting between the conqueror and the conquered was remarkable. Both bowed to the ground to one another, and Tato Chenito, having taken from his arm three gold bracelets, asked the Ras to accept this gift, saying the following: "I give this to you, man among men. Neither Ras Gobana, nor Negus Tekla Haymanot, nor Tesemma, nor Demissew ever succeeded in subduing me; but you have done so. If you refuse to wear these bracelets, I will despise you."

News of the capture of the King was announced to his scattered people, and the war ended. Kaffa prisoners were set free; and through them the word was spread that all could return to their lands without fearing for their lives; and that the elders should assemble in the town of Andrachi. For the most part, the leaders of regions remained as before, and individuals who were well known for their services to Abyssinia were named to prominent posts. On the restoration of peace, the Ras, together with Chenito as prisoner, set out for Addis Ababa, having entrusted to his wife and a small detachment the

job of guarding the territory. The other troops were given furlough.

## **IV. Andrachi (January 8-22)**

Andrachi is located at the confluence of the River Guma with the River Gichey, which below that town turns to the south and flows into the River Omo.

The town is at a height of about 1,800 meters above sea level. It is surrounded on all sides by high mountains. It is spread out picturesquely on several hills. The climate of the locale where Andrachi lies is very humid, due to frequent rain, abundant dew, and thick evening fog.

Andrachi, which was formerly the capital of the Kaffa kings, is now the residence of the Ras. The palace of the Kaffa king, erected on top of one of the highest hills, was burnt down on orders from Wolda Giyorgis. In its place a new one now rises, which occupies a circular area, about 200 sagues [426 meters] in diameter, enclosed on all sides by a high fence.

The courtyard is partitioned by lower fences into several separate plots, each of which (with the buildings found within it) has a special significance: reception rooms, or inner chambers, or rooms for household necessities. Several gates, of which some are considered the main ones, lead inside the palace.

A large courtyard lies behind the main gates. Here the Ras's leaders come daily and leave

their mules. Only officials have the right to enter the courtyards which follow — officers or those who come to the Ras on business, or, finally, those who bring gifts. In the second courtyard there is only one building (I pitched my tent next to it. Earlier there was a cannon there which was taken away on my arrival.) The third courtyard, which is called Adebabay, serves as a throne room. A tower is situated along the wall opposite from the entrance. It is two-stories high, and the Ras sits on it in state during trials and ceremonial receptions. In the little courtyard after that is located Aderash — a large dining room of the Ras. Here on Sundays, Thursdays, and holidays, the Ras gives large dinners — gybyr — and entertains his officers and soldiers. The dining room with three doors, which can easily accommodate a thousand people, is like a large barn without windows. The walls are made of connected rings. Inside, a colonnade of thick posts supports a thatch roof. The alga — the throne on which the Ras sits in state during ceremonial dinners — stands near one of the walls, under a canopy made of white cotton cloth. Not far off are a large sofa (one and a half arshins [70 inches] high), and another small one (three-quarters of an arshin [21 inches] high) covered with carpets. The area where the sofas are located is separated from the rest of the premises by a white curtain, which is lowered when the Ras eats and is raised when invited guests enter. The inner chambers of the Ras and his wife are located in the next courtyard beyond the Aderash. On both sides of the main courtyards are small courtyards, with buildings in them. These courtyards have economic significance, as for example: gymja-byet, the storerooms where the money and belongings of the Ras are kept; wot-byet, kitchens; injera-byet, bakeries; tej-byet, places for cooking honey; sega-byet, slaughterhouses; etc.

Doorkeepers, armed with long sticks stand at all the gates of the palace. Guards are posted around the elfinya (bedroom) at night.

Of the old palace, only the chapel of the Kaffa king was left whole. It is sheltered in a grove of huge sycamores, near the palace of the Ras. It has now been turned into a church.

The slopes of the hill on which the palace was built are covered with cabins of soldiers of the Ras. On the neighboring hills rise the large houses of his leaders, likewise surrounded by the low cabins of their soldiers.

On the large area in front of the palace, a market assembles twice a week, to which the natives of the neighborhood throng. For bread from Jimma, they exchange coffee, which today constitutes the only wealth of the region.

It is very difficult to determine the number of inhabitants of the town, since Andrachi is nothing more than a permanent camp of the Abyssinians, not having in it a settled form of life. A local permanent population simply doesn't exist.

I stayed in Andrachi for 12 days, from January 8 to 22, 1898, waiting for the muster of the operational detachment.

The first three days we rested and stayed in bed after the journey. People slept almost all

day and only in the evening, having dined, they became animated, sitting around a campfire and singing songs. I didn't see the Ras those days. By Abyssinian custom, it is considered a special courtesy not to disturb someone who has just arrived from a journey with invitations. Each day in the morning and in the evening the Ras sent to ask about my health; and, in turn. I sent my ashker to convey to the Ras my gratitude for his consideration and to ask about his health and that of his wife. For dinner and supper, an elfin ashker (page) of the Ras, Gomtes, brought several dishes prepared for me on order of the Ras and marvelous tej (mead) in small decanters wrapped in a silk cloth. In the evening, they gave me durgo. A long file of women with baskets filled with bread, pitchers with honey, earthenware pots with sauce etc., came to my tent. One of the kitchen shums (leaders), bowing low, entered my tent and showing the gifts that had been brought, had those who were carrying them file before me. My ashkers took the durgo, and the bread, according to custom, had to be counted again. One of the baskets, covered with a red calico coverlet and chosen for its size, was usually stuffed with the most delicate injera (bread flat cakes), intended especially for me.

I spent these days plotting my route to Kaffa on a map and took solar observations. (42) Several retainers of the Ras came to make my acquaintance. The deputy of Konta (43) Beleta-Menota came with gifts — two chickens and some thalers (silver rubles), which I, to his deep chagrin, refused. However, he didn't bring those gifts unselfishly. Rather he counted on rich return gifts from me, and from his first words he began to ask me to for a hat, a silk burnoose, a gun, a saber, etc. Not at all embarrassed by my refusals, he confidently said, "Well, if not now, bring them to me next time."

Incidentally, here's some information about Beleta-Menota. By birth, he is from the Konta tribe. He is fulfilling the duties of regent there until the king comes of age. Neither in clothes nor in appearance did Menota differ from the average Abyssinian; only his eyes, which were wild, always moving, curious and narrower than those of Abyssinians, drew attention to him. He tried to conduct himself with dignity and in general noticeably imitated the Abyssinians, but his naive curiosity and greedy begging betrayed the savage in him.

Beleta came to the Ras bringing tribute, and after two days he went back to his land. Before leaving, he came to say good-bye to me, and invited me to come to his place as a guest. "Come see me," he said. "I will give you a beautiful wife. I will slaughter for you my fattest bulls and rams."

I also became acquainted with the king of Kulo (44) — Haile Tsion. He is still a young man. He's of large build, with regular facial features. He has the same savage, shifty eyes as Beleta-Menota, and, also like him, Tsion differs little in appearance from Abyssinians. On the death of his father in 1892, Haile Tsion fled with his mother to the neighboring land of the related Walamo tribe. Soon, however, he successfully returned and expressed submission to the Ras, who confirmed him in his legal throne, on condition that he recognize the authority of the Ras and pay him tribute.

When Wolda Giyorgis erected his residence in Kulo, Haile Tsion was with him the whole

time. The Ras christened him and stood as his godfather. Living at the court of Wolda Giyorgis, the king adopted Abyssinian customs and manners, studied the Holy Scripture and after several years, thanks to his aptitude, became a thoroughly educated Abyssinian aristocrat. During the Italian war, when the Ras went on a separate expedition against the Aussa Sultan, Haile Tsion stayed to govern the country. The people, thinking to take advantage of the absence of the Abyssinians, rebelled and forced their young king to take part in the uprising. On his return the Ras himself put it down, and the people once again expressed their submission. Because he hadn't able to prevent the uprising, the king was shackled and sentenced to a fine of 10,000 thalers.

Haile Tsion was very interested in everything European. He often visited me, asking about our way of life, and in turn answered questions about what interested me about the life of his people, which up until this time was little known. Previous explorers (Massai, Antoine d'Abaddie) called all the tribes who inhabited the banks of the middle course of the Omo and who composed at one time several separate states — Kulo, Konta, Kushya(45), Walamo, Goma, and Gofa(46) — by the general name "Sidamo." (47)

As I already said above, up until the conquest by Abyssinians, those who populated the right bank of the River Omo were tributaries of Kaffa.

### **January 11. Sunday.**

At dawn, I set out to church for mass. The church — a large round building, covered with thatch — was sheltered a few hundred paces from the palace, on a hill in a grove of huge

sycamores. When I arrived, the Ras was already inside, and the church was filled with people. It was dark inside. Only after a while did the eye become accustomed to the surrounding objects. High thick wooden columns supported the building. The altar was located on the eastern side, separated from the rest of the room by a bamboo partition, covered with a white curtain. There were three gates in the altar, one of which was the king's. There were no icons at all. Two priests and three deacons performed the religious service. One of the priests was a tall old man with a severe, handsome face, overgrown with a long white beard; the other, who was a young man, thin and short. Their robes were threadbare — wretched silk chasubles, faded from age. The chasubles were worn above the same kind of silk shirts. Their feet were bare. Their heads were covered with large white muslin shawls, which draped over the shoulders and the back.

The deacons, 10-12 year old boys, were dressed the same as the priests, only their heads were not covered. They all read together quickly (for the religious service they use the Geez language) and sang the exclamations and songs prescribed by regulation (14 of them in the whole mass). The tunes are difficult to discern because of the continual transition from one tone to another. Those who were conducting the service stood in front of the altar several times to read the Gospel or to spread incense, in which case large censers, hung round with bells, rang pleasantly. When the time came for the consecration of the holy gifts, one of the deacons went out in front of the king's gates and, bowing in a characteristic pose to the altar and hanging his head low, began to ring a small copper hand bell for a long time. Then the mourning began for the suffering and death of Christ. The melody of this mourning was amazingly sorrowful and sincere. I noticed that tears

actually flowed from the eyes of the priests. After those who were conducting the holy service received the Eucharist, they brought the holy gifts for the Eucharist of those who had come to offer prayers. One of the priests carried the holy body on a large wooden disk, which was supported on the sides by two deacons; and another priest brought the holy blood in a glass chalice, (48) over which a third deacon held an open parasol. First, the men took the Eucharist, then the priests went to the southern part of the temple, separated by a curtain, behind which stood the women, and having given them the Eucharist, returned to the altar. They first gave the holy body, which the priests broke off from the lamb with their fingers and placed in the mouths of those who were taking the Eucharist, and then from the imitation of the holy blood. At the end of the communion, prayers began, during which the priest and the deacons went out with crosses and censers to the chancel, and a choir of debtera( 49) sang prayers of praise.

One of the debtera, who had a high voice, sang, apparently improvising, and the choir continued the refrain, hitting copper rattles (50) in time. Another debtera, sitting on the ground, accompanied him, striking a long drum with his palms. Little by little, the slow tempo of the song began to speed up, the singers became more and more inspired, the beating of the drum became more frequent and stronger, the rattles were silenced, and hand clapping resounded in rhythm. The group of singers, who at first had been motionless, began to wave. The inspiration turned to ecstasy. The singers squatted in time to the song. Some went to the middle of the church with their staffs, which were as long as a man is tall and which they had leaned on during the holy service, and began a holy dance. The dancers rose up on tiptoe, dropped down in time to the song, again rose up,

and stretching out their hands, moved smoothly. Their eyes, turned toward heaven, sparkled ... The inspiration reached the extreme limit and was transmitted to the crowd. Even the calm, severe face of an old priest became animated, and he, too, began to squat in time to the singing ... Finally, the choir stopped. A priest read a prayer. One of the debtera began to quickly go around among those who were praying and to assign them, in groups, a saint to whom they would pray. In this manner, he went around several times among those who were praying, until all the saints had been enumerated. Then on the reading of the concluding "Our Father," all kissed the cross and left the church. The holy service made an indelible impression on me.

The dark church was similar to a barn, with wretched beggarly conditions. But there was such ecstasy, such strength of faith among these black Christians. Such sincere prayer, such deep and touching feeling shines in the faces of people whole-heartedly devoted to their religion! ... Imagination involuntarily carried me to the first centuries of Christianity ...

I sat on a mule and, surrounded by a crowd of my servants, slowly went home. It was a marvelous, quiet morning. The sun shone brightly. Trees were in blossom and filled the clear thin mountain air with perfumes. So beautiful were the huge mountains which surrounded us and which were lost in the clear blue sky! ...

No sooner did I return home than Gomtes came and asked me in the name of the Ras to come to the great dinner and to lend him my folding table, chair, and dining set. I

answered that I accepted the invitation with pleasure, but I asked that he not trouble about obtaining European conveniences for me, since I know the customs of the country and I am used to them. At nine o'clock, the agafari (gentleman-in-waiting) came for me, and I ceremoniously set out to the aderash (dining room), accompanied by all my ashkers, with rifles on their backs. When I entered the dining room, the curtain had already been lowered. The Ras sat on his divan and washed his hands. Beside him on the carpet Dajazmatch Balay sat to one side. On the other side, a chair was prepared for me. The Ras was surrounded by his closest servants. Behind the divan stood Ilma, the chief sword-bearer of the Ras — a handsome Galla of enormous build, with a thick black beard. Opposite, picturesquely leaning against columns which supported the roof, Azzaj Gebra (the Ras's marshal of the court) and several agafari (leaders of guards) made themselves comfortable, having artistically draped themselves in their white shammas. They hold little whips in their hands, as an emblem of power during receptions. In front of the Ras and in front of me were placed two large baskets, covered with red calico cloth. A file of cooks, dressed in shirts clasped at the waist, carried in a great number of earthenware pots of various sizes, with food. The chief cook, a beautiful woman, dressed more neatly than the others, with silver earrings and a silver necklace on her neck, removed the cloth from our baskets. The Asalafi of the Ras (a special post which in translation means "he who serves the food") dropped down on his knees in front of the basket and, having tasted each dish brought to him by the cook, began to take them out on chunks of injera and place them before the Ras. The Asalafi, a strikingly handsome young man of the pure Semitic type, is a descendant of a Tigrean family. He was raised at the court of the Ras and, probably, will receive another more important appointment, i.e.,

a company or a regiment.

For me, the Ras prepared a special dinner, which, in his opinion, should satisfy the taste of a European. Here is the menu: 1) fried chicken, 2) thin slices of meat fried in a pan, 3) beef ribs grilled on hot coals, 4) afilye (51) — an Abyssinian national dish, 5) meat that was scraped and boiled in butter, and 6) soft-boiled eggs.

With an air of great importance, Gomtes, page of the Ras, carried these dishes in small enameled cups, hiding them under his skirt, in order that an evil eye not spot them. He placed them before me on a basket. I was hungry and, to the great satisfaction of the Ras, I ate everything with great appetite: both the boiled and the fried meat, the soft-boiled eggs and the rest.

When we had eaten half our dinner, other honored guests began to be admitted behind the curtain — commanders of regiments and senior officers. Finally, they gave us coffee in miniature china cups without handles and then opened the doors, through which an endless file of other guests began to enter. They appeared decorously, not hurrying, having wrapped their clothes around their waist and legs. Holding the free end in their left hand, they gracefully dropped to the floor, distributing themselves in tight circles around baskets, on which were laid in piles breadless flat-cakes of injera (some slices of it were soaked in a pepper sauce). Soon the dining hall was filled with a motley crowd of banqueters. Above each circle of diners, one of the servants, bending over from the weight, held a large piece of beef. They passed to everyone a long knife mounted in

ivory. Having selected a piece of meat, each, in order, sliced it and ate, adroitly slicing pieces at their very teeth by a motion of the knife from below upward that was so fast that I positively did not understand how their lips and teeth remained intact.

A line of wine servers adroitly gave the banqueters huge horn goblets of mead through the whole room. A traveling singer appeared, and standing in the middle of the room, sang heroic songs and improvisations in honor of the Ras, with the accompaniment of an instrument similar to a violin (52).

Zelepukin was among those who were invited. They had him sit near the divan of the Ras. In front of him stood the basket from which I had eaten before. But, regarding the black foreigners skeptically, he distrustfully glanced at the dishes placed before him, not touching them at all. With his thickset build and muscularity, Zelepukin produced a strong impression on the Abyssinians. In particular, the Ras took a liking to him, calling him zokon or "elephant." Looking on Zelepukin with unconcealed pleasure, the Ras asked me if all the soldiers in Russia were such fine fellows as this. It is necessary to mention that the Abyssinians had formed an unflattering opinion of European soldiers from their acquaintance with the Italians — namely that they are feeble and weak.

As soon as the first set of diners had satisfied themselves, they got up at a signal from the agafari and left. In their place, there immediately appeared another set of diners, and after it a third, and, finally, a fourth. The Ras himself and his honored guests continued sitting in their places the whole time, carrying on pleasant conversation among themselves and

draining small decanters of tej (mead), one after another. They also served red wine — "Bordeaux" — as the Ras called it — and a local vodka distilled from mead.

Conversations for the most part touched on military matters and hunts. The Ras and his military comrades remembered "by-gone days and battles, where side-by-side they fought with sabers." (53) With captivated interest I heard about the battle at Embabo in 1886, during the war with the Gojjam Negus. Not holding out against the first onslaught of the Gojjam, Menelik's whole army fled, and only the Emperor himself, then still a king, stayed calmly in his position on a high hill. Suddenly, he opened up on the Gojjam with only the 200 rifles he had at that time, with such a murderous fire that they wavered. At that moment, Ras Gobana, who had just arrived in time, attacked the Gojjam from behind, and the enemy turned in flight. The Ras personally took 40 men prisoner. I heard about the Aussa campaign of 1895, and about the attack of the Danakils in the Battle at the Awash River. That day so many Danakils died, that the Abyssinians, having pitched camp for the night on the very field of the battle, fastened the tent ropes to bodies. They also told about the horrible return of the Ras's detachment from that campaign, marching at a run, but not from the enemy, rather from terrible Awash fevers, which every day claimed masses of victims.

The Ras also asked me about our army and about our methods of conducting war. As I already mentioned before, the Abyssinians had formed a very unflattering opinion of European armies. In their eyes, European armies although disciplined, were in just a stationary mass, and in battle their whole action consisted exclusively of gunfire. I found

it necessary to refute that opinion with regard to the Russians. That astonished him.

"We attack with bayonets on 'Hurrah!'; and the cavalry, likewise, with sabers," I told the Ras.

"I thought," he noted in reply, "that 'foreigners' only fire their guns; but if you attack with side-arms in hand, that means that you are truly good soldiers."

He asked me, among other things, about whether we drink tej in our country and whether we put on feasts like they do.

I told him that among us, in the distant past, almost all was similar to their style of life now. I told him about Saint Vladimir, about his feasts, his baptism, and his answer to the Mohammedan ambassadors: "The joy of Russia is drinking." (54) The Ras liked my story so much that he soon retold it to his retinue, who unanimously decided that Russians, truly, must be true Christians.

Only at two o'clock in the afternoon did we leave the dinner which we had sat down to at 9 o'clock in the morning.

## **January 12**

The regiment (2,000 men) of Fitaurari Imama arrived in Andrachi. Previously, they had been stationed in the far regions of Dime and Melo, on the left bank of the River Omo.

The Ras invited me to watch the arrival of the regiment. We made ourselves comfortable on a tower in the adebabay (law court), looking out for the appearance of the army on the road. Finally, on the summit of the mountain opposite us a detachment appeared in four columns stretching along a narrow path bordered on each side by thick bushes. It slowly drew nearer, gaudily displaying a great number of flags. Snow-white shammas of the soldiers, and weapons and armor shone in the sun.

Through a telescope, Wolda Giyorgis recognized the majority of the officers and many soldiers, and not even the slightest details of their dress and equipment escaped the notice of the alert eye of this military leader. Frequently, he even seemed to know the mules and horses. The Ras expressed his impressions in characteristic exclamations, "There is so-and-so," he quickly said. "Look, the gray mule which I gave him last year seems to be exhausted ... There so and so has ribbons on his head. Truly, he has killed an elephant." And so on.

Going down from the mountain and crossing a stream which flows at the base of the hill on which sits the court of the Ras, the detachment went to the square in front of the palace, forming a front in two lines. In the first line — behind the leader — all the mounted troops stood in several ranks (2-4). All the infantry stood about 25 paces behind them. The regiment stopped in front of the gates. The mounted troops dismounted. Servants and younger soldiers took the mules and horses. All the rest quickly and loudly ran into the adebabay and formed a front 4-5 ranks deep in the room in front of the tower of the Ras. The first row consisted of all the officers and distinguished soldiers of the

lower ranks.

This army presented a remarkably beautiful spectacle! You could see in each soldier his awareness of his own dignity and pride. How manly were the expressions on the faces of these warriors hardened in battle! How natural and majestic was their bearing! ...

These barefoot men, dressed in white linen trousers, wore rich silk shirts and gold-embroidered multi-colored velvet lemds (cloaks) or lemds made of the skins of lions, leopards, snow leopards, or, finally, of long-haired rams. The shields of many were decorated with silver. Those who had killed elephants displayed on their heads green, yellow, and red ribbons. Others, who had killed Danakils in the Aussi campaign, displayed on their heads little silver crowns — kalecha — which were military distinctions or wore silver helmets with silver chains hanging in the face. Several officers had their heads wrapped in ribbon cut from a lion's mane — this amfara (55) corresponds to our order of St. George. For the act of rescuing wounded in battle, many have sabers with silver tips. For having killed enemy warriors, others have sabers with silver rings.

When the regiment had formed up, the commander, Fitaaurari Imam, calmly and with deep awareness of his own dignity, appeared in front of the regiment, with his senior officers. From the tower resounded the greeting of the Ras: "Endyet Sonobatatchukh!" The fitaurari and the whole regiment in answer bowed low. As one man, they laid their rifles in front of themselves, went down on one knee, bent their heads to the very ground, and lightly, quickly rose up again. In this bow, you sensed not humility before an

unlimited ruler, but rather devotion to their beloved leader. After the first bow, the commander of the regiment made several steps forward and on the second greeting of the Ras he answered with the same kind of bow. Finally, when he came close to the tower itself, there followed yet another greeting and a third bow, and the official part of the welcome ended.

Troops mingled with those they had met. Old friends and acquaintances found one another and kissed one another three times. It produced quite an impression, as if an entire crowd were kissing. The Ras went into the aderash (dining room), where a feast had been laid out for the arriving troops, the same as that described by me above.

Fitaurari Imam represents a characteristic type of Abyssinian leader. He is young, remarkably handsome, energetic, well-known for selfless courage and adored by his people. As a 14-year-old boy he came to the court of the Ras and having made himself the Ras's elfin ashker (page), accompanied him on all his campaigns. At first, he only followed behind the mule of the Ras, carrying a Psalter or a saber or a goblet for water. When he was older, he got himself a spear and began to take part in battles himself. Finally, he was given a gun and ten cartridges; and from that time his military career began. Soon the Ras made Imam his agafari (gentleman in attendance) and commander of his person guard, and several years ago promoted him to the rank of fitaurari. Imam received as a command about 300 soldiers, several hundred guns and several thousand cartridges; and for the feeding of the detachment he received one of the outlying districts. From that moment, he was permitted to recruit for himself whatever size detachment he

deemed he was in a position to maintain. Of the 300 men in his command, Imam selected the most capable and outstanding men and made them leaders of a thousand, leaders of a hundred, and leaders of fifty men, dividing the remaining soldiers among them; and he let them fill their units as they wanted. At the present time, his regiment has grown from 300 men to 2,000.

The formation of the detachment of Imam as described by me is the prototype of the origin of all Abyssinian units.

### **January 13**

I spent the morning with the Ras, examining a map of the theater of future military action. The Ras received me in the courtyard of his elfinya (inner chambers) under a small awning, resting against a fence and covered with straw. This place was the favorite working office of the Ras. From there one had a wonderful view of the mountains surrounding Andrachi. When I entered, the Ras was occupied with current business with his secretary Aloka-Melke. Sitting on a divan, he dictated a document to him. Aloka-Melke is a handsome young man, who some years ago was a deacon. Having settled himself on the floor, Aloka-Melke quickly wrote on a paper placed on his knee. The scratch of his reed pen resounded almost uninterrupted. From time to time, he dipped it in an inkwell, made from a cartridge case, which was placed between the toes of his right foot. When the document was finished, the secretary moved away, and the Ras and I were left alone. I spread out on the floor a map I had obtained which was marked in Abyssinian, and we began to consider it. Recognizing where Andrachi and Addis Ababa

were located, the Ras himself oriented the map and tried to determine for himself the relative distances between points that interested him and to understand the concept of "degree" which was completely unknown to him — meeryg as the Emperor Menelik calls it. The Ras showered me with questions. How far was Lake Rudolf? How many degrees? How great is the distance from the line of operation of Dajazmatch Tesemma? Where is the second degree? Why did these two degrees appear so big? From where are they calculated? It was necessary to deliver a lecture on the spherical shape of the Earth, to explain the concept of the Equator, the latitude of the place where we were, etc.

"Why are there neither words nor rivers there where we will go?" the Ras asked me.

I answered that this area had not yet been explored. The Ras shook his head and thought. A really difficult problem lay ahead. He had been ordered to subdue and annex to Abyssinia the huge territory which lies among Kaffa, Lake Albert and Lake Rudolf from 2 degrees north latitude, and, while doing this, to oppose any other force which might have a similar intention. The region which the Ras had to conquer was completely unknown to Abyssinians. They only had information about the region that is closest to Kaffa and the Shuro tribe which lives there. The territory the Shuro occupied was a complete riddle to them. They didn't know who the neighbors of the Shuro were, whether there were any neighbors, and, finally, what kind of country lies beyond the borders of this tribe, and whether it is rich in bread grain.

Provisions for the troops could only be supplied by way of requisition, i.e. by doubtful

capabilities in completely unknown regions. In view of the large numbers of the corps that was setting out on this campaign and their shortage of lifting power, it seemed unthinkable that they could bring enough provisions with them, all the more so since there wasn't enough time to prepare for the campaign and to reconnoiter the theater of action. Due to political considerations, Emperor Menelik demanded that the Ras complete the task given to him this very year, and there were only five months left before the rainy season.

16,000 men were supposed to go in the expeditionary corps. Of those, 10,500 regular soldiers had guns. The rest — volunteers from Galla and other tribes — had only spears.  
(56)

One part of this army was posted at the center of the Ras's domain, another at its outskirts. All soldiers received provisions from the location in which they were stationed, and the commanders of units were at the same time both administrators and chief justices in their regions. In the interior provinces, which were completely pacified, soldiers were allotted plots of land and several enslaved natives each. In time of peace, they dwelt on their allotments and made a living from them. In the outlying districts, which were not yet pacified, the system of military settlements was inapplicable, all the more so because the troops were almost always under arms and raiding neighboring lands. They lived in fortified camps. Native leaders obtained the necessary quantity of provisions for them, gathering them from their tribesmen, under threat of requisition in case the quantity was insufficient.

In monetary and material prosperity, the outlying units were equal with the ones in the interior. Each soldier received annually from the treasury of the Ras from 5 to 15 thalers to purchase a donkey, horse, or mule. The amount depended on the merit of the warrior. Each also received one outer garment — a shamma — and linen for two pairs of trousers.

Five of the regiments were called waruari and were considered the Emperor's troops. The rest were the Ras's own troops. In each of these regiments, part of the soldiers were mounted and part were on foot. The more well-to-do soldiers and those who had already served for some time bought themselves a horse or a mule. Young soldiers and the poor ones did not have them. The troops were not subdivided by type of weapon. The origin of the waruari is interesting. On the accession of Menelik to the throne of Shoa, eleven-year-old Wolda Giyorgis went to serve the Negus as his elfin ashker (page). He accompanied Menelik on all his campaigns and soon made himself one of Menelik's favorites. Ras Makonnen, cousin and great friend of Wolda Giyorgis, had the same kind of job. Together they endured all the burdens of their position: they froze at the entrance to Menelik's tent. They were happy when one of the senior men let them drink from a half-drunk decanter of tej or to eat what was left of the meat.

In 1870, it was reported to the emperor that three young soldiers who had formerly served King Tewodros had arrived and wanted to join his army. Menelik gave the order to invite them in. Pondering over who he should assign these soldiers to, he asked Wolda Giyorgis who, at that time, was blowing on the campfire in front of him.

"Well, Wolda Giyorgis, advise me — who should I give them to?"

"Give them to me," he answered.

These three soldiers were the nucleus of that 15,000-man corps which the Ras now commands.

Wolda Giyorgis quickly promoted his first soldiers to commanders of fifty men, obtained for each of them a leopard skin for battle dress, asking his older relatives for them, and let his subordinates recruit their own half-companies. Soon about 20 men were assembled. Money obtained in raids was used to acquire pack mules, which, on the march, carried provisions for the entire detachment and the tent of its commander. The newly formed unit began to occupy a separate bivouac, marked by this tent.

Little by little, the number of soldiers of Wolda Giyorgis increased, and his property and fame grew. Distinguishing himself with outstanding courage and enterprise, he could also elicit these qualities from his men. Thanks to rare talents as a regimental commander, Wolda Giyorgis created from his soldiers, who were still almost children, such fine fellows that during the war with Wollo they were the talk of the whole army of the Negus. A day did not pass without them participating in a raid and without one of them returning to camp with trophies taken from the enemy. Menelik took notice of the feats of these daring fellows. Once, talking about the ever more famous soldiers of Wolda

Giyorgis, the Emperor said: "These are not mucha (unfledged youths) but waruari (spear throwers)." And he kept affirming this name for them. As a reward for his feats, Wolda Giyorgis received a small portion of land, thanks to which he was able to increase the size of his small detachment.

In 1883, Menelik named Wolda Giyorgis chief agafari and elfin-askalakay-ishaka — head of the elfin ashkers (pages) and of the personal guard of the negus. He then made him gerazmatch (lieutenant colonel).

In 1887, Wolda Giyorgis was promoted to dajazmatch (full general) and received independent control of the region of Limu. At this time he already had five regiments with a total strength of about 3,000 men, which were considered soldiers of the Negus and were called, as before, waruari. The units newly formed after Wolda Giyorgis was named governor-general of Limu were troops of the Ras himself and became called byet lyjog (children of the house).

At the time of the announcement of the mobilization, his troops were at the places where they were stationed. Several units were 400-500 vests [300-375 miles] from the town of Andrachi, which was the mustering point for the whole detachment. The mobilization order was sent from Addis Ababa at the end of November and it took at least 16-20 days for the farthest units to get the message — that is in the middle of December. The troops were supposed to assemble in Andrachi in the middle of January. Consequently, they had only one month for muster and concentration, and remote units had to allow not less than

15 days just to get to the mustering point. However, despite the many difficulties, the whole 15,000-man detachment was already at muster by January 15, and January 24 was set as the departure date. It was decided to use the nine days (from January 15 to 24) to rest the animals of the units that had come a long way and to organize the feast that is customary before a campaign.

The order of the Ras which announced this mobilization is interesting. I will present it in translation. It begins with the customary introduction to all orders that are announced nationwide: "Listen! Listen! Listen! Whoever does not listen is an enemy of the Lord and of the Mother of God! Listen! Whoever does not listen is an enemy of the Lord and of the church! Listen! Whoever does not listen is an enemy of Menelik! Warriors! I am setting out on a campaign against the Shankala (Negroes). All of you, assemble on the Holiday of the Baptism in Andrachi. Whoever is late will not go on the campaign and will miss this unique opportunity to win fame and get livestock and prisoners."

Soon after town criers had announced this order in all bazaars and in all the places where troops were stationed, first individual soldiers from interior regions, who made a living from allotted parcels of land, began to gather at the mustering point. Then the farther units began to come. Natives also responded to the call and assembled, as said above, in the number of about 5,000 volunteers.

By the designated date, the mobilization and the concentration of the detachment was completed. Now it only remained for the Ras to set in motion this 16,000-man force

which was dependent on him and to carry out the mission that was assigned to him. The assignment was dreadful, because of the absolutely unknown conditions which he would have to take into consideration and the responsibility to his state and to the people who followed him which the Ras took upon himself.

Wolda Giyorgis was aware of all of that but did not show the least hesitation or indecisiveness. At the end of our conversation, he, in saying good-bye, told me, " It is a difficult task ahead of us, but I set my hopes on the God of Menelik who will help me. To strengthen the throne of Menelik (na Menelik alga), I will use all my strength; and with joy I will sacrifice my life."

These words clearly express the determination of the head of the detachment and how he looked at the expedition. The subordinates of the Ras regarded the campaign in a way not far from that.

Feeling an innate love for war and having full faith in their leader, they dutifully gathered under his flag and were ready to set out on the campaign. But it was noticeable that the soldiers were worried about the unknown conditions in which they would have to operate. They felt what lay before them was indeed more difficult than the usual raids.

"Where are we going?" There was no simple answer to this question which all were concerned about, and gossip excelled at inventing answers. The soldiers were startled by the large transport of cartridges (about 10-16 mule-loads per regiment). My presence in

the detachment also troubled them, arousing rumors.

"It's a bad sign that a frenj (foreigner) goes with us," said some.

"In the south they say there are Europeans. We will be led to fight against them," observed others.

"The English took land from the frenj and took away his wife and children. He complained to Menelik, and Menelik ordered the Ras to go punish the English and to return to the frenj what was taken away from him. Only they say that this is very far. In that place there are people who are like dogs. It will be bad for us to go so far," added others.

The soldiers of the Ras beset my men with questions which in their opinion should have been known for a certainty. Where we are going? For how long? When my ashkers answered that they themselves knew nothing, the soldiers observed, "Sure, for you it's good! You will go straight home. But how hard it is for us ..."

The soldiers stubbornly held onto such hearsay. As for the officers, while they did not believe all this gossip, they did foresee a long campaign and difficulties, and showed ill-will toward the expedition. The aim of the campaign — to go to some distant region which was unknown to anyone — seemed pointless to them. All the more so because in the immediate neighborhood there was still an abundance of forage and land rich in food-

stuffs.

The Ras knew about the gossip that was going around among the soldiers and also about the frame of mind of the officers. He listened tactfully to these rumors and countered them by starting new favorable ones, for example that in one of the lands where we were going there are horses and cattle. He also tried to influence the officers through his closest supporters who gathered in a military council where he impressed on them his way of thinking.

#### **January 14**

In the morning, the Ras had to hold trial court in the adebabay, and I received an invitation to attend. The Ras sat in the tower, and a place was prepared for me beside him on the carpet. Below, on the square, sat two judges — the "right" and "left" judges, and a group of leaders, several priests and scholars, debtera. In front, facing the Ras stood a crowd of people. Here were the litigants and witnesses as well as spectators.

The first matter heard was essentially administrative in character. A local judge and the leader of a small detachment which had settled in his district disputed the competence and right of the court over local residents in matters regarding administrative infringements of the law. The litigants got very angry and argued endlessly, citing decrees of the Ras which had been published at various times. The judges showed great interest in the debate: apparently, the resolution of the question being examined infringed on their interests. The Ras silently and patiently listened. He already, for a long time, knew the

main point and all the evidence brought by the parties, but he didn't interfere with the debate, instead looking through a telescope at the neighboring mountains. Finally, the disputes began to abate; the evidence of the one and the other side ran out. No one convinced anyone, and all awaited the decision of the Ras, which he decreed in a clear and brief formulation. The litigants bowed to the ground to the Ras. The next defendant was accused of having sold his military prisoner, under the guise of a gift. The crime was obviously proven. The guilty party was subject to the death penalty, but the Ras did not have the right by his own authority to impose that sentence because the criminal was an Abyssinian. The Ras ordered him put in chains and sent to Menelik.

"Ass!" he concluded his resolution. "He only needed three thalers for a slave. As if he does not understand that all of Europe is now watching Ethiopia ..."

The third case before the Ras was a Kaffa accused of murdering an Abyssinian with a fishing line. The criminal was interrogated through an interpreter, and Kaffa officials took part in the trial. The murder was committed by two Kaffas, who fell by surprise on an unarmed Abyssinian. But one of the malefactors escaped from the place of confinement. The remaining one asserted that it was not he who killed the Abyssinian, but rather the man who fled, who before this had succeeded in bribing the chief judge. The judge, against whom the criminal brought the charge of accepting a bribe, was present. He stood right beside the Kaffa and energetically protested.

"He lies!" he said. "I didn't do that!"

"He did," he said. "What will you stake on it that you aren't lying?"

"Your head!" answered the judge.

Thus, the matter took a new turn. A new investigation would be necessary. This was entrusted to one of the Abyssinian judges together with the Kaffa katamarash. After the investigation, one of the accused would be subject to the death penalty. (57)

Then several more, somewhat less interesting cases were examined. In the last, one of the priests of the town of Andrachi who was accused of blasphemy appeared before the court. He asserted that the Holy Trinity consists of nine persons. He did not yield to any of the arguments of the priests. They accused him, before the Ras, of heresy. The court sentenced him to fifty lashes with the jiraf (whip). They took the priest off to the bazaar and, after forty strokes on the kettledrum, delivered his punishment. I, by this time, had already taken leave of the Ras and was in my room at court. My ashkers were keenly interested in the outcome of the punishment, which was often fatal. They even took bets among themselves on whether the convict would survive the flogging. They took the outer clothing and the shirt from the convict, placed him with his stomach on the ground, and began to carry out the sentence. The hands and feet of the priest were tied with ropes, which the executioners pulled. Kettledrummers performed the role of executioners. The lashes were delivered with a long, thick belt whip with a short whip-handle. They beat him with wide, infrequent strokes, which were counted by the officer designated for this.

. With each stroke of the whip, a noise resounded that was like a pistol shot. The convict endured the punishment very patiently, and those who had bet on his death lost. After the flogging, they lifted the priest, dressed him and, supporting him under the arms, took him home. His back was completely blood-stained.

### **January 15**

The last troops that the Ras was waiting for arrived — the regiment of Fitaurari Damti, who were stationed the farthest away, namely in the lands of Aro, Bako, and Shangama, on the slopes facing Lake Stefanie. The meeting of the troops was exactly the same as what I described above. Then followed a dinner which I attended.

Fitaurari Damti is a young man. He began his service, like Fitaurari Imam, as elfin ashker (page) of the Ras. He now already has the rank of fitaurari and commands a regiment which made an excellent impression on me. A large part of his soldiers are adorned with military armor obtained for distinguished service. Among the officers, there were typical veterans. Incredible stories were told about one of them, Aba-Ilma, stories that I could not have believed if I had not heard them from Aba-Ilma himself, and also from other people who are worthy of confidence — for example, from the commander-in-chief. (Subsequently, I became friendly with him and came to know his absolutely truthful character.)

Aba-Ilma is a representative of an interesting, obsolescent type of Abyssinian warrior from the time of Emperor Tewodros. He is a gray, lean, muscular old man, with a

remarkably lively temperament, who doesn't know fatigue, is always happy, and who encourages his comrades. He has waged war his whole life; and if you were to gather all the blood he has shed, he could, I believe, swim in it. But there is not a trace of cruelty in him. Aba-Ilma is pure of heart, simple, and naive as a child.

Aba Ilma is from the Agau tribe. His father ruled an insignificant principality in the neighborhood of Tigre, and was, at the accession to the throne of Emperor Yohannes, one of the feudal lords who had revolted and taken the side of Yohannes. In one of the battles, Aba-Ilma — then still a young man — was wounded with a spear. This happened when, after charging at his opponent, he threw a javelin at him, but missed, and turned his horse back in order to gallop away. The spear hit him in the neck, somewhat to the left of the spine, came out his mouth, cut through his tongue, and broke three upper front teeth...

Aba-Ilma fell from his horse, but was not lost: with quick action, he pulled the spear from the wound and at the very moment when his opponent having dismounted, intended to finish him off, Aba-Ilma, with a pistol, shot him where he stood. A comrade of the dead man rushed to the rescue on horseback. Ilma lay still, and as soon as the enemy drew close, inflicted a serious wound on his leg with a saber stroke. Finally, he fell senseless. Soldiers, having recognized him as the son of the prince, took Ilma prisoner; and, in spite of the serious wound, put him in shackles. When he recovered, Ilma went into service for Menelik, took part in all his wars, and was repeatedly wounded, including once when a bullet passed right through his chest.

Aba-Ilma is a passionate hunter and killed many elephants. While hunting, quite

improbable adventures happened to him. For example, pursued by a wounded elephant, he, with a saber, cut off a piece of its trunk. When that elephant turned back, with a second stroke Ilma cut off a piece of its tail.

Aba-Ilma has been rewarded with all the distinctions attainable at his rank. He has a lemd (a cape for the shoulders, made of a lion's mane), and a silver shield, and silver gilded manacles, worn on the arms from the hands to the elbows; and gold ear-rings in both ears, and silk ribbons to decorate his head, and a silver head-dress (kalecha) of filigree work, similar to a crown.

After dinner, I received as guests Abyssinian officers and natives who came to become acquainted with me. Among them was the first high official of the Kaffa king — a retired katamarash. He limped from a recent injury and, long before reaching my tent, taking off the rags which covered his emaciated body, he bowed low.

I called him into my tent and, through an interpreter, asked him about the Kaffa way of life before the land was conquered. But I learned little from him. Parting with him, I gave him several thalers. This touched the old man so much that he fell on the ground. And (it must have been as a sign of gratitude), he hit himself in the chest for a long time.

## **January 16**

Today, they held another large dinner, one of those which Abyssinian military leaders hold to entertain their troops before setting out on a campaign. These dinners bear a

special military imprint and are very lively. Veterans, with some embellishment, reminisce about by-gone battles, tell about outstanding feats and so forth. Tej (mead) flows in rivers. At the end of the dinner, the lifting of spirits attains its highest level. One after the other, the banqueters jump up and, hoarsely crying out, enumerate the feats they have performed and vow fidelity to their leader. (58) "I am a killer!" cries a soldier with foam in his mouth. He seizes a saber by the hilt. His eyes wander wildly. He shakes all over nervously and seems positively insane. "I repelled a spear in battle! I repelled two spears in battle! I repelled three spears in battle! I killed in the Aussi campaign, and in Tigre and among the Negroes. I killed everywhere where I waged war! I am your slave, your dog! With you I will conquer! With you I will die! I am Kaytimir! (His personal name)." And in conclusion, he bows to the ground to the Ras.

The talking subsides. All listen tensely. One person follows another to deliver fokyr. Only the commander-in-chief keeps his composure and each time quietly utters, "Name a guarantor." The person vowing fidelity finds himself a guarantor among his comrades and, having received a large goblet of mead, sits at his place.

From the Gimiro tribe, which borders on Kaffa, a deputation arrived in Andrachi, consisting of the prince of this tribe, the chief priest, and three elders. They brought ivory to the Ras as a gift and asked him to take them under his protection. The Ras showed much kindness to them, gave them presents, and let them go home.

Before leaving, they came to have a look at me, at white people. Entering my tent, they

looked at me and my things with childlike pleasure and curiosity. These savages were very original in their bright red cloaks, worn on the naked body, and the red bandages worn on the head.

I asked them if they had ever seen white men before. They answered no, and added that they had heard that last year white men, from where they didn't know, had entered the neighboring land. They had pitched a sparkling silver tent and the following day vanished without a trace. (59)

From the point of view of geography and hydrography, the Gimiro knew very little about the territory neighboring them. They had not heard of the existence of a large river (Omo), which, we then assumed, flowed to the west, to the Sobat, passing Lake Rudolf. They also knew nothing about this large lake, but talked about some other lake — Bosho, into which the streams of their country flow.

I also asked them about their way of life, and with one question made them very embarrassed. Wanting to find out if they practiced polygamy, I asked the priest how many wives he had. The priest looked at me suspiciously, evidently at a loss for understanding why I needed to know this and perhaps suspecting that I wanted to demand them for myself as a gift. He slowly answered, "As many as God sends."

At parting, I gave them several thalers. In gratitude, they kissed the ground and hit themselves in the chest with their palms. Leaving, they crowded at the exit to the tent, as

if expecting something more from me. It seemed that they wanted to see how one got fire by hand (matches) — a wonder about which they, correctly, had heard from the Kaffa. To their fascination, mixed with terror, I showed them this trick, and they left completely satisfied.

### **January 17.**

I visited Nagada-Ras Vadym-Aganokh(60) He lives 10 versts [7 miles] from the town of Andrachi, in Bonga, which used to be the second capital of the Kaffa king.

The Nagada-Ras is a young, energetic and lively man. He belongs to the class of smart dealers that is coming into being in Abyssinia. They are in complete contrast to the type of leading Abyssinian personality which dominated up until now. These "new men" have become acquainted with Europeans and have adopted from them many good things — their energy, their openness in address, not considering it necessary, as people of the old stamp, to strike an important pose and limit their speech to the minimum etc. in order to maintain their authority. I encountered such people mainly among the merchant class, but also noticed the same tendency in other strata of the population. The Emperor Menelik himself and his foremost associates belong to this new type.

I sent my foot servants ahead, and myself went on horseback accompanied by two mounted ashkers. I sat on a horse for the first time since my bout of rheumatism. Having rested for those days, Defar (my horse) left my fellow travelers far behind me. At full gallop, we jumped off steep banks and again clambered up rising slopes and at a wide

gallop rushed across plains ... Thick bushes, completely covered with flowers grew along both sides of the road. The multi-colored tents of the assembled troops appeared in all the clearings.

My ashkers and all the soldiers of the Nagada-Ras were in formation to meet me near his house. He himself went to the gates to greet me, wearing his parade clothes as a sign of special respect to his guest. His home is located on the site of the burnt-down palace of the king of Kaffa. From the previous building there remained only a palisade made of enormous trunks of palm trees and, sticking up from the high grass, several charred ends of columns which had supported the roof of the palace. The dwelling of the Nagada-Ras was built in the Abyssinian manner. Inside a court, enclosed by a high palisade, rises a large house (aderash) intended for receptions, and several other buildings, such as the bedroom of the host, the kitchen, etc. Behind the palisade, around the perimeter, lie several groups of low cabins. The soldiers of the Nagada-Ras live in those cabins. The court was full of merchants who had come on business with their leader. Here were Kaffa, Gallas and Abyssinians. The Kaffa and Gallas were sharply contrasted in their appearance from the Abyssinians. As Mohammedans, they wore turbans on their heads; and on their necks they wore long beads. Vandym-Aganokh led me into the aderash, which was this time covered with carpets and filled with the smoke of incense. There behind a cane partition, sat his elderly mother, who had recently become a nun, and his eighteen-year-old wife. His wife was very shy and hung her head low and only at the end of the dinner did she decide to now and then glance at me in curiosity.

They gave us an excellent dinner, and the hospitable civilized host entertained me not only with local mead, but also wine and absinth ("abusent" he called it), and even liqueur. He gave all my men enough to drink to get them dead drunk, and when I went back, they ran in front of my horse, not letting me outdistance them. They cried out heroic recitatives, fired their guns, etc. Two of them — Ambyrbyr and Aulale — even fought, arguing which of them was braver.

### **January 18.**

I received the Ras at my place and showed him how to develop photographs. He was especially interested in the moment when the figures of people known to him (whose pictures I had taken) began to appear and to become clear on the white plate.

### **January 19.**

Ras Wolda Giyorgis introduced me to his wife — Woyzaro Eshimabet. Because of ill health, she had been unable to receive me earlier. The reception took place in the elfin — the bedroom of the Ras — and was very ceremonial. The elfin is a large round building about 15 arshins [12 yards] in diameter and 8 arshins [6 yards] in height. The walls are coated with clay and whitened. The floor is covered with carpet and strewn with freshly picked fragrant grass. Inside, a series of high thick hewn posts support the roof. The rafters and concentric bamboo hoops, with the attached-to-them bamboo foundations of the roof, are wound with multi-colored calico cloth. There are two doors to the house which are located diametrically opposite one another. There are no windows. In the middle of one wall stands a high bed under white bed curtains, alongside which stands a

small divan, and in line with that a chair was placed for me. At the opposite wall is another small divan. That's all the furniture. In line with the bed, there rises a bamboo partition. On the walls are displayed guns and sabers of the Ras, several shields and his library, which consists of books on spiritual subjects, each of which, in a large leather case, hangs on a strap on a separate peg.

The Ras and his wife sat beside one another on the low divan near the bed. Woyzaro Eshimabet is already aging, but she is still a rather beautiful woman. The color of her skin shone strikingly for an Abyssinian woman. She was richly dressed, and all of her glittered with the brilliance of a mass of gold and silver. Her black silk burnoose, draped over a colorful silk blouse, was richly embroidered with gold. On her head, she wore a silver diadem, hung round with silver chains and spangles. On her ears, she had large gold earrings, and on her hands rings. (61)

Behind her, with their arms around one another, stood several maids of honor — pretty Galla and Abyssinian girls, dressed in white blouses which extend down to their heels and tied around the waist with sashes. Here were also several little pages, and near the door, turned away from his mistress, not daring to look at her, stood the agafari who had led me there. Behind the partition were the rest of the female staff of the elfin, and through cracks there sparkled several curious eyes. These others included two daughters of the Ras from his first wife, two daughters of Eshimabet from her first husband, and also two daughters of the Ras and Eshimabet.(62)

Having shaken hands with the hostess, European style, I sat on the chair opposite her; and, interrupted with long pauses, the ceremonial conversation began: "How are you? How do you like our country?" etc.

The Ras very much wanted to have a portrait of his wife, so I sent for my photographic equipment. But the Woyzaro flatly refused to go out into the courtyard, saying that she was afraid of the sun, and I was forced to take her picture inside the room, having opened wide both doors.

The appearance of the equipment put an end to the solemn ceremonialness of the reception. The Ras sprang out of his place, dragged out from behind the partition four young women who were hiding there and sat them beside his wife. He was such a likeable bustler at that moment! How much he, apparently, wanted the portrait of his beloved wife to come out as well as possible! He ran from her to the apparatus, and then again to her, this time adjusting the decoration on her head, that time smoothing out the wrinkles in her clothes. Finally, the procedure of taking the picture was finished. The former boring stiffness and coldness did not return. The young ladies did not go back behind the partition. We, sitting at a small decanter of white tej (mead), conversed enjoyably until evening.

No sooner did I return home when, in the name of Eshimabet and the other women, ashkers came and brought me several baskets with the most delicate injera and several large jugs of aged mead. In reply to this, I sent them my last bottle of champagne. In the

evening, as usual, I developed the photographs I took during the day, wrote in my journal, and chatted with Zelepukin. We lay — I on my bed and he on a tarpaulin on the floor, and, lending ear to the unusual animation which prevailed in the camp of the Ras, we reminisced about our distant homeland ...

Having raised high the flaps of our tent, we admired the marvelous picture of Andrachi around us. On these nights, no sooner did it become dark than in the cloudless sky there appeared a myriad of stars. And against the black background of mountains which surround the city, these innumerable little stars burned, shining much more brightly. Those were the soldiers' campfires which burned at their bivouacs ... On all sides resounded songs, accompanied by sparse, but uninterrupted gun-fire, with which those who were feasting expressed their warlike frame of mind. The falling bullets sometimes buzzed over our tent.

My ashkers kept up with the soldiers of the Ras. Having dined and drunk their portion of mead, they sat around the campfire and struck up songs. For the most part, these were military improvisations, and their contents amounted to praise of themselves and of their master. Liban sang in his clear, beautiful voice, and the chorus joined in the monotonous refrain, "Gedau! Berekhanyau!" ("Killer, killer, tramp of the desert!"). One of the ashkers, in a form of accompaniment, beat in time with his palms on an empty water tin. Women's voices joined in the chorus. The longer it went on, the more lively became the merriment. Finally, someone jumped up with a loaded gun in his hands and cried out a full self-praising recitative, a fokyr, at the end of which he fired into the sky. Comrades calmed

the warrior who had lost his self-control, telling him: "Don't burn ("ayzokh")! Don't burn! Everything that you say is true!" And the interrupted singing continued. Military songs were mixed with satirical ones, sometimes very clever. Then they struck up merry dance songs. Men and women at the cheerful refrain "Chi-chi-ko! Chi-chi-ko!" portrayed unambiguous pantomimes and this black "flirt" provoked outbursts of laughter.

The excitement which had seized Andrachi was aroused by the upcoming war. The Abyssinians got themselves ready for it as if for the most joyous festive occasion. It was evident that craving for military exploits entered the flesh and blood of this people and that in spite of all the troubles and deprivations they had experienced in previous wars, the Abyssinians, although they foresaw great burdens, still worshipped war. The Abyssinian connects his idea of war with glory and spoils. He dreams about having killed several enemies and returning home, proud of his success. His wife would smear the hero's head with oil; and friends and relatives would hold a feast for him. He would let his hair grow long and braid it in plaits — the irrefutable sign of his valor. And how great would be the joy of his whole family, if moreover he brought home a fat cow or a female prisoner who would fetch water and go into the forest for firewood, or a captive boy who until he grew up and became a soldier himself, would carry for him his rifle and shield and pasture his mule ...

### **January 20.**

In the morning, I again took pictures of the Ras's whole family — this time with better success. Today the shipment of meal that I had long awaited arrived from Jimma. It was

supposed to serve as the basis of my food supply, which I hoped to replenish on the march. Altogether there were about 50-60 poods [1800-2160 pounds) of meal, and that could be enough for my detachment for 30 days, figuring two pounds of meal per day per person.

In addition to the meal, Aba Jefar sent me a cow as a gift. It turned out that on my first bivouac from Jimma, when I was going to Kaffa, the local chief was ordered to give me durgo, and since he for some reason did not do this, he was fined one cow, which was now sent to me as if in compensation for the losses I had suffered !...

The departure of the detachment was set for January 24. I decided to leave a little earlier, namely January 21, in order to freely make as exact a map of Kaffa as possible. The interpreter Gebra and the Kaffa Kata-Maguda (assistant of the Katamarash) were assigned to accompany me.

We made preparations in the evening and on the following morning my transport set out. I stayed in Andrachi until noon, printing the photographs I had taken in the elfin the day before. The Ras's whole family took an active part in this. Woyzaro Eshimabet fixed the prints; her stepdaughter then placed them in the bath. Even the permanent staff of the elfin — a stern monk (a former colonel who had taken orders at the death of his wife) and another young monk (from a sect of celibates) got excited and crowded around the bath with curiosity. By eleven o'clock, the printing was done. Woyzaro Eshimabet treated me to lunch; and after long farewells, I finally set out. I spent the night in Bonga at the house

of the Nagada-Ras.

## **V. Through Kaffa and Gimiro to the Abyssinian Border**

**January 22.**

I spent the whole day in Bonga as a guest of Nagada-Ras Vandym-Agnaokh. Here I finally formed the caravan for our subsequent movement. (63)

The order of movement was as follows. We set out at about seven o'clock in the morning, when the dew had fallen and it became warmer. While the tents were being taken down and the mules loaded, Zelepukin and I ate our breakfast. Then the transport set out. First went two herdsmen with tarads (poles from the tents), measuring their pace with the full pace of the mules. After them went one or two mounted ashkers, and after the horses obediently went the herd of mules loaded with their packs, after which followed ashkers. At the end, rode Aboye, the head of the transport. And behind everyone went Zelepukin, his broad-shouldered bulky figure and sunburnt crimson-colored face making a complete contrast with the slim, well-proportioned, black-skinned Abyssinians.

Some time after the transport set out, I sat on my regular mule and started, accompanied by weapon bearers, who carried my guns, (64) a knapsack with writing implements, a theodolite, and photographic equipment. With me also went Gebra the Kaffa language interpreter and Katama-Guda my guide. We usually went very fast, but I often stopped along the road to observe the azimuth and to plot the location on a surveying plane-table. At noon, if the weather allowed, I made solar observations. In a day, we marched 20-30

versts [13-20 miles] and by 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, we made camp for the night. On arriving at the bivouac, the mules were let out pasture; and in the evening, they were brought to tether. Quickly, the tents were broken out. Some of the ashkers set out for water, wood, and grass. The rest, together with my two cooks, prepared the food. For this part of our march, we ate excellently. The men each received each day a large cup of meal which they used to cook themselves very tasty flat cakes — kita — and ate them dipping them in crushed red pepper or pepper sauce. Each day they received mead, which they drank with water. And every two days, they got meat ... Zelepukin and I, having meat and meal in abundance, all but feasted.

### **January 23.**

In the morning, we left Bonga. The transport having set out first, I ascended Mount Bonga-Shambata, which in translation means "Holiday or Festival Bonga." It was given this name because at its summit there once was located a temple to the god Dento or Deontos, where several times per year were held massive sacrifices. The summit of the mountain, which is overgrown with high grass and, along the sides, with thick forest, attains a height of 2,075 meters above sea level. I made azimuth observations from there. Then we went down to the River Gicha, crossed it by a bridge made of the trunks of date-palm trees, and climbed the mountain ridge that stretched out to the west of us. Here the country is picturesque. It seemed as if we were going through a marvelous park. On both sides of the road we encountered beautiful groves of date palms, coffee and huge deciduous trees of various types, mixed sometimes with clearings overgrown with grass. In times gone by, all these clearings were inhabited, as evidenced by the plantations of

banana trees which had escaped destruction.

We set up our bivouac at the foot of Mount Bonga-Beke (in translation "To see Bonga"), on the banks of a swift, shady stream.

### **January 24.**

The transport having set out on a straight road to the southwest, I climbed Mount Bonga-Beke. The chief of the region of Dake (Dake-rasha) (65), a handsome young Kaffa, accompanied me to these places. Lightly and elegantly, he sat on an excellent chestnut-colored horse and with ease, adroitly controlled it. His white cloak fell down in artistic folds. Short wide trousers left bare from the knees his lean, muscular legs. By the Semitic features of his face and his whole primeval figure, he resembled an ancient biblical warrior. Behind him ran several servants, one of whom, a typical Kaffa of enormous size, blew the whole time on a horn made of a small elephant tusk, to notify the populace that their leader was passing through. (66)

The road was gently sloping, rising amid dense forest. In intervals between huge trees, it was overgrown with dense thickets of bamboos and ferns. The ferns looked similar to small palms and attained a height of several arshins [arshin = 28 inches]. The summit of the mountain was densely populated. Small huts, constructed soon after the war, were hidden in groves of banana plantations and were surrounded by fences of intricately interlaced splintered bamboo stalks.

In one of those farmsteads, the wives of the imprisoned Kaffa king, Tato Chenito, lived under strict surveillance. I wanted to meet them and sent in advance to notify them of my coming. Past narrow gates which were protected by guards, we went into a small tidy courtyard. On an ox hide spread out in the shade of banana trees, a young, rather beautiful woman sat, and behind her stood the chief guard of the captive harem — a large beardless eunuch.

Having exchanged greetings, I began to converse with her through an interpreter. She answered my questions quite naturally, and behaved reservedly, and with extraordinary dignity.

She is the daughter of the king of Kusho (67), one of the former tributaries of Kaffa. She got married at the age of 12. She is now 25, and the 13 years of her marriage were for her, in her words, continuous happiness. The king loved her more than all his other wives and adorned her and dressed her more richly than them and more frequently than any of them summoned her to himself. (68) She loved her king, was depressed without him, and asked me if I had seen him, if he was healthy, if he had already died in confinement ...

She spoke with amazing simplicity, remembering her former life with regret. The whole time, there was an imprint of deep sadness on her face. Two other wives were with her, as well as four concubines of the king and his bold beautiful twelve-year-old sister. I asked that these others also come out, and I took their photograph. Among the concubines was one "rising star," an amazingly good-looking Galla woman, who was remarkably

cheerful. She was never bored anywhere, even in captivity, and at a time when all were sad, she smiled and even flirted.

Having taken leave, I set out for the summit of the mountain in order to take observations there. But the noon solar observation was unsuccessful since clouds obscured the sky. I just took azimuths on the surrounding mountains, and after long examinations finally determined their names. From Mount Bonga-Beke, all of Kaffa was visible — divided by natural boundaries into 12 regions. On the northwest rise Mountains Bacha-aki-Keli and Gaua-Gunga in the Kaffa region of Gauat, which borders Geroy. A bit further south, along spurs of the mountain ridge, is located the region of Gimbi, with the summits of Gida, Shonga, and Goli located there. And to the west of that, on the crest of the mountain ridge is the region of Geshe. To the southwest of Gimbi, along the courses of streams which flow into the Gumi River, are seen the forested regions of Bunta and Opa. Further south along the same crest of the main mountain ridge, heading to the southeast lies the region of Chana. To the northeast, along valleys of streams which flow into the Gojeb River are the regions of Shasha and Shara. South of those lies Kaffa itself, with the town of Andrachi. East of Kaffa lies the region of Buta, and the region of Adiya lies on the crest which serves as the watershed of the Gojeb and Gumi rivers. On the southwest appears the mountainous region of Goa. Mount Bonga-Beke itself is located in the region of Deche. From here, the system of the Gumi River is clearly delineated. Among mountainous ravines, it flows from the northeast of Mount Buty and at the foothills of the mountain at the town of Andrachi, it joins with the Gicha River. The Gicha River flows from Mount Bonga-Beke and skirts the mountain to the west. Having passed Bonga-

Beke, the Gumi goes through a wide low plain. Here the realm of Kaffa itself ends and the Negro settlements of Shuro begin. To the northwest is seen the valley of the Gojeb River. From Mount Bacha-aki-Kela, a river that the natives call "Tira" flows into the Gojeb. On the northeast, the Adiya River flows from Mount Adiya into the Gojeb River. Waters of the southwest slopes of Gauata to the west from Opa form the Menu River, which flows into the Jubba and the Sobat. From here is visible how the main mountain ridge from Gera stretches out to the southeast. The height of Mount Bonga-Beke is 2,615 meters above sea level, and the summits of Bacha-aki-Kela, Gaua-Guno, Gida and Shonga exceed 3,000 meters. On the east, on the crest which serves as the watershed between the Omo and Gumi Rivers, stands the pointed peak of Mount Wadibalo, likewise probably exceeding 3,000 meters above sea level. The mountain ridge gradually and significantly gets lower to the south.

Only at five o'clock in the afternoon did we arrive at our bivouac, which was laid out on the banks of the Wosha River in the region of Deche. A crowd of Kaffa were waiting for me, with the leader of the region at their head. By order of the Ras, they brought provisions (durgo) for my detachment. I took a ram from the rasha and gave him five efimks. I refused the rest and returned the durgo brought by his half-starved Kaffa. In addition, I gave them several efimks to buy seed. The Kaffa were very touched by this and beat themselves in the chest and kissed the ground as a sign of gratitude.

### **January 25.**

We set out after noon. Completely naked hungry Kaffa children wandered around our

bivouac, picking up any garbage. It made you feel sorry to look at them. They had lost the appearance of humans and were terribly thin; they were skeletons covered with skin. On their thin legs, which were almost devoid of meat. The joints at the knees were sharply delineated. The cheeks and eyes were sunken, and the stomachs were distended.

The morning was cool (10 degrees Reaumur [54 degrees F]). The grass was covered with abundant dew, and the unfortunate children, shivering from the cold, looked for bones in the grass, fought among themselves for the internal organs of a ram, and if they found its foot, then gnawed on its skin and flesh.

I had a confrontation with one of my elfin ashkers, Ambyrbyr, a young hot-tempered Tigrean. He got into an argument with Haile; and despite the fact that Haile invoked Bulatovich by his God — "Ba Bulata Amlak" — to leave him alone, Ambyrbyr started a fight with Haile. This took place right in front of my eyes, and consequently it was an encroachment on the authority of my name. In view of this, I had to intervene personally. In spite of my command, Ambyrbyr did not stop. I struck him, but he got even more enraged from this and was ready to throw himself on me. I had to act decisively. I pushed him in the chest, and he fell down unconscious. After several minutes, he came to. With this, the incident ended. On the day after this unruly conduct, I dismissed Ambyrbyr from the elfin ashkers and replaced him with Aregau.

We made a short march and stopped in the land of Bunta. Along the road, they showed me the burial vault of the Kaffa kings. The graves were completely level with the earth

and were not marked in any way.

### **January 26.**

We entered the region of Chana. Going along the road which led past Kaffa settlements along the crest of the mountain ridge, and having passed an outpost, we went over the boundaries of Shuro. The boundary is separated from Kaffa by a wide uninhabited strip, which on the west is adjacent to land that was reserved for elephant hunts of the Kaffa kings. Along the road we now and then came upon signs of elephants. The Shuro, knowing that a campaign was being launched against their side, guarded their borders with reinforcements and watched this road. In the dense grass and on the edges of the forest, here and there, their black figures appeared in passing.

Having proceeded through this area, we passed an outpost and again entered the rather well inhabited region of Chana. We set up our bivouac beside that of the detachment of the newly named head of the border Kaffa regions — Ato Kassem. He soon came to greet me and brought as a gift several pitchers of mead. Ato Kassem, a 60-year-old man, frail and smooth-tongued, was formerly a judge in Kulo. He had received these regions which were under his leadership as a pension for long service.

The house of a well-known priest (bale) of Chana was located not far from our bivouac. I ordered someone to send for him. The bale soon came and sat at the entrance of my tent, deciding not to go in so as not to defile himself by being present in a dwelling of a man who uses the meat of unclean animals as food, which is what he took Europeans for. The

bale was a young, handsome Kaffa, who by appearance did not differ at all from his other fellow-tribesmen. He is from the Gossa clan, and all his ancestors as far back as he remembered were also priests. I asked him about many matters, but got very little information from him.

### **January 27.**

We went down from the mountain ridge to the Uka River (from a height of 2,400 meters to 1,700 meters above sea level) by way of a road that is skillfully built along the crest of a spur. The road went through dense forest in which the trees attained dimensions the like of which I had never seen before. Even the kolkuala cactus contended with the most colossal trees in height. In the forest, we came across many monkeys, but almost no birds. We crossed the Uka River by an extremely well constructed bridge. The Uka constitutes the southern boundary of Kaffa itself, and beyond it begin the lands of tribes that are subject to Kaffa.

We stopped with a bivouac near the river and on the following day again climbed the mountain ridge. I went up to a summit located near Mount Boka or Bokan, from which, at a height of 2,714 meters, a distant horizon opened to the south and southeast. From here it could be distinctly seen how the crest of the main mountain range stretches to the east and then turns south. Far in the haze are seen its southern summits, which I later became familiar with and got to know by name — Kastit, Say, Uyta, Shashi, and others. Still farther to the east rises the pointed pyramidal summit of Mount Dime, which Donaldson Smith gave the name "M. I. Smith." To the north of it appeared another, even

larger mountain, having the shape of an obliquely truncated sugar loaf. We called this mountain Ya-Menelik-Saganeyt. (69) These two mountains were located on the other side of the River Omo. The evident direction of the crest of the main mountain range gave rise to my first suspicion of the possibility that the river might skirt it from the south and turn west. (The further journey finally confirmed that this newly discovered mountain range deflects the Omo to the south, forcing it to flow into Lake Rudolf and that it constitutes the watershed of the Nile and Omo Rivers). The crest of the mountain range is covered in several parts by forest, and its gently sloping western inclines and the valleys of many westward flowing tributaries of the Menu River (70) were densely populated. Here dwelt the Gimiro tribe, which is divided into small principalities dependent on Kaffa: Kaba, Shevo, Isheno, Yayno, Duka, Benesho, Shyaro, and Shyako.

This people differs in type from the Kaffa. The skin of the Gimiro is darker, and the facial features are more coarse. The language is completely different from the Kaffa and very difficult to pronounce. It abounds in whistling and dental consonants. Its syllables are pronounced as if swallowed. It also differs from the language of the Sidamo tribes: Kula, Konta, and others. But the mode of speech of these languages is similar, and you encounter common roots in them. The Gimiro believe in God, calling him by a name taken from the Kaffa — Iero or Ierochi. However, there exists another deity — Kiy — to whom they offer sacrifices. The Gimiro do not recognize the rite of circumcision. The culture of this people is the same as that of the Kaffa in both weaponry and clothing. In character, they are peaceful and hardworking rather than warlike. Their houses are built skillfully and simply. Their household utensils include washtubs — the first that I had

encountered in Abyssinia. These tubs are made from trunks of kolkuala cactus. The Gimiro dig their fields deeply with pickaxes and sow them with bread grain of all kinds, depending on the altitude of the location. Cattle breeding flourishes. Their cattle are very good. There are no horses. They hold bees in large quantities. The rich vegetation and moist climate favor beekeeping.

On the summit of Bokana, I conducted the noon solar observation and took azimuths on the surrounding mountains. A crowd of natives who gathered around me examined me and my instrument with curiosity. I asked them about the names of the surrounding mountains, but they only knew the nearest area and couldn't tell me anything about the mountains visible in the south, except that Shuro, i.e. blacks, live there. When I asked them for water, they brought it in an enormous bamboo stalk.

Having gone down into the valley of the Wayna River, which lies at an altitude of 2,000 meters above sea level, we entered the densely inhabited region of Shevo. The Wayna River flows in marshy banks. We crossed it by a well-made bridge, covered with palm branches. Along the other side of the river, the inhabitants had cleared the road for the passage of the Ras. Catching sight of us, some hid in a thicket. The rest, bowing low, greeted me with the words "Saro, saro!"(71)

We stopped on the bank of one of the tributaries of the Wayna River, on the site of the future bivouac of the Ras. An entire palace had been built for him on the bank of the stream. It consisted of several houses built in the form of enormous cabins, surrounded by

an intricate fence. In the palace, active preparations are being made for the reception of the Ras. The Gimiro are bringing meal wrapped up in banana leaves and honey; and soldiers of Ato Kassema are making tej from it. Some of them chop gesho leaves into fine pieces (a stupefying remedy added to tej). Others add honey to water in huge pitchers and tubs, separating wax from it.

Ato Kassem and Prince Shevo came to my bivouac and brought me a ram and honey and meal. The honey was remarkably fragrant and completely white, but to eat it in the afternoon seemed impossible. As soon as they brought the honey into the tent, the tent filled with bees, which clung to the plate and spoon and flew at my mouth. The bees here are very good compared to ours. You can brush them away from you. Nevertheless one of them was sitting under my spoon at the very moment when I put it in my mouth. It stung my tongue. That made me put off eating dessert until evening. My tongue swelled up, and for two days I could talk only with difficulty.

### **January 29 and 30**

We stayed in this place for two days. I made solar observations, determined the latitude, checked the chronometer, determined the declination of the magnetic meridian, and entered on the map the recent stages of my journey. This rest period was opportune for me, since the rheumatism in my legs had not yet gone away, and after two climbs on Mounts Bonga-Beke and Boka, the pain had increased significantly, furthered by the damp and cold weather in the mornings. On January 29, I rode out to photograph two hanged men I had seen the day before. The bodies had been hanging for more than a year

on an enormous sycamore and had completely dried out.

In our bivouac great excitement reigned. In the afternoon, the ashkers practiced throwing javelins at a target. As a sign of victory, he who hit the mark the greatest number of times walked to the target on the backs of his player-comrades who were lying face-downwards on the ground. In the evening, songs and dances were organized, during which the Kaffa showed us their war dance — a beautiful dance reminiscent of the lezginka [a Caucasian dance]. They dance in twos, armed with spears and shields. One of the dancers, attacks while wildly calling out in time to the song. Having aimed his spear at the chest of his opponent, he advances at him and shakes the spear the whole time. The opponent backs up and parries the blows with his shield, and then, in turn advances. The motions of the dancers were smooth and graceful. They describe circles, as in the lezginka. When the dance was in full swing, they accomplished amazing steps, jumping high, throwing themselves against one another, sometimes squatting as in the Russian prisadka.

### **January 30.**

An incident occurred which showed how far the spirit of comradeship had grown among my ashkers. One of them, Damye, suffered from syphilis, and his legs were covered with sores. He hid his illness from me from fear that I would exclude him from the campaign; and, suffering silently, he was doing the same 11-hour marches on foot as the others. He did no less than his comrades. Here the opportunity presented itself to buy a horse from one of the soldiers of Ato Kassem. Since Damye did not have the money, his comrades formed a pool and collected the 30 efimks necessary for this.

**January 31.**

We entered the land of Isheno, which on the east and south borders on domains of Shuro Negroes who still do not recognize the authority of Abyssinia. The western boundary of this region is ten versts [seven miles] in all, and the eastern is twenty versts [thirteen miles]. This place is just as rich in vegetation and abounds in water as much as the land we had just passed through. The road stretches along the western slopes of the mountain range, crossing many streams with excellent bridges built across them.

We laid out our bivouac beside the house which had been built for the Ras; and soon after our arrival, Prince Isheno appeared. A typical Gimiro of enormous stature, he brought me meal, honey, and a ram as gifts.

**February 1.**

My party spent the following day resting, and I climbed the mountain ridge which constitutes the western border of Isheno. A whole detachment of Gimiro accompanied me — a hundred men under the command of the prince. Of my servants, I brought only the gun bearers, to the great chagrin of the other ashkers who probably thought we were undertaking a raid on neighbors.

From the altitude of the crest, there appeared the low-lying valley of the Uka River, which flows to the east, and which joins in the distance with another river (according to the natives, the Gumi).

Many settlements were scattered along the slopes of the crest. My fellow travelers were seized by a passionate desire to go down to enemy land and finally give vent to their warlike aspirations. With difficulty, I succeeded in holding them back. Having looked around the place, I returned.

On our return to camp, we went past a market at which a mass of people were crowded — men and women — who, at our appearance, ran away. Prince Isheno with difficulty succeeded in stopping and calming his subjects, and they continued their interrupted commerce. Here bread, beer, hens, rams, and various kinds of cloth were sold. The merchants and buyers seem to be mainly women. For the men, the market serves as a club. They throng here with long pipes in their teeth, chatting and exchanging news. I bought a large wooden pipe from a Kaffa nobleman and ordered him to come to my bivouac for the money. At the designated time, he appeared. I invited him into my tent, served him honey, and conversed with him. My interlocutor seemed to be pagan. Formerly, he was very rich, and owned many cattle. He had two wives, seven slaves, and three children. But they all died during the war. He spoke of this with genuine sadness. "I asked God for death," he said, "but he didn't give me it."

"Who is God?" I asked him.

"Iero!" he answered me. (He knew about the other Kaffa deity — Deontos — but could not explain to me what the difference was between them. He also knew about the devil —

Saytana.)

I asked him if he had heard about Christ. He answered no.

"And about the Mother of God?"

"I have heard about Mary."

"What do you think will become of you after your death?"

This question evidently touched one of the most sensitive and lively places of his soul, and he decided to share with me what had for a long time burdened him.

"It is the absolute truth," he began enthusiastically. "What I say is the absolute truth! We have heard that good people will be in a state of bliss after death, and the evil will be racked with pain. We have heard that to get the first, we should fast. Meat is tasty. Butter is tasty. But we do not eat them. There are many beautiful women. We are attracted to them. But we restrain ourselves. I know of this by hearsay, and for a long time this has hurt my soul (literally, "my stomach hurts"). What all of this means and how it happens, I do not know."

I briefly told him the foundations of Christian teaching. He listened with great attention, striking himself on his chest with his fist from time to time. In conclusion, he asked,

"What must I do?"

"Be baptized!"

"And who will teach me fasts and rites? And can I be baptized when my ancestors were not baptized? Will I do well?"

I again advised him to be baptized, after which he thanked me; and, apparently sincerely agitated by our conversation, he went away...

In the evening, a courier arrived at a gallop with a letter from the Ras. He informed me that he would arrive in Shevo on the following day and asked about my health and about how successful my work was. "Did you see many lands?" he asked in the letter. I answered him that, thanks to God, I was healthy, that I had seen many lands, and that on the following day I would come to visit him in Shevo.

## **February 2.**

In the morning, I took a short stroll in the land of Yayno, to the southern Gimiro border. After dinner I set out to the Ras on horseback, accompanied by two ashkers, who were also on horseback. His camp was spread out wide. For several versts from the headquarters of the Ras, the road was studded with tents on both sides. Soldiers, soldiers' wives, children, mules — all were mixed together here in disorder. Where the terrain allowed, I rode at wide gallop. At the sight of me, some of the Abyssinians we met

respectfully made way for us. Others looked around contemptuously, crying "Ali." That's what the Abyssinians called Italians and, together with them, all white men. This name is insulting in the highest degree, and Menelik forbade calling Europeans that, under threat of punishment with the jiraf. But this time I did not pay attention to the offensive calls, not wanting to begin with reprisals my acquaintance with future comrades on the campaign. However, I also heard approving exclamations relating to my horse and my riding, as for example "Ay faras! Ay faras! Frenj faraseny!" ("There's a horse! There's a horse! The foreigner is a cavalryman!").

I found the Ras in the little courtyard of his headquarters, surrounded by officers. He sat cross-legged, on a carpet in the shade of a branchy tree and light-heartedly cleaned his teeth (72) with a little stick. The old warrior, hardened in battle, apparently felt fortunate to find himself once again at the head of his army, in a campaign, under the open sky, on the border of enemy land, on the eve of crossing into it. To this feeling of pleasure must have been mixed some nervous alarm before a new fight, such as a fast horse feels at the start of spring after having passed a peaceful winter.

The Ras and I met heartily, and I stayed with him until sunset. In the evening, I returned to my bivouac.

### **February 3.**

From eight o'clock in the morning, the continuous file of the Ras's soldiers began to arrive. About ten o'clock, the clear sound of flutes was heard from afar, signaling its

approach. In front, drummers in little red fezzes rode, sitting on the sacrum of mules, loaded in the front with the drums. Swinging their sticks high, they beat the drums in a beautiful joyous rhythm. Behind the drums, two mules carried the enormous tent of the Ras; and bearers carried the long bamboo posts for it. Then his horses in silver gear and his mules were led. The stable-man of the favorite war horse of the Ras carried two spears — silver and copper. Then a long file of pages and bearers followed with property of the Ras: a well-made wooden armchair in a red calico cover, a medicine chest, two small water-skins, a library, a telescope, etc. The Ras takes these things with him during his journeys and his campaigns. Behind the bearers walked the flutists and, finally, surrounded by all the officers and soldiers of his guard, rode the commander-in-chief. Immediately behind him followed weapons bearers, carrying ten guns of the Ras in red woolen covers and many ammunition belts, thrown around their necks. The mule of the Ras in a heavy silver collar had an Abyssinian saddle, covered with velvet trappings, embroidered with silk.

The Ras wore a thin white shirt and trousers. A black silk burnoose, worn over the thinnest shamma, was thrown over his shoulder. With the free end of the shamma, he covered his face up to the eyes. The Ras's feet were bare, and his head was covered with a wide felt hat. His armaments consisted of a small revolver and a saber mounted in gold (a military distinction, received from Emperor Menelik).

The Ras settled down and waited for dinner in one of the houses, where his camp-bed was set up and carpets were spread out. Deputations greeted the Ras by bowing to the

ground; and, as a sign of joy at beholding their lord with their own eyes, they kissed the ground and beat on their chests with their palms. Prince Isheno brought several marvelous bulls as a gift, one of which the Ras gave to me.

Prince Isheno and his subjects were invited to take part in the campaign. they with joy accepted this offer. A special detachment of them was formed under the command of Gebra, who had until then had served as my interpreter.

It was decided to cross the Shuro border the following day. The Shuro lands were separated from the Gimiro by a dense border forest, through which only difficult foot paths led. The Ras issued orders to quickly dispatch workers to clear a road ahead and designated a detachment of a hundred soldiers to guard them.

I wanted to set out with the advanced party, and after a big dinner with the Ras to which all the officers, the most senior soldiers, and his whole guard were invited, I crossed the border.

At five o'clock in the evening, we reached the edge of the frontier forest and set up our bivouac in a small clearing. I rode ahead to acquaint myself with the neighborhood.

Going several versts along a scarcely discernible trail in a very dense forest, we ran up against Shuro scouts, who hid themselves as we approached. Finally, we climbed to the crest of the mountain spur, which went down by a precipice to an unknown river. As far as the eye could see, the valley and hills were densely settled. Smoke arose from the

houses. Evidently, food was being prepared there. Cattle were returning from pasture, and the sight of marvelous white cows aroused the appetite of my travelling companions, who kept exclaiming, "Look how many cows! So white! And Cows! Those are such cows! ..."

The field around was cultivated. The quiet hardworking life of a peaceful people was evident in all, and it was sad to think that tomorrow all this would be destroyed ...

The picture will change: the inhabitants will flee, driving their livestock and carrying their goods and children. They will, most probably be killed, wounded, or captured. Their houses will go up in a blaze, and all that will remain of them will be the hearths. Didn't the Shuro foresee this? Ras Wolda Giyorgis more than once passed on to them through their Gimiro neighbors the advice to voluntarily submit. They know that the Abyssinians are close: scouts watch over all trails leading into their country. Disaster draws near. Evidently, sorrow is close by and unavoidable. But despite this, on the eve of disaster, they prepare their food without a care.

It had already gotten dark when I returned to our bivouac. Along the road, we came upon my ashkers who had set out for food. On their own initiative they took all military precautions, and the two who were carrying water were convoyed by two others armed with rifles. (72)

In the evening, we slaughtered the bull which had been given to me by the Ras, and I treated the advanced detachment to dinner. I invited fourteen officers into my tent, and we ate raw meat, dipping it in red pepper. My guests appeared with their own knives or

daggers. (Some had little knives inserted in the scabbards of sabers.)

During dinner, we established the procedures for the night watch, in view of the probability of an attack by the Shuro. Campfires were set at the four corners of the bivouac, and eight guards lay down in front of each of them. They were strictly instructed to shoot only in extremity and never inside the bivouac. In case of alarm, they were ordered to muster at my large tent. Our precautions, however, were not justified. The night passed peacefully ...

## **VI. From the Borders of Abyssinia to Lake Rudolf**

**February 4.**

In the morning, there was a light drizzle. The Gimiro cleared a path with axes, cutting down trees that stood on both sides. And Abyssinians stationed in front of the workers chopped the densely interwoven lianas with sabers. The work proceeded so slowly that I decided to go ahead with several of my gun bearers and, after getting to an open space, to conduct observations.

We advanced with difficulty along a narrow trail in the dense forest, time and again moving past huge trees which had been deliberately felled by the Negroes. For nearly half an hour, we went quietly, not disturbed by anyone, when suddenly, on crossing one of the abattises, right beside us, the loud warning sounds of a horn resounded, which forced us to stop and grab hold of our guns. Our bolts clicked. Holding our breath, we waited for the attack. Straining our sight, we peered into space to see the enemy in a thicket of the forest. In response to the first horn, others sounded in the distance. Finally, all fell silent, and all we could hear was the sounds of people almost beside us, who had penetrated into the bushes. We cautiously moved farther ahead, and in an hour and a half got to the forest's edge. The whole time, we were followed by Negroes; but they did not attack us. The valley of the Oyma River, which I had seen yesterday, now unfolded before us. Its populace was at this minute in full flight. Women came out of the houses loaded with every kind of goods and supplies, and hurriedly left, driving their cattle with them. Some of the men followed their wives. Positioning themselves along the crests of

mountain spurs, others watched us. It was evident that the exhortations of the Ras to submit voluntarily had had almost no success.

By 11 o'clock, the road was cleared, and the Ras's army poured into the valley, where they scattered in various directions, rushing to replenish their supplies. Any prohibition would be unthinkable and fruitless, since the whole provisioning system of the campaign depended on such commandeering. The ground was covered with Abyssinians jumping in all directions; and in the farmsteads the real work was in full swing: from little granaries raised on piles over the ground, the soldiers threw off sheafs of shef and mashella, and here in the courtyard they threshed them with sticks on spread out shammas. Several lucky ones found meal in houses, and rejoicing in this find, triumphantly carried it to the bivouac. Soon all trails that led to our stopping place were covered with soldiers who were heavily loaded down: one carried grain, another hay for mules, another a hen, another drove a ram. The soldiers were contented and threw jokes at one another.

The bivouac of the Ras was located along the crest of a mountain spur which towers above the Oyma River. My tent was in front of the headquarters of the Ras. On returning, I went to visit him and to congratulate him on the border crossing. He was surrounded by senior officers and was composing the order of the day — ayaj.

The order began with the usual formula and said the following: "Do not separate from your unit without permission of the commander. Do not go far to commandeer goods. Do not kill if you are not attacked. Try to take prisoners in order to obtain guides. If you

come upon a mule that is lost, do not unsaddle it, but rather present it to me, along with all the property that is found on it. I will cut off the hand of anyone who is guilty of stealing lost, loaded mules. Quickly bring prisoners and cattle to me."

With 40 strokes on the nagarit (kettledrums), the detachment was notified of the upcoming announcement of the order of the day, after which the order was read before the assembled officers and senior soldiers. The prisoners and cattle that were taken that day were presented to the Ras.

There were three prisoners in all: an old woman and two young women, one of whom was pregnant. All of them were extremely ugly. Their facial features were typically Negro. In punctures made in their thick lips, they had inserted small wooden sticks. Their teeth stuck out in front. And their lower incisors were knocked out. The slit of their eyes is narrow. The whites of their eyes are reddish. The hair, cut short around the crown of the head, was let grow above and was curled in hanging locks, abundantly smeared with a mixture of clay and oil. On arms and legs, they sported iron bracelets; and in the ears, they wore small wooden ear-rings. They were dressed in two large ox-hides, of which one was wrapped around the waist, and other was fastened by the lower end to the first, and by the upper ends was tied across the shoulder. On the back, in an upper skin in the form of a sack, they put infants, for whom the bosom in front serves as the storehouse of all good things. We only found on the captive women the following items: provisions, various household utensils, iron arm and leg bracelets, and iron ornaments twisted in a spiral shape which they wear on a string tied around the hips. This waist decoration

probably serves for them as a kind of "décolleté manches courtes" and is worn during dances and feasts.

The women were interrogated in the presence of the Ras, but we learned very little. They replied stupidly and disconnectedly, dragging out their words and speaking repulsively through their noses. The Ras ordered that the prisoners be fed. One of them he kept as a guide, and the others he let go, having ordered that they be turned over to their fellow tribesmen in order that they would express support for submitting to him. In case of submission, he promised full inviolability of property and freedom. The prisoners thanked the Ras, kissing the ground and striking themselves in the chest with their hands, and left, swearing to carry out his will. They were led outside the limits of the camp with the cattle which had been taken that day, and they left in all directions.

After the prisoners left, I stayed alone with the Ras. Realizing the gravity of his position, the Ras did not consider it necessary to hide it from me. Now he had crossed the border and he had under his leadership a 30,000 man army, completely cut off from its base. And besides, his army possessed only the most scanty means and had to count exclusively on provisions from an unknown region. We definitely could not guess in advance what awaited us ahead: our future was as unknown as the goal of our operation — Lake Rudolf — which we wanted to reach.

"From worry, I do not sleep, eat, nor drink. Reading the Psalter serves as my only comfort," the Ras told me. Suddenly, after a short pause, he forcefully announced, "But

however difficult it may be, I will fulfill my duty or die!" And he asked me to help him choose the route of the detachment.

I agreed, with pleasure, and on the following day set out with the regiment of Fituarari Atysye and with Ato Bayu for the first reconnaissance mission. Atysye commanded a regiment of waruari and was the chief fitaurari of the Ras. His place both on the march and in the bivouac was always in front of the whole detachment. Atysye is a descendant of simple peasants, and advanced through the ranks thanks to his personal military service. He took part in almost all the wars and was wounded several times. I can see him now riding a small white mule, with a long javelin in his hands and with a soiled felt hat on his head; always cheerful, cracking jokes and filling our whole column with ringing laughter, with which his fat figure shook.

In complete contrast to him, Ato Bayu is a typical contemporary Abyssinian courtier — young, handsome, restrained; subtle in speech, and elegant in manner. In his childhood, he served as an elfin ashker (page) of Ras Dargi and, at court, learned various crafts from Europeans. Once he made a gun with his own hands and presented it to Menelik. Struck by the talent of the boy, the emperor took him to himself; and from that time, Ato Bayu became a favorite of Menelik, accompanied him on all campaigns, brilliantly carried out secret missions which were assigned to him, and finally received authority over the Wollaga territory, a land rich in gold, which is located on the western boundaries of Abyssinian domains and borders on Emir Abdurakhman's Beni-Shangul. Having established relations with Abdurakhman, he convinced him to send an embassy to

Menelik, with gifts as a sign of recognition of his suzerainty over them. But the timing for the embassy was unfortunate since Menelik was then preparing for war with Italy, and the question of Beni-Shangul was set aside. (74) The appointment of Bayu to a country rich in gold and ivory aroused envy toward him. Many began to say that Bayu gave himself airs, that he was friends with Europeans, that he enriched himself at the expense of the Emperor, etc. The slander produced its effect, and the Emperor deprived Bayu of that region, under the pretext that he gave refuge in his house to a relative who had fled from imprisonment. Too confident of his influence on Menelik, Bayu was impertinent and unrestrained when the Negus announced this decision to him, and for this he was subjected to definitive disgrace. He spent a year in shackles, confined in Ankober, but then was freed and sent in exile to Ras Wolde Giyorgis. He has now been with the Ras four years. And in this time, he has succeeded in getting close to him and becoming his closest advisor in all matters.

## **February 5.**

I was still lying in bed when Ato Bayu came into my tent and told me that it was time to get started. I quickly dressed; and having called my gun bearers, I rushed to the mustering point. Day was just breaking. It was fresh and damp (+6 degrees Réaumur) [45 degrees F]. The detachment was still sleeping, and soldiers, having wrapped their heads in their shammās, lay like mummies on the dew-covered grass. Someone who was cold was busying himself at the night's campfire, which had died out. He was trying to reignite the fire. Among the general silence, the distant doleful song of a sentry chasing away sleep and the loud repulsive roar of a donkey resounded. We passed the headquarters of the Ras

which was surrounded by a ring of tents of his guard, then passed the bivouacs of the vanguard regiments, and finally went beyond the limits of the camp. The regiment of Fitaurari Atyrsye was already at the mustering point. The soldiers crowded in a little clearing, impatiently awaiting their departure. In a motionless authoritative pose, leaning on a long walking stick, the Fituarari stood in front of his soldiers and, having turned his face to them, he held back his troops who were striving to surge forward.

No sooner did we succeed in starting out than they were each seized by a desire to be in front of the others in the first battle of their unit. All of them dashed forward irrepressibly. This was spontaneous, mass motion; and orders to stop would have been useless. The Fitaurari and his officers galloped to a narrow passageway in the dense forest, and standing here across the passageway, stopped the unit. The noise and uproar at this minute were inconceivable. The Fitaurari and officers restrained their soldiers and blows of the officers' sticks rained down on the shields of the foremost soldiers.

Senior soldiers helped the officers in this matter and with the butts of their guns held back their comrades who were straining forward. When order was reestablished, we went farther. In front were ten men, who constituted our vanguard. Behind them, under guard of several soldiers, the guide who had been captured the day before walked submissively. Behind her followed: me, the Fitaurari and Ato Bayu and, finally, the regiment. They put a rope around the neck of the guide. It was held by the translator, Gebra Maryam, a huge, typical Negro. As an eleven-year-old boy, he had been captured by the Abyssinians, brought up and educated by them. He completely assimilated the Abyssinian customs and

now feels deep contempt for his former fellow-countrymen, considering them animals and savages. Therefore, very often when I wanted to ask prisoners about their way of life, Gebra Maryam made the most disdainful grimace and told me:

"Geta! (Lord!) Why do you ask them about this? As if they were people. They are animals!"

Gebra Maryam was the only interpreter of the Shuro language in the detachment. Therefore, he had to accompany me on all my reconnaissance missions, which he really didn't like. He wept bitterly, feigning that he was lame, and kept asking for a mule for himself.

We went toward Mount Kayfesh, which was seen not far away, in order to look over the territory from its height and plan the path of our reconnaissance. At 7 o'clock in the morning, we reached the summit of the mountain. The terrain which opened in front of us was a system of mountain spurs, descending to the west of the main mountain ridge. In the southwest was seen the valley of the Sebelimu River, which probably flows into the Menu River. According to the native, the large Shorma or Shorum River (probably the River Omo) lay to the east of the mountain ridge.

The mountain and the closest crest located to the north of us were covered with dense forest which constituted the border between the Shuro and the Gimiro. In the farthest parts of the border forest, the trees had been felled and the bushes burned<sup>(75)</sup>, apparently

for sowing or for settlement. To the south of Mount Kayfesh, the land is densely populated. I took azimuths on the mountains that were visible and wrote down the names of the closest of them, which the guide named for me, and selected for myself the path from there for the reconnaissance. We went down from the summit and, going to the southwest, went into densely settled territory. Near the border, the farmsteads of the natives were close together and surrounded by high wattle fencing for defense against incidental attacks by their Gimiro neighbors. Farther to the south, there were no such fences. The houses here are low, covered with thatch, and look more like temporary shelters than permanent dwellings. Beside the houses are overhangs into which they drive their cattle at night and small granaries raised above the ground for protection from termites. The fields are cultivated, but not so thoroughly as among the Gimiro, and they are sown with mashella, maize, tef and dagussa. In elevated places, kogo [banana-like trees] and barley are found. Near the houses tower enormous sycamores, covered with beehives. The inhabitants had abandoned their dwellings. The women and children went to the south, and the warriors, having spread out along the crests of the surrounding mountains, vigilantly watched us, sometimes attacking Abyssinians who had separated from the detachment and parties of soldiers who were returning with booty. The Shuro retreated before us, and alarm sounds from their horns informed the populace of our approach. At 9 o'clock in the morning, they unexpectedly attacked us. We had just begun to enter the dense forest at the bottom of a narrow ravine, when suddenly war cries of the natives resounded and shots from our vanguard detachment answered them. The troops who were closest to them quickly ran to their aid, and Fitaurari Atysye, having assembled several dozen soldiers, sent them off to attack in the forest. Then having

selected a glade on a hill from which the place of battle was visible like the palm of your hand, he stopped there and the regiment which had been stretched out along the narrow trail began to assemble at that place. To support those who were attacking, the Fitaurari gradually sent new units. About 10-15 minutes after the first shots, the Shuro were already retreating, energetically pursued by Abyssinians.

The road in front of us was now free, and there was no need for further bloodshed. But to stop the pursuit now was not so easy. The Fitaurari and all of us shouted to the pursuers who had gotten carried away with enthusiasm, telling them not to kill the natives and to try to take them prisoner and return to the detachment. But it was very difficult to take alive a naked Shuro who was remarkably adept at going through thickets. And the feeling of competition, which seized the pursuers, was great — to kill or to take an enemy prisoner in the first battle — especially since very often several Abyssinians were chasing after one Shuro. None of them wanted to give up the "prize" to a rival, and they raced one another to shoot the man who was fleeing.

To hide from Abyssinian bullets, the Shuro climbed high trees; but the bullets found them there, and the Negroes, like shot birds, dropped from there to the ground; and the victors, with penetrating joyous cries, proclaimed their victory to their comrades. One old Shuro man also climbed a tree, but having seen that they noticed him, he quickly came down to the ground and started to run. Several Abyssinians rushed after him in pursuit, but the old man, with remarkable adroitness, managed to go through the dense thorny bushes, jumping over the trunks of fallen trees ... We shouted to the soldiers not to kill him, but to

take him prisoner; however, the question of who exactly would kill or capture the old man was so important for the Abyssinians that they, paying no attention to our shouts, shot at him and, fortunately for him, missed. Finally, the old man got tangled in lianas and fell, and Abyssinians piled on top of him. There wasn't anyone left to pursue, since, as is usually said in Abyssinian reports "who was killed, was killed, and who ran, ran." One after the other, the victors began to return to us. In heroic recitatives (fokyrate), they recounted their victory to their leader and, expressing their devotion to him, bowed to the ground, at which the Fitaurari replied indifferently, with the usual congratulatory phrase: "Ekuan kanykh," "Finally, you have had a stroke of good luck ..." The captured old man shook from his recent agitation and looked at us vacantly with his narrow reddish eyes. He must have been perplexed that he had not yet been killed. He was completely naked. His body had been heavily scratched by thorns. We calmed the old man and promised him freedom if he would faithfully serve us and tell the truth. And we began to interrogate him. The old man only knew the nearest territory and revealed that there is a big road in the east which leads to the southwest. We gave him something to eat, tied his hands to the hands of the woman guide, buried the dead soldier, and having made slings for the two wounded, set out to find the road. In this action, we had lost one man killed and two wounded.

The old man belonged to that nationality which the Kaffa call "Shuro", i.e. blacks. They themselves do not call themselves that, and I did not succeed in finding a common name for all these tribes.

By type, language, religion and culture, the Shuro differ from the tribes that were known to me up until that time. The facial features, the shape of the skull, the sharp facial angle, (76), curly hair, narrow eyes with a vacant expression and reddish whites of the eyes all testify to their Negro origin. But the color of their skin, although darker than that of the Kaffa and Gimiro, has a chestnut tint which makes one think they are not pure representatives of the Bantu race, but rather have mixed, to some degree, with another non-Negro race.

The Shuro language differs completely from the language of the Sidamo and Gimiro. They speak in an amazingly ugly manner, pronouncing words as if through the nose. They believe in the god Tumu, but do not sacrifice to him. Circumcision is unknown among them. They bury their dead in a sitting position, with knees bent to shoulders, in shallow graves. They buy wives, paying relatives their redemption fee. The wealth of a Shuro is expressed in the number of his wives. The culture of this people — thanks to laziness, which is the main attribute of their character — is on a low level of development. The manufacture of cloth, for instance, is completely unknown to them. Women dress in skins, and men do not cover themselves even with skins, except that some of them wrap the small skin of a young goat around their waists. They are armed with javelins, small round leather shields (some of which are only 5-6 vershoks [9-10 inches] in diameter), and heavy wooden clubs.

The Shuro are divided into many separate tribes, ruled by independent princes, but the beginning of a state system is still in a rudimentary stage among them. Their way of life

is extremely simple. The Shuro engage in cultivation but also keep livestock. They eat primarily a vegetable diet, and also use the meat of domestic animals and birds. But they do not eat the meat of elephants, hippopotamuses, and other wild animals, and in this way differ from other tribes who are related to them by type and language and who are not squeamish about any kind of meat. Therefore, the Shuro call these others by the contemptuous name of "Idenich" — "sons of non-people."

We soon found the road which we were looking for. It was a narrow trail, well placed along mountainous territory, and trampled down by running inhabitants and livestock. At 11:30, we went down into a deep stone ravine and stopped on the banks of the Kilu Rivulet.

The sky was cloudless. It was nearly noon. I sent a file of soldiers to the side where natives had been seen following us on the ridge, in case they might attack unexpectedly. And I began to carry out solar observations. Looking with curiosity at the actions which were unintelligible to them, the remaining Abyssinians clustered around my instrument. Seeing foreign sorcery in this, several old men turned away with disgust and spat. When I finished the observations, we went back; and at four o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the bivouac. The Ras was very satisfied with the results of this first reconnaissance. The prisoner was presented to him. The Ras ordered him to wear a shamma, to wrap his head in a red band and to be fed. The old man was delighted with his fate. He closely scrutinized his clothes and all the time kept repeating: "Byshi! Byshi!" ("Good! Good!") The anxiety he had recently experienced was expressed in him only by his unquenchable

thirst. On the road, he drank at each stream and now didn't stop asking for water. The old man stayed with the detachment as a guide. The Ras let the captive woman go free, having given her a shamma and having repeated to her that she should pass on to her people the invitation to voluntarily submit.

I went to bed quite sick. Bees had stung me badly during the reconnaissance. Going down from a steep mountain by a narrow rocky trail, I suddenly noticed that the people who were walking ahead for some reason fell to the ground and covered their heads with their shammas. Not understanding what was going on, I continued to ride farther; but I no sooner went a few steps, when bees swarmed around me and my mule; and the mule, like a lunatic, galloped down the trail. I beat the bees off as best I could, but nothing helped. Finally, I pulled my helmet over my ears, put my hands, in my pockets and let the mule go as it pleased. The mule at full gallop carried itself away from the mountain and, at the bottom, literally flew into a crowd of Abyssinians who had gone down there at the appearance of the bees. They covered me and the mule with shammas and killed the insects. By evening I had a high fever, my head ached, and my face was very swollen.

### **February 6.**

At 5 o'clock in the morning, the sharp sound of a signal horn from the Ras's headquarters woke me. Twenty minutes later there followed a second signal, indicating that the Ras was setting out. Along the path that went by my tent, a crowd of people surged. Leaving Zelepukin with the transport, I jumped on my mule and, together with my gun bearers, rushed to join the Ras. Feeling better, I rode beside him. His marvelous mule ambled, and

the cavalry went at a trot, and the infantry ran to try to keep pace behind him.

Along the way stood regiments that had formed up with their officers and with those soldiers who were free from duties, to meet the commander. In answer to the greeting of the Ras: "Endyet walatchukh?" ("How are you?"), pronounced by his agafari, they bowed to the ground and then quickly joined the moving column. Where the terrain allowed them to walk in formation, they formed a reserve column. Otherwise, they stretched out on trails in a long uninterrupted file.

Having sent scouts (salay) ahead, the regiment of Fitaurari Atysye went in the vanguard. Behind the vanguard went the main forces, and behind them followed the transport, under guard of soldiers who did not have units. Finally, at the tail end of the column, went the rearguard — the wobo.<sup>(77)</sup>

We went very quickly along the road we had reconnoitered the day before. By the pace of the march, the vanguard shortened the time required for stretching out the whole column, which was made difficult by the long-accepted Abyssinian custom of the whole army breaking camp at the same time.

With piercing cries of "Hid! Hid!" "Go! Go!" officers who were riding behind urged the foot soldiers ahead, and the seemingly indefatigable soldiers ran easily, without tiring. Their lean, well-proportioned figures were remarkably warlike and beautiful. In this apparently undisciplined army, an astonishing rise of spirit and energy was felt!

Having come alongside one of the hills which rise not far from the road, I separated from the column and climbed it to examine the territory. I spent a short while on the summit, and the vanguard of the column did not go far off. But when I went down from the hill, I found myself amid such a dense mass of people and animals that I couldn't get out of it; and only at the bivouac, did I connect with the Ras again. Like an endless worm, the transport, wriggled quietly, following the detachment. Dust rose high over the column. Soldiers, women, children, horses, donkeys, and mules went alternately in a dense mass, and an unimaginable groan — in which were mixed the roar of animals, loud laughter, cries, and swears — hovered above this crowd ...

Spontaneously, by an irrepressibly powerful flow, this human sea rushed forward, following its leaders. Imagination involuntarily carried me to the distant times of the emigrations of peoples.

How various are faces and types! Here is an old experienced warrior, with a thick black beard, with a large scar on his face from a saber blow in some battle, who drives in front of him a small heavily loaded donkey. And what hasn't he loaded on it! Here is the soldier's felt coat "burnoose" and his little tent, and two skins filled with grain, and a skin with meal and every kind of household article — a wooden bowl in which to knead bread, an iron pan, etc. The little donkey quietly trudges along under its burden, and the owner urges it on from behind and, driving it, calmly repeats: "Hid, vandyme, hid" "Go, brother, go!"

But the donkey is tired of going. It is hot, stifling, dusty. Here it sees on the side of the road a branchy tree and, abruptly turning, runs under its shade and stops — to the complete vexation of its owner, who now rewards his recent "brother" with strokes of the cane, and at the same time runs through the entire lexicon of Abyssinian swear words. Behind the soldier walks his wife — a young, beautiful Abyssinian woman who carries on her back a gourd in which dough for bread is soured. A boy — a relative or the son of the soldier — carries on his shoulders a bunch of stakes for the tent, a gun and a shield.

Beside this group walks an enormous soldier — a Galla with a manly, but savage expression on his face. He has no baggage. He wears all his property on his person. His clothing does not hide his magnificent musculature. He wears only trousers. He rolled his shamma up into a ball and placed it under a skin full of grain, which he carries on his head. From his cartridge belt, one or two cartridges stick out. Behind his belt is a mail dagger. On his shoulders is an old Remington, which the Abyssinians call "Snayder."

Here come the tej-byet, the people who cook honey for the Ras. A whole file of women carries fermenting tej on their backs, in pitchers, wrapped round with red shawls. The women who carry the pitchers merrily flirt with the soldiers, sometimes get into a squabble with one another, crack jokes about friends, and burst out in ringing laughter. The head of the honey-cooks rides behind them, having covered his nose with his shamma, and has an important look about him as if he were the commander-in-chief.

Here too is the wot-byet — the kitchen crew of the Ras. Several mules carry various utensils and the cook tent, which is made of black woolen material. The head of the kitchen and the chief cooks ride on mules, silently, with dignity. The female cooks act like the greatest dandies. They adorn themselves with silver necklaces, rings, and bracelets. Close by them walks a file of women of the injera-byet — the bakery. They carry on their backs dough, fermenting in large gourds. They are just as merry as their friends in the tej-byet. Here is the baggage transport of the Ras — a whole herd of mules loaded with all kinds of provisions, surrounded by teamsters, under the supervision of the head of the transport — chinch-shuma.

Having reached the edge of the heights, the road narrows and goes down along a steep rocky slope, winding along ledges, which only allow passage by one person at a time. A whole sea of people and animals is backed up before the descent. And behind them more and more masses arrive. The growing crowd becomes an impetuous, deep river, which has suddenly been dammed. It seemed that calamity could not be avoided. In other words, it would only take for those behind to press on those in front to clear a place, and those waiting on the edge of the precipice would fall headlong into the abyss. But to my great astonishment, this didn't happen, and the crowd seemed to discipline itself. They made a lot of noise, but order stayed exemplary and each tried to support the other. If someone tried to push ahead, cries and incantations immediately poured on him from all sides: "Ba Wolde Giyorgis Amlak! Ba gora!" (In the name of the God of Wolde Giyorgis! In the name of the ravine!). And the guilty party stopped, because otherwise his comrades would use force against him.

The difficult descent was traversed safely, without any misfortune. I, for example, was not even once pressed. This was the first time I had ever seen such intelligence and judgement in a crowd, which struck me and forced me to more deeply consider the seeming disorder of the Abyssinian army.

We forded the little Kila River, and the sound of a horn informed us that the head of the column was setting up camp. In one of the clearings, the tent of the Ras shown white. The front sector of the bivouac was oriented to the side toward which the entrance was turned. Orienting themselves by that, the commanders of regiments laid out their headquarters. And based on that, the order of their units was established. My tent was laid out in front of the tent of the Ras. To the left of me was Dajazmatch Balay; to the right was Geta-Wali; in front was the head of the guard, Agafari Mentyr; and beside him were the kettledrummers who immediately on their arrival at camp had begun the beat which corresponded to that event. Behind the first large tent of the Ras, which served him as dining hall and reception room, stood a second smaller tent with a double roof, in which was located the bedroom. Behind those were spread out various departments of the on-the-march housekeeping of the Ras: tej-byet , injera-byet, wot-byet, sega-byet, gymja-byet (honey cooking, bread baking, kitchen, butcher, storeroom), his mules and horses at tethering posts, etc. Here was stationed the secretary of the Ras and Ato Bayu. The headquarters of the commander-in-chief was surrounded by tents of his guard. At the entrance of the camp, a unit of soldiers was deployed, searching for forage or provisions, and at the same time finding good places for pasture and watering of animals. The mules,

as soon as they were unsaddled, were let to graze, and commanders designated the units to be on duty, who were stationed at some distance around the camp. When I arrived at the bivouac, the Ras in his tent read the Psalms and prayers which had been determined in the morning by the occasion of a fast day (Wednesday). Around his headquarters sat officers who were waiting for dinner time — "when the shadow of a man is the length of seven steps" — since during a fast one is only permitted to eat after noon. The commander-in-chief asked me through his agafari to set out quickly to scout the road for tomorrow; and before I set out, he invited me to come and drink a glass of vodka. I entered the tent. The Ras, sitting cross-legged on the bed with a book on his knees, read the Psalter aloud quickly. Not interrupting his reading, he acknowledged my arrival with a bow. Gerazmatch Zemadenakh gave me a glass of vodka ("turpentine" is what Zelepukin and I called it); and when I drank, he covered me with a flap of his clothing. Then the Ras and I said good-bye in the same silent manner that he had greeted me, and I set out on reconnaissance.

At 11 o'clock in the morning, we got started and began to go up the crest of the heights. When I stopped here to take the noontime solar observations, beside me a battle started between our soldiers who had gone off to the side and Shuro who suddenly attacked them. The Abyssinians soon fought back the attack, losing one dead and two wounded. A spear pierced the throat of the dead one, and the others were hit in the chest. We left several men to bury him and moved ahead ourselves.

The territory farther along seemed even more thickly settled, but the inhabitants were not

visible. They went away to the depth of the country, driving their cattle; and only warriors followed us from a distance. At 5 o'clock in the evening, we returned to camp.

The Ras met me with questions: "Did you find a road? Did you screw up the sun?" (That's what he called solar observations). And "Do we have many degrees left to go?" To the last question I had to answer that we had as much a journey ahead of us as we had the day before. Actually, we had traversed in today's march no more than 10 versts [six miles] to the south. Indeed, with such a large army, it was impossible to move any faster. A 30,000-man army with 10,000 animals had to move along a narrow trail which only allowed them to go one at a time, which meant the journey had to stretch out for five to seven hours. The most we could go would be 20 versts [12 miles], but in that case the rearguard would arrive in the evening. Evidently, in such circumstances it would take us a long time to get to Lake Rudolf.

The sun set, and the time came for evening prayers. In front of the entrance to the tent, on a spread-out carpet stood the commander-in-chief, who had turned his face to the east. Beside him stood the priests of the detachment. And behind him in a semicircle stood his retinue. One of the boys — a page who was standing in front of those who were praying — took an icon out of a leather case and carefully took off the red silk shawl in which it was wrapped. This was an icon of the Mother of God, made in Moscow. At the sight of it, all bowed down to the ground. A public prayer service began. This service is called "Udasye Maryam," which means "glorification of the Mother of God." The priests read the prescribed prayers to themselves. Most of those present knew them by heart and, in a

whisper, repeated them after the priests. This hour was the time when the next night's watch came on duty at the headquarters of the Ras. They arrived in the middle of the prayer with their full complement and armed for battle. Having bowed to the ground before the Ras, the watch stood opposite him in a front. The stern faces of the soldiers, the inspired look of the Ras, the quiet rustle of the wind in the thick leaves of an enormous sycamore, were mixed together with the whisper of his prayer ... At the end of the prayer service, one of the debtors several times went round those who were praying, giving each group the name of a saint to whom it should pray. Then a priest read the recessional "Our Father," and the prayer service ended. This prayer produced a magical impression. With the detachment in the midst of unknown lands, we were like on a ship, lost in a boundless ocean. Who among us will be left here? And who will return? ...

The Ras went into his tent and, after several minutes, sent his agafari to ask for me. Abyssinian etiquette requires that the host go into his house before the guest.

The prisoners taken that day were interrogated and then set free. Our guide recognized one of the prisoners as his grandson. Their meeting was remarkably moving. When the Ras gave him the boy, the old man tenderly hugged his child, cried from joy, and beat himself on the chest. They were both fed and taken away to camp.

One after the other, military leaders of the Ras entered the tent to take their leave and say good-bye to the commander-in-chief. The agafari gave them their orders and duties for the following day. Finally, the tent became empty, and we were served dinner. The

official day of the Ras ended. Evening was dedicated to conversation with his friends and for rest. For dinner, the usual guests of the Ras gathered: Dajazmatch Balay, Geta-Wali, and the detachment's monastic priest, the confessor of the Ras, Aba Wolde Madkhyn. We were given a handwashing. The female cooks brought several baskets with injera and little pots with food that had been prepared for us. Aba Wolde Madkhyn read a prayer, and we began our modest meal.

I remember these minutes with pleasure. I vividly recall now the tent of the Ras — long, round, covered over inside with green cloth, supported by one internal post. On one of the sides stands the camp bed, and over it stands a small canopy made of white canvas. Here a gnarled pole stuck into the ground serves as a rack for all the guns and ammunition belts of the Ras. On one of its twigs hangs a pocket watch. The host sits on the bed, crossing his legs under himself. We arrange ourselves beside him on the carpet. Leaning against the supporting post of the tent stands one of the pages of the Ras. He holds in his hands a long wax candle which throws its dim light on the handsome face of the page, who time and again thoughtfully removes the candle snuff, and on the group of those standing around nearby — elfin ashkers, agafari and others of the Ras's retinue. The light did not penetrate the corners of the tent.

The lively talk did not stop. Everyone, even the youngest, took part in the conversation. The commander-in-chief and his comrades-in-arms seemed to me like a large family, united by strong bonds of comradeship in battle.

I also remember the Ras's entourage. Here is Ilma, a black gun-bearer of enormous size, whom they tormented for his Galla origin. Here is the elegant secretary Ato-Melk, whom they force to tell about his love affairs. Here is little feeble Gerazmatch Zemadyenakh, who is devoted like a dog to the Ras and doesn't take his eyes off his host. No one can serve the Ras as he does. He knows how to lay down a pillow, and how to stretch weary legs ... The Gerazmatch is deaf. They make jokes at his expense, laugh at him, but he doesn't hear it. The brave Kanyazmatch Alemnekh serves as the reference book for all historical stories. He remembers everything; and when the Ras begins to tell some story, he turns constantly to Alemnekh for him to tell the details ... Agafari Mentyr is a very meticulous veteran. He always stands in the same spot at the entrance to the tent and holds in his hands a long staff. Conversation doesn't interest him. He is involved in fulfilling his duties and waits until the Ras finishes eating and the time comes to call the others who have been invited to dinner. Two boy-pages stand hugging one another. They evidently want to go to sleep. One of them, without doubt, is a future hero. I observed today how he at the campfire proved his manhood to his contemporaries by burning his hand with a smoldering rag. On the burnt spots, bright black marks will remain, and the skin will look like the pelt of a leopard ...

And the friends of the Ras were also interesting: Dajazmatch Balay, Geta-Wali, and Aba Wolde Madkhyn.

Dajazmatch Balay was deprived of his estate for a civil war with the neighboring sovereign of Wolo — Ras Wali (cousin of the Empress Taytu) — and was sent to Kaffa to

Ras Wolde Giyorgis. Before this, he spent a year in fetters at the court of Menelik and only on the insistence of Wolde Giyorgis, whose wife is the Emperor's cousin, was Balay's punishment softened. Dajazmatch Balay is well known for his bravery, and Menelik calls him his most courageous Tigrean. Balay is lean, with rare beauty, a typical Abyssinian aristocrat. The color of his skin is remarkably light for an Abyssinian. For this he is indebted to his descent from some Ras Ali, a newcomer from Arabia. The manner of the Dajazmatch is always distinguished by unusual dignity, and in all his conduct you sense a natural gentleman. The Ras is amazingly delicate in his relationship with Balay, who is under his power. The Dajazmatch is by rank lower than the Ras, on whom he is, by his present position, completely dependent. Almost the same age as the Ras, the Dajazmatch is quite ruined. The Ras fed him and his servants, lent him money, clothed him, and showed him, in view of his former glory and the misfortune which had befallen him, honors the likes of which would not be shown to one's equal. The Ras, for example, rose when the Dajazmatch entered and answered the greeting of the Dajazmatch by bowing to the ground.

Geta-Wali is an old friend of Wolde Giyorgis. He is chief of one of the most warlike Mohammedan tribes in Walo, renowned for his desperate audacity and horsemanship. This man is fifty years old, of tall stature, with a thick black beard and whiskers cut short, which gives him a fierce appearance. The Ras got to know him during one of the wars of Menelik against Ras Mikael. They became friends despite the difference of their religions, which in Abyssinia is a big obstacle to intimacy. Now setting out on the campaign, the Ras told his old friend about it; and Geta-Wali left home and family and

rushed to his call-up.

One of the most sympathetic personalities was the priest of our detachment — Aba Wolde Madkhyn. An idealist and dreamer, quiet, gentle, tolerant toward others, but strict with himself, he represented a complete contrast to the lawyers found among the Abyssinian clergy, who with blind devotion to ritual call to mind the ancient scribes and Pharisees. All withered, having turned into a mummy from strictly observing fasts regardless of circumstances; with all his seeming frailty, he displayed remarkable powers of endurance and never showed signs of weariness.

When our dinner neared its end and the treasurer of the Ras, the head of the gymja-byet (storeroom), gave us coffee (78), the retinue of the Ras sat down to dinner. First came the most senior of the retinue: Ato Bayu, Kanyazmatch Alemnekh, Agafari Mentyr, Gerazmatch Zamadyenakh, and others. After them came the rest of the retinue, and, finally, the elfin ashkers (pages).

Not far away, kettledrums were beat, using the customary rhythm for the evening. In the distance there resounded muffled gloomy sounds which the Abyssinians thought should frighten the enemy. The entertainment ended. We finished drinking our decanters of dull unfermented tej, which to us on the march seemed like the height of perfection. Then having heard the after-dinner prayer read by Aba Wolde Madkhin, we said farewell to the Ras and went to our own quarters.

Near the exit from the tent, ashkers who had come for me were waiting. Escorted by them, I returned to my camp. One of the pages, by order of the Ras, lighted my way by torch.

Work was already awaiting me at home. I had to write my observations in my journal, to plot the next day's route on the map, to unload and load again my photographic apparatus. Only at 11 o'clock did I manage to go to bed.

### **February 7.**

At 5:30 in the morning, we got started, stretching out in the usual marching column. Having gone 15 versts [9 miles], we set up camp on a plateau which constitutes the watershed of the Sebelimu and Kilu Rivers, near Shuro settlements. They set up the tent of the Ras in the shade of a huge sycamore. They built a platform on its branches and fit a ladder to it. From there, the Ras examined the countryside with a telescope. As soon as I arrived at the bivouac, I set out, by order of the Ras, on reconnaissance with the regular regiment of Kanyazmatch Alemnekh. Like on the day before, I was accompanied by Ato Bayu, Gebra Maryam, and the old prisoner. This time the prisoner carried his grandson, with whom he didn't want to be parted for anything. The countryside was the same as what we had seen the day before. It was just as densely populated, but we didn't see inhabitants anywhere. We only came across one dead body — a completely naked, huge Shuro, who had died of a gunshot wound while running away. There were copper and iron bracelets on him, and beside him lay a spear and a shield.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, we returned to camp. As usual, some sick and wounded were waiting for me. One who was seriously wounded was brought on a stretcher. He had set out the day before looking for booty, and with several comrades he had gone off to the side from the camp. The Shuro had attacked them from ambush and killed one of them. A spear went through the back of this one and came out the abdomen near the navel. The wounded man, however, did not lose consciousness. He took the spear out himself and continued to defend himself by firing back until help came to him. The wound looked very bad. Intestines hung out from a hole about the size of a fist, by which the spear had exited. The intestines were so squeezed at the edges of the wound that to put them back in place I would have to extend the cut. But this would be completely useless and could only lead to censure of me if the man were to die from my operation. I covered the wound with iodoform and bandaged it. The wounded man suffered badly, but did not moan nor complain. Evidently, he had no doubt of the outcome of his wound and peacefully awaited death. He died the following day.

That day we captured several women. They were just as ugly as those captured earlier. Their lips were also pierced. One of the captives was wife of a local prince, and in her bosom they found some kind of flat cake, similar to a piece of hardened cinder. It turned out that this is salt which the Shuro exchange for cattle with the Dulume tribe which lives near the Shorma or Shorum (Omo) River. Here salt is very valuable, and is owned only by the wealthy, who use it as a great delicacy. The Dulume prepared these flat cakes of salt with cinders of some kind of grass, mixing it with water. (79)

Before sunset, I made solar observations to determine the angle of the hour. The Ras was curious to see how "to screw up the sun," and his escort crowded around my instrument. I showed Wolde Giyorgis the sun, which amazed him by its quick passage across the hairline. And I even gave him a short lecture on astronomy, explaining the set up the instrument, the meaning of the calculations, the annual revolution and daily rotation of the Earth, etc. He listened to me attentively; and most of what I said he retold in his own way to his entourage, who in amazement quickly clicked their tongues, "Ts, ts, ts, ts!" Others spread the word, expressing astonishment with the exclamation "Oyyougud. Ytjyg!" etc., making urgent jerky movements toward the instrument to see how it happened that the heavens shone in a tube. After sunset was over, there was the usual evening prayer, after which I, having eaten at home, occupied myself with developing photographs.

For dinner, the Ras sent me some marvelous white fragrant honeycomb honey. This served as the occasion for Zelepukin to formulate in the following manner thoughts which had probably interested him for some time.

"Here, your Honor, in this country they go too far: they cut honeycombs in February!"

### **February 8.**

It was the last day before Lent (80), which is strictly observed by Abyssinians both at home and on the march. Abyssinian military leaders wait with impatience for the beginning of Lent, since at this time soldiers do not eat raw meat and therefore are more

protected from illness.

On the occasion of the day before Lent, the Ras held a great feast. All officers and the most senior soldiers were invited, as well as Zelepukin and my ashkers. The bakery was busy the whole night. In the morning, several dozen bulls and rams were slaughtered. Both tents of the Ras, joined as one, formed a room where about 200 people could assemble at once.

At 9 o'clock in the morning, one of the elfin ashkers came to call me to the feast which was proceeding in the usual order, not differing from those which the Ras gave his troops at his place in the capital. Among the soldiers, there was a singer who delighted us with his voice during dinner. Only at 3 o'clock in the afternoon did we go back to our quarters.

Returning home, I noticed that someone had been in my tent in my absence, since some of the negatives which had already been developed and some of the ones still in the bath were ruined. I conducted a strict interrogation, and it turned out that the guilty party was Adera, my second cook. He wanted to drink. There wasn't any water in the camp, so he drank the contents of the bath. Adera stubbornly denied that he did it, but Faison saw him drink and confirmed his testimony with an oath on his gun. By the way, the ritual of this oath is interesting: they stuck Faiza's loaded gun in his belly, cocked, and he, pronouncing an oath, licked the barrel of the gun with his tongue. Adera could not say anything against such testimony and was severely punished.

**February 9.**

At 5:30 in the morning, we set out and by 10 o'clock we pitched camp on the banks of the Sebelimu River, having gone down from an elevation of 1,600 meters above sea level to the altitude of 1,000 meters. The descent was steep and rocky. We started to come across granite and gneiss rocks.

The Sebelimu River flows into the Menu River. At this place it is a sizable little river (25 paces in width), with a very swift current. Among the numerous kinds of acacia which overgrew its banks, I for the first time saw a tree which subsequently, further south, I came across more frequently. Similar to the acacia in appearance, it differed from the acacia in its enormous fruit, which from a distance looked like large elephant tusks. Each fruit, by its basic structure, calls to mind the cucumber, and is an average of one to one-and-a-half arshins in length and up to a quarter arshin in cross-section, [arshin = 28"]. Its shell is rather strong, and the core is soft with small white seeds, like a watermelon.

From camp, I set out on reconnaissance with two regiments, those of Gerazmatch Zamadymakh and Kanyazmatch Wolde Tensae. With them, I went across the uninhabited valley of the Sebelimu River and climbed the mountain. The countryside seemed densely populated, but not concentrated around a definite center — rather in small groups.

In one of the ravines, we came across two women. One of them, who was young, rushed to run away with a scream. The other, an old woman, was quite peaceful and not at all confused. She came to us. She was terribly ugly. Her few teeth stuck out, and in place of

knocked-out lower incisors, a black breach was seen. She was called Belemusa. She was a market woman; and, therefore, she knew the surrounding territory extremely well. She agreed to serve us as a guide. We let the young Negro girl go and brought the old woman back to camp with us. It turns out that all trade among these people is conducted by old women who go freely over all the lands of the various tribes. Men are not allowed inside the boundaries of another tribe.

On my return, I had a meeting with the Ras about the rationale behind our daily reconnaissance. To me, these missions didn't seem to be accomplishing their goal, because we were only checking out a very limited region — not more than four to five hours of the route ahead of the bivouac. Besides, this reconnaissance involved a very large and wasteful outlay of troops. In addition, in recent days the regular members of the reconnaissance — I, Ato Bayu, and our ashkers — had been setting out at 5 o'clock in the morning and not returning to camp until 4 to 5 o'clock in the afternoon, going all that time without food. According to the Abyssinian way of thinking, it would be absurd to take food with you on a military enterprise if you would have to bring it back with you to camp at night. (81)

Moreover, the regiments assigned to reconnaissance were worn out pointlessly, forced to do in one day at least a triple march. In other words, they set out together with the troops of the Ras and went with them to the next bivouac, and from there they immediately went further to find a new bivouac site, and then went back again. Longer-range reconnaissance would, in my opinion, be more useful. Then we could report better

regarding territory lying farther ahead and select a more convenient route for the detachment. In that case, people would not have to make a double trip there and back, but rather, having fulfilled their mission, they would stay and wait for the arrival of the main forces or of new orders.

I told the Ras these ideas, and he agreed with me. Having gathered his fitaurari in a military council, he told them the following: "Yskynder Bulatovich finds that our present close-range reconnaissance isn't of much use. He advises that we undertake more distant ones. What do you say to that?"

The majority approved of my proposal, but since separating oneself from the main forces by a significant distance was against the spirit of Abyssinian tactics, it was decided that tomorrow we would only move ahead two days' march and, having reconnoitered the road and chosen a camp site, we would send a message to the Ras and would wait there for his arrival.

### **February 10.**

At dawn we set out on reconnaissance with the regiment of Fitaurari Imam. We left our whole transport with the main forces and only the leaders took with them, by mule, a tent, and some provisions. Zelepukin rode with me. We sat the guide Belemusa on a mule owned by one of the soldiers of Fitaurari Imam. The old woman, who before this had never seen a mule, was afraid to sit on it. Several soldiers picked her up — some by the legs, some by the arms — and, to general laughter, lifted her onto the animal. At this

moment Belemusa was a pretty sight: she was all bent over forward, clutching hold of the front arch of the saddle, her naked legs dangling helplessly. The soldiers laughed and made fun of her, but this didn't offend her. Making a disgusting grimace, she tried to smile.

Along a trail that had been trampled down by fleeing Shuro, we went up a mountain spur which stretched to the south of the main mountain ridge. At about 10 o'clock in the morning, we went up to the summit of Golda (1,800 meters above sea level). From there I took azimuths on surrounding mountains, and Belemusa told me the names of the nearest of them. Mount Golda is covered with grass and bushes. Its slopes are densely populated by Shuro. The Ras set his bivouac on the banks of a stream, at the natural boundary of Gornu. Having gone down from the mountain, we moved farther to the southwest and soon arrived at the steep edge of the spur. Below began the wide valley of an unknown river which Belemusa named inconsistently: either Chomu or another. In the southeast towered a mountain ridge about which she, likewise, did not give me any information, pleading complete ignorance both of its name and of who and how many people lived there.

We went down into a valley from an elevation of 1,600 meters to 1,000 meters above sea level and set camp at the natural boundary of Shabali, at the foot of the mountain spur.

While we were climbing Mount Golda, our soldiers had a skirmish with the natives, killing several of them; and on the way down, we captured a Shuro who had hidden in

bushes near the road. This was an old man of 60 to 70 who was barely moving, and who looked quite unlike a Negro. The color of his skin was lighter. The features of his face were regular. His clothing, in contrast to others, consisted of a long, excellently worked ox hide, thrown over one shoulder and the ends skillfully set in iron rings. Several iron and copper bracelets and one belt adorned his arms. On his neck, on a small strap, hung a snuff box made from a small tusk of a wild boar. His spear was also distinguished by more elegant decoration. The prisoner cursed the whole time and did not want to answer questions. He didn't seem to be an ordinary Negro; so we, having lifted him onto a saddle, took him with us to camp. There, after we had fed him, he became more gracious and answered several of our questions. The old man turned out to be the prince of this territory and was named Komoruti-Geda. In the west, according to his words, Shuro also live along the mountain spur, in the territory named Jiri. He was friends with their prince, and sometimes he went there to drink beer with him. But he couldn't tell us anything definite about the southeast of this mountain range.

"That's not our land, and I don't know it."

He also said that over there, in two to three day's journey, lies a land which is abundant in bread grain, and that, on the contrary, on this side, except for elephants and other wild animals, there is nothing. We asked him again, dozens of times, and still could not get a definite answer. The interpreter, Gabro Maryam, was worn out repeating all these questions and hearing the same negative answer: "Y, y, y."

For the time being, we had to be content with suppositions and guesses. Taking into account that the mountain range seen in the south wasn't so far distant from us that the climatic conditions could be different or that on it there would likely be less water than on this spur, we decided that it must be populated like this one; but that its populace probably belonged to a different nationality. The main direction of our journey should go through these mountains, and it would be necessary to reconnoiter them. In this spirit, the Fitaurari sent a report to the Ras, and we stayed to wait for his arrival.

On all the trails, we saw fresh signs of people and animals. In the vicinity of the bivouac, time and again there resounded gun shots of our soldiers who had gotten into fights with Shuro. This day a few dozen Negroes were killed and one Abyssinian. One Negro attacked my ashker Wolde Markyn from ambush. While Wolde Markyn was pulling up grass for the mules, the Negro threw a spear at him, but, fortunately, missed. The opponents grappled hand to hand, and Wolde Markyn knocked the native out with a dagger. Evidently, all the people who had fled were concentrating in this valley and were getting ready to desperately resist the Abyssinians. We, therefore, expected an attack. We laid out our bivouac more compactly and posted a strong guard, and at night set out large campfires along the edge of the camp. However, these precautions turned out to be unnecessary. The night passed peacefully.

### **February 11.**

At ten o'clock in the morning, the Ras arrived with the head of the column and conducted a second interrogation of Komoruti-Geda, after which, at council meeting, it was decided

to go with the whole detachment farther west to the foot of Mount Jasha on the following day, and to set up camp there. The regiments of Fitaurari Dameti and Fitaurari Gebra Maryam, together with me and Ato-Bayu, would set out to investigate the mountains to the south; and the regiment of Fitaurari Chabude would move to the west with the same goal. The Ras would wait in place for definitive results from both reconnaissance missions. For that time, the troops would replenish their reserves of provisions in the mountains.

The Ras's prohibition against entering into battle with the natives now seemed unfeasible. The natives evidently had no intention of submitting; and, on the contrary, they attacked first. Just as the day before, the surroundings resounded with gun shots and in camp, time and again, you met victorious soldiers singing victory songs, with trophies, prisoners and livestock taken by force.

Several dead men were carried in, and comrades loudly mourned the deceased. Several wounded were brought to me for bandaging. One of them was suffering badly. A spear had passed through his chest, going in the right shoulder blade and going out around the middle of his chest, at the level of his nipple. In the back, the width of the wound was five and a half centimeters; and in front, it was three and a half. In addition, the palm of his right hand was badly cut, having caught the point of the spear, which was sticking out, at the moment of impact. The flesh between the middle and index fingers was severed to the bone. I washed the wounds and covered them with iodoform and stitched them.

Our troops did not disturb the women and children. Only Galla soldiers brought in livestock since the Abyssinians could not use meat during Lent. Therefore, the Galla ate their fill that day. The area around our bivouac was littered with ox innards and the chopped off heads and bones of animals killed the day before. Struck by their quantity, I couldn't help but ask myself — how many pounds of meat did each man need?

### **February 12.**

We went to the foot of Mount Jasha. The detachment set up camp there, and two regiments (Fitaurari Gebra Maryam and Fitaurari Faris) set out on reconnaissance. I rode with them. We left all the transport with the main forces and only took with us provisions for ten days.

We went down into the low-lying valley of the Chomu River (which is at an elevation of 800 meters above sea level) and went in the direction of the spur of the mountain range seen on the horizon. The terrain here is rocky, overgrown with short grass and occasional trees. Among the stones are found granites of the most diverse coloring, flints and mica shales.

The valley of the Chomu River is completely deserted. The water is held in holes in dry river channels, the vicinity of which abounds in wild life. We came upon elephant tracks, but we did not see the animals themselves.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, we crossed the riverbed of the Chomu and took a short

break on its banks. Here we found water in a deep hole and watered our mules. It was very hot. My head and eyes ached from the blinding light of the sun, which reflected in myriad beams in the bright rocks scattered around. I felt weak — probably the old fever was coming back to me.

But Fitaurari Gebra Maryam — a cheerful, carefree soldier, a fine swordsman who never let pass an occasion to drink with a good fellow — drove away my weariness. He gave me a large horn cup of his strong tej, which one of the ashkers always carried for him in a huge ox horn. The mead made me a bit intoxicated, but it also cheered me up.

We went farther. When it had become quite dark, we set up camp for the night in a hollow near a small water hole. Fires shone on the mountains opposite us. Evidently there were people there. But our former guide, Belemusa, did not know what people live in those places. In that day we covered 58 versts [35 miles], and we were still about 15-20 versts [10-13 miles] from the mountains.

### **February 13.**

We didn't set fires at night, and we got up before dawn and quickly set off toward the mountains. The regiment of Fitaurari Gebra Maryam went first, at the head of which rode the commander of the regiment, Ato Bayu, and I. Behind us, in a front several files wide, went the officers and mounted soldiers. Fifteen paces behind them, also in a front several files wide, advanced the foot soldiers of the regiment. Behind the first regiment, at a distance of 50 paces, went the second regiment, in the same order. They were

commanded not by Fitaurari Faris himself, who because of illness stayed behind with the main forces, but rather by his most senior officer.

At about eight o'clock in the morning, we saw huts of natives not far off. And near them, we saw a herd of cattle peacefully grazing. Natives noticed us and raised the alarm. The mountains resounded with cries. Warriors ran in small groups and rushed to meet us. We moved ahead without shooting, having made the translator call out that they should calm down, that we wanted peace with them. But they evidently didn't understand the Shuro language in which the translator was speaking, and little by little, they surrounded our detachment from all sides. One javelin and another flew at us. A stone thrown from a sling whistled past my ears. It would have been senseless to hold back our men any longer, since we had not come this far just to sacrifice soldiers. The long awaited command of Fitaurari Gebra Maryam resounded: "Belau!" ("Go ahead!"), and our whole mounted detachment threw itself at the enemy at full gallop. The natives did not stand up to the onslaught. They scattered in all directions. Not a single man from our regiments stayed in place. Having for a long time thirsted for battle, our soldiers rushed in a frenzy to take advantage of the situation which presented itself and to finally obtain the laurels about which they had been dreaming from the first days of the campaign. Each sought a victim for himself ...

A whole series of individual skirmishes now took place in front of us. Here an Abyssinian jumps on a mule and urges it forward with all the strength of his legs, pursuing a naked young native who is running about twenty paces ahead of him. The Abyssinian lifts a

saber high, preparing to strike, but the native dodges. He has two spears and a shield in his arms, but he doesn't even consider defending himself. Rather he rushes to the nearest house. Another soldier on a small frisky horse, his shamma fluttering in the wind, cuts off the path of the fugitive. Now the first soldier overtakes him. The saber flashes; and the native falls, spilling blood. With victory cries of "I am zarraf!" ("killer"), the winner seizes his victim by the hair and slits his throat with the customary dexterous motion of the saber. The eyes of the victor look senseless, wild. He is drunk with blood, and at this moment he seems insane.

Here an Abyssinian foot soldier overtakes another native. The soldier shoots and misses. The man he is chasing quickly turns around and throws a spear at the Abyssinian. The Abyssinian is now in a helpless position. He doesn't have a saber, and he can't reload his gun ... But now nearby resounds the obliging shot of a comrade, and the native falls — the full length of his enormous body — dead.

One of the wounded managed to hide in a house, but the trail of blood on the sand gave him away. A soldier throws himself headlong after the tracks, but falls dead on the doorstep, pierced through with a spear ... Comrades of the brave man surround the house, which is dark inside. No one decides to go inside, and the soldiers crowd around the lair where the fox has just hidden. One of them finds a match, and after a few moments, the house goes up in flames. Like a madman, the native jumps out of the flames, but a well-aimed shot from an Abyssinian kills him on the spot. His wife runs out after him, and the soldiers take her prisoner. The unfortunate woman shudders from the terror she just lived

through and, stretching out her arms with the palms of the hands up, she mutters something disconnectedly, probably begging for mercy. She is rather pretty. On her completely naked body, iron trinkets are attached to a small strap at the waist. Her hair is smeared with yellow clay. A large stone earring is displayed on her ear ... Over there, two young soldiers pursue two natives. Despairing of escaping, the natives who are fleeing throw themselves on their knees and lower their heads to the very ground, submissively awaiting death. I see this scene from afar and cry out to the soldiers, "Do not kill! Do not kill! Do not kill! Take them prisoner." But the soldiers had recently received guns, and they very much wanted to test the effect of their new weapons. Now they take aim, hurriedly fire two shots, and miss. At that moment, I succeed in catching up with them, and we take the natives prisoner.

On one of the hills, the tent of the Fitaauri shone white. It was supposed to serve as a beacon and muster point for the scattered detachment. The soldiers little by little began to gather there. Most of them returned with trophies of victory. All were excited and seemed drunk with killing and with the sight of human blood: nervous jerky movements, feverish brightness of the eyes, unnatural speech. Each told of the events that had befallen him. Several quarreled and came here to the Fitaauri for judgement as to who actually killed such-and-such a native. More than a hundred men and women were captured. All of them did not understand the Shuro language at all. We had no means whatsoever to talk to them. Finally, we let them go free.

At about 12 o'clock noon, when the detachment had assembled, we moved ahead,

intending to climb the densely populated crest of the mountain ridge, which rose steeply several hundred meters above us. Scouts reconnoitered the trail which the natives used to drive their cattle down. Having stretched out in single file, we began to climb cautiously. The way up was difficult, and the natives could easily have made it completely impassable by blocking the only trail which meanders along the ledge. Letting loose a landslide on us, they could do us great harm. But the morning battle which they saw from the height of their mountains had stunned them. It was as if new, never-before-seen people had fallen from heaven — people who dress in some kind of white clothing and jump on wild animals and kill enemies with puffs of fire, the bang from which resounds like the thunder of a spring storm ...

We climbed the mountain ridge unimpeded. Its summit was completely built up. As was the case in other settlements, each farmstead was fenced in. Inside the fence there was a house and excellently cultivated fields. A little road lined with trees went among the farmsteads. Not far away, on a hill, we could see a small grove of high trees. Beside the grove stood a large house, near which natives crowded. We advanced on them without shooting; and when we got within several hundred paces of them, they threw down their weapons and, raising their hands to the heavens, apparently asked for mercy, crying out to us, "Halio! Halio!"

Our detachment stopped. With signs, we invited the crowd to come near. To definitely convince the natives of our peaceableness, I ordered everyone to sit. I tore up a little bunch of grass and began to show it to the natives. Then some of them, having placed

their arms on their chests, and others, having grasped one hand with the other behind their shoulders and holding it suspended, indecisively came toward us, repeating the whole time "Halio!" At fifteen paces in front of us, they squatted.

Then began negotiations the likes of which have probably occurred only rarely in military history. Perhaps the situation was similar in the time of Christopher Columbus and Cortez in America. The natives did not understand the Gimiro or Shuro languages and only mumbled in answer to all our questions. The large house on the hill probably belonged to the chief of the tribe, and I wanted to find out if he was here in front of us or if he had gone. I tried to express this thought in many different ways, but my attempts were in vain. Beside me, separated from the rest of the crowd, stood four negotiators, shaking from fear and depicting the shape of a grape leaf with their hands. Finally, I stood up and set out for the large house. The negotiators became agitated and stood up in front of me as if to ask me not to go there. It wasn't difficult to make them understand our wish to see the person who was in this house — the big man himself. The natives understood, mumbled something cheerfully and, asking me to sit, ran to the house. After a few moments, a file of people came from there, carrying on their heads several large gourds filled with a thick beer (turcha), a small elephant tusk, several hens, several little parcels of honey wrapped in banana leaves, bundles of tobacco and, to crown all, they dragged after them a dog. These gifts were sent to us by Koys, as one of the negotiators kept calling him, while giving us the gifts. We accepted the offering, but to the horror of the natives, the dog broke free and ran away. They threw themselves at it to catch it, but failed; and in place of the runaway dog, they brought us two puppies from the house.

Finally, the prince himself made his appearance. He was a tall, fat, bald old man. Like his subjects, he was naked and adorned with a large number of bracelets on the arms and legs. He approached us calmly, filled with a sense of his own dignity, and squatted opposite us. He ordered the negotiator to kiss my hand. The negotiator, approaching me, first clapped his hands and having taken my hand in both of his, turned the palm upward and kissed it, opening his lips wide while doing this. The prince said, "Halio! Halio!" The Abyssinians slapped the natives on the shoulders and soon a close friendship was established among them. They brought additional gifts from the house of the prince: several packets of ginger (probably one of their favorite delicacies). I took a little piece, bit off half and gave the other half to Koys. We explained, as best we could, that they should supply us with provisions at our camp; and we went down from the crest of the hill to our previously laid out camp.

The Abyssinians were delighted with the natives. "What kind of Shankala (Negroes) are these?" they asked. "Even though they are naked, this is a civilized people. They respect their king, and their houses are well built, and they were able to submit to us. Real Shankala would run away like animals and would perish to the last man, not realizing that it would be better to submit voluntarily. But why did they give us a dog? Either they are scoundrels and think that we eat dogs or, perhaps, they themselves eat them." This circumstance surprised me as well. Maybe there was some symbolic significance in the gift of a dog, or maybe they really do use them as food. I didn't succeed in finding out.

The inhabitants of these mountains do not resemble any of the tribes that I know. I

noticed almost nothing that they had in common with Negroes. Their facial features were beautiful and regular. They had a high forehead. The shape of the skull was oblong. Their eyes were expressive and intelligent. All were of large stature, of strong build, with strongly developed musculature. The large calloused hands of tillers-of-the-soil testified to the industriousness of this people. The hair of some of them hung down to their shoulders and was twisted in small locks. Others had their hair cut short or fluffed up above and sprinkled with ashes. Completely naked, as I already said, the men were adorned with large bracelets made of iron, of ivory, and, rarely, made of copper. I noticed that one of them had on his elbow a large iron bracelet to which was attached a small elephant tusk that stuck out behind. The warriors had the right part of their chest and arm tattooed, for which several deep incisions were drawn in the form of straight parallel lines with a border below which was a decorative pattern. This operation must be very painful and is carried out, as I later discovered, with a scorching hot knife. I saw one warrior who had been recently tattooed. His incisions were bright red, and it looked like they had torn all the skin off his arms ... All of them had the end of their ears pierced and in them they had put large wooden or stone earrings in the form of a disk, one and a half inches in diameter. Some had bands made of skins wrapped around their heads. Others wore hats made of the skin of some animal.

I noticed that many had a special decoration in the middle of their forehead: in the hair in the front, a wooden hairpin stuck out, to which was attached a red pelt, taken from the head of a pretty bird. Perhaps this is some kind of military distinction.

Their armament consists of a large spear and a round leather shield.

The language abounds in whistling dental sounds: t, ts, s. The pronunciation resembles the Gimiro language, but they did not understand one another and even did not know of one another's existence.

The culture of these natives is much higher than that of their Shuro neighbors. Their dome-shaped houses are excellently built. The fields are very deeply dug and well cultivated. For the most part, the fields are sown with bread grains which are well-known in Ethiopia. Their iron articles seemed extremely well made. We found blacksmith's tools in almost every house.

Their food is for the most part liquid. The preparation of bread, either leavened or unleavened, is apparently unknown to them. In place of bread, they drink a very thick sour liquid, made from meal and seeds of various bread grains. It is not similar to Russian kvas nor to beer. They call it turcha. It is very tasty, remarkably nourishing and is not intoxicating.

At night, from the bivouac, Fitaaurari Gebra Maryam sent a report to the Ras. One of the officers carried it with a mixed command of 20 men. We surrounded our camp with an abattis and took precautions in case of a night attack.

Since I did not have a tent with me, I shared quarters with Ato Bayu, whose tent was in

the very middle of the camp. Having thrown an Abyssinian shamma on the ground, I laid my head on a saddle, covered myself with a cloak and fell sound asleep, full of the impressions of my recent experiences.

#### **February 14.**

We climbed the mountains to reconnoiter the lands that lie farther to the south. Part of the detachment stayed in the bivouac and part went with us. Inhabitants met us, squatting along our route. There were no women. We climbed a hill from which the countryside opened up beautifully to us. Here I stopped to carry out some observations. Soon, Koys came and brought some gourds with turcha. He treated our soldiers and then his subjects. His subjects guardedly took from their prince a little scoop in both hands and drank from it, two at a time, mouth to mouth. (Surprisingly, the rule that you must use two hands to take things from those who are senior to you also exists in Abyssinia). Together with the prince, a small clever old man appeared — the same one who the day before had been the first to understand me during the negotiations. His face shone with intelligence, and I tried to find out from him what this land and the surrounding territory is called. Naturally, I had to express myself with signs. I stamped my foot, touched the ground with my palm, then cried out questioningly, etc. I repeated this performance many times, but the old man still did not understand me, but rather just imitated me in all my motions and mumbled like a monkey. Finally, he became very happy and cried, "Beru! Ko-Beru! Beru!" He repeated this ten times, touching the ground with his palm and he pointed to the settlement. The most difficult task was done. Now I could find out other names.

The old man called the densely populated hill to the south of Beru "Ko-Kassi." He named the surrounding mountains one after the other: Ko-Garo, Ko-Dami, Ko-Kanta, Ko-Moru. When I didn't know which one he was referring to — the near one or the far one — he cried "i" sharply and with his finger pointed down; when the mountain was far, he snapped his fingers, stretched his arm forward and pronounced "cho-lo-lo-lo-lo-lo..."

### **February 15.**

Sunday. The detachment rests. In the morning, I was engaged in a rather original activity — conducting war on the multitudinous inhabitants in my underwear. Ato-Bayu did the same. We sat side by side in light clothes and carried out our work. An old aunt of Ato-Bayu, his constant companion on all his campaigns, bashfully turned away and prepared a drink of honey and water at the other end of the tent. When one of us succeeded in catching a very large specimen, we boasted to one another and showed it to the old aunt. She got embarrassed and cried with horror, "Ere Ba Egziibeer!" "Ah! For God's sake!"

At nine o'clock in the morning, I set up the universal instrument for solar observations. On the day of the battle, I had forgotten to wind up the chronometer, and now I had to determine the moment of true noon by the corresponding heights. In the meantime, I measured the latitude and managed to eat lunch. My ashkers cooked a hen for me on a spit and baked unleavened bread. I had run out of salt several days before.

After noon, Kira came. (That was the name of the old man who told me the name of the place the day before.) He brought turcha, a small elephant tusk, some packets of coffee,

and a large copper bracelet. Kira kissed my hand, laid the gifts down in front of me, and explained that Prince Koys sent them. Then he leaped up and began to mark time, as if he were walking and repeated, "Goro, goro, goro." Finally, he cried out "e" interrogatively. I understood from this that Kira, as a subject of Koys, was asking us to take the gifts and leave their lands. Then I helped Kira sit down, and I myself stood up. Lifting the canvas of the tent a little, I expressed with signs that there at Mount Jasha are found still many more Abyssinians and a very important man who is sending all of them here, and then we would all go south — "goro, goro, goro." At first Kira listened very sadly; but later, when he understood, it pleased him. He jumped up and began to mark time side by side with me and to recount the lands where, according to what he knew, we should go: "Beru! E? Kassi! E? Bais! E? Menu?" At the word "Menu," he mumbled in a long-drawn way that probably indicated that Menu is the farthest limit of the lands known to him.

The more we talked, the more Kira and I understood one another. Finally, we even worked out our own language, which consisted of basic gestures and of several words of the Shuro language which were known to both of us. Kira even managed to express to me his position with regard to the king. He came from another land and when he was an infant his mother brought him here. When I asked him if there is a very large river to the south, Kira said that not far away to the east there flows a large river named "Kibish," in which the water is thigh deep; and farther off there is a very large river named "Shorum" in which hippopotamuses swim. In saying that, Kira depicted how they dive and snort. Apparently, Kira did not know about the existence of a large body of standing water to the south — Lake Rudolf.

He sat with me in the tent until evening, entertaining us with songs and dance, and went away only when it had become dark. I asked him to come see me the next day, as soon as the cock crows. Kira understood and promised to appear.

### **February 16.**

Kira came early in the morning. I took with me part of the detachment and climbed the mountain, going in the direction of Kassa. We crossed streams which had banks overgrown with dense forest and which served as the boundary between the lands of Kassa and Beru. The inhabitants raised the alarm when they saw us, but Kira called out to them that they should calm down, throw down their weapons, and sit on the ground.

Without a shot, we went through their settlements and, having reached a hill from which the surrounding territory was visible far to the south, we stopped. The prince of Kassa came to meet us, accompanied by a crowd of his subjects, and brought us a gift of some gourds, turcha, tobacco, and a large elephant tusk.

I set up my universal instrument and began to carry out solar observations to determine the latitude, and then began to take the azimuths and to ask Kira about the lands to the south.

Below us flowed a stream named Kora, and beyond it lay the land of Balis. To the southeast stretched a high mountain ridge, on which rose the three-pointed peaks of Kanta. To the southwest of the mountain ridge, its rocky spurs were seen. Kira pointed to

the west and said that there lies the land of Menu or Men. By his words, in that land there was so much bread grain, that to them it was just something to blow your nose at. To explain that, he took a handful of seed and, throwing it on the ground, blew his nose. But I wasn't able to determine exactly where this Menu lies — whether near or far. There could hardly be fertile land on the pointed rocky peaks we saw. I tried to get Kira to say how many times we would have to make camp for the night before we could reach Menu. But Kira, evidently, did not know very well and gave inconsistent answers. Maybe three days, maybe five ...

### **February 17.**

At night there was a violent storm which nearly tore away the tents. In the morning, a messenger from the Ras arrived to congratulate us on the successful outcome of our reconnaissance. The Ras sent me as a gift a large fish, similar to a sheat-fish, which he had caught the day before in the Choma.

At eleven o'clock, the tent of the Ras appeared below us, about seven versts [four miles] away. I set out with Ato Bayu to see him. We took Kira with us. Kira immediately understood who was the commander-in-chief and kissed his hand, made him laugh with songs and dances, and went away having completely charmed the Ras.

My boys greeted me joyfully. Some of them with heroic exclamations boasted to me of their victories. Liban sang of how he stabbed a Shuro with a dagger. While we were gone, the army had carried out several requisition raids in the mountains of Jiri. The natives

resisted stubbornly, suffered significant losses, but also inflicted losses on us ...

Several of my ashkers were sick. Zelepukin also suffered from a fever.

### **February 18.**

At night there was a storm with rain. In the morning, the detachment crossed to the foothills of the mountain ridge and set up camp near the land of Garo. At noon two princes from Beru arrived — Koys and Kiyas — with several thousand of their subjects. Among them was an old priest. Kira called him "Dormoro" and, pointing to the sky said, "Dadu" ("God"). Around the neck of the priest hung the "white fat" (94) of a ram which had just been sacrificed.

The princes brought the Ras a large elephant tusk as a gift. A dense crowd of natives squatted in front of the Ras; and in the name of both princes, Kira kissed the hand of the commander-in-chief. The ceremonial reception was silent: we couldn't express ourselves.

The Ras gave Koys and Kiyas red woolen cloaks. (However, they looked at them suspiciously and were not willing to put them on). Then the Ras let them go home. He intended to keep Kira with the detachment as a guide and ordered that he be detained. At first, Kira was displeased with this, but then he seemed to resign himself to his fate. And after dinner, in the tent of the Ras, Kira entertained us with his tricks. He was supposed to be shackled to prevent him from running away, but I felt sorry for him and asked that he be given to my custody; and the Ras agreed. In the evening, shots rang out on the right

flank of the camp. The inhabitants of Garo, on the boundary of whose settlements we now stood, attacked some Abyssinians who had gone far from camp, looking for firewood and grass. The commander of the regiment on the flank, having heard shots, went to help. The Garo were beaten off, but the Abyssinians lost several men killed.

I let Kira sleep in my tent, beside my bed, and posted a guard at the entrance. Kira took with him the trousers the Ras had given him; and rolling them into a bundle, he put them under his head. He covered himself with the shamma which had been given to him, and, after a few minutes, he was snoring ...

### **February 19.**

When I woke up in the morning, I saw only the trousers and shamma in the place where Kira had slept. Kira had run away! With my misplaced sentimentality, I was responsible for his escape. In any case, without Kira, the detachment was in a difficult position. So I decided to try to find Kira and bring him back.

Most likely, he was hiding at the house of Koys. I had to go to Koys and demand that he turn Kira over. The detachment had not yet set out when I climbed up Mount Beru.

Behind me went my three gun bearers. When Ato Bayu saw me going past his tent, he joined me, together with his gun bearers. The sun still hadn't risen when we climbed the mountain ridge and arrived at the house of the prince. Despite the early hour, a mass of people was already crowding around, and it was strange to see that, to a man, the peaceful, friendly Beru people were now armed with spears and shields. Had Kira already

aroused the populace with some fable concocted by him? Late-arriving warriors rushed by all the little roads to the house of the prince. Seeing us, they hid behind houses and trees. I went straight toward the crowd. From the crowd was heard the exclamation "Halio! Halio!" and those standing in front started to hide their weapons. Koys ran out to meet me. I began to explain the purpose of my visit and demanded that he hand over Kira right away. Koys mumbled something in reply and quickly ran into the house. After a few minutes, he returned dressed in the clothes which had been given to him the day before. He must have thought that this was what I had asked him to do. After lengthy explanations, he finally understood me. Pointing to the east, he said that Kira was at the house of Kiyas, the other king of Beru. Then I demanded that they bring Kira to me, and I went into the house of the prince and sat there, indicating that I wouldn't leave until Kira appeared.

The courtyard consisted of a round area about 40 paces in diameter, surrounded by high wattle fencing. On its south side was adjoined a high house with a roof that hung over to the ground, and a low, solidly closed door. In the middle was built an overhang for cattle and under it stood several excellent cows. The right side of the house was set aside as a place for sacrifice, as testified by a pile of ashes, in which was buried a large elephant tusk. Alongside lay a large rectangular stone slab, on which were preserved traces of beer poured during sacrifices. Evidently, the dwelling place of the prince was considered holy. There was no one in this place aside from several old men. And my presence here, apparently, defiled the supreme rights of their leader and horrified the people.

The natives made loud noises behind the fence and talked animatedly about something. Several old men came up to me, explaining something, but I persistently repeated the word "Kira," demanding that they bring him to me. They pointed to the east, evidently saying that Kira and Kiyas were there and that they themselves could not bring Kira from there. Then I decided to go to Kiyas and, taking the prince by the hand, ordered him to take me there. He obeyed. I sat on a mule. Koys walked ahead with ten natives. Two hundred paces behind us, stealing behind bushes, went all the warriors who had assembled at the house of their prince. Several of them more openly dared to show themselves in front of us with weapons in hand. I personally disarmed them or ordered my ashkers to take away their spears.

Ato Bayu and my weapons bearers were amazed at the behavior of the natives and kept telling me not to trust savages. Each minute they expected an attack. In case of this, their guns were loaded and cocked, and, between the fingers of the left hand, they held several cartridges in readiness ... I, no less than them, understood the danger of the situation; but I felt that the natives would not dare to touch us despite the fact that there were so few of us ...

Kiyas lived down in the valley, about five versts [three miles] from the house of the prince, but we couldn't go there because at this time, our main detachment of troops, having climbed the mountain ridge, got into a heated battle with the neighboring Garo tribe. Suddenly, not far away, their shots rang out. Koys was terribly frightened, trembling all over from fear. He suddenly broke away from the ashkers who were holding

him and broke out in a run, and all his followers went with him. This was a signal for general panic of the natives. It was now useless to try to catch the fleeing prince. It made no difference if he fell into our hands now. And I had no intention of killing him.

Therefore, when one of my ashkers was aiming at him and ready to pull the trigger, I (fortunately, in time) stopped him. Now, of course, hunting for Kira was pointless. As sad as it was, we had to abandon that intention and return to the detachment. I set out for Kassa, where a bloody battle was going on.

Already on the day before, I had had a feeling that if we joined battle with the Garo, then the Abyssinians, in view of the indefinite boundaries, would cross over into the peaceful and in no way guilty land of Kassa. I had alerted the Ras of this and had urged him to take measures. He actually guarded the way to Beru with fences, but he thought that it was possible to cross Kassa without causing harm to its inhabitants, if he first assembled the whole detachment in Garo. But, apparently, he hadn't succeeded in doing that. The border forest, in which a mass of natives was hiding, was surrounded by Abyssinians who had literally massacred their enemies. Shots rang out from all sides. Bullets whistled by our ears. Over here lay the bloody bodies of savages, among which were also found Abyssinians. The sight of the bodies with enormous wounds was horrid. There were practically none of them which did not have the gaping wounds of saber strokes, since natives who were shot almost always also had their throats slit by saber. At times, we chanced upon wounded.

I still remember one of them well. With stomach ripped by a spear and intestines pouring

out, he was still conscious and silently watched those going by. It was evident how terribly he suffered, but he didn't let out a single sound ...

In the clearing where we such a short time before had drunk turcha and where I had shown the savages the shining compass and watch and had amazed them, now lay the dead prince of Kassa and the chief representatives of his tribe. They probably had gone to meet the Abyssinians, but the Abyssinians had misunderstood their peace-loving intentions and had shot them all ...

Now the Ras was in no position to stop the bloodletting. A thirst for blood and murder had taken possession of the troops. They showed no mercy, not only to men, but also to animals. (82) The corpses of animals with slit throats lay all about the road in masses. Only women and children escaped death, and they were taken prisoner.

The commander-in-chief was deeply grieved by what had taken place. He practically wept from compassion and rode silently, covering his face with his shamma. The officers who were accompanying him were also upset. It was distressing and disagreeable to all of them.

We made the difficult descent to the Kori River and set up camp on its banks. Little by little, the detachment began to assemble. They brought some wounded whom I bandaged. The soldiers drove livestock and prisoners ahead of them. When all of them were at muster, they beat the nagarit and informed the army that an order was going to be

announced. The kettledrummer shouted the usual introductory formula for an order, and then the secretary of the Ras — Ato Melke, who was standing beside the confessor of the Ras — read the contents.

"Are my words the words of a cook?" the order announced. "Why kill unarmed men and for no purpose waste cartridges? I do not consider heroes those who killed today. I consider them mice. Let them not smear their heads with oil and let them not braid their hair for today's killings. Whoever was with me in Aussî (83) knows what real courage is and demonstrated his bravery. Let all know that toward those who kill without being forced to do so, I will act as I vowed to my confessor today. Gather all livestock and prisoners. Let every true soldier tell me if he finds out that another violates my orders by killing natives or livestock and slitting their throats."

When the order was read, all bowed down to the ground and silently went away. About a thousand men had been taken prisoner. By order of the Ras they were led behind the bivouac and set free. I took several photographs. Among others, I took some of one rather beautiful woman prisoner. When I aimed the camera at her, she started to scream, probably thinking that I was getting ready to shoot her. The only way I could take her picture was to have a soldier hold her arms from behind.

## **February 20.**

The detachment crossed the land of Balis. We now had no guide and no interpreter. Kira had told me about the land of Menu, but where was it, and how could we pass through it?

The commander-in-chief decided to stop here and ordered two regiments — those of Fitaaurari Damti and Fitaaurari Chabude — together with me to reconnoiter the territory and find Menu.

At twelve o'clock noon, I set out on reconnaissance from the new bivouac. Zelepukin, my gun bearers, and several ashkers went with me. We left our transport with the main forces, taking with us only enough provisions for a few days. We set out toward the south and soon were beyond the limits of inhabited lands. The temperature was 27 degrees Reaumur [93 degrees F] in the shade. We went along a deserted rocky plateau. The soil was covered with sharp rock fragments. In the gaps between them grew scraggly grass and sparse low thorny trees. The channels of streams were dry. Only in one did we find some very foul water. Rarely, we came across dilapidated huts and small open enclosures for livestock. But judging by the dried manure, one could conclude that the settlements had been abandoned by their inhabitants. Natives probably migrate here with their herds during the rainy season.

At 5:30 in the evening, we reached the cliffs which Kira had pointed at and called "Menu." However, near at hand, there were no traces of population. The sun went down. Our soldiers had been moving almost non-stop since five o'clock in the morning, and they hadn't had anything to drink since noon. It was time to set up camp, so we sent out mounted soldiers in all directions to look for water. For a long time, the searches were in vain, and only at 7:30 did one of the scouts gallop back with the message that water had been found. Then we fired our guns to signal the others to return.

We set up camp near the water. My ashkers quickly put up the tent, made the campfire and cooked coffee (the last handful I had). Both Fitauraris and Ato Bayu came to visit me. I served them coffee. Here they put together a report and sent it to the Ras with one officer and 20 soldiers.

### **February 21.**

Our reconnaissance detachment divided into two units and, early in the morning, we set out to reconnoiter. Ato Bayo and Fitaurari Chabude went north. I went southwest with Fitaurari Damti. To guard the camp (against wild animals, but not against men), we left several dozen soldiers.

The farther we went, the more barren the territory seemed. The countryside was gloomy and bleak, but at the same time remarkably beautiful. All around were granite rocks of the oddest shapes and stones of all possible hues — from rose to dark gray. After several hours we found water in the channel of a stream, and near it, we found fresh traces of men and animals. Probably, the inhabitants who were fleeing from Bale were hiding here. Nearby rose a high hill. Having climbed to its summit, we began to check the vicinity with binoculars and a telescope. Fifteen versts [ten miles] to the southwest was seen the valley of some stream. A band of green trees bore testimony of the existence of that stream. The river must flow to the southeast and into it flowed the channels of all the dried up rivulets which we had just crossed. Farther to the west rose rocky mountains, and on the horizon in the west was seen the gently sloping inclines of mountains that

were unknown to us.

Their gentle outlines were similar to the outlines of Beru and Kassi, which provided some basis for supposing that they might be inhabited. If Menu really exists, then in all probability, it should be there. (84) In my opinion, we should go down into the valley of the rivulet seen in the southwest and, on the following day, look for Menu in the west. But my travelling companions energetically protested. It seemed to them that the mountains which I indicated were too far off; and that if we were to go there, we would not be able to return to the main forces within a week, and the Ras had not ordered us to go that far.

The nearest mountains were evidently uninhabited. And they thought that nothing more remained for us but to return to the Ras and communicate all to him for his judgment. I was a guest, and it was not fitting for me to push my opinions on them ... We returned to the bivouac, loaded the mules, and set off toward the main forces.

The reconnaissance was unsuccessful. We did not fulfill the task that had been given us, and the question of whether inhabited land was more or less near to us remained open. This was disappointing to me. In my soul, I blamed my travelling companions for indecisiveness; but now, coolly considering all the circumstances of the recent expedition, I was forced to regard this failure more tolerantly. Really, the conditions of the campaign were most unusual. This wasn't so much a military campaign as a geographical expedition by a fifteen-thousand-man detachment in absolutely unknown

territory.

The Abyssinian troops were completely unprepared for this activity, which was new to them. The sun had already set when we returned to camp. The commander-in-chief invited me to visit him in his tent and began to ask me about the reconnaissance. I candidly expressed my dissatisfaction.

"You are right," he told me. "But I foresaw that this would happen in this way. My soldiers are brave. They love war. But they do not tolerate deserts. Now they are convinced that there are no people farther off; and wherever I would send them, they would return with one answer: 'It is impossible to go farther.' Only following behind me will they go forward. But where are we going? How should we act?"

"Our position is not so hopeless," I reported to the commander-in-chief. "Not far off, behind us, is a land rich in bread grain. We can leave there all the sick and the weak and a large part of the detachment. Then we can go farther with select men, following the course of the Kori River, which apparently heads to the northwest. It must have tributaries both on the right and on the left, and along one of them we could then go south. We will be well provided with water, and we will take with us provisions enough for ten days. When those provisions run out, we will find wild game in abundance, if not bread grain. Perhaps Menu is not so far off as it seems. If to the south we find a densely populated territory which is rich in bread grain, we will pull part of the detachment over to there, will build a second strong point, a second base, and then will go farther."

The commander-in-chief listened to me with great attention, and when I finished, he said, "Your words go through me and into my heart."

He decided to hold a military council the next day.

### **February 22.**

The military council was held in the morning. The Ras opened it with a speech in which he described our present situation, having shown both the necessity of going forward and the fact that such was the will of the emperor. In conclusion, the Ras proposed that those present express their opinions, but all were silent.

Then the Ras said, "Tomorrow, we return to the mountains. There we will leave part of the detachment, the sick, and the weak. We will replenish our provisions, and then I will go ahead with the best men."

The day before, we had found traces of the presence here of the Italian expedition of Bottego — some iron fasteners from pack chests, spent cartridge cases of the Veterli system, ten-caliber paper cartridge cases, and some miraculously intact pages from "Theory of Probability" in the Italian language. The astronomical position of this place is 60 degrees 48' north latitude and 35 degrees 26' east longitude from Greenwich.

Prisoners taken in this vicinity belong to a nationality which is completely different from

their neighbors (the mountain dwellers of Beru and Kassa). They more closely resemble the Shuro Negroes, but they do not understand the Shuro language. The men and women are very ugly. They all have their lower front incisors knocked out. The women are especially unattractive. Their lower lip is pierced wide and hangs low, uncovering the rare teeth which stick out, with a gap in the middle in the place of the knocked out front incisors. They place a wooden disk about two vershoks [three and a half inches] in diameter(85) in the hole that is pierced in the lip. The prince of the tribe — Jufa — was found among the prisoners.

### **February 23.**

We went back to the Kori River and made camp on its banks to the southeast of our former one. In a large water hole in the channel of the river, we found a lot of fish, which the soldiers caught with their shammas. The commander-in-chief also went fishing and caught 14 of them and sent them to me as a gift. In addition, Zelepukin and my ashkers caught a saucepan full. On this day, one of the colonels gave me what couldn't have been a more opportune gift — a piece of salt. Zelepukin and I cooked ourselves a marvelous ukha [fish soup] and ate it.

In the time after supper, I took care of medical treatments and bandaging. Around my tent, as always, there crowded a mass of sick people. Above all, the troops suffered from bloody flux, and our supply of bismuth and castor oil was quickly exhausted.

They also suffered from fevers and inflammation of the eyes. The eye illnesses I

successfully treated using eyedrops which are still unknown to medicine (a secret of I. S. Dzhevinskiy, my landlord in Tsarskoye Selo). I often treated the wounded. Some of the more lightly wounded recovered quickly. Today, for example, I removed a splint from a soldier who on one of the first days after crossing the border had had his arm broken by a rock thrown from a sling. Another had been hit by a spear several days before. It had pierced through the muscles of his chest, missing the chest cavity. Today, I removed the bandage and poured collodion on the healing wounds. But one poor fellow whose chest was pierced by a spear at Jasha Mountain did not recover. He got terribly worse. The wound, which had been sewn by me, opened; and when he exhaled, a white liquid flowed from it, and stinking pus and air bubbles came out.

#### **February 24.**

At night there was a violent storm; and all morning it rained, accompanied by the strongest wind. With incredible efforts, we climbed the mountain along a steep slippery trail. The mountain ridge was densely populated with the same kind of people as Beru.

Their buildings were the same, and their fields were just as carefully cultivated. The whole population ran away on our arrival and not a single soul could be seen. The head of our column arrived at the site of the bivouac at nine o'clock in the morning, and the rearguard only at six o'clock in the evening.

The transport marched past in front of our tents all day long. The tail end of the column was a melancholy sight. The sick and wounded stretched out quietly in a continuous file.

Some were carried on stretchers; some went on foot, supported by comrades; others rode on mules and, so they wouldn't fall, they were held behind the shoulders by those who were walking beside them. They led one dying Galla on a mule, having placed him on the saddle, with his legs bent behind and all fastened to the saddle with straps. The poor fellow had no one to carry him on a stretcher; but all the same, he couldn't sit on a saddle. Those suffering from smallpox were an awful sight. For the most part, those were Galla soldiers, or male and female servants of Abyssinians.

The Abyssinians inoculate themselves against small pox, taking it for the most part when they are still children. (86) Half naked, covered with large gray boils, with terribly swollen faces on which you almost couldn't see the eyes, the small pox victims languished in the rain and the wind. Already at five o'clock in the morning, the unfortunates who were riding had started their journey, enduring all the suffering and misfortune with amazing patience.

After noon, the Ras personally conducted reconnaissance and selected the site of our future fortress. This was a hill which rose at the end of a mountain spur and was a strong and convenient location. A stream flowed at the foot of the mountain. There was fuel and also an abundance of grass for mules.

#### **February 25 to March 4.**

The detachment went to the site which had been chosen and set up a compact bivouac, grouped around the tent of the Ras. Immediately on arrival, they began to build a palisade

around the bivouac and to build a house for the Ras, into which he moved that very evening. The order was announced to the troops: they were forbidden to leave garbage in the camp, and they must maintain special cleanliness. Each soldier had to dig his own latrines and each time fill it up with earth.

We stayed at the bivouac in Kolu from February 25 to March 4. These days were passed in daily foraging and in strengthening the fortress, which they surrounded with a high palisade and a moat. The soldiers built cabins for themselves and houses for their leaders. The hostility of the populace among whom we now found ourselves called for strong defensive measures on our part. In the daytime, we sent out guards from one of the regiments, in order, and posted them in raised and open places in front of the watering places, pastures, and sites of wood-chopping; and almost all day long, they waged war with the natives. The natives used every opportunity to inflict casualties on us, and attacked from ambush not only soldiers, but also women and our mules, donkeys, and horses. They committed outrages on the dead. I saw, for example, the body of one woman whose stomach they had ripped open, whose breasts they had cut off, etc.

A military council was held on February 27. At this meeting, they finally determined the composition of the detachment that would go with the Ras. In all, 5,664 guns were chosen. This number included almost all the officers and a large part of the mounted soldiers. In the fort, all of the regiment under the command of Fitaurari Faris would stay, plus about three thousand men from the other regiments, and the sick, the weak, and also all of the transport and all of the women. If any of the officers wanted to take a cook

along with him, he was obliged to give her, without fail, a mule. With the detachment went only part of the transport of cartridges and provisions. Each soldier had to take with himself enough for not less than ten days. Responsibility for provisions was on the soldiers themselves. A soldier would ride on a mule and carry his provisions with him or load them on a pack mule. Others carried their provisions on their heads.

February 26, 27, and 28, they commandeered provisions in the neighborhood. For this, the regiments were divided into three shifts. The commandeering took place in the following manner.

The regiment whose turn it was, having received the direction in which it was supposed to act, set out with its full complement. Going to a richly populated territory, the soldiers scattered, drove out the natives, and loaded their mules and horses with provisions. Part of the regiment served as a reserve in case of unexpected attack and was stationed in the center of such a territory. On the way back to the bivouac, the reserve followed at the tail end of the detachment and served as the rear guard.

In those three days, they gathered a month's supplies for the detachment which was staying behind and fifteen days' worth for the detachment which was leaving.

I rested during this time. Part of the day, I occupied myself with marking the route on a map, making some observations, and tending to the sick. But all my free time I spent with the Ras. These days flowed quietly and peacefully.

Early in the morning, the commander-in-chief went out to his favorite place, from which the whole camp was clearly visible.

Seeing the commander-in-chief, the commanders of regiments, the officers, and soldiers rushed to bow to him. With a light, gracious movement, they threw their shammās off their shoulders and bowed to the ground. Then they sat down in a close circle and, in this manner, the Ras was soon surrounded by a crowd. The commander-in-chief sat here from morning until dinner and from dinner to sunset. They took care of business or amused themselves with conversation or games. Officers and men came to be judged. Often, serious matters were decided. Here are two typical cases and their amazingly simple resolutions: The Emperor Menelik, having changed the distribution of his troops, took away from Ras Wolde Giyorgis his estates on the left bank of the River Omo and gave them to other leaders. In exchange, he granted the Ras all the lands to the southwest of Kaffa. When the troops evacuated the regions that had been taken away, many soldiers joined the service of the new ruler. Because of this, the number of soldiers in many companies of regiments previously stationed in those territories had diminished to the point that the companies only existed nominally. In several companies all that remained were the commander and several officers. However, all companies received an equal allowance. In view of this, several companies of one of the regiments complained to the Ras about the abnormality of this situation. The Ras acknowledged their complaint as well-founded. Commanders were responsible for the numbers of their units and, consequently, were guilty if their companies were not fully manned. On the basis of this,

the Ras ordered men from incomplete companies to transfer to other, fuller ones; and the officers were demoted to soldiers ... The other case arose from the fact that the commander of one of the companies had evaded going on campaign for a second year, under pretext of illness, and his sergeant major commanded in his place. Before the present campaign, this company was supposed to receive twelve new guns, but Tuki declined to take them since the responsibility for them would then lie on him as the commander. The sergeant major was well known as an excellent soldier.

"You don't want to take these twelve guns?" asked the Ras.

"I can't. I'm poor."

"You are commanding in place of your sick leader for the second year?"

"Yes, for the second year."

"Then take the company and become a captain (yamato alaka)!"

So the sergeant major became a captain.

They also brought to the commander-in-chief soldiers who had been found guilty of taking livestock from the natives and having slaughtered them, which was forbidden by the Ras, under penalty of strict punishment. These were for the most part Gallas, because

the Abyssinians were fasting and didn't eat meat. The guilty were punished with ten lashes of the jiraf, which like pistol shots resounded through the camp, accompanied by plaintive cries. One soldier was guilty of wanting to kill a native when he wasn't forced to and of having shot at him with a gun. He was sentenced to 40 lashes. It was fortunate for him that his shot had missed; otherwise he would probably have been executed.

In the intervals between these cases, people talked to one another, recalled interesting true stories, or simply cracked jokes with one another. As in any gathering of comrades, here there were some natural wits, among whom one kanyazmatch particularly distinguished himself. I have forgotten his real name, but everyone called him Kanyazmatch Yanye Wadaj ("my friend") because that's what he called everyone. A Gojjam by birth, he was lean, with a remarkably comical face, with a small beard that stuck out and with legs so long that when he rode on his little mule they seemed to drag on the ground. He was always cheerful and joked constantly, making fun of one or another of his comrades and provoking a friendly outburst of laughter.

They played gebeta with enthusiasm or looked through a telescope at the surrounding mountains. The Ras had two telescopes which he took with him here, and his favorite pastime was to look through them. (However, a telescope is one of the attributes of every Abyssinian leader. In their paintings, the Abyssinians depict the military leader standing on a hill and looking through a telescope during battle.) First the commander-in-chief himself looked through the telescope. Then it passed from one to another; and little pages waited impatiently for the moment when they too would finally get a chance to look.

The Ras knew all the subtleties of the construction of telescopes. With special love and even pride, he dismantled and polished not only his own telescopes, but also those of his officers.

Gebeta took up a lot of our free time, and I eventually took a great liking to it. (87) We enthusiastically squandered hours at the board. All who were present showed the most active interest in the game. All seniority disappeared while they were playing.

The commander-in-chief and his fellow players laid on their stomachs at the board and sometimes argued heatedly. The best player and the invariable partner of the Ras was his ashker — the one who carried his parasol.

When evening fell, the carpets were removed, and we stood for prayers. Then the Ras invited me to his small, comfortable little home, and entertained me with a scanty dinner and a little decanter of tej with water or a little glass of home-made vodka.

He himself did not dine during Lent and ate only once a day, after noon, making an exception to this rule only on Sundays. He didn't even eat fish during Lent.

The little home of the Ras was divided into two halves. His bed was in the one half. In the second, stood his two war horses and two mules. The horses were outstanding. One was a gray mare — the well-known Sougud. The other was a dark-bay mare.

Abyssinians are very superstitious and distinguish between lucky and unlucky horses. Both of these horses were lucky. Sougud — the Bucephalus of Wolde Giyorgis — formerly belonged to Menelik and was considered wild. But the Ras, according to his retainers, asked the emperor for him and completely tamed him.

When the Ras rode Sougud during the Battle at Embabo (88), he had the good luck to take 35 men prisoner that day, after which this horse became the main battle horse of the Ras and accompanied him in all his campaigns. The dark-bay horse was likewise in high esteem. On it the Ras made war with Gomu, and from it he killed three rhinoceroses in one day.

Our rather extended stay had good consequences. The natives, seeing that the strong forces which had arrived did not go away but rather built themselves houses and, by all signs, would stay, decided that, whether they liked it or not, they had to submit.

On March 1, the first deputation from the land of Duk arrived with an expression of submission. At its head was the prince, an old man named Muruta Babus. He brought the Ras a large elephant tusk as a gift. Muruta was a lucky find for us since, being of the same nationality as the Beru, he also knew the Shuro language and could serve as an interpreter. This circumstance extracted us from the helpless position we had been in before of not being able to communicate with a nation which had submitted. They treated Murutu Babus with affection, gave him gifts, dressed him in a red woolen cloak, and kept

him with the detachment as an interpreter, keeping him shackled at all times so he would not make off as Kira had. They promised him that if he would faithfully serve us, they would subsequently make him the chief ruler of all these lands.

Now we could converse with the mountain-dwellers, but we still needed another interpreter who would know the language of the captured Jufa. We found one the next day. The inhabitants of the land of Kanta, who are from the same tribe as the Beru, also came to express their submission, and one of them knew the language of Jufa. A deputation also appeared from the inhabitants of nearby Dami Mountain, relatives of the Kassa, Beru, Kolu and Duka. Their prince was two arshins and 12 vershoks tall [six feet five inches]. Their tattoos were deeper and larger than those of their fellow tribesmen, and their adornment was more elaborate as well.

Having treated those who arrived with affection and having given them gifts, the Ras let them go, telling them through Murutu Babus, that they should let the surrounding tribes know that the Abyssinians fear nothing, that they do not wish to harm anyone, and that they only require submission.

The interrogations of all prisoners carried out that day gave us information about the stay here of an Italian expedition and about the territory which lay ahead.

The "Guchumba" (which is what the Jufa called the Europeans), arrived, by his words, from the southeast. They set up camp beside a Jufa settlement, and stayed there several

days, demanding, under threat of their fire-breathing weapons, that they deliver bread free of charge. Then they went away to the northwest. As we found out later, all the tribes from here to Lake Rudolf call Europeans "Guchumba." "Guchumba" literally means "tramps."

The Jufa also let us know about the territories lying to the south and west. Menu or Meun, a region rich in bread grain, was found, by his words, in the west, at a distance of three to four days' journey. Another land rich in grain crops — Murle, which lies somewhere to the south — was far off, and he didn't know how to get there. (This land, as it later turned out, is located on the banks of the River Omo, at its mouth). The Jufa had heard nothing about the existence of a large lake in the south, but he was familiar with another lake several days' journey to the northwest into which flowed the Kori River. He called this lake Kiy and agreed to be our guide, saying that along the way to it there is a land rich in bread grain. The banks of the lake, by his words, do not have a settled population, and along it wild hunters wander, armed with bows and arrows. I asked Jufa what their nationality is and whether he knew their language. "They are all Idenich," answered Jufa. Telling me this, Gebra Maryam turned away from Jufa with scorn. Muruta Babus and Kanta did the same. I was amazed by this scornful attitude of savages to savages, and I asked them to explain to me about the Idenich.

"Inhuman children!" said Gebra Maryam. "They are wild animals. They eat the meat of elephants and of lizards. They almost do not sow grain. They are Watu," Gebra Maryam finally added, spitting with disgust. Watu are the pariahs of Abyssinia, scorned by all the

other inhabitants of Ethiopia. They are probably the remnants of some tribe which belonged to a lower race. The Watu dwell in the dense forests and low-lying unhealthy river valleys. They occupy themselves mainly with hunting. They kill hippopotamuses and from their skins make alancha whips which are widespread throughout Abyssinia and also shields. They use the meat for food, like the Idenich, not being squeamish, in general, about any kind of meat. I saw several Watu in Abyssinia and saw that, on the exterior, they had much in common with the Jufa and with those of their fellow tribe members with whom I was then acquainted: they were just as unattractive, with just as indeterminate facial features and the same vacant, stupid expression in their eyes. Might the Watu and the Idenich belong to one and the same race? They appear to be the northern and southern representatives of the same race, and living either in deserts with little water or in dense forests, they have preserved themselves by having mixed very little with other tribes.

The plateau to the south of the main mountain range is populated by Idenich nomads who in the territories nearest to the mountains live a more or less settled life style and till the soil. I also met them in the forests on the banks of the River Omo, where their main occupation consists of hunting and fishing.

Everywhere the Idenich were equally despised by other tribes. In this territory, they speak a language which is close to the Shuro. They call God "Tuma," but have only a very vague conception of Him. They perform no sacrifices. A distinctive feature of this tribe is the knocking out of the front lower incisors, the ugliness of their women and their using

all kinds of meat as food. I could not explain the reason for this disfigurement. Could it be that they consider it beautiful or do they do it so their brave neighbors won't want to take away their women? ...

On the basis of the testimony of the Jufa, we made the following plan of action: on March 4 (March 3 was a major Abyssinian holiday), the Ras and the select detachment would set out to the west. We would follow down the course of the Kori River to its confluence with the lake, if there really was such a lake. From there, we would choose a route to the south or southwest through Menu or another region abundant with bread grain which we might come upon along the way.

During our stay in Kolu, I happened to observe unusual meteorological phenomena. Each evening before sunset, in a cloudless sky, little storm clouds appeared from the west. At about nine o'clock, a violent storm rose in the mountains which intensified to nearly the strength of a hurricane. First it swooped down on us with terrible force in several gusts and was accompanied by rain. By midnight everything had quieted down.

This phenomenon took place the first time on February 15 and from that time was repeated daily, only with varying force, depending on the altitude of the terrain. After we went down to the Beneman plateau on February 20-21, I no longer observed such storms, but then in Kolu they began to be repeated with even greater force, so that they blew away our tents. The first time I experienced such an unpleasant event was February 26. We did not suspect the approaching calamity and calmly went to bed. On the little table

beside my bed lay my open notebook and barometer. Photographic prints were soaking in the bath.

At nine o'clock in the evening, we heard from afar noise in the mountains and the earth shook, and the first terrible gust of wind that swooped down on us ripped the edge of the tent from its pegs, lifted the table, like a little pen, and threw it across my bed. The next gust, which was even stronger, took away the inner post of the tent, the lower part of which fell on my head; and the tent covered me and Zelepukin. Several intact ropes didn't let it fly away, and it beat against the ground like a wounded bird, now being raised by the wind, and then again flopped down again, and the slapping of its ends against the ground resounded loudly. How terrifying that moment was, but there was no point in thinking about calling servants and setting the tent up again.

I could only lie under a felt cloak, protecting my head from injury with my arms, and wait to see what would happen next.

When the storm calmed down, the soaked roof pressed down on us, forming like a solid hot compress, under which we gasped for breath from the stuffy heat. When it had grown quiet, Zelepukin and I tried to make an account of the damage.

"Zelepukin, you weren't knocked out?"

"Not at all."

"Where is the knapsack (with documents)? Is it near you?"

"It's near me."

"And where is the instrument (theodolite)?"

"Yes, your worship. It's here."

"And where is the photograph?"

The photograph was gone. It was taken away together with the table. But I had managed to hide the barometer under the cloak.

A new gust of wind that swooped down on us at that moment drowned out our conversation.

On the following day, in the evening, I took measures to strengthen the tent, but my efforts turned out to be futile and again it blew down. On the third day, I surrounded it with a fence — again it blew down. Only when we beat the pegs deep into the ground, attached double ropes to them and covered the whole tent in the middle with a long pack strap, in order to restrain the flaps, did it stay standing. Having learned by experience, we took precautions at night, like a ship expecting a storm, and when the sun set, we gave

orders to reinforce the rigging. Everything that could be soaked or carried away by the wind was put away in packs. We hid guns under a tarpaulin. Then we lay and waited for the storm, wondering uneasily if it would blow down the tent.

## **VII. From Kolu to Lake Rudolf**

### **March 4.**

At 5:30 in the morning, the select detachment of 5,664 men under the command of Ras Wolde Giyorgis left the fortress at Kolu. I accompanied them.

Since we were travelling light, I only took 11 ashkers and several pack mules. Of course, Zelepukin came with me.

Before I set out, the sick and wounded who were staying in Kolu asked me to give them medicine in reserve. A heavily wounded man, with a puncture through his chest was desperate, saying that now he would be helpless and most likely would die ...

Finally, we got started.

All four interpreters were led in front of the Ras. The old man, Muruta Babus, rode, wearing the red cloak he had been given. His legs, which were too long, dangled helplessly since he could not rest them in the short stirrups. Jufa boldly ran ahead and led the detachment. Along a steep slope strewn with rocks, we went down to the Kori River and headed west, following its course. At four o'clock in the afternoon, after a ten-hour march without a break, we reached the inhabited and cultivated territory of Lessi and set up camp here. The natives ran away when we got close. Nonetheless, soldiers succeeded in capturing several women who were from the same tribe as Jufa and who were just as

ugly as those we took prisoner in the land of Balis.

It turned out that they too know Guchumba — Europeans. They said that Europeans crossed their lands last year and that their prince brought the Europeans gifts of grain, hens, and rams. From here the Guchumba went north. The natives didn't know about the existence of a lake. But they said that nearby there is "a place where water lies."

The stream on the banks of which we set up our camp abounded in fish. On our arrival, the commander-in-chief set off with a rod to go fishing. I went along to watch. The officers sat on the shore of a little pond surrounded by steep cliffs.

The air was stifling, so I began to climb up one of the cliffs, hoping that up above it would be cooler and also hoping to take photographs from up there of this unique group — the commander-in-chief fishing, surrounded by his whole staff. My undertaking nearly cost me dearly. At a height of two sagues [4.26 meters] above the water, the rock on which I stepped broke away and after it toppled a boulder, several arm widths in girth, which must have rested on the small lower one. I, too, slid down the cliff. Seeing this, the Ras and his officers cried out in horror. The boulder slid down at the same time over me, and it seemed like it was unavoidable that it would crush me. But I somehow luckily jumped aside; and having flown past right beside me, it fell into the water with an uproar and raised a whole column of spray. In general, this day was rich in adventures for me. 1) On jumping across the rocky channel of a stream, my mule stumbled and fell on its head, carrying me along with it. 2) While climbing a steep mountain, overgrown with thick

bushes, when striking against a thorny branch, I leaned back, a twig caught my pistol cord, and before I could succeed in unhooking it or catching by the reins the mule which was quickly clambering up, I was pulled off the saddle and fell on my back, with my head down, under the feet of another mule which was immediately following me. Luckily, both times I got away with just bruises.

### **March 5.**

We passed the settlement of Lessi and went into the low-lying uninhabited valley of the Kori River, which is a wide rocky plain, at an elevation of only 700 meters above sea level, with scanty grass and mimosa and acacia trees. The air here is remarkably dry and motionless; and as a result, the heat was extremely strong. In the shade it was 29-30 degrees Reaumur [97 to 99 degrees F].(89)

On arrival at camp, we set out to the river to go fishing, and our soldiers accidentally dragged out a little crocodile.

At the camp itself, we caught two Idenich natives. They knew about Europeans who had passed through last year (Bottego), and one of them had even brought them a ram for sale. They denied the existence of a lake nearby. The land of Menu was two days' journey from here.

The old man Jufa continued to affirm that the lake was near.

The women who had been taken prisoner yesterday said today more confidently than the day before that in one days' journey there is water of a river that "lies." We decided to go down the river a bit further in order to make sure of whether there actually is a lake there.

### **March 6.**

We found the place where the water "lies." It was the confluence of the Meru and Kori Rivers and, actually, the current here was very still — not more than four versts [two and a half miles] per hour. The width of the river is 40 to 60 paces.

We set up camp a bit below the confluence of the Meru and the Kori; and I set out, accompanied by my gun bearers, to a small rocky summit, which was visible about seven versts [four and a half miles] from camp. Exhausted by the difficult climb in the scorching heat, bathed in sweat, I clambered up it.

I was rewarded for my work by the marvelous view and distant horizon which opened up from here. In the northeast arose the mountain ridge which we had just left. It had the shape of an enormous row which disappeared in the haze of the horizon. In the north, as far as the eye could see, there stretched the low-lying valley of the Kori River, and lines of mountain spurs, to the right and left of it, marked the tributaries which flow into it. On one of these spurs arose Mount Jasha, at the foot of which we had set up camp February 10-12; and beyond it was seen the valley of the Sebelimu River, which flows into the Kori.

Here, evidently, all the streams which flow down the western slopes of the mountain range we had passed through must unite and form the highwater level Sobat or Jubu which serves as the western boundary with Abyssinian domains. The mountain range to the east constitutes the watershed of the Omo and Sobat Rivers, which undoubtedly demolishes the former assumption which found many proponents among people interested in this question. Those who were of that opinion included the Emperor Menelik and the Europeans who were close to him. Count Teleiki and Hohnel, who discovered Lake Rudolf, found at its north end the mouth of a large river and first expressed the thought that this was the River Omo. Their assertion was for the time being unsubstantiated and was soon refuted by Donaldson Smith, who went a few dozen versts up the river. However, he mistook one of the tributaries for the main river, and in view of how little water it contained, confirmed the hypothesis which d'Abaddie had first put forward. Bottego attested by his journey that the Omo flows into Lake Rudolf, but at the time of my journey, the work of his expedition was still not elaborated and was unknown to me.

Setting out on the present journey, I, along with the majority, held the opinion that the River Omo skirts the Kaffa Mountains on the south and is just the beginning of the Sobat River, which flows into the Nile. On January 28, when from Mount Boka, I saw the mountain range which stretches from Kaffa far to the south, a mountain range which up to then was not marked on any map, I had my first doubt of the truth of that assumption. Now it was definitively refuted. The mountain range discovered by me separates the basins of the Omo and the Sobat and drives off the waters of its western slopes from what

seems to be its natural basin — Lake Rudolf — to the distant Nile and the Mediterranean Sea. This mountain range is named, with the permission of the Tsar and with agreement of the Emperor Menelik, the "Nicholas II Mountain Range."(90)

But where could the lake I had heard about from three completely different sources have disappeared? Even in the town of Andrachi, Benesho natives had told me that to the southwest of them there is some Lake Bosho into which their main rivers flow.

The guide Belemus said that in the west there was some lake with hot water, on the shores of which her fellow-tribesmen extract salt. And finally, the Idenich Jufa pointed to the northwest and definitely said that there is Lake Kiy, on the banks of which wander savage hunters who are armed with bows and arrows.

If the lake really exists, then it must be found in this low-lying, fog-covered valley of a river. The elevation of the river above sea level — attaining 700 meters — convinced me of this, in addition to the indications of natives. With very little fall and the very slow flow, the river had a huge area ahead of it before it could unite with the Nile.

The main goal of our campaign was to the south, and therefore I, unfortunately, could not verify whether my assumptions were correct.

Returning to camp, I saw a crowd of people surrounding my tent. They were waiting for my return. They had brought a soldier who had just been bitten by a crocodile. The

wounded man was so frightened that his face looked greenish. He had been swimming with comrades, and the crocodile grasped him in its mouth across his whole body, and began to drag him under the water. At the sight of this, the soldiers cried out and the crocodile let his victim go. On the soldier's shoulders and chest, there were 12 deep wounds, as if made by the sharp teeth of a saw. The wounded man complained that his heart hurts, and he thought that the bite of the crocodile was poisonous. I sewed up his wounds with 32 stitches. (After several days, he recovered). At this point on the river, there were quite a few crocodiles. One of our soldiers was killed while swimming; and after that, we decided not to go swimming any more.

#### **March 7.**

The detachment moved southwest in the direction of Menu. Two Idenich, who we had taken prison on March 5, led us. The steppe where we were going abounded in wildlife. Sometimes, wild goats shot out from under foot, as if insane, and galloped along our whole column. I killed one large gazelle. It was comparable in size to a small ox, but it galloped with the ease of a chamois, with the long wide stride of a thoroughbred race horse. Its hair was light yellow. Its snout was like that of an ox, as was its tail. Its horns were spiral and rather straight. I chopped off one of the back legs of the gazelle with my saber, and one of my weapons bearers lifted it on his shoulders and set out to catch up with the detachment, which had gone far ahead while I was hunting.

At about 11 o'clock in the morning, we found water in the channel of a dried up river, digging a little hole in the sand.

From here the terrain begins to rise. We crossed several mountain spurs and finally, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, entered the first settlement of Menu. Houses here are arranged in groups, and each farmstead is surrounded by a low fence. The intervals are sown with mashella and corn. In the valleys, herds of goats and rams grazed. The inhabitants fled as we approached. Soldiers scattered through the farmsteads looking for meal and grain, replenishing the supplies of provisions which we had used up over those days. Several natives were captured and were taken to the Ras for interrogation. They belonged to the Idenich tribe, the same as in Jufa, and differed from them neither in type nor in language; only the women weren't as disfigured and their lower lip, although pierced, was not cut widely, as with women in the land of Beneman.

The prince of this territory — Besela — was among the prisoners taken. He was a large decrepit old man, dressed in an ox hide thrown across his shoulder and with heavy iron bracelets on his arms. The surrounding territory was completely unknown to him, and he had never heard about a lake to the northwest or to the southeast. Farther to the south, the terrain was, by his words, completely deserted; people didn't live there. When we asked him if he had ever seen Europeans — Guchumba — he, to our great surprise, answered they are quite close to us on the southern boundaries of his land. The women prisoners had also seen them, and one of them just yesterday met one there, bartering meal for strings of beads. To the question of how many of them are white men, they answered that they are all white men, probably because they are all dressed in white clothes. And to the question of whether there are many of them, they pointed at the bivouac of one of our

regiments.

This news was so important that the commander-in-chief called his unit leaders in order to tell them. It was unknown who these Europeans were. Perhaps it was Major MacDonald's detachment of the English army, which from Uganda was supposed to go north to meet Kitchener, (at this time we still did not know about the failure of that expedition), or some scientific expedition. In any case Ras Wolde Giyorgis had been given quite definite instructions by Emperor Menelik about how to act in case he ever met with any Europeans. Therefore, it was decided to go the next day to the place where the Europeans had been seen. Today it was already too late, and the army was too exhausted from a non-stop ten-hour march and from requisitioning provisions after that, for them to undertake further reconnaissance right away; and it seemed too risky to rely on a captive at night in completely unknown territory.

Besela agreed to recognize the authority of Menelik and together with all the other prisoners was set free. He designated one of his subjects to stay with us as a guide.

### **March 8.**

At dawn the signal horn of the commander-in-chief awoke us.

Scouts were sent ahead. The detachment was constituted as a reserve column. All the regiments had a full complement of files and detached only the most essential men and transport. The regiment of Fitaurari Atysye went in front of all. Behind it, at a distance of

25 paces, the regiment of Fitaaurari Gebra Maryam went in file. Then at the same distance, went the regiment of Fitaaurari Chabude. At 100 paces behind it, surrounded by two regiments of Azzaj (marshal of the court) Gebra followed the commander-in-chief, directly protected by men of his own gurad.

Up front, inside a ring formed by them, they carried the banner of the Ras. They carried his tent and drums, and led his war horses. His weapons bearers brought his guns. Behind the regiments of Azzaj Gebra went the regiment of Fitaaurari Ubye.

To the right of the Ras, at an interval of 200-300 paces, went the regiments of Fitaaurari Imam and Kanyazmatch Alemnekh. To the left, at the same distance, went the regiment of Fitaaurari Dubye and Fitaaurari Damti. Behind the reserve column followed the transport, and after it went the rear guard, consisting of the next regiment. Each regiment was constituted as a front in several files. In each regiment, the foot soldiers went in front in 6-10 files. Then at a distance of 15 paces went mounted soldiers (in 2-4 files). In the interval between foot and mounted soldiers rode the commander of the regiment. The depth of the front of each regiment was about 40-60 paces. Its width was 50-70 paces.

I admired their balance, order, and ability to adapt themselves to the terrain.

The units passed through a ravine with remarkable skillfulness: the front units ran through it at some distance and formed up again. They did this so adroitly and quickly that the middle of the column went almost without delay.

At about 9 o'clock in the morning, we climbed to the summit of the ridge, at the foot of which, according to our guide, the camp of the Europeans should be. But when we reached the summit, we only saw the abattis which surrounded their camp. The smoke of their extinguished campfire bore witness to their recent presence.

We stopped on the ridge. Below, on the edge of a grove, on the banks of a stream, the natives who had fled from us crowded.

Through an interpreter, we began peaceful negotiations at a distance of 500 paces. We called out to them to go back to their houses calmly and that they shouldn't fear us since we would not do them harm and that their king Besela had become our friend the day before. For a long time our assurances were unsuccessful, and only after an extended period of time did several bold spirits dare to approach to within 200-300 paces of us, hiding behind trees. In their hands they carried twigs — symbols of peace. We also took branches and leaves; and by this act we definitely convinced them of our peaceableness, and they began direct negotiations.

These completely naked natives belonged to the Idenich race, but the features of their faces were much more regular, with a much more intelligent expression than that of their fellow tribesmen. Being a settled people, they evidently surpassed the nomads in culture. Their spears and shields seemed excellently made. On their arms they displayed numerous iron bracelets. They decorated their heads with ostrich feathers.

Our envoys reported that the Guchumba left today at night and that their camp was very noisy. By the light of torches made of dry grass, they loaded their animals and hurriedly went east — to Belu or Balis — to the place from which they had come seven days before.

I rode into their camp, which was arranged very well, on the boundary of a settlement, near a shady stream. A round area about 60 paces in diameter with two gates was enclosed by a high abattis made of trees which had been cut down and piled up one on the other. Inside, there were places for two tents, a place for a kitchen strewn with hen feathers, a place for storing provisions (raised a foot above ground on a stone area), 13 small cabins where servants probably lived, and 11 little pens. Judging by the manure, five of the pens were for mules and donkeys, and six were for cattle. The broken fence testified to the haste of their departure. Probably, it seemed too slow to drive the cattle through the gates; so to speed up the procedure, they broke the fence. Many of the cattle were left along the road, and, in general, the exodus resembled a panicky flight. The Ras was amazed by the fear the fugitives displayed.

Judging by the size of the detachment, they constituted a scientific expedition which had nothing to fear from us. With this in mind, the Ras sent a letter after them, expressing bewilderment about the cause of their flight.

Objects found in the abandoned camp led to the conclusion that the expedition consisted

of Englishmen.

Our detachment set up camp a bit below the camp of the English expedition, on the banks of the same stream. I climbed one of the nearest hills in order to orient myself. The ridge of the height, covered with dense forest, shut off the horizon in the south. Farther in this direction there were no more people. The natives said that only elephants and other wild animals are found there.

From Menu the Ras had to make a rather difficult choice of route. It seemed impossible to go farther to the southwest.

According to the natives, there were no inhabited lands. The time was already late; and the rainy season should be coming soon. Therefore, the Ras decided to postpone farther movement to the southwest to the following year and to take possession now of the mouth of the Omo River, the most important strategic point in these regions; and then return to Kaffa to finally conquer all the tribes found on the route which we had followed, and to station garrisons in their lands.

I very much wanted to investigate to what degree the territory to the southwest of Menu actually is uninhabited and impassable. I thought about separating from the Ras, with my own little detachment; but yielding to the request of the Ras, I gave up this intention and decided to go together with him to find the famous Lake Rudolf.

**March 10.**

We rested ... Since the natives did not know where to find Lake Rudolf, our natural guide was now the compass.

I approximately determined the geographical position of Menu and showed the Ras the direction in which the northern section of Lake Rudolf should lie. He decided to lead his detachment straight there. I did not fully approve of that decision.

After reconnaissance on Feb. 20 and 21, I doubted the possibility of a large detachment going across a rocky plateau with little water, straight to the lake. Besides, it seemed to me it would be necessary to thoroughly reconnoiter the territory lying to the southeast and southwest before leaving Menu.

Ras Wolde Giyorgis understood the morale and strength of his soldiers better than I did. He considered it useless to undertake reconnaissance now with units of his detachment, since he was already convinced that would yield no results. It was necessary to move ahead, not losing time and to use what inertia of strength the army still had, rather than risk it by delay. As an experienced warrior, the Ras knew the laws which apply to human masses. He felt the degree of intensity of energy of his detachment and foresaw that stopping threatened much greater danger for them than the uncertainty of the desert.

**March 11.**

At dawn, the signal horn woke us, as always. We left the settlement and set out to the

southwest into the desert. Near the settlements, we came upon cattle left behind by the English expedition which had passed through here two days before. And at several hours journey from Menu in one ravine, we found fresh bones and the innards of rams, which caught our attention because many predatory birds were flying above. The English expedition must have here rested during the day, after their night march of March 8 to 9.

At 11:30 we found water and set up camp. I conducted solar observations and marked our approximate astronomical position on the map. (91) Because he was very interested in the results of these observations, the Ras sent his elfin ashker (page) with the usual question: did I "screw up" the sun? How many numbers (i.e., minutes or degrees) had we gone? And he asked me to show him on the map the place where we were going.

I sent him the map. I wasn't in any condition to go myself.

I lay on my bed in complete exhaustion. I was beginning to get a fever. To this was added severe diarrhea from disgusting food.

The wheat meal had run out several days before. My ashkers had used a small stone bar to thresh meal from some grain they had obtained. This was, strictly speaking, not meal but rather shattered grain. From it we baked unleavened and unfermented flat cakes in iron pans, and that constituted the basis of our food. We only ate meat on days of successful hunts or in inhabited lands if we succeeded in catching a goat or ram. I no longer had any salt. (92) Because of this we could only cook meat on coals, pouring some

bile over it for taste. Cooked unsalted meat and the soup made from it were too disgusting. Instead of flat cakes, we sometimes ate mashella grain cooked in a pan. This is a remarkably fine dish. Each grain is split into several pieces, fastened at the base, and resembles a snow white miniature rose. It is tasty but bad for the stomach, since the skin irritates it.

For a long time, I had neither tinned goods nor wine nor coffee. There remained several little boxes of broth (Magi), in case of illness, which I now ate, and a little bottle of essence of cognac, several drops of which I added to boiling water, which, together with saccharine, I drank instead of tea. In camp, Zelepukin and I drank several saucepans of this beverage, avoiding unboiled water. We restrained ourselves from drinking on the march.

In general, it is unpleasant to be sick; but on the march it is immeasurably worse, especially in such circumstances. The long marches then seem endless, each step of the mule seems a torture, but arrival at camp is no easier. You have no beds, and you can't get grass nearby. You lie on a tarpaulin spread out directly on the rocky ground, accommodating yourself to rocks that stick out under it. The sun shines through the poor-quality material of a small soldier's tent. The temperature is 28-29 degrees Reaumur [95-97 degrees F] in the shade. The stuffy heat is terrible. You pour with sweat and wait and wait for evening. Finally the sun sets. Camp fires blaze. They are our light and heating.

The camp grows quiet. It becomes colder and there is a new misery. A violent storm

swoops down and brings down the tent; and under a downpour of rain, you are soaked to the bones ...

That day we made a seven-hour march and set up camp at the foot of Mount Bume, which I had noted from the cliffs on February 21.

### **March 12.**

We set out at dawn and the Ras sent ahead reconnaissance to find water. The terrain we were going through was very rocky. Here and there among the stones there was some scanty grass, scorched in places, and low little mimosa and acacia trees. About twelve o'clock noon, we took prisoner several women of the Tirma tribe who live in the mountains which rise in the east. They were gathering beans here from a tree which is similar to the acacia and which the Abyssinians call komora or rok. The fruit of the komora looks like pods, inside which there are paired seeds with a meaty covering. These fruits are used in the preparation of a fermented drink; and the women, having gathered them here, take them to Menu where they barter these fruits for grain.

The prisoners had heard about Guchumba (Europeans) who passed through their lands 8-10 days before. The Europeans had bought bread from their tribe for beads and had taken a guide to Menu.

They did not know of the existence of a lake to the south.

The land of Murle, about which our guide Jufa had spoken, was also unknown to them. According to them, there was no water nearby. Fortunately, we found some puddles with water, which had collected in the channel of a dried-up river after the night's cloud burst. Our mounted patrols returned late in the evening and by campfires told the bivouac that they had found only desert.

The temperature during the day was 28 degrees Reaumur [95 degrees F] in the shade and at night was 18 degrees Reaumur [72 degrees F].

After a completely calm and clear day, a violent rainstorm arose at night.

I felt better and recovered somewhat from my illness.

### **March 13.**

The commander-in-chief continued to persist in his intention to go straight to Lake Rudolf, despite the absence of water.

We left the Tirma mountains in the northeast (where the prisoners had come from) and began to go down a little along the gently sloping inclines of the plateau, moving along the channel of a stream on the banks of which we had stayed the day before.

The countryside here is just as threatening as it is beautiful. In places there rise cliffs arranged like decorations. Their outline is in the highest degree distinctive.

In the southeast there stood out a high rocky mountain, similar to a truncated pyramid, which looked like it had another pyramid of smaller dimensions placed on its upper surface. I had first seen this mountain on February 20 and now beginning on March 8 it rose all the time on the horizon in front of us, serving as our beacon. Then I saw it March 24-30 from the valley of the River Omo, and finally in the month of April from Mount Kastit. Its local name remained unknown to me. Very often I had to plot it on my plane-table and when during the long tedious hours of lengthy non-stop marches, suffering from intense heat and thirst, I was carried away in thought to my distant homeland, this mountain reminded me of the Tsar's Cylinder at Krasnoye Selo. This plateau seemed to me like a huge military exercise field, and it was as if we were maneuvering our detachment over it, and ahead was the Tsar's Cylinder with a tent pitched on it as on parade days ...

Therefore. I named this mountain "Tsar's Cylinder" both in my journal and on my map.

About noon, after long searches, we found a puddle of water in one of the dry channels. The territory where we had come is a realm of animals, in the full sense of the word. The flat steppe, at an altitude of 1,000 meters above sea level, is covered with short unscorched white grass and rare trees. The whole animal population crowded near water. Herds of zebras roamed alternately with antelope and wild goats, and looked with astonishment on humans who unexpectedly appeared. They did not rush to go away from us. In the sand of the channel were seen the deeply pressed tracks of rhinoceroses and

elephants.

Around the camp, uninterrupted gunfire resounded: the soldiers, the majority of whom had exhausted their supply of provisions, were hunting to get themselves food.

Our soldiers had left Menu with a very small quantity of provisions, hoping that a new land abundant in bread grain was no farther from Menu than Menu was from Kolu; and for those who had to carry all their supplies on their heads, that food had run out already. These soldiers, who usually strictly observed fast and were squeamish about eating the meat of wild animals, now killed whatever game came their way and were not squeamish about any kind of meat. Those who did not go hunting bought meat for themselves from their more fortunate comrades. For example, two soldiers came to me during dinner and, bowing low, entreated me to sell them, in exchange for cartridges, a piece of an antelope I had killed ... The old man guide Muruta-Babus said that in two marches to the north there is Kira, a land rich in bread grain. The women prisoners taken the day before likewise confirmed this and on the following day the Ras decided to once again climb the mountains.

It was quiet and joyless in our camp. Neither songs nor laughter nor jokes, nor the humorous sayings which Abyssinian soldiers so much enjoy.

This goal of wandering in an uninhabited desert with little water and suffering deprivation was incomprehensible to them.

Fantastic rumors spread among them. Of course, they blamed the foreigner — me — for all their troubles and gave my ashkers a very hard time.

"Where are we going?" they asked. "Are we soon going to be able to go home? Your frenj wants to destroy all of us! To him this is child's play. He's enchanted. He can go without eating and drinking and doesn't get tired ..."

Sometimes fights broke out between soldiers and my ashkers. However, in relationship to me, both the officers and the soldiers were courteous.

Incidents of people making insulting statements about me no longer occurred (as they had in the first days of my acquaintance with them), and although their feelings toward me were hostile, at the same time the soldiers respected me. Malice toward me had grown in recent days and began to reach such proportions that some of my friends felt it was their duty to warn me so I would be careful ...

#### **March 14.**

We turned north and began to climb the mountain. I hunted antelope and zebra. I killed several but, unfortunately, could take neither the hide nor the horns of the antelope. I just only loaded on my saddle one leg of a dead zebra for dinner. From an altitude of 1,000 meters above sea level, we climbed the mountain range to a height of 1,500 meters and by a difficult, steep descent, clearing a road in dense thickets of thorny bushes, went

down to the Demu River at an altitude of 600 meters above sea level.

There was very little water in the river. It sufficed only for the men. The animals were prohibited from drinking. To maintain order, a guard was posted at the water. We had gone non-stop for eleven hours that day, at a temperature of 26 degrees Reaumur [91 degrees F] in the shade; and during the entire march we had only found water once, at nine o'clock in the morning, in a small hole at the top of the mountain range.

In the territory where we found ourselves, nomad Idenich of the Tilay tribe wandered with their herds. The soldiers captured one of their herds and drove it to our camp. This was a lucky find for our hungry soldiers. With a cry, forgetting their weariness, they chased oxen, goats, and rams, taking them from one another.

One Tilay fell captive to us. He was two arshins and 12 vershoks tall [6 foot 5 inches], and was armed with two spears. A seventeen-year-old soldier caught him.

The prisoner knew the territory to the north and that to the west, including Menu. He had seen Guchumba (Europeans) when they crossed through his lands, and he had sold them a goat.

Regarding the existence of Lake Rudolf, he had not heard. He only knew that the Kibish River, into which the Denu River flows, flows in turn into the large War River, which was east of us about seven days' journey.

Of the tribes living to the south, he mentioned the Bumbi, who came from far to take their livestock.

### **March 15.**

We crossed to the Kibish River by a valley thickly overgrown with bushes, and set up camp on its banks. The Kibish River goes down the southeast slopes of the mountain range and flows into the Omo. Its sandy channel was widely eroded as a result of the abrupt variations of the level of its water. Its current near our camp was about 6 versts [four miles] per hour. Its width was about 30 paces. Its depth was no more than an arshin [28 inches]. Its altitude above sea level was 900 meters.

Near the bivouac itself, our soldiers found fresh traces of the presence of Europeans. On the banks of the river several campfires smoldered, near which lay pieces of meat, thrown away during a hasty exit, clothing of servants, and some articles such as knives with English brand names.

Apparently, they still hadn't gotten over their panicky fear of the Abyssinians and, taken unawares, had hurriedly fled. It would not be difficult for the Ras to pursue them now, if there were any need to do so; but, of course, there was no need for any kind of aggressive action, and the Ras let the Europeans go away peacefully. (93)

In the low-lying valley, closed in by mountains, it was even hotter. At noon it was 31

degrees Reaumur [102 degrees F] in the shade. I, as usual, "twisted the sun" and determined the astronomical position of our bivouac.

The afternoon weather was calm, but at sunset there were gusts of strong northwest wind which reminded me of the violent storms in Kolu.

### **March 16.**

We entered the land called Kira and set up our bivouac among dense settlements at a height of 1,400 meters above sea level.

Near Kibisha, we stumbled upon a female rhinoceros with her young and killed them. Entering a populated land, the soldiers spread out to get provisions for themselves. The inhabitants retreated before the Abyssinians, attacking only when they got very excited. Individual fights, which broke out rarely, cost us several men killed and wounded. Among those killed was one officer, whom the soldiers carried into the bivouac and loudly mourned.

My ashkers also went to get spoils and brought several skins full of grain, several pounds of coffee and a ram with a large fatty tail. I was delighted to get the coffee. We melted down fat from the ram's tail. From its "white fat" (94) we made candles, which for two days served as my substitute for what up until then had been my only light — the flame of the campfire.

Several prisoners were taken who belong to the same nationality as the mountain dwellers of Beru, Kasi, Dami, etc.

### **March 17.**

On the occasion of a holiday in honor of the Mother of God, the detachment was given a day of rest. Foraging was prohibited.

### **March 18.**

We went east, following along the summit of a densely populated mountain spur which stretched in this direction. In the north, arose the rocky peak of Muy, and from both sides of the mountain ridge, streams, flowing in deep valleys, fell into the Kibish.

The natives left their dwellings and, sitting on cliffs several thousand paces from us, looked at our marching column, and sometimes pointing at the road with their spears expressed their wish that we quickly go away. The settlements were just as dense, the houses as well built, and the fields as well cultivated as in Beru. On the hill were seen the farmsteads of the tribal leaders, and near them were holy groves.

Going up to the mountain spur, we went down by a steep difficult cliff to the Karka River and set up a bivouac on its banks.

We left the populated territories behind, and ahead of us again stretched low-lying hot, and almost uninhabited space with little water.

Our march was of short duration. We had only been gone for 12 days up until now, from the time when we left the fort at Kolu. We hadn't gone very many versts over that time, wandering in unknown places. But, in spite of that, our soldiers were exhausted and our animals were worn out. In such circumstances, however, it is not the distance nor the time which determines the expenditure of strength of the detachment, but rather the obstacles of the march.

Not finding water very often from bivouac to bivouac, we moved without stopping, sometimes going for ten or eleven hours under scorching intense heat, without a road, breaking a path along rocky desert strewn with sharp stones or among dense thickets of thorny bushes, which turned our clothes into rags. How much these marches made the men lame and crippled the animals, and how little time the soldiers had for rest in these conditions! ... No sooner did the detachment arrive at bivouac than some soldiers went to tear out grass for mules (but there was very little of that on the rocky plateau), to fetch firewood, to fetch water, to grind meal on field millstones for flat-cakes for dinner. Others were assigned to details and guard duty. Only in the night did the detachment quiet down, and even then people who had lost their mules during the day roamed about calling out in monotonous cries "in the name of Abo" (Abyssinian saint), "return it or show me where it is."

There were also a good number of sick people in the detachment.

Now new difficulties lay ahead of us. Soldiers were ordered to supply themselves with provisions enough for not less than ten days. The Ras explained to his officers that we would go to the lake which is located ten days' journey away, and on the shores of which we would find provisions. But who in the detachment was confident that this lake actually exists and that the Ras's words were justified? Up until this time, prisoners had talked very indefinitely about some river to the east — Shorum or War — a very large river in which, judging by the chuckles which they made when saying this, hippopotamuses swim. The water of this river becomes very great farther on and then "lies." But where the river "lies" and who inhabit its banks remained unclear; and relative to anything regarding this lake in general, the testimony was very contradictory. The only one who knew for certain about the existence and location of the lake was I, and the commander-in-chief had complete faith in me. The officers were unsympathetic toward the new march. When the Ras explained his decision to them at a military council, many of the leaders protested, pointing out the condition of the detachment.

The commander-in-chief was unshakeable; and in refutation, he answered with the following words: "Let cowards and old women perish or clear out! I will not return without having reached the shore of the lake. And if you all leave me, I will go there with Iskyndyr Bulatovich and with the men of my guard."

I do not know if another leader could have succeeded in moving this immense weary army, who felt immediately ahead of them the horror of hunger, in a new unknown and seemingly endless desert.

But Wolde Giyorgis, in the highest degree, had the gift of a military leader to control the will of his subjects and to carry them along behind him.

### **March 19.**

We left the bivouac at the Karka River and went southwest. There had been a rain storm at night, which made our route difficult. We crossed several mountain spurs of Mount Say and, finally at three o'clock in the afternoon, set up camp on the lower reaches of the Karka River. For the first time our guides were two young natives of the tribe which inhabits the western slopes of Mount Say. They had arrived the day before and had brought as a gift to the Ras two rhinoceros horns. These natives had heard that there is a lake to the south. They called it "Boru." Near our very bivouac was found the stopping place of the English from a month before. According to the natives, the Europeans stayed here a long time and then went west.

These two mountain dwellers were remarkably good-looking women. They had a bold open expression on their faces, and regular features, large expressive eyes, and straight noses. They led us to the southwest until we had gone a significant distance from their lands. Then when we went into a dense thicket, they hid in it and ran away.

Our bivouac was at an elevation of 920 meters above sea level. The temperature was 32 degrees Reaumur in the shade [104 degrees F].(95) I was beginning to feel very sick. Feeling an attack of fever coming on, I swallowed strong doses of quinine.

**March 20.**

We went across low-lying, black-earth steppe, which was boggy from rain that had poured at night, to the Kibish River, and set up camp on its banks. Here a mass of wild game appeared. There roamed herds of wild goats, antelope, and zebra; and I shot at them without leaving the trail. Hunting the wild goats was the most fun. Frightened, they rushed at a gallop back along our whole marching column, sometimes, like crazy, bursting into our ranks. The men raised a cry, shot at the goats, threw spears, chopped with sabers and then ceremoniously divided the booty. I killed one he-goat with horns nine inches long. In the thick forest which stretches along the banks of the river, a rhinoceros attacked us. Unexpectedly, it threw itself from the bushes on the very middle of our marching column and having killed one mule (the Abyssinian who was sitting on it saved himself by some miracle), it hid in the bushes on the other side. This happened so quickly that no one even managed to shoot at it. It was remarkably hot that day, even though the thermometer only registered 28 degrees Reaumur [95 degrees F] in the shade. It was really a steam bath.

When I arrived at bivouac, I lay in total exhaustion under my tent, having raised its side, having taken off absolutely all my clothes, and having drunk weak warm coffee. At noon I still had enough strength to conduct solar observations.

In the east, according to our guides, a large river should be found at a distance of one or two days journey. (In all probability, that would be the River Omo). But what the natives

understood by one or two days journey and whether there would be water along the way, remained unclear. It was necessary to conduct reconnaissance, but who could you rely on now? The commander-in-chief decided to do it himself. Not far away there rose the height of a mountain ridge from which one could see the river valley well. The Ras and I climbed one of the peaks, and in front of us in the east opened the low-lying valley. About 30 versts [20 miles] from us, at the foot of the mountain ridge which stretched out on that side of the valley, was seen a dark ribbon of trees and here, evidently, must be the water surface.

The Kibish River turned to the northeast. We did not notice any other tributaries of the supposed river to the east. And the commander-in-chief took the bold decision to go straight to the east. The way along the Kibish River would take a lot of time, but, evidently, we could cover in about seven hours, without much trouble, the 30 versts [20 miles] separating us from the other river to which the Kibish aimed its path.

Not far from the hill from which we were examining the countryside arose a higher mountain which promised me a more sizable horizon. I separated from the Ras and headed to it, accompanied by one of my gun bearers. However, the mountain turned out to be much farther than I had guessed, and was at least 10 versts [7 miles] from the bivouac. At an altitude of more than 1,000 meters above sea level, the crest was overgrown with low grass and rare trees. On the summit, I saw several holes with water collected after the rain. Near them the ground was completely trampled by the hooves of zebras and antelope.

Here went fresh trails laid by elephants, along which they, probably, crossed the mountains, wandering from the River Omo to the Kibish River. Despite such an abundance of signs of wild animals, I only chanced to see one antelope. The sun had already set when I reached the summit. I was mistaken in my expectations: nothing new could be seen from this mountain, and having taken from here azimuths on the surrounding mountains, I rushed back to the bivouac. Only at nine o'clock in the evening did I return, delayed by complete darkness and by the difficult descent.

The locale where we were now was remarkable from a mineralogical perspective. The bed of the stream was strewn with fragments of every possible kind of granite and gneiss. In the mountains, you encounter micaceous shale, veins of quartz, and rock crystal. Here the natives, as we later learned, mine iron and copper ore. (96)

### **March 21.**

This day was one of the most memorable of the whole expedition.

At four o'clock in the morning, by the light of campfires, we loaded our mules and went beyond the Kibish River, to the southwest, toward where we presumed the River Omo lay. Having passed dense bushes along the banks of the Kibish, and having left behind us the mountain ridge on which we had climbed the day before, we entered a wide smooth steppe. Here the soil, having reverted to a swamp in the rainy period, now was strongly cracked, and in fact, our mules stumbled. The road became still more difficult thanks to

the sticky mud of a night shower.

Our detachment went spread out along the steppe in a wide front.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the terrain began to change its character, and we came upon rare bushes in clumps which stood along the steppe. Here there was a lot of wildlife, but we didn't disturb it because we had such a long crossing ahead of us. Only for a giraffe was an exception made. The commander-in-chief very much wanted to kill this animal — the only one which he, up until this time, still hadn't killed. The advance guard was even ordered to quickly report as soon as giraffes were spotted.

At 10:30 in the morning, a soldier from the advance guard galloped back with the report that a herd of giraffes was near.

The Ras jumped on his horse, and all of us who were riding mules or horses galloped in the indicated direction. We quickly overtook the herd. The fleeing giraffes made a very humorous sight. They held their long necks high (so that their snouts rose above the bushes which grew around). The short hind legs hopped as if in a gallop, and their long front legs, not bending, ran ahead of us in some sort of Spanish trot. Our horses and mules seemed faster. On my marvelous little mule, I soon caught up with one large giraffe and galloped beside him. I very much wanted to chop with a saber along its long thin neck, but the damned mule did not by any means want to get near to such a strange animal, which it had never seen before. I finally laid low the giraffe with several shots

from a Mauser revolver and, having chopped off its tail as a trophy, hastened to return to the detachment, which had already gone off, far to the side.

Passing occasional bushes, we went into dense thickets of thorny trees which the Abyssinians call "kontyr". This is a low little tree almost devoid of leaves, with branches covered with long (about a vershok [1-3/4 inches]) thorns, turned to the base.

There were occasions when these thorns literally took you prisoner. One soldier caught by the shoulder and wanting to free himself, caught himself by the sleeve. With his other arm he tried to free the first, but it did not escape the same fate. The soldier tried to free it with his teeth, but the thorns caught his lips in several places, and the poor fellow began to yell with foul language.

Salt marsh replaced the black-earth steppe. Our column stopped. With sabers, we hacked a narrow trail in the bushes and slowly entered it. The heat became intolerable. The sun was almost at its zenith and scorched us with its perpendicular rays.

Air in the thickets was completely motionless and was made even more stifling by the multitude of people crowded together. After a fast walk by a difficult muddy road, an intolerable thirst tormented all of us, and especially pained those of us who had gone hunting giraffes and had taken part in the 20-minute gallop after them. But we still didn't come across water, and all the water that we had had with us had already been drunk.

All our thoughts and striving concentrated on the expected river, but almost every step brought us new disappointments. Here the terrain begins to drop steeply. You strain your sight to see through the trees the water you are wishing for; but, alas, this is just a dry riverbed. Beyond that follows a second and a third ... Time passes, and the torment becomes even more unbearable. Many Abyssinians — people who, it would seem, are accustomed to the heat — began to collapse, to fall from sun stroke or exhausted by heat and thirst.

It was already four o'clock in the afternoon. More than three hours, which seemed to us an eternity, had passed since we found ourselves in such agonizing uncertainty. Dry river beds followed one after the other. There wasn't even a sign of the presence of a river nearby. These were painful minutes ...

The thought oppressed us that we could be mistaken in supposing that there is a river in these thickets. Perhaps it doesn't exist. Perhaps it's still several dozen versts away from us. Perhaps even, it is located on the far side of the ridge ahead of us, and along here go only dry riverbeds of its tributaries ... Perhaps finally, I had made a significant mistake in determining the longitude of our bivouac, and we were actually much farther west than I thought? If that was true, the detachment was threatened by certain destruction. My head became foggy from these thoughts. A moment seemed like an eternity.

You count each step of the mule. You continually look at your watch, but the hands haven't moved. It's as if your watch had stopped.

Suddenly, up ahead, a cry resounded: "Water!" It was 4:30 in the afternoon. Under our feet, there began to glitter a wide band of water on the surface of which, here and there, shone the black drowsy forms of crocodiles, stretching the full length of their enormous bodies.

The commander-in-chief ordered that horns be blown — the signal to stop and camp. Along the whole column, like electrical current, went the news that water had been found. The forest resounded with joyous cries. What a feeling! What incomparable joy we experienced at this minute! Water was found! The detachment was saved!

We rushed to the river and endlessly drank its warm water. I scooped with my helmet, and the more I drank, the more thirsty I became. My body, which up until then had been completely dry, was soon completely covered with sweat. One of the officers wanted to drink so much that, having arrived at the water, he felt dizzy and fell into the river.

Only at seven o'clock in the evening did the rearguard arrive, having buried on the way four soldiers who had died from sun stroke. In all, on this day, more than ten men died, and in addition, several dozen lost their way and were missing.

Near the river itself, an Idenich woman fell captive. In the forest, she had been gathering some kind of grass which they use for food. Kelemis was the name of our prisoner. She called this valley "Kelese," and the river "War." Kelemis belonged to a tribe of savages

who roamed these woods and lived by fishing and hunting. The only place which was abundant in bread grain which she had heard of was a land, according to her, about five or six days journey away. She also knew Europeans — Guchumba. By the testimony of Kelemis, they had gone through here four days ago and had crossed the river at some distance south from our bivouac.

The river is 657 meters above sea level. Its banks are sandy and steep, rising about 30 meters above the water. The width is 200 to 300 meters. The current is about eight versts per hour.

We kept Kelemis as a guide.

### **March 22.**

As usual, we set out at dawn and went south, following, at some distance, the riverbed of the War.

At about 10 o'clock in the morning, we set up camp. I used the early stopover and hurried to one of the nearest hills to conduct noontime solar observations.

In his descriptions of his journeys, Donaldson Smith or Hohnel (I do not now remember which of them) said that those who think that travel is just a pleasant way to pass the time are very mistaken. And, actually, if the traveler only wants to get some favorable results, he would make a mess of the work. I am thoroughly convinced of the truth of that. Apart

from a whole series of trouble, apart from the constant strain of attention, of cares, and long wearisome marches, how much time it takes to put together maps of the route, and make every kind of observation, and to choose the route, etc. On arrival at camp, instead of the wished for rest, new work awaits us: we have to mark the route on the map, write in a journal, conduct astronomical observations and calculate them approximately, take photographs, etc. If you take all this into account and also the fact that there was almost never a day's rest in recent time, and that we were on the road every day for not less than six hours, and that our transport arrived two to three hours after arrival at the bivouac of the head of the column, then actually my whole day was filled with work. The hardest task for me was conducting solar observations at noon, especially in the low-lying valley of the River Omo. As soon as we arrived at camp, if it was before noon, I rushed with my instruments to some high hill, from which I could observe the territory. Out of breath, bathed in sweat in the 60 degree Réaumur [167 degree F] heat, I tried to get to the desired summit. Noon was already approaching. There was no time to rest. You rush to set up the instrument but somehow, out of spite, the level doesn't want to stay still for long. From the heat and the rapid walk, my heart beats quickly, my fingers refuse to handle the micrometrical screws with the necessary care. My gun bearers spread out around the little hill where I am conducting observations, protecting me in case of unexpected attack from natives lying somewhere in ambush. It is difficult to sit motionless in the full heat of the sun. The sun burns mercilessly. Sweat pours in a torrent from my forehead, onto my eyelashes, and prevents me from looking in the eye-piece of the instrument. My temples throb. My head spins... But I had to observe with my full attention. With effort, you observe the moment when the sun touches "the edge of the hairline." You must not make

a mistake regarding the second on the chronometer and regarding the vernier(97) in the "vertical circle." What torture all this is and how much patience it takes!

Making use of the fact that in these latitudes the sun is almost at the first vertical, simultaneously with observations of the least zenith distances, I conducted observations of the moment of greatest height of the sun by corresponding altitudes.

At the same time, I observed the place of the meridian and, with the universal instrument, took true azimuths on salient mountains.

On this day, several Idenich women fell captive to us. They were extremely ugly and gave the impression that they were complete imbeciles.

After sunset, a violent storm flew down from the northwest, bringing rain.

### **March 23.**

The detachment continued to follow the course of the river, just as the day before, blazing a road in the dense thickets with sabers. The river turned west, and its salt-marsh banks were eroded by rainstorms in a large space, forming an intricate miniature mountain system. We went zigzag, following the turns of the river and thereby, to no purpose, lost strength and time. It would have been much better to follow at a greater distance from the river, straight to the chosen bivouac site on its banks.

The Ras stopped and began to personally interrogate Kelemisa about the location of Murle, (98) and the closest way to get there, avoiding the bushes which were holding us back. But Kelemisa, who only two days before had said she knew Murle and the road there, now flatly renounced her words and announced that she had not heard anything about Murle. Probably the other captive interpreters, wanting the detachment to quickly turn back, got her to say that. This evident lie produced an enormous impression on the soldiers who were crowding around the Ras and who were attentively listening to the interrogation. And because of the speed with which this news spread among the Abyssinians, it could have had dire consequences for us. They all at this point believed the Ras's words that the land of Murle, abundant in bread-grain, was just a few days' journey away. Now, suddenly, the promised place had not been found, and our guide even denied its very existence. Fortunately, I was with the Ras at that moment and hurried to intervene.

"You lie," I told her through a translator. "Here, for this lie, I am now going to give you a medicine from which you will quickly die as soon as you tell another lie."

I ordered soldiers to open Kelemisa's mouth, and staring fixedly at her eyes, I squeezed a dose of quinine in between her teeth. Kelemisa looked at me with horror.

"Where is Murle?" I asked her after that.

She pointed south with her finger.

"Liba ie unto? Is there bread there or not?" (In the Idenich language.)

"Ie. There is," she answered.

The Ras and I triumphed: we had avoided a major calamity. After this, we went further, and toward noon came to water.

Kelemis now obediently carried out our orders.

At about 11 o'clock we set up camp. On the opposite bank of the river, native farmsteads were seen close together, surrounded by fields of mashella. On our bank, the fields were also cultivated in some places, but there were no settlements. The natives probably crossed to this side in dug-out canoes for field labor. Two men and several women fell captive to us. By outward appearance and dress, they differed from the Idenich. And they didn't understand the Idenich language. They were much better looking than the Idenich. The lower lip was pierced and into it was placed a small stick, several centimeters long, decorated with copper plates. The edge of the ears, from top to bottom, was threaded with several copper rings with red beads on them.

The men were completely naked, and the women on their hips wore a short apron, embroidered with little shells, and had an ox hide thrown across their shoulders. Their hair was cut short and let grow only on the crown, in curled locks.

I "twisted the sun" and then dispensed medicine and made bandages for the sick and wounded who had come to me. The medical condition of our detachment became worse each day. Many soldiers had cut their legs on rocks or gotten splinters from thorns, and the hot tropical climate was injurious to even the smallest wounds, subjecting them to virulent putrefaction.

In addition, many suffered from abscesses. Many were sick with diarrhea and fevers. There were some who were wounded during recent foraging. These men were amazingly patient. I had never seen such powers of endurance.

I spent the time after dinner with the commander-in-chief on the bank of the river, in the shade of an enormous tree. We watched the inhabitants on the other bank through a telescope and shot at crocodiles and hippopotamuses when they appeared on the surface of the water. The crocodiles were amazingly bold and did not fear men at all.

#### **March 24.**

The river turned east. The detachment followed its flow, and at about 12:30 the head of the column set up camp on the shores of a small lake, formed by flooding of the River Omo. The low-lying part of the bank was overgrown with dense forest, in which the trees attained gigantic dimensions. I "twisted the sun" and since we had gone first to the southwest and then to the southeast, and were not getting much closer to the celebrated Lake Rudolf, Wolde Giyorgis despaired when I showed him the location of today's

bivouac on the map. He had begun to doubt that we would ever reach the lake, and today he expressed his thoughts to me in private. Evidently, the strength and energy both of the detachment and of the commander-in-chief had fallen. A characteristic indicator of this was the extent to which the marching column had stretched out: the head of the column arrived at the bivouac at 12:30 and the rear guard only at about 7 o'clock in the evening. Mules withstood the heat very badly and, going daily with packs, from seven to thirteen hours a day, with each day they became weaker and weaker. The men also were extremely exhausted — especially those who because they didn't have pack animals carried their provisions on their heads.

I acknowledged the justice of the Ras's misgivings, but said that the lake should be quite close. And we should find provisions there!

"We mustn't lose spirit," I told the Ras. "You know that no great deed is easily done; yes, even a woman, when she gives birth, suffers."

The commander-in-chief liked these words. Laughing, he replied, "God grant that we soon give birth to your lake."

At eight o'clock in the evening there was a violent storm, but a weaker one than the day before.

**March 25.**

The day of the Annunciation was very lucky for us. Going through hilly salt marshes, we came to a level steppe overgrown with succulent grass and bushes. At eight o'clock in the morning, we sighted the farms of natives, ripening fields of mashella and corn and numerous herds of cattle and donkeys. How gratifying this picture was for our hearts after the barren salt-marsh hills and impassable thickets of thorny bushes! Soldiers forgot their weariness and, with a whoop, scattered over the plain. They took cattle and went into houses, looking for milk and bread. The inhabitants fled and only rarely did shots resound, bearing witness to individual skirmishes. At nine o'clock in the morning the detachment set up camp in the very center of the settlement.

I climbed one of the hills which rose not far from camp and from there conducted solar observations. Several paces from me lay an Abyssinian officer, face downwards, having buried his face in the ground and having put matab to his lips (a silk cord with an amulet sewed onto it, for which the Abyssinians have now substituted a cross). He had just been killed. On his back and on his neck gaped enormous wounds caused by a spear ...

Having returned to camp, Zelepukin and I dined marvelously on ram cooked in butter, and drank a pitcher of milk ... Soldiers returned to camp weighed down with grain and drove before them livestock and prisoners. The prisoners were interrogated, and they indicated that the lake was just two days' journey away.

For the whole detachment this day was a great holiday. For the first time in three days of marching we could go to sleep without heavy worries about the following day.

The camp didn't settle down for a long while this night.

After dinner, the joyful beat of drums which rang out — gybyr! gybyr! — as the Abyssinians called it, was drowned out by the bleating of sheep, the moaning of cows, and the he-haws of donkeys newly captured by soldiers. Somewhere people were singing. Joyful laughing was heard, along with lively stories about today's battle episodes. And among all these noises resounded the usual long drawn-out cries of soldiers searching for their lost mules. Near each tent was a campfire; and by its light, soldiers busied themselves with their just-acquired donkeys, training them to carry packs. The donkeys break loose and fight, but finally submit.

### **March 26.**

At five o'clock in the morning, the signal horn resounds, and we set out. A captive who was taken yesterday leads us straight along the smooth steppe which is covered with grass and rare trees. The Murdu settlements (99) were left behind. Near the banks in some places are seen fields of mashella, but houses are not noticeable. About eight o'clock in the morning, the surface of the lake shows in the distance. Here, finally, is the cherished goal of our expedition! Soldiers greet the long-awaited lake with joyous cries. Our marching column is again just as noisy, impetuous and joyful as it had been before. With laughs, the soldiers repeat sayings they have made up during the march, expressing in a humorous vein the hardships they have undergone. (100)

We set up camp on the shore of a small lake, among small settlements of the Masai tribe (101) and took several inhabitants prisoner. The majority of the prisoners were lame as a result of damaged tendons under the knee. I didn't succeed in determining the cause of this circumstance. Did they go lame in a fight with comrades, armed with bracelet-shaped knives, or was it a punishment for vagrancy, and a way to attach them strongly to the land? ...

## **VIII. The Mouth of the River Omo and the Return Trip to the Kibish River**

After the confluence of three rivers named Gibye into one river, the Nyanya (which the natives who live near its mouth call the Omo) is pressed on the east by a high mountain range, which constitutes the watershed of the basins of Lake Walamo (Regina Margherita) and Lake Rudolf. On the west, it is pressed by the high Kaffa Mountains — spurs of the Emperor Nicholas II Mountain Range, which is the watershed of the basins of the Omo and Sobat Rivers. From there it goes south from six degrees north latitude, from mountain ravines into a wide valley. Then one of the spurs of the eastern mountain range, rising in the shape of a rock ridge above the left bank of the river, deflects its flow westward, and the river skirts the southern end of these mountains at 5 degrees 20' north latitude, flows from there south, and then at 4 degrees 59' north latitude and 36 degrees 14' east longitude from Greenwich falls into the Rus or Yrus Bay of Lake Rudolf. The bay is separated from another bay to the east, by a narrow belt, overgrown with half-submerged, high trees.

Along the right bank of the river, which was several dozen versts from us, a high mountain steppe stretches parallel to its flow. On the southern end of the steppe is found the pointed stony summit of Mount Kuras. To the west of these mountains, from a rocky plateau, a stream, which from time to time dries up, flows down to the lake. It flows into the wide Labur Gulf. From the east, a sizeable tributary flows into the River Omo at a latitude of 5 degrees 20' north latitude. (Donaldson Smith climbed along its left bank

during his journey and mistook this river for the Omo). The river valley is a smooth low-lying salt-marsh steppe, covered with grass, and along its course are found dense thickets of thorn bushes and a narrow strip of dense virgin forest. During rainy periods, the terrain near the shores of the lake is flooded to a significant extent. High fantastical column-like structures built by termites are scattered all across this space.

The banks of the Nyanya River are populated only at its mouth. The tribes who dwell here — Murle, Rogo, Murd or Murutu, Masai, and others — are related to Idenich savages, judging by type and language. The typical signs of the Negro race are noticeable in them, but they are more cultured, the expression on their faces is much more intelligent than among the savage hunters and nomads who are related to them and who dwell higher on the course of the river, and who roam in its dense riverside forests and on the rocky plateau to the northwest of the lake. This people startled the first Europeans who discovered them both by their appearance and by the dignity with which they behaved. They are all well-built. The women are far from ugly. The men don't wear any clothing. The women wear around their hips a small crescent-shaped skin which is sometimes sewn with shells; and across their shoulders they throw a large, excellently made ox hide which hangs to the knees. The men and women adorn themselves with iron bracelets, copper ear-rings which are threaded seven in each ear, and small sticks a vershok [1-3/4 inches] in length, which are pulled through the pierced lower lip. Sometimes they replace the stick with a stalk of dry grass and whistle with it. The women, in addition, wear a necklace in several rows, made of finely sawed-up bird and crocodile bones or from clay beads, among which they flaunt blue and white European beads. For the most part, the

men cut their hair short. Some have their hair fluffed high and form two separate tufts of hair, front and back. The women have their heads shaved around the crown, on top of which they grow several locks which fall downwards.

The armament of the warriors consists of long spears, the cutting edge of which is stuck on a horn handle, attached to a long cane. Spears are well sharpened and covered with leather hair-pieces. Defensive armaments consist of shields, decorated on top with ostrich feathers. Warriors adorn their heads with helmets, made from felt put together from human hair, sewn above with shells or from braided dry grass, richly decorated with ostrich feathers.

A characteristic belonging exclusive to this tribe is a small low stool which the men always carry with them. The men sometimes tattoo their right shoulder and right arm with spots, and their forehead with several little vertical lines. The lower incisors of both the men and the women are usually knocked out.

Their language, judging by those words which I gathered, differs very little from the Idenich.

Their culture is at a comparatively high level. Their dome-shaped houses are excellently built. Settlements are arranged in groups. Farmsteads are surrounded by fences. The land is excellently cultivated. They raise cattle and, in addition, breed donkeys, the meat of which they use for food.

Donkeys here are much larger than Abyssinian ones, light-bay in color, and excellently formed.

Most of their settlements are arranged on the left, higher bank of the Nyanya, and only the Murdu or Murutu tribe, who are distinguished for their warlikeness, spread out on the right bank, not fearing attacks of the warlike Turgana steppe inhabitants/nomads, who dwell to the west of Lake Rudolf.

### **March 27.**

At seven o'clock in the morning, we set up camp on the very bank of the river, in the shade of high trees, where the Nyanaya flows into the Rus Gulf. Our detachment in part scattered through the vicinity searching for booty, while part built cabins in the camp. I took advantage of the early stopover and having set up the universal instrument on a small hill on the shore of the lake, carried out solar observations. About two o'clock in the afternoon, having finished the observations, I set out for camp.

Along the way, I passed soldiers returning with booty. Some carried on their heads corn or mashella packed in a cloak; others carried huge gourds, full of sour milk; some lucky ones drove ahead of them herds of donkeys, oxen, goats, and rams and carried on their shoulders shields, spears, and military helmets — today's victory trophies — taken from the natives. The rich booty made the Abyssinians forget their recent troubles and deprivation. They sang war songs and threw one another witticisms and jokes. They met

me now with special respect and bowed low to me. Several kissed my knees and naively thanked me for having "led them to a good land," as if I were the one who had initiated this ...

I no sooner succeeded in returning and dining on a piece of meat cooked in donkey oil, when the Ras and his confessor, surrounded by a crowd of soldiers, came to my tent. They brought me a small boy, abandoned by its parents and terribly mutilated by our blood-thirsty Kulo [irregular soldiers in the Abyssinian detachment]. (100) By the look of him, he was about three years old. A priest found him in the reeds, where he lay in a helpless state near the river itself. The priest picked him up and took him to the Ras, who now brought him to me asking that I help.

The boy stood silently before me, with his legs spread wide. He was terribly covered with blood, but the blood for the most part had dried. The little sufferer did not moan and did not cry. He just looked at all of us meekly. When I laid him on his back so I could bandage him, he, seeing scissors in my hands, began to defend himself with all his strength and to plaintively cry, "Ay! Ay! Ay!" — pounding his chest with his palms. Stern soldiers, who had shed much blood in their time, out of pity could not look at the innocent boy who had spilled his blood and was suffering.

One after the other, they left. The first to go was the Ras himself. I cleaned the wound, washed it with a mixture of mercuric chloride and cocaine and, having made a bandage, laid the boy in my tent.

Vaska, which is what I called him, turned out to be a good, healthy, big-bellied, little boy. The hair on his head was cut short. Only on top did two bunches of hair stick up. His two lower incisors had been knocked out. He had iron bracelets on his arms and legs, and on his neck on a string were fastened two small crocodile bones and were strung beads made of clay.

Zelepukin wanted to take the bones and beads, but Vaska caught hold of them and wouldn't give them up for anything.

I spent the rest of the day in a "dolce far niente" [pleasant idleness] on the banks of the river. In my soul, above all other feelings, the feeling of uncommon peacefulness and "satiation of energy" predominated, if one could express oneself that way — a state which only occurs after completing some difficult protracted task which you have been given. It is pleasant to realize that it is finished, but at the same time you feel some emptiness ... The Ras lay on the high bank of the river on the spread out shamma of one of his pages, having laid down his head on the knees of a colonel. The other officers sat or lay around.

We looked at the quietly flowing, turbid waters of the river and took shots at crocodiles and hippopotamuses which appeared here and there. Through a telescope, we observed what people were doing on the opposite bank, and, now and then, exhausted from the heat and stuffiness, ran down to drink the warm water of the Nyanya...

**March 28.**

The detachment was given a day of rest. The troops were ordered that each rank of the detachment get two stones for the building of a monument in commemoration of our arrival here. One of the colonels was ordered to get men and prepare for the crossing of a small detachment to erect the Abyssinian flag on the other bank.

In the morning, I ordered Gebra Maryam (the soldier-interpreter of the Shuro language) to bring all of the prisoner-interpreters, and each of them came accompanied by the soldier to whom he was entrusted. I spoke to Gebra Maryam in Abyssinian and he translated my words into the Shuro language for the old man Murutu-Babus, who translated them into the language of the mountain dwellers for the captive of the land of Kanta, who in turn translated them for the Idenich, who had been captured several days before near the River Omo, and who, finally, communicated my question to the latest prisoner, the one from the Masai tribe. This wasn't an easy matter. At first, each interpreter repeated several times to his neighbor "Listen well!" and translated my words for him only after the listener had, as requested, answered several times: "I hear well." In this manner, my question travelled to the Masai and back and, of course, underwent all kinds of distortions. Therefore, it was necessary to begin again, with the risk, however, that the mistake would be repeated, since it was not known at which link of the chain it had occurred. Even what would seem to be the most simple pieces of information — for example, the names of the land and the tribe of the new captive — could only be obtained after long interrogations. To satisfy myself that they were really answering the question, I

had recourse to all possible ways of verifying it. Otherwise you could obtain phenomenal distortions. In a word, I refined my sensitivities, like an investigator during a difficult interrogation.

Finally, I learned something. I put together something resembling a dictionary. (103) The languages of the Masai and Idenich tribes seemed so similar that I suspect that a mistake occurred, and that the captured Masai answered with words of the Idenich language which he knew.

Regarding the tribes which live nearby, I found out the following: to the west from the mouth of the river is the land of Lomodok, the inhabitants of which are rich in livestock, but who do not do any cultivation. To the south of them, along the western shores of the lake live the warlike Turgana, who have many herds of livestock and many camels. The Turgana do not sow bread grain, but gather on the shores of the lake some kind of grass which they use as food. (Our soldiers found supplies of grass with many of the women whom they took prisoner near the lake; but not knowing its use, they threw it away).

Many of the prisoners had light blue beads on their neck, some had copper cartridge cases, which, they said, Guchumba (Europeans) had given them. Actually, near the mouth of the river traces of a demolished European camp could still be seen. A low abattis surrounded a small area in one of the corners of which was built a watch-tower. Around the abattis lay many fish and ram bones and, among them, a human skull. The Guchumba were here three months ago, and from here they went into the land of Naruga, up along the course of the River Omo. Apparently, these Europeans were those whose

traces we encountered in Menu. The natives, according to their words, had never seen any other Europeans.

Worn out by the interrogation, I went to rest on the bank of the river, where, at this time, soldiers were getting ready for tomorrow's crossing. The Ras requested interpreters for himself for negotiations with natives on the far side of the river.

Several naked black figures sat on that far bank on low stools, under the shade of a branchy tree.

"Come submit to us," Masai cried out to them, on order of the Ras.

"We don't know you," they answered from the other bank. "You Guchumba (vagrants), go away from our lands."

"If you don't surrender voluntarily, we will shoot at you with the fire of our guns; we will take your livestock, your women and children. We are not Guchumba . We are from the sovereign of the Amhara (Abyssinians) Menelik."

"We do not know Amhara-Menelik. Go away! Go away!"

These talks brought no success, but when a dug-out canoe, found higher on the course of the river, arrived at our bank, the natives became more tractable and began to ask:

"Who is this Amhara-Menelik to whom we are supposed to submit?"

"We are Amhara, and Menelik is our great king."

"You will kill us if we come to you."

"No, no. We will not kill you. Come. Bring tribute."

"Good. We will have a talk about that ..."

At this time, several Abyssinians moored to the opposite bank in order to bring across to our side another dug-out canoe, and the natives hid.

Before evening I performed some operations. I lanced the abscesses of three sick men: one on the hand and two on the soles of the feet.

In our camp, despite the fact that we have been here such a short time, the stench of the mass of innards of slaughtered animals lying around had begun to spread. The Galla literally stuffed themselves with meat. The Abyssinians cut it up into thin ribbons and dried it in the sun for the future, for the first meal after their fast. In particular, processing water-skins corrupted the air. To do this, they moisten the just-taken animal hide and hold it until it begins to rot so much that the animal hair starts to come off easily. Then they

take the hair off, inflate the skin and press down on it with their feet. There was almost no soldier who didn't stock up on water-skins. At almost every tent you see either moistened water-skins set out to rot in the air, or ones fully inflated with air and drying in the sun. You see soldiers dancing on other such skins — holding onto the branch of a tree with their arms and jumping high on a tightly inflated water-skin.

Vaska lives, and today I gave him a bandage. Today one of the ashkers went past the tent where Vaska lies, going to slaughter a ram. As soon as Vaska saw the knife in his hand, Vaska grabbed a stone and raised it threateningly at him. Such spirit in a three-year-old boy! I completely agree with those explorers of Africa who confirm that here there are no children, or, better said, that all — old and young — are equally children.

### **March 29.**

In the morning, everything was ready in camp, and volunteers were already beginning to cross to the other side of the river in the two canoes obtained yesterday. They were dug-outs and were very unsteady. The people sat six to a canoe, holding their arms overboard and clasping the person in front of them with their legs. On the stern, stood experienced boatmen of the Ras from the Kulo tribe, who lived on the banks of the Omo. They rowed with long oars. From the lake there blew a strong wind which raised waves on the river, and the waves washed across the low sides of the dugouts. About a hundred men crossed over, and from this side a thousand guns supported them. The last to cross were Ato-Bayu and I, with a flag attached to a long pole. We tied the flag to the top of a large tree, and from the other side, the troops saluted with a volley of gunfire and the beating of drums.

After having erected the flag, Ato-Bayu and I went back, but the other soldiers scattered along the densely populated bank; and the shots that resounded from time to time showed that they, with deeds, were confirming the words of the Ras, when he was trying to convince the natives to submit willingly. The volunteers assembled for the return crossing only at sunset and returned to our side in the same order in which they had come.

The Ras did not undertake any more serious operations on that side, since his domain ended at the right bank of the River Omo.

In the evening we ceremoniously erected a flag at the mouth of the river. On a signal from the Ras, the detachment came forward, as a reserve column, to the shores of the lake. Each rank of the detachment, including the Ras, carried two stones on its shoulders. We stopped on one of the hills at the very shore and made a high pile from those stones. In the middle, we fixed a column (12 arshins [28 feet] high), made by connecting several tree trunks; and on the end of it rustled a silk green, red and yellow Abyssinian flag. Then the detachment lined up at the flag with their back to the lake. On the opposite side, with his face to the lake, stood the commander-in-chief and his retinue, and behind them the drummers and flutists and pipe players. The Ras took a gun in his hands. All became quiet. All eyes were directed at the commander-in-chief, and the army with tension waited for his first shot. This was a moment of celebration. In front, the lake glistened, that same long-wished-for lake, to which we had striven for so long and steadfastly. To the right, stretched the low-lying steppe, and there the far mountains; to the left lay the

dense forest along the banks of the River Omo. And against this background the front of the Abyssinian army stood out brightly. The silk shirts shone, the animal hides, the gold and silver decorations; and Abyssinian flags fluttered. Finally, a shot rang out, and five thousand Abyssinian guns saluted the new domain of Menelik and again erected his flag. They beat drums, blew on pipes, blew on flutes, and broke out in military songs. Moved, Ras Wolde Giyorgis embraced me, and I, warmly and with feeling, congratulated him.

### **March 30.**

The detachment set out on the trip back. I separated myself from it, intending to climb Mount Kuras, which rose on the southern end of the mountain range, and which stretched out at several dozen versts from the right bank of the river. I wanted to conduct observations there and to make connections with the summits of the mountain range in the north which should be visible from there. Because the detachment was overtired, only two of my gun bearers accompanied me — Ababa and Aulale. I didn't forewarn the Ras of my intentions, knowing that he would not agree to let me go alone without a convoy. We set out at four o'clock in the morning and went quickly along the plain. At first, the terrain was even, and I, in an amble, rode on my marvelous little mule. Ababa and Aulale, the first with the three-eighths inch caliber rifle and the universal instrument, and the second with the tripod, rushed after me at a run. The sun soon rose, and it became hot, and the road became more difficult. The loose soil, which had become soaked during flooding, had deep cracks. The mule stumbled every minute. We went more gently. At about nine o'clock in the morning we heard, not far from us, conversation in the bushes. My boys rushed there and stumbled upon about ten natives with their families.

They had just slaughtered a large ram and were skinning it. Taken completely unawares, the natives fled in all directions, and my ashkers rushed after them. My mule, which could not run quickly because of the cracks in the soil, fell behind the ashkers.

However, this was for the best since soon the natives, having noticed that there were only two Abyssinians, stopped and began to go up to my ashkers from behind; and only when I appeared did they definitely run away. Ababa finally caught a native who was armed with spear, shield, bow and arrows, and Aulale caught his wife with an infant. In this case, my ashkers showed themselves to be fine fellows, since only a brave man could capture an armed man, even if he was fleeing. It was much easier and more tempting to shoot him with a gun ... As for Aulale, he was completely unarmed, with only the tripod for the instrument on his shoulders, when he pursued the natives. The prisoners were in complete despair. The man plaintively bellowed and stretched his arms out forward, having turned them palms upward; and the woman pressed several drops of milk from her breast on her palms and stretched them out to me, begging for mercy. The baby howled. A little dog, who had stayed faithful to his masters, twirled around us and inundated us with barking ... I had the idea of using our captives as guides, and I began to calm them down as best I could, pointing at the mountain which was up ahead and expressing with signs that I wanted to go there and then would let them go free. They understood, it seemed, and stopped trembling. My boys shifted their burdens onto them — the instrument and the tripod — and we went toward the mountain.

The prisoners were from the Turgana tribe. The man was of tall build, with regular facial features, a straight nose, not at all similar to the Negro. His lips were not especially thick. His eyes seemed intelligent. The expression on his face was open. He was circumcised, and his hips were tattooed with small spots. Over his shoulders was thrown the black hide of a little goat, which hung from the shoulders backward and constituted his entire dress. His hair was plaited and long, hanging down to the shoulder in a chignon, somewhat resembling the hairstyle of one of our seventeen-year-old women, who wear their hair in silk nets. The end of the chignon is twisted in a tail with sticks out behind. On the crown of his head was an ostrich feather.

His travelling companion was a young, very well-built and comparatively beautiful woman. By type, she was similar to a Somali. Around her hips was wound an ox hide. She had iron bracelets on her arms. Her hair was cut short, and only on the crown of her head was there left a tuft of hair. Her lips were not pierced, as is the case with Idenich women; and her front incisors were not knocked out. At about ten o'clock, we reached the foot of the mountain and began to climb up by a way strewn with hardened lava and rocks. Soon I had to get down from the mule and, leaving one of my ashkers with it, I went ahead on foot.

The sun was particularly scorching that day. The ascent seemed difficult and steep, strewn with small stones. Its inclines were overgrown with dense thorny bushes. We clambered up with difficulty; all the same, stumbling and falling ...

Half-way, the prisoners refused to go farther and lay down, hugging one another. No kind of threat helped. They, probably, decided that it was better to die than to go farther. The captive man was very necessary to me because only he could tell me the names of the surrounding mountains. Therefore, I decided to force him to go at any cost. I shot my revolver right above his ear and, making use of his fear, I picked him up by his hair.

I lifted his burden onto my shoulders and went forward. He followed me mechanically. The woman continued to lie, and we left her. The father took the baby in his arms. At 11:15, completely worn out, we reached the summit of the mountain. Its height above sea level is 1047 meters. The height of the climb was 500 meters. The temperature of the air at the foot of the mountain was 34 degrees Reaumur [108 degrees F] in the shade, and at the top was 28 degrees Reaumur [95 degrees F]. Noon was approaching. In addition to the least zenith distances of the sun, I also had to observe the moment of its greatest height and the place of the meridian.

There was no time left for rest. I, despite complete exhaustion, hurried to set up the instrument and got to work. Having finished the solar observations, I began to draw on the plane-table the territory which opened up from the height of the mountain, and to take azimuths on salient points and to try to find out from the captive the names of the surrounding mountains.

Because I didn't know his language, of course I had to express myself with signs.

From here, all the northern part of the lake with its three bays is seen as clearly as if it were on your palm: two narrow and long on the east, into one of which, Rus, the Nyanya flows; and a wide bay in the west — Labur, which is surrounded with mountains, like an amphitheater. This bay ends in the south with a high rocky cape, on which there rise three peaks. I could not determine the local name for it and therefore in honor of Vaska, whom I had had found that day, I named it the "Cape of Vaska."

This cape ends with the mountain range of Moru and Nakua which stretches from the west to the east. (104) Separate from these mountain ranges and somewhat north of them, rises a cone-shaped summit, like an extinct volcano, which the captive called Ereke.

Farther, in the northwest, was seen the high mountains of the range which was already known to us, and in the west towers the sharp peak of the mountain I called the Tsar's Cylinder. In the northeast, scarcely noticeable in the haze of the horizon, were the summits: Mount Dime (M. O. Smith) and Mount Ya-Menelik-Saganeyt, which were first seen by me from Mount Boka.

To the south of them was a high mountain range with several sharp-peaked summits, hidden away in the southeast.

Into Labur Bay, on its northeast end, there flowed an unknown river, and along its course there wound a ribbon of green trees. (105) This river unites in it those beds of dried up streams which were crossed on March 11 to 13.

The water in the bay had apparently risen to a higher level than usual, since part of the trees at the mouth of the river were half-submerged.

It was already 1:30 in the afternoon when I finished my observations and we began to go back down the mountain. Standing on our feet or squatting, we slid down the steep descent, strewn with crushed stone. And at two o'clock in the afternoon we reached the spot where we had left the mule. The captive also went behind us. Plaintively repeating "Dulole! Dulole!" he called his wife. But Dulole did not respond. We were tormented with thirst. In a gourd, there remained still a few mouthfuls of water, and we divided it equally. The Turgana, for his part, gave several drops to the baby.

Up until sunset there now remained only three and a half hours. And until water, there were no less than 20 versts [13 miles], and the bivouac was still much farther. We had been on the move since four o'clock in the morning and had gone more than 30 versts [20 miles], not counting the climb up the mountain. We did not have any provisions with us. Water, of which we needed only two cups per man, was all drunk up.

And up until the Nyanya itself we would not have any more. Having left the captive with his baby, we just barely pushed forward. Aulale had colic. I sat him on the mule and went on foot. After an hour he felt better, and we went farther, taking turns on who sat on the mule. On the horizon, the forest along the river bank, toward which we were striving, shone black. But it didn't seem to get any closer. Rather, it seemed to get farther away

from us. At five o'clock in the afternoon, we took a five-minute break; and I no sooner succeeded in sitting on the mule again, when, not far off, a herd of goats and rams came out from the bushes, and after them came several dozen natives.

Behind them rose the voices of still others. They, probably, were withdrawing deep into the country, getting away from the Abyssinians who were going along the river.

Our position was difficult now. The natives, seeing how few of us there were and how weak we were, would probably attack us. We, extremely exhausted, could not withstand a protracted fight, all the more so since our arms were insignificant — just one rifle with 30 cartridges and one revolver with 10 cartridges. It seemed to me that it would be much better for us to attack them unexpectedly, rather than wait to be attacked. Not losing a second, I galloped at the natives and they, startled by my sudden appearance, scattered in all directions and hastened to run away. Carried away by my example and forgetting their weariness, Aulale and Ababa ran headlong in pursuit. I attacked the second group of natives, who were more persistent than their first comrades, and I even got into a fight with one of them ... The natives abandoned their herd, and our path was now free. I stopped and began to call my ashkers, but they did not respond. I fired a shot, but no answer followed. I waited for them for about 20 minutes, calling and firing shots, but they didn't raise their voice in reply. It was useless to look for them now. To wait longer was pointless and dangerous.

If they were alive, then they, probably, worn out with thirst, were now hurrying straight to

the river. With the burdensome feeling of not knowing what had become of my companions, I left this place behind. I began to come upon many signs of livestock, heading to the south. It must be that the natives went this way, driving their herd in the opposite direction from the Abyssinians. To my amazement I still didn't see traces of our detachment, which by my calculations, I should have found already.

The sun had already set and it was becoming dark when I got to the forest by the river. To my horror, I came upon the following scene: on the edge of the forest lay an Abyssinian killed with a spear and beside him lay his horse. He was probably one of the scouts who had separated from the detachment. A bit farther, in a hidden clearing in the forest, there lay about in the grass regularly arranged rope nets, stretched on wooden frames for loading donkeys. This must have been the bivouac of those whom the Abyssinians frightened off. In a thicket of the forest, I stumbled upon a hunters' lair, arranged under a large branchy tree and surrounded by dense bushes. In the middle of a circular area, a sagene and a half in diameter [3 meters], was the hearth, and beside it was a unique basket, an arshin and a half [42 inches] in height. Twigs were stuck in the ground and connected with hoops. The bottom of it was located at half an arshin [14 inches] from the ground, and in the basket were pieces of dry wood and coal.

The dense forest was not quite so uninhabited as it had seemed at first glance...

Forcing my way with difficulty through the thicket, I continued to go toward the water and finally reached the steep bank of the Nyanya. It was impossible to water the mule at

this place, and having fastened its lead to my saber, which I drove deep into the ground, I, grabbing hold of a liana, let myself down from a height of several sagues [a sague is a little more than two meters] to the river and greedily began to drink its warm water.

Using the same liana, I climbed back up. To my great happiness, I found my mule — now my only companion — in the same spot where I had left it, and my fears that some Idenich would kill it from ambush or that it would break away, frightened accidentally by a wild animal, were not justified.

I left the forest and again began to look for traces of the detachment. My recently quenched thirst flared up again now to a much greater degree; and my body, which before this, had been dry, was completely covered with perspiration.

Along the way, I frequently came upon gullies. It was impossible to go farther in such conditions. I had to wait for the moon.

The moonless black tropical night was now in the full strength of its mysterious beauty. It was terrifying to feel myself completely alone, lost in the middle of an unknown, hostile land.

There were no signs that the detachment was near, and I tried in vain among the night sounds to make out the neighing of a donkey.

It was to no purpose ... I only heard an elephant forcing its way into the forest through the

thicket, and from the river a hippopotamus and the piercing cry of a night bird ... Getting down on the ground and tightly tying the mule's lead to my hand, I leaned against a high hill built by termites and dozed off.

Exhausted, and not having had anything to drink all day, the mule stood hanging its head. Sometimes, having sensed a wild animal in the vicinity, it snorted in fear and pricked up its ears.

I was in a state of both sleep and drowsy consciousness. I held the mule tightly, listened hard to each rustle, and was ready for the most desperate self-defense; but, at the same time, fantastic pictures went through my imagination one after the other. This was really a waking dream ... In thought I was carried away to my family, to my comrades in the regiment. I remembered petty incidents of my life and, facts were interwoven with fantasy in a continuous chain of images.

Finally, at about 12 o'clock at night, the moon came out and I set out farther in search of the detachment. The whole time I followed along the steep edge of the steppe to the north, and after an hour I began to come across frequent tracks of mules and horses. Still a bit farther, I came upon a wide trail trampled down by people on foot and by horses. The tracks led to the north: there was no doubt that they belonged to our detachment.

I rode at a trot along the trail, time and again stumbling upon the bodies of men and animals who died during the march, and my mule threw itself to the side in fear. In low

places near the bodies, hyenas already reigned; and in the quiet of the night there resounded either the growling or the groaning of a lion — long drawn out, heard from afar, not loud.

At about three o'clock in the morning, I reached the place where our bivouac had been located on March 25. The detachment had left it, and the trail went far in the middle of dense grass and bushes. I rode quickly in the high grass. Suddenly, at several paces in front of me, in the light of the moon, there shone the blades of spears, and I saw three natives. I quickly shot at the middle one with my revolver and galloped at them.

The middle one fell, and the others rushed into the bushes. The meeting with natives indicated that our bivouac was near: they were probably roaming close to it. Actually, in a little while, I heard nearby the loud neighing of a donkey, which at this memorable moment in my life joyfully resounded in my heart, like the voice of the herald of my salvation.

My servants, having waited for me with alarm, came to meet me with burning logs. My meeting with Zelepukin was the most joyous. He, poor fellow, was already beginning to grieve and getting ready to go on a search. It was already four o'clock in the morning. I quickly had a bite of a stale flat cake.

Ababa and Aulale arrived almost at the same time I did. Pursuing the natives, they had stumbled upon the road by which the detachment had gone; and, tormented by thirst, they

had set out straight for water, leaving me alone.

This day's march did not come easily to the detachment either.

The Ras ordered his troops to go straight through the waterless steppe, in order to avoid the bends of the river and the bushes on its banks. Several dozen captive women and children died because of this, since they were unaccustomed to protracted walking and endured thirst badly.

Of our soldiers, five died from sun stroke.

### **March 31.**

We avoided the bivouac of March 24 and came close to the bivouac of March 23.

Our marching column had increased now almost to double what it had been before, from the quantity of livestock that had been taken, and captive women and children. The Ras did not have the spirit to force his soldiers to give up their booty.

Our soldiers were in a state of bliss: donkeys carried reserve provisions, relieving their masters of this heavy burden which they otherwise would have had to carry on their heads.

Captive boys carried guns and shields or drove cattle which had been taken. And captive

women, quickly submitting to their fate, already went for water, tore up grass for mules and ground meal.

My boys also got several donkeys for themselves and grieved that they had not succeeded in capturing a Negro woman who would relieve them of the necessity of grinding meal themselves.

Vaska gradually got better. They carried him in their arms during the march. He is a remarkably intelligent boy and already knew my name and Zelepukin's, and could ask for food and drink, etc., in Russian.

We hunted for elephants and wounded several of them, but they got away.

#### **April 1.**

We set up camp half an hour's distance ahead of our stopping place of March 22. The commander-in-chief decided to go from here straight to the Kibish River, in order to avoid the dense and thorny thickets which we had found ourselves in on March 21.

#### **April 2.**

At two o'clock in the afternoon we set out, taking with us as much a supply of water as possible, and went until complete darkness. We set up camp at eight o'clock in the evening.

### **April 3.**

At two o'clock in the morning we got up and, orienting ourselves by compass, moved farther on. Having avoided the thickets, we arrived at the grassy steppe before sunrise.

At six o'clock in the morning we stumbled upon a lion and killed it. The vanguard saw it when it was quietly going away from the approaching detachment. They notified the Ras of this, and we began to rush so as to cross its path. The Ras shot at the lion first. Then others. The lion fell, turning its head toward us. It was still alive. Several Abyssinians came galloping up to it and killed it with sabers.

The sun soon rose and lit up the mountains along the Kibish River. We set out to the familiar summit, near which we had set up camp on March 20. The way there still seemed very long. It became hot. The water we had taken with us was all drunk up by nightfall. Our column spread out, and the weaker began to fall behind. First the captive women and children began to fall and die. There was no one to pick them up, and they were thrown on the deserted steppe, since whoever could, rushed with all his strength to water.

At about ten o'clock in the morning, we saw a herd of giraffe at about a verst [two thirds of a mile] from the detachment, and the Ras still had the endurance to hunt them.

Accompanied by several officers, he galloped after them. But the hunt was unsuccessful: horses, stepping in cracks in the soil, fell. My friend Ato-Bayu broke his collar-bone this way, and I made him a bandage, using his long belt for this. (106)

At about twelve noon the vanguard horsemen reached the river and having drunk and gotten as much water as they could, galloped back to help their comrades on foot. Only at four o'clock in the afternoon did the detachment assemble. We had lost from sun stroke four Abyssinians and two Galla. About a hundred captives had been left behind.

Zelepukin, who went with the transport in the middle of the column, had seen all kinds of horrors during the march and arrived downcast.

"How awfully pitiful it is to look at the captive Shankala (Shankala is "Negro" in Abyssinian), your Honor," he said. "They walk, then stagger, then fall and lie. The master lifts her, beats her, but already, evidently, she has no strength left. He can't pick her up, so he throws her aside and leaves."

The temperature at noon was 32 degrees Reaumur [104 degrees F] in the shade.

#### **April 4.**

It is Holy Saturday. The detachment sets up camp at the Kibish River, and a select command of ten men from each regiment with an officer is sent to the fort at Kolu to lead the detachment which had been left there. Muruta Babus went with the select command.

He was infinitely happy when he found out that they would let him go free. He danced in front of the tent of the Ras and sang, improvising in his language, laudatory songs in honor of the Ras.

The commander-in-chief generously gave presents to Muruta. I also gave him a shirt, and we movingly said good-bye to one another. This is an amazing man — patient, hardy, never showing fatigue and, in spite of his age, remarkably cheerful. He was a favorite of the detachment, and the soldiers called him "Komoru" ("king" in the Shuro language). During marches they always joked with him, making him, like a parrot, pronounce all kinds of swear-words. And Muruta, to the general satisfaction, willingly did all that. One time he fell ill. This happened suddenly when he was more than ever necessary, serving as our guide (March 14-15). They made him a stretcher, and he almost constantly stayed with the commander-in-chief, who rode behind him, and the whole marching column. Long and thin, Muruta got even worse, and for three days could eat nothing. But, in spite of that, he never complained; and to all our questions, he answered only "bushi, bushi" which means "well."

With his intelligence and understanding, Muruta stood out from the other interpreters. In him appeared the undoubted superiority of the mountain-dweller race to which he belonged, over all the other tribes who dwelt in this area.

Muruta was very friendly with me, and called me none other than Benti-Babus, which means "great wizard."

In Holy Week, the Abyssinians adhere to the most strict fast. On Good Friday and Holy Saturday they eat and drink nothing. On the march, they refuse food and drink only on

Saturday. I did not want to lag behind the Abyssinians in this, so I also ate and drank nothing today.

Since we had to stay at this bivouac for several days to give time for the detachment setting out from Kolu to reach us, I built myself a small lean-to and moved into it from my low torn-up tent. Not moving, I lay there the whole day, bathed in sweat and with impatience awaiting the cool of the evening.

The army was given an order in which it was added that soldiers observe cleanliness in camp and bury all garbage deep in the ground.

The Ras sent me a large bull as a present on the occasion of the breaking of the fast. At sunset, my ashkers slaughtered it beside my lean-to and swarmed there, sharing the carcass, looking forward to the delight of breaking the fast.

That night our detachment did not sleep. Here campfires burned, and whoever could got ready to meet the coming holiday.

Already several times a chorus of donkeys neighed — they were the cocks of our detachment. But midnight still didn't come and, in anticipation of it, soldiers sat around the fire and quietly chatted. The officers by the light of candles made from the epiploon of rams, in an undertone read the Psalter or the Gospels. This night was unusually solemn and, as always, full of expectation. Finally, from the tent of the Ras, a shot resounded —

Christ is risen! And through our whole bivouac, gunfire began to crack in a thunder peal, and piercing joyous cries spread out: "I-li-li-li-li." Zelepukin and I exchanged a triple kiss [Easter greeting] and began to break the fast with milk and meat, dreaming of salt, which we hadn't had for a long time. After several minutes, a messenger came from the Ras with an invitation for me to dinner.

#### **April 5.**

Easter Sunday. The Ras arranged a large feast for all our detachment. The food, however, was simple, consisting of unleavened bread flat-cakes and fresh meat, which the Abyssinians, after a protracted fast, ate in incredible quantities. My ashkers, for example (there were eleven of them in all with me), succeeded in annihilating an entire bull in two days. Vaska's stomach swelled and became hard, like wood, but apparently that didn't harm him. He was happy, recovered, and his wound healed. Zelepukin followed him around like a nanny and lay down to sleep beside him, not being squeamish about the fact that Vaska behaved badly at night and only swore about this each morning.

#### **April 7.**

I went hunting. On the damp sand of the riverbed of the Kibish River, there were fresh tracks of lion paws and of rhinoceroses; but in spite of searching hard, I didn't shoot any wild animals.

The day before, lions had roamed near our bivouac and had slaughtered several donkeys and one woman. At night I set out on the hunt. (107) With one of my ashkers — Aregau

— I climbed a tree, fastening myself to the branches with a long strap, and tied a little goat to a bush. As soon as it became dark, from the direction of the river, there was heard, the growling of several lions, similar to deep breathing. The goat was on the point of rushing about, but it did not bleat. We waited in vain all night long. The lions did not come to us. In the morning, limping on both legs which had become numb during the night, I returned to the bivouac and snatched a hasty bite to eat.

In the north, approximately 15 versts [10 miles] from the place where we had set up our bivouac, a high mountain was seen, on which I found it necessary to climb to survey the vicinity. It seem to me that it would be possible from there to at the same time see both northern and southern summits which were already known to me and to "connect them among their azimuths." I decided to do this quickly. This time I couldn't go without letting the Ras know. He ordered a convoy of 26 men under the command of an officer to accompany me. In addition to them, I also took three of my ashkers: Tekla Giyorgis, Ababu, and Abto Selassie.

Crossing the Kibish River, we, along the low-lying steppe which stretches along the River Omo, set out straight to the mountain, which turned out to be much farther away than I had assumed. Only at ten o'clock in the morning, after going for four and a half hours, did we reach the foot of the mountain.

Here a high steep stone ridge rises 1000 meters straight up from the valley of the River Omo. Dense settlements of natives huddle together along ledges. Apparently, the summit

of the mountain is completely populated. We found a trail which led up and started to climb. My soldiers followed me unwillingly.

As soon as the natives noticed us, they filled the mountains with alarm cries; and their warriors, armed with spears and shields, began to come running together in groups, and the women and children escaped, driving the livestock. On a ledge of the cliff, a hundred paces in front of us stood an old man. He threw handfuls of dust in our direction, probably as an incantation.

When we approached, the old man hid behind a tree. I ordered Abto Selassie to catch him, and my ashker swiftly went after the old man and, in a moment, disarmed him and took him prisoner.

The decrepit old man was not at all confused by this and coolly continued to smoke his long pipe. We led the prisoner forward and went farther. A group of about a hundred warriors, having occupied a narrow passage, blocked the road to us. I told my men not to fire, and we calmly went closer. When we were only 50 paces from the warriors, from their group I heard the cry "Halio" (peace). I also answered them "Halio," and having stopped the detachment, tore out a bunch of grass as a sign of my peaceful intentions, and in earnest approached the three natives in front.

They pointed to the old man, apparently asking that we let him go; and I did so. Then I, with signs, expressed to them that I demanded them to put down their weapons,

threatening that otherwise I would kill them with a puff of my gun. They understood and began to carry out my request, and in the group of natives, the old ones who were more prudent and who wanted peace, forced the young ardent ones to obey. The road was now clear and we went farther. However, my soldiers turned out to be too frightened to go ahead. They unanimously began to refuse and asked me, in the name of the God of Menelik and of Wolde Giyorgis to go back. I couldn't agree to their demands. Having come so close to the goal I had set myself, for me it would have been too painful to renounce it now. Moreover, the natives were not acting especially hostile toward us, and retreat seemed disgraceful to me. With harsh expressions, I began to reproach the soldiers, called them "mice" (the most insulting expression for an Abyssinian warrior) and, having called my three ashkers, I went forward decisively, having told the soldiers that whoever of them wanted could go back to the Ras. My decisiveness had an effect on them; and the soldiers, this one grumbling, that one justifying himself, reluctantly followed me. We had not gone several hundred paces when the natives, who had seemed conciliated, began again to get ready for hostile action. It must be that the party of the young brave warriors got the upper hand; and they, quickly hiding behind rocks and trees, began to overtake the tail of my detachment. In front of all of them ran a mountain dweller of enormous size with decorations made of ostrich feathers on his head and three spears in his hands. He was already just 50 paces from our rear and, jumping high, he performed his war dance and aimed his javelin at one of my soldiers. To tarry longer was unthinkable.

A shot burst out. Its rumble and the sight of the dead man turned the attackers into retreat.

We went farther; and when we had gone a significant distance, a crowd of natives gathered around the dead man. I saw through binoculars how they examined his wound and finally, digging a grave, buried him. Others, having watched this scene from the mountain, were also frightened by it and didn't dare attack us. As we passed by, they hid behind houses or, sitting on rocks at several hundred paces from our route, they showed us the road with their spears whenever we began to doubt which of the trails to choose to climb to the summit. The higher we climbed, the more densely populated it became. Near one group of houses we took a break and drank some marvelous milk and thick kvass, which my askhers had procured.

At 12:30 we reached the crest of the mountain. I was disappointed in my expectations. From here you could see well to the south; but to the north, the horizon was blocked by the high Mount Say, which was about 15 versts [10 miles] from the place where I found myself. Nevertheless, I stopped and began to plot on my plane-table the territory which opened up from here and with surveying compass took azimuths on the salient points. For more than an hour, I conducted this painstaking work. My soldiers kept pestering me, to hasten our return. There was not a single native visible on the crest of the mountain, and our bivouac was six hours away. I just had to take several more azimuths to the northeast, and I told the soldiers that they should calmly go back down the cliff, and I would catch up with them very soon. There stayed with me only Ababa, who held my mule and carried my three-eighths-inch caliber rifle, Tekla Giyorgis, Abto Selassie, and the senior man of the convoy. The others had already gone a hundred paces from us, and I was taking the last azimuth, when suddenly I was surprised by a startling change which took

place in the surrounding terrain. The apparently uninhabited bushes and bare rocks came to life.

Everywhere were seen the black shapes of armed natives. The foremost of them was now some hundred paces from me.

Our position was critical. There were only five of us, with four guns, only 30 cartridges each for three of them and a hundred for mine, and 50 for my revolver. I myself at this moment was unarmed, since I had taken off my saber and revolver, which got in the way of my observations. They lay several paces from me. At this minute, we were completely in the power of the natives. The soldiers who were leaving could not return to us in time. To leave now would mean condemning ourselves to certain death. It was necessary to quickly undertake something which could delay the natives even a little and give time for the rest of my men to come back to help.

"Halio!" I called out to the native who was closest to me, who, hiding behind a tree, was approaching me. I went to meet him as I was, with only my plane-table and my compass in my hands.

He stopped and, having hidden, answered "Halio." His comrades, amazed by such a turn of events, began to watch what more would happen.

Having approached to about five paces from the tree behind which the native was, I

stopped and began to beckon him to me.

My opponent indecisively came out of hiding and went toward me, saying "komoru", which means "king." I reached out my hand to him, and he, in the air, kissed it. Then I said "Dir" and, squatting, made the native squat. We began peaceful negotiations, and time was gained. I took the warrior's spears and, having indicated that I demanded that he lay them on the ground, made him do that. Then I began to call the other natives near him, who were, with curiosity, watching this scene, making them lay down their spears, beforehand, and then kiss my hand.

Soon twenty men had gathered around. They squatted beside me. I showed them my compass, let them listen to my watch, and finally, having called the senior man of the convoy and having ordered him to take my place in the ceremony of kissing hands with newly arrived natives, I myself rushed to my gun and put it on. Now on our hillock there were already 15 Abyssinian men, and the time had come for us to go. Having called out several times "halio" and "dir," we, satisfied that all had turned out so successfully, began to go back down the mountain.

But we hadn't succeeded in going a hundred paces when suddenly behind us there sounded loud trumpet sounds and the place resounded with howling and war cries of the natives. They surrounded us and, wildly jumping and "playing" (108) with their javelins, they swiftly attacked us. The site of the battle was closed and very awkward for us. On the north and west grew dense bushes, and to the east the mountain steeply came to an

abrupt end. Our trail twisted along ledges of the precipice. We took hold of our guns and quickly began to shoot, aiming the fire on the foremost, who fell about 20 paces in front of us. I fired five cartridges from my three-eighths-inch caliber rifle, and while Ababa reloaded it, let loose ten cartridges from my rapid-firing Mauser revolver. It was difficult to miss at such a close distance, and almost every shot hit its target.

The accuracy of our shooting had a stunning effect on the natives and stopped their charge. We were particularly helped by the circumstance that the natives couldn't steal up on us and that they dragged their dead and wounded comrades far back; because although our fire was effective, there were too few of us and we had too small a reserve of cartridges to be able to hold out for long. The natives only had 20 paces to go to reach us, and we would find ourselves in their arms.

After several minutes of heated fighting, the distance between us and our enemies had increased to a hundred paces. Somehow the natives' spirits had fallen, and they only sprinkled our side with stones from slings. We already didn't have much ammunition left. Stopping firing and dividing my soldiers into two units, which should provide cover for one another consecutively, I began to descend, little by little.

Our enemy was stunned. As soon as we moved down, they took heart again, and, not daring to attack us, resorted to another means of action. Our trail lay along ledges, and groups of dare-devils, having separated from the main mass of the enemy, began to occupy salient points above the road and to push off falling rocks onto us from there. It is

impossible to say that rocks flying down with a crash, rebounding on all sides from the stone ledges they encountered produced a particularly nice impression. It seemed to each of us at that moment that the rock was falling directly on him, and each rushed to hide behind the cliff face or to bend down low to the ground. Howling and wild cries of the natives accompanied each rock fall. Although, luckily, they had not yet caused real damage, they caused among my soldiers. In order to counteract the intentions of the enemy, we in turn began to occupy areas from which we could fire on the ledges where the natives were preparing rock slides, and in this way, to some degree, we stopped them.

Only at five o'clock did we get down the cliff. We passed the boundaries of the settlements safely, if you don't count one soldier wounded in the arm by a stone from a sling and one dead mule. Late at night I returned to camp.

The Ras, who was worried about my long absence, waited for me impatiently, and as soon as he learned of my return sent to ask me to go to him. They had already reported to him all the details of the fight. Congratulating me for the victory, he at the same time began to reproach me.

"Why didn't you say that you were going to fight? I would have given you more soldiers. I do not understand how you stayed safe and how your soldiers did not run away. Death must have seemed inevitable to them. You are Saytan (the Devil). But you should know that your present bravery is not yet true courage, but rather the ardor of youth and inexperience. Believe me, that only when you have experienced retreat and been

wounded will you begin to understand danger, and your inexperienced ardor will change into the conscious courage of a warrior hardened in battle."

He was right.

#### **April 10.**

We reached the Karka River. Along the way we hunted elephants, but unsuccessfully. At night, from nine o'clock to ten o'clock there was a heavy cloudburst, and the insignificant Karka River turned into a stormy stream, which we crossed with difficulty.

Before sunset, soldiers who had set out for grass saw elephants near our bivouac. We pursued them and wounded several, but they got away from us, thanks to the swiftly approaching darkness.

#### **April 11.**

We marched around the course of the Karka and set up camp at several versts to the west of the place where we had had the fight on April 8. Because of the cloud-burst the day before, the mountain climb turned out to be very difficult. Many of the donkeys which had been captured at the mouth of the Omo and were unaccustomed to mountains stopped.

#### **April 12.**

We were forced to halt and wait for the detachment coming from Kolu. The troops were

allowed to disband to forage for provisions; and, as an escort for them, several small detachments were sent in various directions. I and Zelepukin climbed the crest of a hill from which I made several observations. Our foragers returned to the bivouac at this time loaded with booty, and on their heels, behind them followed natives. From above it was clear to me that the natives were returning to their dwellings with their wives and children to gather the thrown away and broken crockery and to rake together the grain which had been spilled.

The whole day, the commander-in-chief kept looking through his telescope at the mountains opposite, from which the troops from Kolu should come.

#### **April 13.**

At noon, on the summit of the opposite ridge, Abyssinian tents shone.

#### **April 14.**

The detachment which had come from the fort at Kolu united with ours. All my baggage arrived, and I luxuriated now in comfort which for a long time had been unprecedented. I laid out my large tent, set up my bed. Instead of the coarse flat-cakes, cooked over again with difficulty from home-made meal, in front of me lay marvelous wheat. I even found a piece of soap in one of the packs; and with delight, I washed myself with it. But there still wasn't any salt ...

During our absence, those troops who had stayed in the fort suffered from chicken pox

and dysentery. The animals also suffered much since the grass turned out to be insufficient and of poor quality. The natives carried on a little war, constantly annoying the fort and attacking foraging parties. Only one of my ashkers had died — Wolde Maryam. He was one of those whom Zelepukin called "recruits." He distinguished himself with excessive foolishness and gluttony, thanks to which he died.

Several days ago, when the detachment was going through the land of Kira, Wolde Maryam ran into the bushes. Having seen there a ram, he slaughtered it and, in spite of the calls of his comrades, stayed there to eat it.

#### **April 15.**

The detachment broke camp and headed north. We crossed one of the spurs of Mount Say and went down on its eastern side. It was a short march, but very difficult. The transport stretched out far, and the rear guard only reached camp at evening. The natives treated us hostilely and kept attacking our flanks. Many were sick. Several days ago some new illness appeared, and yesterday one of the servants of the Ras suddenly died from it.

Before he died, the sick man was unconscious; and when he died, he nose was full of pus.

#### **April 16.**

The holiday of the Mother of God. There was a day of rest and a dinner with the Ras. My universal instrument had broken several days before (the web in it broke), and I was busying myself today with fixing it. In the absence of a web, I attached to the eyepiece

two of my own hairs, plucked from my arm. In the tube, they appeared like strings. In order that their thickness not affect the accuracy of the observations, I used the following system: I observed the upper edge of the sun with the lower edge of the hair, and the lower edge of the sun with the upper edge of the hair (on average, the thickness of the hair subsequently amounted to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ).

#### **April 17.**

We went ten versts [seven miles] north, following along the foot of the mountain spur. Ten versts to the east stretched out a dense forest, which extended as far as the River Omo. Through a telescope, from above, we saw a herd of elephants in one of its clearings. But there was already little time left before sunset, so a hunt didn't take place. A large snake attacked one soldier during the march. He was riding in dense grass, somewhat separated from the rest of the detachment. We suddenly saw the head of the snake rise over the grass. The soldier cut off its head with his saber. The snake was five arshins long [twelve feet].

#### **April 18.**

A day of rest. The whole day we fought with natives. Time and again, gun shots resounded from the mountains. I conducted solar observations, determined the declination of the magnetic meridian and was startled by the magnetic anomaly I detected in this place. I took magnetic azimuths on very distant mountains from two spots a hundred paces from one another and obtained a difference in azimuths of 5 degrees in whole numbers.

**April 19.**

The holiday of George the Victorious. This is the name-day of the commander-in-chief, and therefore is the occasion for a feast and day of rest. In the bivouac, all night long gunshots were fired.

It turned out that one of the colonels had died of this new unknown illness, and soldiers and friends of the deceased gave him military honors, shooting around his tent. The illness is spreading wider and wider in the detachment and carries away several victims a day. Among my people, also, things are not going so well. Yesterday evening Zelepukin fell ill. At two o'clock in the afternoon, he went to the river to wash his underwear, and, probably from the strong sunlight reflected off the river, his left eye began to itch and pus appeared. By evening his eyelids had swollen so much that I could hardly open them with my fingers to instill eyedrops. Zelepukin suffered badly, but tried not to moan. I had never seen such a severe form of inflammation of the eyes and already despaired of saving them.

**April 20.**

The detachment marched to the foot of Mount Jasha. The ashkers carried Zelepukin. I had wrapped his eyes in a kerchief. One ashker led his mule and two others supported the sick man from the sides and deflected upcoming branches from him. On arrival at the bivouac, I climbed to the crest of the mountain ridge. I was accompanied by three gun bearers with instruments and my gun.

The crest rose 400-500 meters above the bivouac. The climb was difficult. I hurried in order not to let noon-time pass, and when I had climbed to the summit, I was completely worn out.

But I was rewarded with the fact that from there I could see Mount Kuras in the south and the bottom of Mount Bokan in the north both at the same time. Having set up the universal instrument, I began to carry out observations. I posted my gun bearers around as guards, since the territory was apparently very restless and fresh traces of natives and their livestock were seen around, and nearby from time to time gunshots of the Abyssinians resounded.

#### **April 21.**

The detachment climbed the mountain ridge and set up camp not far from the summit of Say and several versts north from the place of my observations the day before. Part of the detachment scattered through the vicinity searching for provisions. Several reserves were sent to support those who were foraging. They were posted on hills five versts [three miles] from the bivouac. The commander-in-chief went up one of the nearest summits and almost until evening observed through his telescope the individual fights which were breaking out all the time between Abyssinians and natives.

They called this place Deche. Its inhabitants were of the same nationality as the Beru, Kassi, Kira, Say and other mountain-dweller tribes. They are very warlike. Guns did not

stun them, as they had their neighbors. And they bitterly defended their property.

My ashkers also went after booty and had a hot time of it. They with difficulty defended themselves against natives who attacked them in one of the ravines. They had already used up nearly all their cartridges when, fortunately, help arrived in time. They brought back to camp a ten-day supply of grain and several captive women and children.

### **April 22.**

A detachment, consisting of healthy and free men from the regiments of Fitaurari Chabude, Gebra Maryam and Kanyazmatch Dubye — all together about 1000 men — was sent to reconnoiter the space between Mount Say and Mount Beru. I went along with this detachment. Zelepukin was doing better, and I wasn't afraid to leave him alone for several days. The main strength of the army would wait in place for the return of the reconnaissance detachment or for its report on where to unite again. We climbed to the crest of the mountain ridge which stretches to the west from Mount Say. The population is dense here. On the summit of the ridge, a crowd of warriors blocked our path. They, wildly jumping, threatened us with spears and retreated in front of us.

At about 11 o'clock in the morning, we climbed up one of the summits. There had been rain during the night. Thanks to the especially transparent air, the distant Kaffa Mountains were distinctly visible. I stopped here, set up my instrument and began to conduct solar observations, and then took azimuths on the summits that could be seen. The soldiers during this time in part dispersed to get themselves sour milk or turcha. The sun was

already almost at the meridian, and I was tensely waiting for the moment when its upper edge would stop rising and once again begin to separate from the lower edge of the hair. Then suddenly, almost beside me the natives' horn blared, and there resounded the piercing scream and howl of their war cries, and they attacked us. Not far away whistled several rocks thrown from slings. One fell on the leg of the tripod and almost toppled over the instrument. The Abyssinians began to fire back. Rather than tear myself away from the instrument at the most important moment of observation, I continued what I was doing under rather unusual circumstances for astronomical work. The natives suffered significant losses and then retreated. We went farther, and they followed us at a respectful distance.

To the right and to the left from the narrow trail stretched a continuous series of farmsteads, with intervals of dense plantings of kocho banana trees. Time and again, skirmishes broke out between us and the natives. At four o'clock in the afternoon, we climbed one of the summits, on which was found a farmstead which was outstanding in its dimensions. Beside it was a holy grove. Probably this was the house of the local princeling. We stopped in its wide courtyard where there were four large houses, with thatched roofs which extended to the very ground. Opposite stood two barns, of which one stood on the chopped-down trunk of a tree five arshins [12 feet] above the ground. In the middle of the courtyard there rose a pyramidal burial mound, about a sagene high [2 meters], surrounded by a circle of stones. At its apex, there lay several pieces of coal, a ram's bone which had been picked bare, and a piece of elephant dung. The doors of the houses were tightly propped shut with strong thick boards. On order from Fitaurari Gebra

Maryam, the soldiers broke down the doors with the butts of their guns and went into the dwellings. But after several seconds, from one house they carried out an Abyssinian already killed with a spear. Several muffled shots resounded from there, and from under the doors a stream of blood appeared ... There wasn't anyone in the other houses. I also entered these dwellings in order to see them. Bending low, I climbed through the little door. After the bright afternoon sun, at first I couldn't see anything inside. Only after some time did my eyes begin to distinguish the surrounding articles. I was struck by what I saw. It seemed as if I were in an ancient temple or some dungeon. Thick molded columns supported the ceiling. On one of the walls among the columns hung two large drums of the same shape as those in Abyssinian churches. Here stood a large harp and lay several iron bells and trumpets made of whole elephant tusks. In the middle of the house, around the hearth stood three clay urns. To their base was attached a thick stone slab. To the right of the entrance lay a large ox hide which probably served as a bed for the masters of the house. The left of the house communicated with a cow stall where a black cow was tied up. Everything was black, blackened with smoke. The columns were made of thick logs, braided with brushwood. They were coated with clay and decorated with characteristic molded designs, just the same as the natives' tattoos. Inside baskets, with which the columns were braided, were found stores of all kinds of goods, and in the urns lay some articles which probably had special significance for the natives. Here were coffee beans, wrapped in small pieces of skin, and pieces of some kind of tar, and smooth little stones, gathered from the bed of a river ...

The inhabitants of this place belong to the same nationality as the Beru, Kassi, Kolu,

Dami, Kira, Deche, and other mountain-dweller tribes which inhabit the ridge of the southern part of the main mountain range. This people had already struck me by their contrast with the other inhabitations of the surrounding areas. The mountain-dwellers by appearance do not resemble either the Shuro or the Gimiro; and by culture, although clothing is unknown to them, they stand incomparably higher than the Shuro and almost on the same level as the Gimiro. Judging by what I had seen of their sacrifices, holy groves, and tombs, and finally judging by the hearths surrounded by urns which I found in almost all the houses, their religious cult should be comparatively high. They call God "Dadu." This name, by the way, is similar to Dedu ("thunder" in the Gimiro language) and Deda ("heaven" in the Sidamo language), which seems significant to me. These tribes are completely isolated by Negro settlements from other Ethiopian tribes: the Sidamo, Gimiro, Kaffa, and finally the Abyssinians. These mountain-dwellers had never even heard of the existence of the Abyssinians nor of their seemingly not too distant neighbors the Kaffa. Nonetheless, in character, way of life and culture, I found among them many analogous features, which led me to think that all these tribes are related to one another. I encountered among these savage tribes the same musical instrument as among the Abyssinians — the large harp; and I even found a board for playing gebeta. Among them, as among the Sidamo and Gimiro and Kaffa, there is sacrifice and divination with the innards of sacrificed animals.

The houses are built with the same thoroughness, and their fields are cultivated with the same industry as among the Gimiro and Sidamo. This all the more confirmed me in my supposition that all these represent a series of tribes who are related to one another,

beginning with the Abyssinians in the north and ending with the mountain-dwellers in the south. Perhaps in ancient times, all the Ethiopian highlands were populated by one and the same people, but then from the northeast came Semites and, mixing with the aborigines of the country, produced the present diversity. The Semitic invasion spread from the northeast to the south and west; and in this regard, it is startling the gradualness with which the quantity of Semitic blood tells in the various tribes. The Tigreans seem to be the purest Semite, then come the Shoans, and finally the Kaffa and Sidamo. In the Gimiro, Semitic blood is not at all noticeable; on the contrary, they seem to have mixed with Negroes; and the mountain-dwellers stand out among all these tribes. The inaccessibility of their mountains, the distance from the sea, and their isolation have preserved the purity of blood of this people; from which, it seems to me, that one should consider them the original inhabitants of the Ethiopian highlands.

The sun had already set when we set up camp on the banks of a stream. The natives surrounded us and bothered us incessantly.

The exchange of fire quieted down only at night. Expecting a night attack, we took measures ...

### **April 23.**

The night passed comparatively peacefully. The alarm was raised twice, but it turned out that the natives were simply coming to take away their dead. At dawn, we set out and began to climb Mount Kastit. At nine o'clock in the morning, we were at its summit,

which rises 2600 meters above sea level. A strong wind blew. The temperature was only 7 degrees Reaumur [48 degrees F]. It drizzled a fine rain, and the half-naked Abyssinians shivered from the cold. Even I, who was now no longer used to the cold, became numb in my hands. The weather, by far, did not favor observations. Only in the south I could make out the mountain I called the Tsar's Cylinder, and in the east Mount Dime, and in the west Mount Jasha. At nine o'clock in the morning, we went back down Mount Kastit and went west along the ridge of the mountain range which stretches in this direction.

As soon as the sun warmed up, the natives again surrounded our detachment and gave us no peace with constant attacks.

At twelve noon we reached Mount Meru. From there Kanyazmatch Dubye and Fitaurari Gebra Maryam went north with the whole reconnaissance detachment. I was worried about the health of Zelepukin, and there was no special need for me to continue the reconnaissance since the geographical position of the Emperor Nicholas II Mountain Range was now already well-known to me.

Therefore, I separated myself from the detachment and went straight to the bivouac of the main forces. With me went my ashkers and several dozen Abyssinians. We walked until sunset, the whole time surrounded by natives, and set up lodging for the night at the foot of the mountain range, to the north of the place where I had taken solar observations the day before. It grew dark. I hastened to orient myself and to see if the bivouac of the main forces was visible from the mountain. Having called my gun bearer, Abto Selassie, I set

out to a nearby hill.

One of the officers, having noticed that I went only accompanied by one gun bearer, followed me. Behind him his twelve-year-old son carried his shield.

I had spent 12 hours in the saddle that day and hadn't eaten anything for a full 24-hours. I do not know if it was for this reason or for some other, but I was in some kind of a dreamy-philosophical mood: how many victims had the conquest of this land cost? It seemed to me brim-full of violence and injustice. Of course, a new phase in the history of peoples is always paid for with sacrifices. But world justice and individual justice are quite different from one another. Murder always remains murder for us, whatever goal it may accomplish, and it is especially immoral in relation to these peaceful, industrious people who never did harm to us, whose land we now take away by force, using the superiority of our weapons ...

A narrow trail rose steeply to the mountain. I went along it, when suddenly ahead, at several paces from me, there appeared the shape of a native carrying something on his head and a long spear on his shoulder. He was also climbing this ridge, but from the opposite side. Unexpectedly seeing one another, we both stopped.

Under the influence of my mood, I didn't even think to undertake any aggressive measures against him. It seemed unthinkable to me that he himself would begin to attack me, even though behind me walked two men with guns ... I had a saber on me, but I

didn't intend to take it out of its scabbard. My Mauser revolver, which I always wore on my waist on the march, this time I had left in the holster of my saddle, since the belt on which I carried it was broken. How great was my amazement when, instead of running away, my opponent in a moment threw the burden from his head and rushed at me with his spear. I took out my saber and cried to my people who were still below and didn't see what was happening:

"Belau!" (Go ahead! Shoot!) The native stopped ten paces from me. Having aimed the spear at me, he made the end of it shake quickly and chose the moment for the blow. I waited for there to ring out a shot and for my crazy enemy to topple over dead, but there was no shot ... Seeing that I was waiting with my saber for his blow, the native, apparently, could not decide whether to stab me with his spear or throw it at me... Suddenly, he bent down, took hold of a large rock, and threw it at me with force. I managed to duck, and the rock flew over my head. After the first stone followed a second and a third! ... "Belau! Belau!" I cried out to the soldiers, but they were busying themselves with something or other a few paces behind me and did not fire. To turn around myself and take my gun would have meant to expose myself to certain death. Finally, a shot rang out — the officer had fired. In haste, he missed. Abto Selassie also took out his saber and we rushed at the native ... At the same time there resounded a second shot of the officer, point-blank, and our opponent toppled to the ground ... He spasmed for a long time, having bared his teeth, with a repulsive smile on his face.

During the last skirmish he struck at one of us with such force with his spear that it

pierced through a leather shield, which at that time was held by the gun bearer of the officer.

It was a strange coincidence of circumstances. My revolver, which I always wear with me, turned out to be today in the holster of my saddle. Abto Selassie for the first time carried my three-inch-caliber rifle behind me. It was loaded and the bolt was at safety, but Abto Selassie didn't know how to cock it.

The other gun of my ashker had a thick cartridge caught in it. It loaded halfway in the cartridge-chamber and then wouldn't move either forward or backward. But the strangest of all was the fact that several days before this occurrence I had a dream in which the general picture of today's fight was repeated and that I had told it to Zelepukin at the time.

We returned to the bivouac. We took along the spear of the native. It was evident that this wasn't its first time in battle. There were recent traces of blood on the end — probably Abyssinian. My dreamy-philosophical mood was completely gone. War is war, and not a tournament; and the more the one with superior strength can defeat his enemy, the better.

#### **April 24.**

Night passed peacefully. At noon, we joined up with the main forces, and our dear boys had stocked up several days worth of grain. Zelepukin had recovered. My little Vaska joyfully ran to meet me and from afar called out to me in Russian, "Greetings, your

Honor!"

**April 26.**

Gunfire kept up all night long — the last honors which were given by friends and comrades to warriors who had died that night. A new illness was spreading widely among the soldiers.

**April 27.**

I was very sick. I had come down with the new illness and in the evening took to my bed. I had a high fever, and my head ached.

My eyes were watering and hurt. My throat glands were swollen. Learning of my illness, Ras Wolde Giyorgis quickly sent to me one of his ashkers, Lyj Ababa, who, it turned out, treated the strange unknown illness by a method he had learned from Arabs in the northwest low-lying regions of Abyssinia near Kassala.

Lyj Ababa took a look at my throat and having felt the throat glands with his little finger, pressed them hard. Due to this, some pus came out, mixed with blood. Then he had me rinse my mouth and eat a piece of stale bread, strewn with red pepper.

With this, the treatment ended. But, amazingly, after it I immediately felt better, and my head began to ache much less.

Lyj Ababa is now the savior of our detachment. Daily, a mass of sick men turn to him, and a huge percent of those get better, thanks to him. It happens that this illness affects not only the throat glands, as in my case, but also those of the nose; and he somehow can break through those as well.

Yesterday a report came from Kanyazmatch Dubye. He was waiting for us with his detachment, several dozen versts to the north. This morning we set out for there. There was a downpour at night, and the rivulet which flowed near our bivouac turned into a stormy stream which it was impossible to ford. The detachment crowded on the bank of the rivulet. The commander-in-chief had his chair placed right at the water, and we waited for the water to go down. After the an hour and a half, the level began to subside quickly; and after two hours, individual dare-devils crossed. Then, finally, the whole detachment went.

Women loaded down with all kinds of household goods were sometimes taken by the water, but a chain of soldiers was posted along the course of the stream to save them. The detachment set up camp at the settlement of Holki.

#### **April 28.**

We crossed the land of Okol and united with the detachment of Kanyazmatch Dubye. The inhabitants came to express their submission to the Ras, and the commander-in-chief gave the troops strict orders not to go off to the side of the road; and to make sure of this, he posted guards all along the way.

Although I hadn't fully recovered, I felt much better.

**April 29.**

A day of rest. I felt worse again. In the morning there was a long meeting of the commander-in-chief and his leaders. The whole territory we had passed through was divided into five bands which extended from the boundaries of Kaffa to the south.

In them he stationed those regiments which had before had been assigned land to the east of the River Omo:

- 1) Fitaurari Atysye received Shuro and all the lands to the west of it, going up to the boundaries of the the domains of Dajazmatch Tesemma.
- 2) Fitaurari Ubye received Jiri, Jasha, Mera, Masha, Beru, Kassi, Kolu and the course of the Kori River.
- 3) Fitaurari Damti received Kastit, Maja-Tirma, Menu and the lands to the southwest of it.
- 4) The regiment of the late Dajazmatch Andarge received Say, Deche and the course of the River Omo.

5) Fitaaurari Imam received Golda. The first four regiments had to set up camp not far from Mount Wyta and wait here for the arrival from Kaffa of the rest of their transport and supplies of cartridges.

Then they were ordered to go to their territories and set about the complete conquest of them.

Fitaaurari Imam would follow us for another few days' march and then independently go to wage war on the militant land of Golda.

This division of the land was announced to the troops in an order. Soldiers of the units who were staying were forbidden, under pain of having their hands cut off, from sending to the homeland for their wives or their baggage, which was usually was a reliable indicator that a soldier intended to desert.

My friends came to me to say good-bye, and my tent was full of people.

### **April 30.**

Our detachment went north, and those who were staying accompanied us for a long time. Fitaaurari Atyrsye was sick and went with us.

The severely ill also went with us, and at the tail of our column there stretched out a long file of stretchers.

**May 3.**

I felt very bad on May 1 and 2. On May 1, when I crossed the Sebelimu River, I was so weak that my ashkers had to hold me up along the way. Lyj Ababa again came to press the glands, but there was no more pus, and probably, my old fever had simply returned. Today I felt better. I used the opportunity to write letters home, their first news of me after a five-month silence.

We continued to fight with the natives all the time. They had become so impudent that at night they started to break into our bivouac, causing alarm at the tethering posts. At night, firing on them was mixed with salutes for the dead.

**May 4.**

We crossed the Kilu River. At night there was again a violent storm and thunder. My tent was blown away. After the rain the climb up the mountain became so slippery that the pack mules were in no condition to make it up, and the soldiers carried the packs up the mountain in their arms. Many animals were stuck in the road.

My ashkers got sick. Zelepukin also came down with a fever.

**May 5.**

We marched to the very borders of Gimiro. The soldiers said farewell to war, and those who for the whole march had not succeeded in killing anyone, resorted to all kinds of

truths and untruths in order to fill this deficiency. Among them this is a special sport.

When the detachment abandons a bivouac, they hide in lean-to cabins and wait for when natives come to the abandoned position, and then shoot at the natives from ambush. But this amusement sometimes costs the hunters very dearly. Many have paid with their lives.

### **May 6.**

We went through the border forest by the same trail by which we had crossed this frontier at the start of the campaign. The trail which we had cleared was in places obstructed by enormous trees which had been ripped up by a violent storm, and we had to clear it again.

We entered Gimiro; and cheerful sounds of flutes let the inhabitants know about the arrival of the army. The Gimiro came out to greet us; and on meeting the Ras, they fell down on their knees and kissed the ground and beat their chests with their hands to express their joy on the occasion of our safe return. The governor of the area, Ato Kassem, came to the bivouac. The old man wept with joy. We greedily tried to get news from him; but here on the outskirts, there was little that he knew.

Interesting speculation had circulated about us among the Gimiro when we had set out the first time. They said that we would go down from the mountains into a low-lying desert covered with fog. Guides would refuse to lead us, but the Ras would go ahead anyway and would die with his army. Others claimed that we would all be carried away by water.

### **May 9.**

We entered Chana. I again climbed Mount Bokan. It rained at night, and in the morning the air was exceptionally clear. I took advantage of this to take azimuths on distant mountains.

From the bivouac at Chana, I set out with several ashkers and twenty soldiers of Ato Kassem to hunt for elephants. Zelepukin also went with me. We walked up until it was completely dark, going down from the western slopes of the main mountain range.

The trail lay among dense forest. When it had become quite dark, we stopped at the solitary farmstead of a Kaffa. The owner of the property lived in a small cabin with his wife and two children. His house had been burnt down during the conquest of Kaffa. Now he was finishing building a new dwelling, which was almost ready. There remained only to cover the roof. A heavy rain was falling. We had no tent with us, so we cut banana leaves with our sabers, covered the roof with them, and spent the night in the house which was under construction.

### **May 10.**

We set out at dawn. It was fresh and damp, and the thermometer indicated 70 Reaumur [48 degrees F]. We turned north and went along the western slopes of the mountain range. We crossed the River Menu, which at this place is still an insignificant mountain stream and crossed other tributaries of the Sobat. At twelve noon, we entered the region of Bitá and stopped at the house of its leader, Bitá-rashi, at the natural boundary of Kushore. The farmstead of Bitá-rashi was surrounded by banana plantations; and inside a tidy

courtyard, enclosed by intricate wattle fencing, stand several small houses. Bitarasha is a tall, elderly, typical Kaffa grandee. He came out to meet us himself, surrounded by his servants. He received me very hospitably.

He is a Christian, one of the number converted by the missionary Massaey. In his house he keeps a small crucifix given to him by Massaey. Bitarasha is from the Amaro tribe which always gravitated toward Christianity and was one of the first that responded to the appeal of Massaey.

### **May 11.**

We passed a sleepless night. Bugs and fleas bit us so much that even the Abyssinians who were used to them could not sleep; and the whole time, we tossed and turned. In the morning, we set out and went to the forests where elephants kept themselves. At ten o'clock in the morning, from the summit of a ridge, we saw below, in a clearing of the dense forest, a herd of elephants. We left our mules and horses here; and by ourselves, going around the elephants, we began to approach them in such a way that the wind blew from them to us. The forest is so dense here that you can only force your way along elephant trails. Bitarasha led us; and, stepping carefully, he walked ahead, holding his spear at the ready in case of an unexpected encounter. I followed him, with Zelepukin behind me, and, finally, stretched out in a file, walked the rest of the ashkers. When we came to the place where we had seen the elephants, they were no longer there. We ran along their fresh tracks. Jumping across deep holes, pressed by the elephants' feet, we then forced our way across a boggy swamp, crossed a small mountain ridge and went into

another, even denser forest. Complete quiet reigned there, and the elephants must not be far away. We held our breath and moved without making noise ... Suddenly a Kaffa stopped and pointed out to me with his finger some dark-brown mass, which, like a wall, obstructed the trail, just a few paces ahead. This was the belly, chest, or hind quarters of an elephant. I was in no condition to figure out which. I was afraid that my impatient ashkers would not restrain themselves and would begin to fire; so I shot at the bulk I saw. Shots from Zelepukin and my ashkers rang out behind my back. The forest began to rumble, trees began to crack, and the whole herd, in panicky fear, broke into a run. The elephant I had wounded also ran, and having separated himself from the rest of the herd, bellowed piercingly in a thicket. We rushed in pursuit. My ashkers flew like whirlwinds, jumped across toppled down trees and hummocks, and shot on the run. Zelepukin and I also began to pursue the elephants, but soon had to fall behind.

On one of the trails, on the leaves of bushes, on the right side, blood was found; and I went to look for the wounded elephant.

But there were so many elephant trails in the forest, that I soon lost its tracks. Soon I stumbled upon another elephant and wounded it, but it also went off into a thicket. From afar, I heard the shots of my ashkers, But they soon fell silent.

Evidently, the elephants had gotten away. I lost all hope for a successful hunt and began to return to the place where I had left my mule. That was seven versts [four miles] away. With me went Zelepukin, two Kaffas and the gun bearer Aulale, who this time carried

only binoculars. Having climbed to the crest of one mountain ridge, we suddenly saw below, on the opposite side of a rivulet, in the arch between two forests, the whole herd of elephants. It must have turned back and now was going from one forest to the other. We were 800 paces from them. I quickly got down on one knee and opened fire on the herd with frequent fire from my three-eighths-inch caliber rifle. The puzzled elephants stopped for a moment, then circled around one large tree, and went back into the forest. Under the tree, one elephant lagged behind and lay down, and in the thicket several wounded ones bellowed. At a run, I rushed down the mountain to the elephant which had fallen. But when I got close, as it turned out, the elephant had gone away. Zelepukin and I rushed along various trails to look for the wounded animal. I also made the Kaffa look, but they had made up their minds not to and stayed at the edge of the forest. Suddenly, in front of me, the bushes started to break ... The cracking quickly got closer. I stood behind a turn in the trail, but after a few moments everything grew quiet.

The elephant stopped somewhere very near, having hidden itself — it must be behind some tree — and waiting for me.

Severely wounded elephants continually do this, and then they are very dangerous. I strained my sight to see it in the dense thicket, and cautiously moved in the direction of the place where the cracking had resounded just before. Aulale also went with me and suddenly cried out in a voice which wasn't his own, "There it is!" Hidden behind a large tree, twenty paces from me, with a bellow, the elephant was now rushing headlong in attack. I shot, and it went toppling over, weightily, just five paces from me.

The bullet had hit it in the head. To be sure, I shot it again. Then with my saber, I cut off the customary Abyssinian trophies — the ends of the trunk, tail, and ears.

The dead elephant turned out to be a female; and it probably had calves, since milk flowed from its udders. I wanted to take a photograph and sent Aulale for the equipment. The mule was three versts [two miles] from us. The road went through forest. And Aulale asked that I give him my rifle. I gave him the three-eighths-inch caliber rifle and was left with a saber near the dead elephant.

The Kaffa ran to me and, after a quarter hour, the other ashkers arrived. Following the tracks of the herd, they had come to this same place. Zelepukin was looking for another wounded elephant; so I sent all the ashkers to help him. Just two Kaffa stayed with me. After several minutes, frequent shots resounded not far off. Then resounded the cries of my ashkers that I should run because the whole herd of elephants was coming at me.

Actually, I could hear them bursting through the thicket not far away. Both of the Kaffa who were with me hid in a moment.

Beside the dead elephant stood a large tree. Its roots were shaped like a niche. The elephant trail went to the left of me, and from that side I was hidden by bushes. To the right of the tree, the bushes were sparser. I sat tight in that little cavern-like niche. Closer and closer, the forest cracked; and the tramp of several hundred elephant feet became

deafening.

Doubtless, they were coming straight toward me. But where would they pass through: to the right or the left of the tree?

Suddenly, to the right, just beside me, appeared an enormous head, wide swinging ears and weighty trunk... I sat, holding my breath. Did the elephant notice me or not? It had already gone past me when suddenly it turned back sharply and, as if rooted to the ground, stopped in front of me. It looked at me with its little glistening eyes, moved forward, gathered up its trunk, lifted the end of it high as if getting ready to make an attack with it, moved back a bit, and, finally, quickly turned and went away. The first danger had passed, but wounded, and therefore very dangerous elephants might be running behind.

Besides, the corpse of an elephant which had just been killed lay nearby me, and everyone knows that elephants in this case are vengeful. (109) One after the other, elephants ran past me. When what seemed to be last one ran past, and I thought that the danger was over; suddenly I heard trampling, and one more elephant heavily ran by me. It was wounded, and blood flowed from its side. Having run past a few steps, it, like the first elephant, turned sharply and came at me. It stopped just five paces in front of me. Its eyes looked terribly evil. It stamped in place, sucked in its trunk, as if intending to cruelly take revenge on the man who had finally fallen into his power. Like two of the worst sworn enemies, we stared each other in the eye.

At that moment I didn't think that God would bring it about that I could ever describe this episode. Its outcome seemed so certain that I now remember how I, from second to second, expected my death ...

But suddenly, it is incomprehensible why, the elephant cried out, twirled its tail and, having turned sharply, ran off.

I came out of my shelter. In front was heard the cracking noise, going farther away. I am alive, and for my salvation I see only God's Providence.

On the mountain they sang the victory song Adoy Shebae, with which the ashkers celebrated the victory of Zelepukin, who had also killed an elephant. The first to run to me were the Kaffa who had made off. They knew that the elephants had gone through here. They had heard the scream of one of them, and had expected to see my remains. They were greatly overjoyed when they found me unharmed. Soon the triumphant Zelepukin came with the ashkers. We measured the distance. From the place where I sat to the trail by which the elephants ran was just seven paces; and to the outermost tracks of the forelegs of an elephant it was just four paces.

It was already four o'clock in the afternoon. Having entrusted Bitarasha to extract the tusks the next day, I hurried to rejoin the detachment; and in the evening, we arrived at the main bivouac.

**May 12.**

The detachment crossed into Dimbiro. It kept raining the whole way. The Ras received sad news — the death of his favorite grandson, and the whole detachment put on mourning. The commander-in-chief grieved greatly.

**May 13.**

We crossed to the foot of Mount Bonga-Beke. I outdistanced the detachment. On the road to Bonga, I met the Nagada-Ras, He was riding to meet the commander-in-chief and was bringing him honey, beer, and bread as a gift. He treated me to several cups of tej and invited me to spend the night at his house. He sent one of his ashkers to tell his wife to set aside a place for me to stay.

The wife of the Nagada-Ras, the pretty Alamitu, received me hospitably and treated me to an excellent dinner, which was attended by her friend, the beauty Tsadike, and two monks. The monks had just arrived from Addis Ababa. They had seen Russians there and talked about the amazing jigitovka [acrobatic, trick riding] of our Cossacks. It's hard to express the degree to which it was pleasant to hear this first news of my own people.

**May 14.**

We entered the town of Andrachi. The troops we had left there came out to meet us. The wife of Ras Wolde Giyorgis, Woyzaro Eshimabet, sent one of her elfin-ashkers to congratulate the Ras and me on our safe return. In front of the entrance to the town stood

a crowd of inhabitants and all the clergy with crosses and censers. Relatives and friends kissed three times on meeting.

Women and children cried out with joy "I-li-li-li-li-li!" Side by side with this, resounded wailing and gun salutes for the dead resounded.

We went straight to the church, where a prayer of thanksgiving was offered. Then the detachment dispersed to their homes, and the Ras went to the tomb of his grandson.

**May 16.**

I rode out to Mount Adaudi, which is about 40 versts [27 miles] from Andrachi. Here I made observations, and at night I returned home.

**May 18.**

I sent my baggage to Addis Ababa.

**May 20.**

I got ready to go to Addis Ababa. Before leaving I went to take my leave and bid farewell to Ras Wolde Giyorgis. He overloaded me with gifts, which represent each of his military distinctions.

He gave me his marvelous mule, taken from the prince of Gofa; a horse with silver dress; the silver spear of the captive king of Kaffa, which he had thrown at the Abyssinians who

took him prisoner; complete battle dress; and a shield decorated with silver. But most precious to me was a gold saber, which the Ras received after a battle, for distinguished service from the Emperor himself. The Ras asked me to take this weapon in remembrance of my fight of April 9 on Mount Say; and in a letter to the Emperor, he asked Menelik to confirm this reward for me.

As a remembrance, I presented the Ras with my true comrades — my three-eighths-inch caliber rifle and my Mauser revolver.

Our parting was in the highest degree touching. Over the four months which we had spent together, we had come to know one another well, and I sincerely liked and had grown to respect the Ras. I rarely met such an honorable, energetic, and noble person, who at the same time is a prominent leader, deeply devoted to his sovereign. I saw in him an ideal man, who passionately loves his homeland, always ready to sacrifice his own interests for it ...

#### **June 5.**

I arrived in Addis Ababa and found here our whole mission in assembly (to the great joy of both me and Zelepukin). Up until the very last day, we had not had reliable news about where our countrymen were.

#### **June 14.**

I set out for Russia as a messenger. At the same time as I, my comrades — Lieutenants

Davydov, Kokhovskiy and Arnoldi — also had to leave, along with a command of Cossacks who had finished their term of service. The Emperor Menelik received me in a farewell audience and told me, in Russian, "Good-bye!" The Empress Taitu could not receive me because of illness and sent her marshal of the court to give me her best wishes. On the day of my departure, the Emperor awarded me a gold shield — an outstanding military distinction, given only on rare occasions.

We were cordially accompanied by the chief of the mission, Acting State Councilor Vlasov, and his whole staff, as well as Madame Vlasov. At noon we left Addis Ababa.

Summing up my stay with the army of Emperor Menelik II, I consider it necessary to say the following:

By order of the emperor, a fifteen-thousand-man corps, in spite of the immense region over which it was quartered, concentrated incredibly quickly and set out on a campaign to annex to the realm of Ethiopia vast lands which lie to the south of it, which no one before this had explored, and which were completely unknown. In the course of just four months, this corps annexed to Abyssinia an area of just over 40,000 square versts [about 18,000 square miles]. Garrisons are posted in the newly conquered lands, and these regions should now be considered definitely lost for any other power which might have had pretensions on them.

An expedition which would have cost any European power millions, was carried out by

the Abyssinians almost for free, if you don't count several hundred men killed and several thousand cartridges shot. I suppose that with these words all has been said. However, concerning Abyssinia, you should not fail to recognize here the enormous strength of a powerful state, which at any moment can easily bring together a two-hundred-thousand-man army.

Many consider the Abyssinian army to be undisciplined. They think that it is not in condition to withstand a serious fight with a well-organized European army, claiming that the recent war with Italy doesn't prove anything.

I will not begin to guess the future, and will say only this. Over the course of four months, I watched this army closely. It is unique in the world. And I can bear witness to the fact that it is not so chaotic as it seems at first glance, and that on the contrary, it is profoundly disciplined, though in its own unique way. For every Abyssinian, war is business-as-usual, and military skills and rules of army life in the field enter in the flesh and blood of each of them, just as do the main principles of tactics. On the march, each soldier knows how to arrange necessary comforts for himself and to spare his strength; but on the other hand, when necessary, he shows such endurance and is capable of action in conditions which are difficult even to imagine.

You see remarkable expediency in all the actions and skills of this army; and each soldier has an amazingly intelligent attitude toward managing the mission of the battle.

Despite such qualities, because of its impetuosity, it is much more difficult to control this army than a well-drilled European army, and I can only marvel at and admire the skill of its leaders and chiefs, of whom there is no shortage.

In recent centuries, the Abyssinian people have endured many conflicts. Now, perhaps, better times are coming for them. They have united and are setting out on the big road to peaceful prosperity.

God help them! ...

On July 1, I left on the deck of the French steamship "Iraudi," which sailed that day from Jibuti; and on July 19, I arrived in Saint Petersburg. (110)

## Appendix

("Mountain" signifies the language of the mountain-dwellers of Beru, Kassi, etc.)

English/ Abyssinian Kaffa Sidamo Gimiro Shuro Mountain Idenich

God/ Egziabeer Ier, Tosa Ka, Kiy Tuma Dadu Tumu (111) Ierotone

devil/ saytan seytano talakhi shembato

king/ negus atye, tato k'ati tend

human being/ sou asho asa ats men

man/ wand anam atu ych meniti yablya-kus

woman/ set mache mach mych makanja yabko-git

father/ abat t'abo abo ba bie kule machu t'anikho

mother/ ynnat t'ande ayo tyn aya kibo yachi

wife/ myst t'amyche macho mych munin

child/ lyj t'abusho — tana, t'anans

son/ wanlyj anambusha atumana ychtana

daughter/ setlyj machebushe machana mychtana honiti

brother/ wandym t'amano ita ych gotene

sister/ ykhet mane mycho tymych wono

sky/ samay gumo deda char

sun/ tsakhay abo aua ober godya chaja sus

moon/ charaka agano agyna erb mulmul atsum tagis

star/ kokab tajo deda char darsa muninya

thunder/ nagedguad teo, gicho — dadu

land/ medyr shovo gade dod ba elu ba

country/ ager shovo entesaa shedod ba elu ba

mountain/ korebta gepo zoze gag tunto dum kumul

water/ wakha acho assa so ma ay ma

river/ wanz ago shafa — ma ay ma

rock/ dengay t'ato tutchu — bet lyalu be

tree/ enchet mito missa ynch tunoto inchi chamochi

grass/ sar mocho masha — habay wogi lanjoy

fire/ esat kako tamo tam go alu kacho

city/ katama keto gedo —

house/ bet keto kesa ket tuo i goru

clothing/ lybs kordo afyla simar afila

trousers/ suri shenafilo adiya shaul

sash/ makanat buro — —

spear/ tor gino tora mayt ber bekyn ber

shield/ gasha gacho gondaloye ges kulto gyasu gasha

bow, arrow/ kast — — — berkondo

dagger/ chubye shiko masha shef

war/ tor iro alaba chanengasa

horse/ faras macho fara fara

donkey/ akhiya — — — sigra ara sigra

cow/ lam mimi niza kash bi oti bi

bull/ bare gato bora —

ram/ beg bacho dorsa dor zunku mederu zynka

goat/ fyel emito desha kets tonga esku noncha

food/ mygyb mao meo mem, mm amido itsa tila

bread (flat cakes)/ injera (gonjo) kosho ukussa budu,

cooked dough/ gunfo buto — koys

soup/ marek mecho yto ach

mashella, durra (grains)/ mashella yncho mallo zanga liba libessa liba

kukuruza/ bakhrmashella, — badela — —

barley/ gebs sheko bencha — — gobsu

banana tree ("musa enset")/ muz kocho meka — —

poa (grain)/ t'ef gasho gashe gach — sima

elevzina (grain)/ dagussa dagocho — — bara

pea/ ater ato — wadya

wheat/ sindye teto sarga temb —

head, leader/ ras kelo — tynd — saru saba

arm /yj kisho — kuch — kuchu sio

foot, leg/ ygyr bato — to — asu dari

stomach/ hod tifo — shul — chon kyango

mouth/ af koko — no —

tongue/ melas echio — gash —

nose/ afencha mudo — sit —

ear/ joro wamo — way —

beard/ tim isano — — —

eye/ ayn — — an

I/ enye ta tena tan dian

you (singular)/ ante nena nena nen denu

he, she/ ersu, bina asa int dua ersua

we/ enya tana inena nona diana, diane

you (plural)/ enant itosh intena inenta

they/ yrsachou bonosh inena

1/ end inko etu mat kona koy done

2/ hulat guto laa nam rama dagyn ramyn

3/ sost kemo eza kaz sizi kadu sizi

4/ arat audo oda od uch kukum buy

5/ amyst ugo siesha uksh achana uchu haena

6/ sydyst harto usupona sanyn shuch yaku ile

7/ sabat sanuato lapu nanyh hach tusu iasabe

8/ symynt shimito ospu nyatyn lud zet isi

9/ zoten itio odupuna chystyn sal sakal sakal

10/ asyr ashiro tama tam tamokita tomu tomun

11/ aeraend ashiroito tamanetu tamomata tomokikona

20/ haya hio latama hatam —

30/ salasa shasho etama kastam

40/ arba abe odama otam

50/ amsa ago meshama uchutam

100/ mato balo cheta bach

1000/ shi humu sha'a

good/ malkam gatso tafa soytekush bushi chonkus jash

bad/ kefu gondo pta itnes gessa chala gersa

big/ talak ogo loa ee buyda babue buy

little/ tynysh gisho tika ushkese tino eras chino

many/ beu mito — tik — muchachiz buy

few/ tekit gisho — ushkese — mera yashish

strong/ bertu manjo loasa band messo babugondi konidum

weak/ dekapu gidakacho labanesa gamas lyut bersasay konidala wyknes

rich/ kaptam ganecho odiasa ketnes — — — dureasa

near/ kyrb kate — ugis aja danta ajay

far/ ruk nibe — ekma ranga okukizo rena

yes/ auy ekha e io e-e y-y e-e

no/ aydolem kontone i! i! ushesigis iong i! i! i! i!

there is/ alle bete — itituk —

there is not/ elem alo — kaygush —

right/ kan kano — — gurg kuba seti

left/ gra iocho — — gurza kanga nangiten

hello/ endyet digone saro dantet ilayban karaay walkh

what?/ mynou amone — — korilo

in front/ wadafit afoche — — tunoko

behind/ wadakhuala gubekache — —

today/ zarye hanoga — — mita

yesterday/ telant icha — —

tomorrow/ naga yacha — — mirache

day after tomorrow/ tanagodiya sharta —

truth/ unat iberone —

thank you/ Egziabeer Ier to loasa kayu

/ istelyn simbo — tsmek

this/ ikh hine kana — dia

went/ heda amabete beda — koydo

found/ alkhedam amache — — koydoiong

saw/ ayokh beke — bekeyti

did not see/ alayokhym bekeache

ate/ banakh maate meda munayti tyl

did not eat/ albalokhiym matache —

heard?/ samakh — — — shigida

killed/ gaddelkh utete aykeda — nissa

said/ nagerkh getete ioteda gayti

born/ daiedkh shiete ieleda — denu

give!/ syt imbe — uts acho itsta-tan inje nanu

go!/ hid ambe — ham iodo enti kaush-ausha?

stand!/ koy — — — tesso

eat!/ bela mamot — mnayk muga baeno mato

drink!/ tata — — ushunt

well (interjection)/ bel — — ga

## Footnotes to *With the Armies of Menelik II*

B: = Bulatovich, author

K: = Katsnelson, editor of Russian reprint

S: = Seltzer, translator

1 S: In his reprint of the Bulatovich book, Katsnelson made some minor abridgements.

I've compared his text with the original and restored the original material for completeness.

2 K: This trip is described in *From Entotto to the River Baro*, part 2 of this collection.

3 S: P. N. Krasnov later led the Don Cossacks against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. After that unsuccessful venture, he went into exile in Western Europe and became a novelist. Then, under Hitler, he led a detachment of anti-communist Russian exiles against Russia as part of the German Army in World War II.

4 S: Artamonov figures prominently in Solzhenitsyn's novel *August 1914* as an incompetent general partially responsible for the Russian defeat at the Battle of Tannenburg. Artamonov also wrote about his experiences in Ethiopia, but his observations were buried, in the Russian archives until 1979, when they were published for the first time by "Nauka" [Science] Press in Moscow, as *Cherez Eftopiyu k Beregam Belogo Nila* [*Through Ethiopia to the Banks of the White Nile*].

5 B: The MacDonald expedition did not take place because of a mutiny of his soldiers.

The unfortunate result of the Fashoda incident is well known. The actions of Bonchamps and Clochette ended in complete disaster and the death of Clochette.

6 K: King Lebna Dangel (David II) reigned from 1508 to 1540.

7 B: According to a legend I heard from Abyssinians, 48 nations were subject to David II. The army that they paraded was huge. When David once gathered it for review, it pitched a camp which extended from Gondar to Gojjam. At the sight of his power and in sorrow that he had no one with whom to measure his strength, David ordered that the earth be beaten with whips; and turning to God with a prayer to send him an enemy, he set fire to a pile of incense (according to some, to a pile of carts), the smoke of which raised its column up to heaven itself.

8 B: Gran was a native of the Harar region, which at that time belonged to Gallas who had adopted Mohammedanism. In 1539, having raised the flag of the Prophet among the Moslem population of the coastlands and having declared holy war, he invaded Abyssinia, burning and destroying monasteries and churches. Inspired by the ideas of Islam, Gran directed his attack particularly toward northern and central Abyssinia, the most cultured area and the religious center of the empire, and destroyed the city of Aksum. In 1545, in Damby at Lake Tana, Gran was killed.

9 B: An Abyssinian monastery is located next to the Russian Inn in Jerusalem. Abyssinian pilgrims often visit our churches. Met by other Europeans with contempt and arrogance, only among Russians do they find sympathy and help.

10 S: Father of the future emperor, Haile Selassie.

11 B: The detachment of Ras Makonnen consisted of 7,000 of his own troops; 6,000 of Menelik's from Gondar, infantrymen under the leadership of Dajazmatch Demissew, governor-general of the western Galla lands; 4,000 irregular Galla of Dajazmatch Gebra Egziabeer, the ruler of the Galla kingdom of Leka; 4,000 irregular Galla of Dajazmatch Joti, the ruler of the Galla kingdom of Wollaga; 3,000 of Menelik's tabanja-yaji, infantrymen under the leadership of Dajazmatch Waldi (who was sent in the summer of 1898 as ambassador to the President of the French Republic); and 1,500 men of Dajazmatch Haile Maryam. Ras Makonnen conquered Beni Shangul and reached the sandy steppe which stretches along the right bank of the Nile. At the beginning of April 1898, his detachment returned safely to Addis Ababa.

12 B: Dajazmatch Tessema reached the mouth of the Sobat River and hoisted the Abyssinian flag on the right bank of the Nile.

13 S: Now Lake Turkana.

14 B: The Abyssinian military hierarchy is very involved. It is difficult to express it as a

table of ranks.

The sequence of grades is as follows:

negus negast — Emperor, commanding all armies

negus — king, commanding the army of his kingdom

ras — field marshal, commanding his province or one of the armies of the Emperor or of a negus

dajazmatch — roughly, our field general or lieutenant general; he can independently command a separate army or a detachment in the army of a ras; in the latter case, he corresponds to our corps commander.

fitaurari — major general; he can also command a separate army; when he commands a regiment, he corresponds to our colonel

kenyazmatch — colonel

grazmatch — lieutenant colonel

balamberas and yamato-alaka — a grade equivalent to the Russian captain

likamakos — adjutant general

azzaj — marshal of the court

elfin ashker — page (literally, servant of the bedroom); elfin ashkers are recruited from boys raised in the courts both of the emperor and of the rases and other commanders. Although they perform the duties of ordinary servants, they can attain the very highest posts.

Promotion in the grades does not take place successively as in the Russian army, but in accordance with the personal choice of the commander. As a result, any captain or lieutenant can be promoted directly to ras. The main difference between the Abyssinian military hierarchy and the Russian lies in the fact that the general principle of service is personal, and each commander has the right to promote his subordinates to the grade just below his own.

Therefore, for instance, there is no such thing as a colonel as such, but rather there is a colonel of such and such a general or ras, or of the Emperor himself. Thus, in order to judge the official position of a person, it is necessary to know for whom he serves. For instance, a colonel of the Emperor counts as higher than a general serving in the army of a ras.

15 B: At noon in the shade, 15 degrees Reaumur [66 degrees Fahrenheit]; at night before dawn -2 degrees Reaumur [28 degrees Fahrenheit].

16 B: I took more men than was absolutely necessary because of possible losses and also so that the men, feeling that there was a surplus of them, would more prize their posts. This measure protected me, to some degree, against the possibility of strikes and mutinies among the servants, which are frequent among the Abyssinians.

17 B: Large white cloaks of cotton material, like a Roman toga.

18 B: From the fruit of the kusso a medicine for tapeworm is prepared.

19 B: By the way, I consider it appropriate to mention the different action of the three-eighths-inch-caliber rifle when shooting with a bullet with a filed end and an ordinary, whole bullet. The first goat I hit at a distance of 150 paces with an ordinary whole bullet, which pierced both lungs of the animal and went through a rib, taking out a square centimeter, the splinters of which appeared in the wound. Despite such a serious wound, the goat galloped two hundred paces and only then dropped dead. I shot another goat with a filed bullet at a somewhat greater distance. This one also had both lungs pierced in the upper part, and its bones and heart remained unaffected. But this goat didn't take another step. It fell on the spot.

20 K: Gurage is one of the peoples of Ethiopia who live in its central and south-west

regions. There are Christians and Moslems among them. The Gurage engage in basic agriculture in combination with cattle-raising; they also have artisans. There are various theories regarding their origin. Some consider them descendants of Tigreans; others descendants of Sidamo, who adopted the Tigrean language and subjected it to some significant changes. In any case, the Gurage language belongs to the Semitic family. (M.V. Rayt, *Peoples of Ethiopia*, Moscow, 1965, p. 16).

21 S: An "express" is a rifle "possessing high velocity, flat trajectory and long fixed-sight range." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, 1911, vol. 23, p. 335.

22 B: A shamma is a white mantle with a red stripe. It is similar to a Roman toga. By custom, it is worn only by free Gallas.

23 B: Aba Dula and Aba Jefar are not the personal names of these individuals but the names of their war horses — Dula, Jefar; the word "aba" means "owner" or "rider".

24 K: Apparently, Aba Jefar acknowledged himself to be a subject of Menelik II in 1881. (G. Sellassie, *Chronique du regne de Menelik II, roi des rois d'Ethiopie*, vol. I, Paris, 1930, p. 175, footnote 3.)

25 B: The tribute paid by the king consists of an annual payment in money of 7,000 thalers and payment in kind of 5,000 to 7,000 skins full of honey, 300 to 400 ukets (an uket is one pood 28 pounds [64 pounds total]) of elephant tusk and, at the request of

Menelik, civette (musk), iron artifacts, cloth, meal etc. Besides the income from his own lands, which is spent on the upkeep of the court and the army, Aba Jifar himself has some customs duties and income of about 100,000 rubles a year from marketplaces, and besides gets a significant sum from his subjects in the form of taxes — at the rate of 1 piece of salt (20 kopecks) a year from each household and 4 kuna (a basket of fixed measure) with a portion of each kind of grain.

26 B: They usually load 6-8 poods [216-288 lbs.] on a mule.

27 B: On the bank of the Gibye River, I killed a bird the like of which I had never before come across in Abyssinia. It was particularly large, with black feathers, and in general resembled a stork. The males had a unique crest on the head.

28 B: Kogo, a banana-like tree.

29 B: Both Christian and Mohammedan Abyssinians consider the meat of an animal slaughtered by a person of another faith to be a profanation.

30 B: This mountain ridge, unknown up until now, was discovered by me. See more lower.

31 B: See lower.

32 K: Originally a region in the southwest of Ethiopia where the Sidamo people, including the Kaffa, settled. This was taken by Negros, who, up until the present, remain in part on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border and are known under the general name of "Shangalla" (from the Amharic word for Negro). The Negros were gradually forced out or absorbed by Cushitic tribes, which consequently received the name "Sidamo," speaking Semito-Hamitic languages. (They have no written language.) Apparently, they settled the whole region between the Blue Nile and Gojeb, but in the fourteenth century were driven away by Galla to the mountains of the southwest. For classification of Sidamo languages see: M.M. Moreno, *Manuale di Sidamo*, Milano, 1940. Kaffa or Gonga is in the Gonga language group, to which also belong the languages Shinasha, Bosha or Garo, Mao, and Sheka or Mocha.

33 K: This legend is not in keeping with the oral tradition established by F. Bieber. The population of the country of the Minjo tribe, from which the king's clan derives, is imputed to be Kaffa. In agreement with this tradition, up until 1890, there were 19 kings who had succeeded one another from the first — Minjo (1390). The version of the descent of the dynasty of the kings of Kaffa from Zara Yakob, cited by A. K. Bulatovich is unconfirmed. (See, F. Bieber. *Kaffa. Ein altkuschitisches Volkstum in Inner-Afrika*, vol. II, Modling bei Wien, 1923, pages 494-533). About the time of government of separate kings, also see: C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646*. London, 1954, Pages LVII-LVIII.

34 B: The double name of the country indicates the origin of this tribe. The more ancient

name — Enareya (which means "slaves") — was given to it by the Abyssinians who conquered it. The more recent name — Limu — it obtained from the name of the Galla tribe which took possession of it afterwards.

35 K: The name "Sidamo" first occurs in Ethiopian literature in the sixteenth century. It is possible that it originated from the western Semitic root "sid," "sad" meaning "to travel" and the suffix -ata, where of course a was transformed into o. See, E. Cerulli, *Peoples of South-West Ethiopia and its Borderland*, London, 1956.

36 K: In actuality, in Kaffa right up to its conquest by Ethiopia, the people preserved many of their distinctive peculiarities, in particular in the political and social structure of the country. (See, F. Bieber, *Kaffa...*, and also G.W. Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia, The Kingdom of Kaffa and Janjero*, London, 1955, p. 103).

37 K: Members of this council were called "Mikirecho." The clans A. K. Bulatovich writes about were called Hiyo, Amaro, Ako (Ukko), Mechcho, and Minjo. The king belongs to the last of those. In the opinion of F. Bieber, the general number of clans attained 37. (F. Bieber, Kaffa, *Ein altkuschitisches Volkstum in Inner-Africa*, Volume II, Modling bei Wien, 1923, pages 53-55). E. Cerulli counts only 25 (E. Cerulli, *Etiopia Occidentale*, volume 1, Rome, 1932, chapter 20). Apart from those indicated, the following clans were considered privileged: Girgo, Argeppo, Dingerato, Yachino, Kalichcho, Kullo, and Matto.

38 B: One of the regimental commanders of the Ras.

39 K: A.K. Bulatovich's guess about the origin of the name Iero is not confirmed. Iero or Yaro was originally the god of the sky, the representation of which after the spread of Christianity in Kaffa in the sixteenth century was combined with representations of the Christian God.

40 K: The last king of Kaffa, Gaki Sherocho (nicknamed Chenito), ascended the throne on April 6, 1890 after the death of his father Gali Sherocho (nicknamed Galito), who had reigned since 1870.

41 B: One of the Ras's regimental commanders.

42 B: This work involved great difficulties. Each time, as soon as I got ready to make observations, I was surrounded by a crowd of curious people, whom my ashkers only managed to chase away with difficulty. In addition, the weather did not favor this work. I don't know if it was chance or if it is a common phenomenon at this time of year, but every day the sky, which had been clear after the morning fog dissipated, was covered with clouds at noon.

43 K: Konta is one of the tribes of western Sidamo (Ometo) who live in the region of the middle course of the River Omo.

44 K: Kulo is one of the tribes of the western Sidamo.

45 K: Kusho, more exactly Kucha, is one of the tribes of the western Sidamo. The region where they settled is the right bank of the middle course of the River Omo.

46 K: Gofa is one of the tribes of the western Sidamo, who live in the region of Konta, to the south of the River Omo, in the area of its confluence with the Irakhino River.

47 B: I do not know how correct it is to have given them the name "Sidamo", since that name is completely unknown to the people themselves. By type, the Sidamo resemble Kaffa and Abyssinians, but in them there is an inconspicuous presence of Semitic blood, as in the Kaffa. Moreover, the difference between the Sidamo and the Abyssinians in the shape of their eyes and their expression is striking. Both the Kulo and the Konta consider themselves as having come originally from the region of Dembea in Gojjam, which is populated by the Agau tribe, who likewise differ from the other Abyssinian tribes and also, apparently, from strangers of Semitic blood. The Sidamo are a very intelligent, capable and hardworking people, who worship war. They are very brave, but cruel and bloodthirsty.

Killing in war among them has been elevated to a cult, and he who returns from a raid without tangible evidence of his victory is subjected to general scorn like a coward. The women are also very warlike; they accompany their husbands to war and during battle encourage the fighters, carrying to them jugs with intoxicating beer.

The Sidamo culture stands at a relatively high level of development. Agriculture, cattle-raising and bee-keeping thrive here. They mine iron, from which they fashion steel and iron spears, daggers, ploughs, etc. They also get a lot of cotton, from which they make cloth which is well known in Ethiopia for its durability and good quality. The clothing of the Sidamo does not differ from the clothing of the other non-Abyssinian tribes. Their armament consists of metal spears of the most diverse shape, a dagger at the waist, and a large round shield.

They believe in God who abides in heaven and whom they call Tos (a word from the same root as Deontos in the Kaffa language). They also worship many other secret spirits on whom their well-being depends. They know the names of Christ ("Krystos"), Mary ("Mayram"), George the Victor ("Giyorgis"), and together with this the Devil ("Satana"), etc. They don't ponder over the nature of God, and don't try to express the relationship of Him to those beings in which they incidentally believe. From their point of view, those are superfluous details, the knowledge of which is necessary only for magi who have remarkable significance. The priest-magi knows medicine for illness, and also knows those who have caused calamities and the means to propitiate them. He also knows how to avoid misfortune. You just have to bring the priest enough gifts and a sacrificial animal. Then the priest throws the animal down on its right side, and slaughters it in a sacred grove ... He collects the blood of the sacrificial animal in a cup and drinks it, having mixed it with ashes beforehand. By examining the internal organs, the priest tells fortunes or gives advice or demands another sacrifice if the first seemed insufficient for

the god.

Among the Sidamo, the conception of life after death is very vague. They say that a man who had good qualities during life will be good also after death, and that one with wicked qualities will be bad.

When someone dies, the accepted practice is to celebrate a funeral feast, at which, as a sign of mourning, the relatives smear their heads with mud, dress in their oldest clothes, tear out their hair, and scratch their faces with their fingernails until they bleed. The dead, wrapped in cloth and palm branches, are buried in deep graves, at the bottom of which, under one of the sides, they dig out caves where they place ivory and various ornaments which belonged to the deceased. The death of a prominent person is usually accompanied with bloodshed. Often the favorite wife of the deceased kills herself; and the relatives, assuming that the cause of death was the "evil eye" of some evil-wisher, set out to find the enemy. Sometimes the priest points this person out or, if he does not know him, they determine who it is by the following rather original method. They set an ambush on a major road. The first man who falls into this ambush is proven to be the sought for evil-wisher of the deceased and is killed. The relatives of the murdered man take revenge in turn, and bloody clan fighting ensues.

The family life of the Sidamo is very similar to that of the Gallas and the Kaffa: they have polygamy; wives are bought and are slaves to their husbands. Boys are circumcised. The form of government is monarchy. The throne is inherited by the eldest son. They

have a council of elders — representatives of clans who reside in the state. This council helps the king in government affairs and in administering justice. The king receives special respect. On meeting him, his subjects throw themselves on the ground with the words "Mokua ganda," which means "For you, I will bury myself alive," to which he replies, "Mokua pyata," which means, "Don't bury yourself."

48 B: For the Eucharist, they do not use wine, but rather ground, dried grapes mixed with water. It is brought from Gojjam or Harrar. Several churches, however, grow vineyards themselves.

49 B: At each church there live many clergy: several priests, deacons, and monks, and finally, debtera, i.e., student-scribes. These are people who are preparing themselves for an ecclesiastical vocation, but, for various reasons, have not taken holy orders. Debtera lead a worldly life, but belong to the clergy. They teach children in church schools, busy themselves with copying books, and sing during the holy service. Among them are found people who are in the highest degree well-read and, from the Abyssinian point of view, educated. One of the debtera, who enjoys great respect among his comrades and parishioners, is designated by a ras to manage the church in which he lives, and the church property.

50 B: These rattles consist of a handle to which are attached two parallel copper plates, joined above at a pivot. On the pivot are put copper rings, which, striking the plates of the instrument when it is shaken, produce a pleasant sound.

51 B: Afilye is prepared in the following manner. The back leg of a ram is freed from the tibial and shin bone; the meat is cut in long thin strips which hanging on the end of the bone form a kind of flower cluster. Then the meat is dipped for several minutes in a boiling sauce, made from butter, pea meal, red pepper and other spices — then the dish is ready.

52 B: This instrument is called a masanko. Made in the shape of a rhombus, it is trimmed with leather; and one of its corners is furnished with a thin long end. There is only one string on the masanko, on which they play with a bow. Singers, as far as I was convinced, have mastered this instrument to perfection. The musical taste of the Abyssinians is very different from ours. European music produces no effect on them, and they do not like it. They prefer their own songs, with a tune which, for the most part, is elusive to our ears, with endless trills, and changing from note to note. For the expression of great feeling, the singer must sing, unnaturally, through the nose, and add hoarse guttural sounds.

53 S: Bulatovich is quoting the concluding lines from the poem "Song of Prophetic Oleg" by Alexander Pushkin (1822) —

"The company feasts on the shore;

The warriors recall by-gone days

And battles where side-by-side they fought with sabers."

54 S: According to legend, Saint Vladimir (c. 956-1016), prince of Kiev, received ambassadors from all the major religions before deciding that his nation should convert en masse to Orthodox Christianity. Moslems forbade drinking alcoholic beverages; so Vladimir replied to their ambassadors that it would be counter to the Russian spirit to refrain from drinking.

55 B: Lemd, amfara, saber with silver decoration, silver shield, kalecha — are the same as our orders with swords. A saber decorated with gold is a rare distinction, given only to senior officers and generals and corresponding to our gold weapon.

56 B: The regular units taking part in the expedition (in my further account, I will refer to them by regiments). The places where they were stationed before the campaign are as follows:

1. Regiment Atysye 1000 men from the land of Kuchya
2. Regiment Faris 800 men from the land of Koshya
3. Regiment Gabro Mariam 800 men from the land of Konta
4. Regiment Chabude 800 men from the land of Konta

5. Regiment Ubye 600 men from the land of Gofa
6. Regiment Imam 2000 men from the lands of Melo and Dime
7. Regiment Damti 1000 men from the lands of Banko, Ara, & Shangama
8. Regiment Dubye 500 men from the land of Kulo
9. Regiment Alemnekha 500 men from the land of Kulo
10. Regiment Andarge 300 men from the land of Kulo
11. Regiment Zamadyanekha 600 men from the land of Kulo
12. Wolde Tensaye 600 men from the land of Limu
13. Zavanog (personal guard of the Ras) 500 men

The number of men in the regiments is approximate. The real number of guns was 10,449.

57 B: The way they conduct lawsuits is interesting. The litigants warrant the rightness of

their claim with property, and, in more important matters, even with their lives. The formula of this guarantee is as follows: "I accuse so-and-so of such-and-such! Now, say what you will stake on the fact that this is not so? I give one measure of honey! (two measures or three, and so forth)." The cost of one measure of honey equals about a thaler. The value of a guarantee depends on the importance of the matter. If the judge finds that it is too little, then he himself indicates a larger amount. Then the law-suit proper begins. They bring in the evidence, call witnesses, etc. The losing side, in addition to paying a fine to the person who won the suit, also pays the monetary warrant to the court, for its use.

58 B: In Abyssinian, this is known as fokyr. Victors in battle cry out in almost the same expression when an enemy falls at their hands and also when they notify their leaders of their victory.

59 B: These white men could not be any other than Bottego and his comrades. And since the Gimiro knew so little about them — knowing only of their trip — I could conclude that the Gimiro inhabit a small area somewhere to the side of the movement of the Italian expedition; otherwise they would have had more accurate information about it. On the other hand, I concluded that in the neighborhood of the Gimiro there should be either a tribe quite alien to them — both by customs and by language — or a wide uninhabited zone. This assumption was later confirmed: to the southwest of the Gimiro there is an uninhabited, low-lying valley of the Juba River, and to the southeast live the Negro tribes of Shuro, etc.

60 B: Nagada-Ras is the head of the merchants. In Abyssinia, all merchants are subject to several nagada-rases, and Vadym Aganokh is one of them. All the merchants who live in the lands of Ras Wolde Giyorgis are under his leadership.

61 B: Woyzaro Eshimabet is a sister of Empress Taitu. Wolde Giyorgis is her third husband. She married him several years ago in a church ceremony. She is a very intelligent woman, educated in the Abyssinian manner. The Ras worships her. Like all noble Abyssinian women, she is very pampered.

62 B: The eldest daughter of the Ras and two daughters of his wife had gone off with their husbands. The second daughter of the Ras was widowed. Her husband, Dajazmatch Andarge, was killed in the Aussi campaign in 1896.

63 B: The 30 ashkers were distributed as follows: the most senior — Wolde Tadik; his assistant and chief of the transport — Aboye; two of elfin ashkers (household servants) of mine — Tekla Giyorgis and Ambyrbyr; two cooks Adera and Inasu; the chief stable-man — Ordofa and his assistant — Ababa; 14 ashker-bearers; two herdsmen who during the march carried sticks from the tents — tarads; and six weapon bearers — Faissa, Aulale, Haile, Ambyrbyr, Abto Selassie and Wolde Maryam. There were four horses and 19 mules. One of the stable-men led my personal horse in front of me and in case of need I sat on it; and the three senior servants — Wolde Tadik, Aboye, and Abto Maryam — rode the other three horses. Three mules were saddled for me, and I rode on them in order. One

mule was Zelepukin's. The remaining 15 mules were for our transport, with a weight at the beginning of the march of about 70-80 poods [2520-2880 pounds]. This consisted of 50 poods [1800 pounds] of meal, cartridges, one large and three small tents, medicine chests, supplies of clothing, underclothing, cooking and dining equipment, salt, wax for candles, some bottles of liqueur, several boxes of dry broth (Magi brand) and wineskins with oil.

64 B: Express rifle, 500 mm caliber rifle, two 3/8" caliber rifles, Winchester and shotgun.

65 B: Dake-rasha in translation means "chief of the Dake region." He comes from the Uka clan and up until the subjugation of Kaffa was a member of the "council of seven."

66 B: The right of such a ceremonial passage belongs only to rases within the limits of their regions.

67 K: Kusho, or more accurately Kucha, is one of the tribes of western Sidamo. The region which they inhabit is the right bank of the middle course of the River Omo.

68 B: The residents of the harem led a life which was quite closed, never seeing anyone except the guard eunuchs. The king never visited their lodging. On his command, they were brought to the palace. Tato Chenito was generous. He surrounded his wives with luxury, gave them gold and silver ornaments, and dressed them in long silk shirts

trimmed with gold chains.

69 B: The astronomical position of both of these mountains was subsequently accurately calculated by me. Mount Dime was determined to be several minutes further south than Donaldson determined it, not to speak of the difference in longitude, which amounted to about six minutes both for this mountain and for the mouth of the River Omo.

70 B: The Menu River flows into the Sobat.

71 B: Up until recently, this greeting, used by the Kulo tribe, was completely unknown to the Gimiro, who copied it from their conqueror Abyssinians who came from the land of Kulo. Not knowing one another's languages, the Abyssinians used for conversation with the Gimiro a third language which they themselves knew little of, thinking that it must be better known to the Gimiro. I noticed this kind of behavior more than once in other circumstances: this tendency to express oneself with foreigners in any language which is the least understandable for the speaker. For instance, our soldier-medical orderlies who were with the Red Cross in Abyssinia, in conversation with the natives used French words such as "march," "mange," etc. Likewise, when Abyssinians encountered a European who was unknown to them, they talked to him in Galla.

72 B: For this they use a damp twig of a special, very flexible tree. Before use, they lightly chew the end of the stick, which does not have a core inside. When it splinters from the chewing, they clean their teeth with it, as a toothbrush. The sap of this tree

stimulates much saliva.

73 B: In general, I noticed how much all the customs of war, which are learned by long experience, were in the flesh and blood of every Abyssinian, including the procedures for safeguarding reconnaissance parties, and the way of life on the march. Already for several marches before this, near the eastern Gimiro border, they had established among themselves procedures for night watches — in which the guards stood along the edge of the tethering posts — and they themselves determined the punishment for insufficient vigilance, which included taking a gun away from the guilty party and giving it to someone else who didn't have one.

74 B: Now Beni-Shangul has been conquered by the Abyssinians.

75 B: Here they clear the forest in the following manner: at the root they make a campfire and when it begins to smolder, they fan the fire until the trunk at the base has burned through sufficiently. Then they topple it down.

76 B: Their teeth stick out in front, and the lower incisors are usually knocked out.

77 B: One of the regiments, in order, was designated as the rearguard. Its responsibilities included: protecting the detachment from the rear; picking up the wounded, sick, and those who lagged behind (who they seated on mules of soldiers in the rear guard); rendering help to those who were left behind with pack animals, and, without fail,

conveying their loads to camp, even in case of the death of the animals.

78 B: Custody of coffee and its brewing is always the responsibility of the treasurer.

79 B: A similar method of obtaining salt is also known in the land of Gof.

80 B: Lent lasts for seven weeks; or eight weeks, counting Shrovetide. For the week before Lent there is also a three-day fast — Noy-Ney.

81 B: Besides, I didn't want to confirm the firmly established opinion among Abyssinian soldiers that Europeans on the march stuff all their holsters with all kinds of supplies and eat constantly on the march.

82 B: Abyssinians didn't do this, but rather irregular soldiers of the Ras, savage Kulo.

83 B: The Aussa campaign was in 1896.

84 B: It turned out later that I was not mistaken.

85 B: It seems that Donaldson Smith met such disfigured women on the left bank of the Omo River.

86 B: The Abyssinians developed this ability to inoculate against small pox themselves.

They inoculate a child with human small pox from someone else who is sick, introducing it into a cut on the skin by the mother. For the most part, those who undergo this operation recover; and since the illness is in childhood, it leaves almost no traces.

S: According to Dr. Pascal Imperato, "The practice of variolation is very old one in Africa, and the Ethiopians had at it centuries ago. I studied it closely in West Africa. The practice actually spread smallpox and didn't give the results Bulatovich and many other early observers were led to believe." Dr. Pascal cites two of his articles on this subject:

"The Practice of Variolation Among the Songhai of Mali, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*. Vol. 62, No. 6, pp. 868-873, 1968.

"Observations on Variolation Practices in Mali," *Tropical and Geographical Medicine*. Vol. 26. pp. 429-440, 1974.

87 B: Gebeta is a widespread game in Abyssinia. Each player is given a little hole which is carved in a board or dug in the ground. (There are 12 holes in all). At first, four little round balls or stones are placed in each hole. The first player takes all the balls from his holes and distributes them one at a time, in order, to the right and to the left, to the following holes. From the hole in which the last ball was placed, he takes out all the balls lying there and continues in the same manner until the last sphere arrives either at an empty hole or at one where there are three balls. In the latter case, in other words when the ball is added to three already found in the hole, all four balls are taken out of the game and become the property of the player who took them away. When all the spheres have been taken away, they begin the game again. This time each player fills only as many

holes as he has enough balls to fill with four balls per hole. The game keeps going until someone no longer has a single ball. I was surprised that people in Kassa had the board which is necessary for this game.

88 B: The Battle at Embabo took place in 1886 during the war of Menelik against the Gojjam Negus.

89 B: Do not look skeptically at this number, my compatriots, asserting that people in Kharkov, Kiev, and other provinces easily endure such heat. If their thermometer shows this temperature in the shade, let them try tying the thermometer to the end of a rope and twirling it around for five minutes. Only then will they find out the actual temperature of the air. In the sun, my Reaumur thermometer indicated 50o, and sometimes even more. But besides, the majority of those with whom I was in Africa observed that there is a striking lack of correspondence between the indications of a thermometer and the sensation of heat. I do not know what to attribute this to: the closeness to the Equator, the brightness of the sun, or properties of the air and soil.

90 B: In number 195 of *The Russian Invalid* for 1899 the following was published:

"Staff-Rotmister of the Life-Guard Hussar Regiment Bulatovich, who travelled in Africa, thanks to his participation at the beginning of 1898 in one of the Abyssinian expeditions to the southern regions of Central Africa, managed to cross through lands which had previously been completely unknown to Europeans and to discover a large mountain range which rises along the western bank of the River Omo and extends for several

hundred versts from north to south.

"Up to this time, the existence of this mountain range was unknown to science. It was assumed that there was a mountain height to the west of the River Omo, but this was still unconfirmed. Previous explorers (Chiarini, Cheki, and Monseigneur Massaya) only passed through and investigated the northern spurs of this mountain range. Travelers who discovered Lake Rudolf (Count Teleki, Hohnel, Donaldson Smith, the 1896 expedition of Bottego, and the 1897 expedition of Cavendish) shed much light on a part of Central Africa the geography which was still unknown. Nonetheless, a significant space found between 7° north latitude and Lake Rudolf and between the Omo and Nile Rivers still remained completely unexplored. The first European who passed through these regions and who discovered there an enormous mountain range was Staff-Rotmister Bulatovich. First, he crossed the northern spurs of the mountain range in 1896. The detailed investigation of the whole mountain range, in all its extent, was carried out in the period from January 24 to April 23, 1898. For the whole time of his journey, Staff-Rotmister Bulatovich used every opportunity to conduct accurate astronomical observations, and along with these made a detailed map of the route. In all, he calculated the astronomical position of 13 points and composed a detailed map of the journey ...

"The Emperor Nicholas II Mountain Range is located between 8 degrees 30' north latitude and 36 degrees 30' east longitude, and 6° north latitude and 36 degrees 30' east longitude. In the north, it separates into several mountain ridges, which constitute the watersheds of the Rivers Gibye, Giye Enarza, Gibya Kake, Didessa, Dobana, Gaba, and

Baro.

"The main mountain range, which stretches along the River Omo, constitutes the watershed of two enormous basins: the Omo and Lake Rudolf on the one side, and the Jubba and Sobat Rivers, consequently the White Nile and the Mediterranean Sea on the other. In the middle part, the mountain range rises above the River Omo 1,000 to 1,500 meters at a distance of only 30-40 versts from its course. And the waters of its western slopes, being so close to what would seem to be its natural basin, are driven off by it for 10,000 versts [6,700 miles] to the distant Mediterranean Sea.

"The average height of the mountain range above sea level is 2000 meters. Its northern part is the highest, where separate summits — Tulu Jiren, Jimayangech, Bacha-aki-Kela, and Gida — attain altitudes of higher than 3,000 meters. The summits of Gongga-Beka, Boka, Yta, Shashi, Say, Kastit and Jasha attain heights of 2,500 meters above sea level.

"Unlike most of the mountains of the Ethiopian highlands, the mountain range of Emperor Nicholas II shows no signs of volcanic origin. It is a system of uniform, even bulges with rare hill-like summits.

"The rocks found there include sandstone, granite, and gneiss. The only metals the natives mine are iron and copper. Veins of quartz often give reason to think that thorough geological exploration might uncover other metals.

"The water which flows down from this mountain range forms the following rivers: from the eastern slopes the water goes down into the Gibye River which arises in the Guderu Mountains, as well as the rivers Gibye Enarza and Gibye Kake. At the confluence of these rivers, it is called the 'Omo.' Farther to the south, the Gojeb and Gumi flow into it, and at the confluence with the Gumi it is called 'Shorum.' Still farther, the Kibish River flows into it, and from here the river is called 'War.' The mouth of this many-named river at the point where it flows into Lake Rudolf is called 'Nyanya.'

"From the western slopes of the mountain range flow the rivers Baro, Menu, Bako, Kilu, Shebelimu, Chomu, and Kori, which unite to form the Sobat and flow into the Nile.

"The structure of this mountain range is different in the eastern than in the western part. The eastern slopes are very steep and precipitous, and the rivulets which flow down them are for the most part fast mountain streams. The western slopes are gently sloping and go down down very gradually, and the rivers on these slopes flow much more slowly.

"This mountain range has great climatic significance. Located close to the Equator, in the region of two trade winds, significantly high above the rest of the territory, it attracts a great quantity of rain clouds, and hence the greatest part of the rain falls on its eastern slopes. With regard to climate, the mountain range is divided into three zones. The middle section of the mountain range in which Kaffa is located is extremely humid; and, at the same time, it has the highest elevation. Thanks to the abundance of water and the regularity of the temperature, the soil of Kaffa is distinguished by its fertility. A large part

of the area of Kaffa is covered with dense forests in which the trees attain gigantic dimensions. Coffee trees, which grow wild in this part of Abyssinia, are found in great abundance. There are two rainy seasons: one in February to March and the other in June, July and August.

"Although the northern part of the mountain range is also distinguished by a humid climate, it has only one rainy period in June, July, and August; it doesn't have the spring period as in Kaffa.

"The southern part of the mountain range is distinguished by a drier climate. Here rain falls both in the spring and in the summer, but in much smaller quantities.

"The climate on the plateau to the south of the mountain range is very dry. Rain falls very rarely here, and the rivers are dry stony channels in which water is held only in rare holes.

"The vegetation here is meager. The soil is rocky and strewn with fragments of mountain rocks.

"The tribes who inhabit this mountain range belong to seven separate ethnographic groups and speak different languages.

"The northern end is inhabited by Galla (Oromo). They are divided into several

independent states: Guma, Gomo, Gera, and Jimma, which have now been conquered by the Abyssinians. Only Jimma preserved its conditional independence.

"Kaffa, which occupies the middle part of the mountain range, is populated by a tribe of Semitic extraction. In the distant past, Kaffa was a strong, rich, and vast southern Ethiopian empire. In 1897, it was subdued and annexed to Abyssinia.

"The eastern slopes of the mountain range which border on Kaffa are populated by Sidamo tribes and constitute the states of Kulo and Kontu, which have now been subdued by the Abyssinians.

"To the south of Kaffa live Gimiro tribes, divided into small states which are dependent on Kaffa: Sharo, Shevo, Benesho, Yayna, Duka, and Kaba. This tribe is probably a mix of Sidamo and Kaffa with Negroes.

"To the south of the Gimiro are found the Negro Shuro tribes, which probably are related to Nilotic Shilluks.

"The southwestern end of the mountain range is populated by a tribe which by type, language, and way of life differs completely from Negroes and resembles the Sidamo tribes. There are grounds for supposing that these tribes are a remnant of the original inhabitants of the Ethiopian plateau which remained intact and which, mixed with Semites, formed the tribes which now inhabit Ethiopia.

"The plateau to the south of the mountain range is inhabited by Idenich nomads, who are probably related to Shuro Negroes but are in a more savage state.

"These tribes are at very different stages of cultural development. The most developed are the Kaffa. They constitute a separate state, have already experienced centuries of political life, and are divided into classes. The least developed are the Idenich tribes. In translation the name "Idenich" means "sons of non-humans," and this name is given to them by their colleagues, by savages.

"The different names which they use for God testify to the diversity of these ethnographic groups. The Galla (Oromo) call God 'Wak'; the Kaffa 'Ier'; the Sidamo 'Tosa'; the Gimiro 'Kiy': the Shuro and Idenich 'Tuma'; and the original inhabitants of the Ethiopian plateau call God 'Dadu.'

"The mountain range, being inhabited in its whole extent by diverse tribes, divided into many small independent states, does not have a special name. Each of these states carries the name of its territory, but there is no name for the whole mountain range.

"From now on its name will be the Emperor Nicholas II Mountain Range."

91 B: I calculated the latitude by the least of the observed zenith distances, correcting it to a half diameter of the sun, taken from the ephemerides. The longitude was determined

graphically at the intersection of the latitude with the azimuth, taken at one of the earlier determined mountains in the north or northeast.

92 B: The supply of salt which I had with me had run out when we crossed the border. Abyssinians do not carry pure salt with them on the march. Rather, they make due with crushed red pepper with a dash of salt. This mixture is called dylykh.

93 B: However, the Europeans' fear is completely understandable after the unworthy and distorted descriptions of Donaldson Smith.

Donaldson Smith spent some time at the residence of General Wolde Gabriel, waiting there for permission from the Emperor Menelik for a trip across Abyssinia to Lake Walamo or Abasi. Menelik had to refuse him because the Walamo tribe had still not submitted to him, and he himself was getting ready to go against them.

The Abyssinian general gave Donaldson Smith a very cordial welcome and assigned him a place to stay in his own house. Wolde Gabriel provided him and his whole caravan with provisions and, on parting, gave Donaldson Smith what was very necessary for him — several excellent camels. In general, Wolde Gabriel conducted himself as a true gentleman and perhaps even with excessive generosity toward this white man who obviously had a hostile attitude toward the Abyssinian nation.

The American took all the gifts of the Abyssinian, gave him nothing in return, and in his

books even reproached Wolde Gabriel for begging, only because one of the general's retainers told Donaldson Smith that his master liked his gun. Moreover, Donaldson Smith described in ridiculous form both General Wolde Gabriel, who had shown him such kindness, and his family as well.

94 S: There is no simple English equivalent of the Russian word "sal'nik." Found in the abdomen of a sheep, "white fat" is a paraffin-like substance which is basically like fat, but with a higher melting point. It looks like rounded aggregates of white spheres. (Thanks to Alexander Chaihorsky for this information. He became familiar with "sal'nik" as an explorer in Northern Mongolia.)

95 B: When it is 30 degrees Reaumur [99° F] in the shade, in the sun the temperature is greater than 60 degrees Reaumur [167° F].

96 B: I collected rocks as best I could; but to my deep distress, a large part of the collection, including all the granite, was lost. They were usually carried in a sack placed in a pack. The ashker to whom the collection was entrusted, figuring that it only aggravated the mule, which was worn out, and that the stones had no value in and of themselves (he says, "you can find as many rocks as you want everywhere") threw them away.

97 S: The vernier or "nonius" is a small ruler on some measurement devices which helps to measure fractions and make fine adjustments.

98 K: Murle is a nationality which lives in the east of the Republic of Sudan and in Ethiopia on its southwest borders. The Murle-Pibor (from the Pibor River) are distinguished from the Murle-Buma (from the Buma Plateau) by their place of settlement. A.K. Bulatovich is talking about the Murle who live in the lower reaches of the River Omo, of whom there are considerably fewer. The Murle language is related to the group of the languages of Central and Eastern Sudan.

99 K: Murdu or Murzu is a nationality which is close to the Murle and which lives in the lower reaches of the River Omo, farther north than its bend. The Murdu language belongs to the group of languages of Central and Eastern Sudan.

100 B: Here is an example of one of these dialogues:

— Et Tekhedalekh? (Where are you going?)

— Bandera tekela. (To set up flags.)

— Myn tybelalekh. (What do you eat?)

— Komora. (Sour fruit.)

— Myn tytelaekh? (What do you drink?)

— Aguara. (Heat).

— Myn tyshekamalekh? (What do you carry?)

— Fujigra. (Gun.)

— Yamanny ashker? (Whose servant are you?)

— Eras makara. (Servant of "Ras of troubles," a nickname of Ras Wolde Giyorgis).

Here is another saying: "Be frenjo hid no auajyu. ("With the foreigner there is only one order — go forward!") "Be Bayu emmaymmechyn gud ayu." ("With Bayu [Ato Bayu] we saw impossible things.") "Be Melke etafan ba kork." ("With Melke [secretary of the Ras] we defiled ourselves during Lent with meat of antelope"). "Te shiambel gadel ishalal." ("Better the masses than the colonels.") And so on, including a most unflattering image of the majority of the leaders.

101 K: The Masai is a nationality which lives in Kenya and Tanganyika. In the nineteenth century, the region of their settlement extended as far as Lake Rudolf. Their language belongs to the southeastern group of Nilotic languages.

102 B: The Kulo are one of the brutal Sidamo tribes (see above). They are so blood-

thirsty that they showed no mercy even to captured livestock, and if they couldn't take the livestock with them, they slit the animal's throat and threw it on the roadside. They were not members of our regular army and had a position in the detachment like Turkish bashi-bazouks.

103 B: See the appendix.

104 B: The Mountains of Nakua are noted approximately correctly on the map of Donaldson Smith. The Mountains of Moru do not appear on his map. The western bay of Lake Rudolf was discovered by Bottego in 1896 and confirmed by Cavendish in 1897. Neither Bottego nor Cavendish found its native name. Captives from the Murugu tribe called it "Labur." That is exactly what my captive Turgana called it for me. This name Labur is found in Cavendish, but he uses that name for the mountains which are found to the west of the Cape of Vaska.

105 B: This river is noted on the map of the Italian expedition of Bottego. There it is named Moritsio-Seki.

106 B: The belt which Abyssinians wear around their waist is a long (about 14 arshins [32 feet]) band (half an arshin wide [7 inches]) of light cotton material (which weighs about one and a half to two pounds). It is useful on the march. It serves as an abdominal band or girdle, uniformly pulling in the stomach. In case of wounds, it is useful as a bandage. It is also convenient to carry a bandolier in this belt.

107 B: In this territory there are so many lions that the Abyssinians call it Yaambasa-Myeda — the Lion Field. Incidentally, they called the fort at Kolu Yadagusca-Myeda — Field of Dagusa (a type of bread grain), and the mouth of the River Omo — Yaakhya-Myeda, i.e., Donkey Field.

108 B: They raise the spear high and aiming it at the opponent, they make it vibrate by fast action of the hand.

109 B: As hunters assert, elephants often destroy all the trees in the place where any one of their herd has been killed. The danger from wounded elephants is corroborated by all the travelers of Central Africa. Prince Ruspoli fell victim to an elephant wounded by him. Count Teleki, Cavendish, and I saved ourselves from them only by miracle.

110 B: I spent from September 9, 1897, to July 19, 1898, on my journey. In all, not counting trips by train and steamboat, in that time I covered about eight thousand versts [five thousand miles], during which there were only four extended stops: 1) from October 15 to November 16 — 42 days; 2) from January 9 to January 21 — 12 days; 3) from February 26 to March 4 — 6 days; and 4) from May 5 to May 14 — 9 days. There were 33 days of short stops. There were 211 days of marching.

111 B: In the language of the inhabitants of the mouth of the River Omo, God is called Niyaguch, not Tumu as the other Idenich tribes refer to Him.

## **Images from Ethiopia, 1897-1898**

Photos from the original, 1900, edition of *With the Armies of Menelik II* by Alexander Bulatovich, taken by the author and Lieutenant Davydov.

### **Full-page plates**



Главкомандующій—расъ Вальде-Георгисъ.

Commander-in-Chief Ras Wolda Giyorgis



Галласы земледѣльцы.

Galla Farmers



Возвращеніе войскъ раса Вальде-Георгиса послѣ завоеванія Каффы.

Return of the Army of Ras Wolda Giyorgis After the Conquest of Kaffa



Торжественный въездъ въ Адисъ-Абаба раса Вальде-Георгиса  
съ плѣннымъ царемъ Каффы.

Ceremonial Entrance Into Addis Ababa of Ras Wolda Giyorgis With the Captured King  
of Kaffa



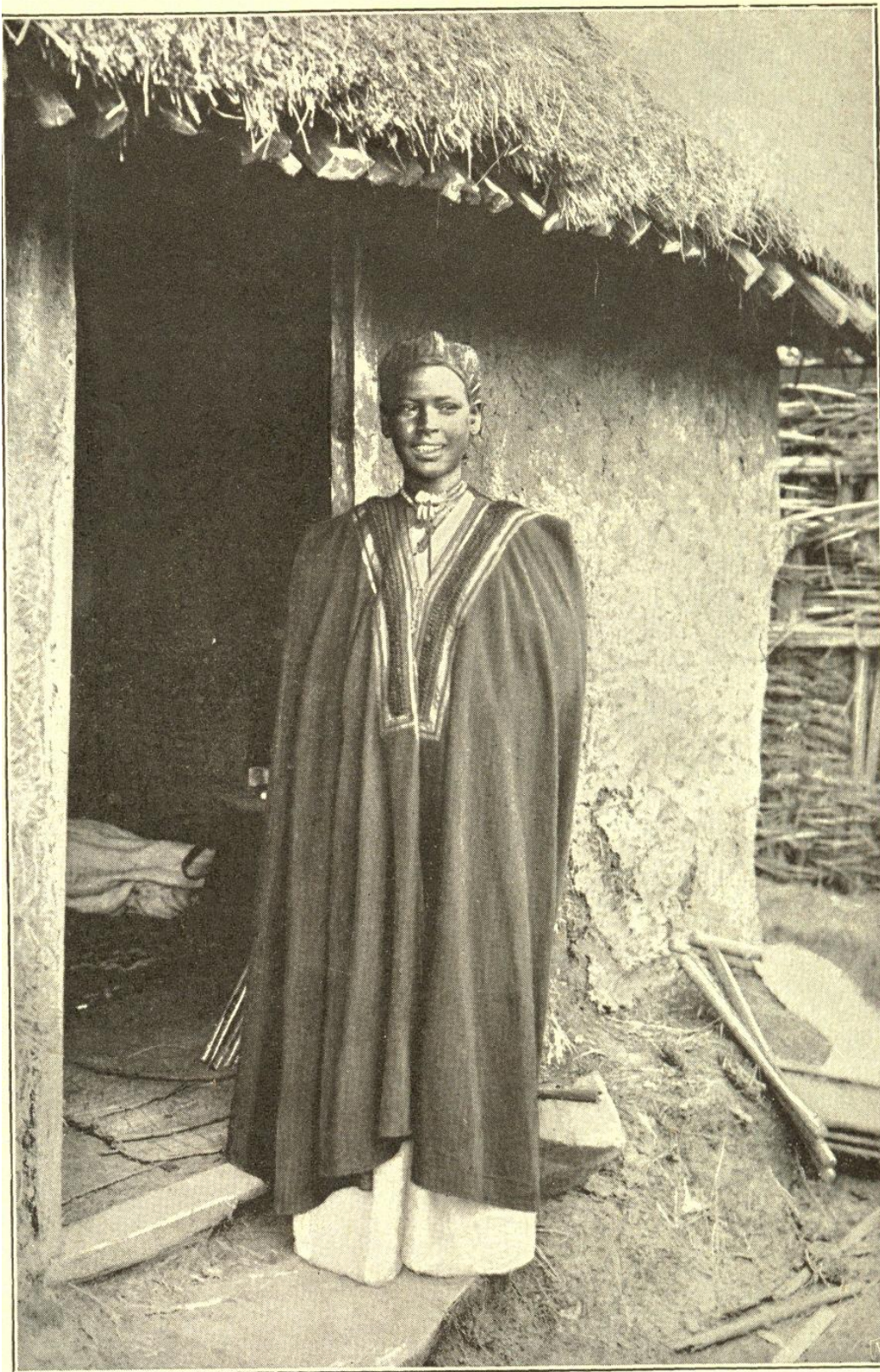
Войска раса Вальде-Георгиса, послѣ завоеванія Каффы, преклоняются предъ Императоромъ.

Army of Ras Wolda Giyorgis After the Conquest of Kaffa Bows Before the Emperor



Азаджъ-Габро́ и Баша́ Вальде-Марсамъ.

Azadzh-Gabro and Basha Wolda-Marsam



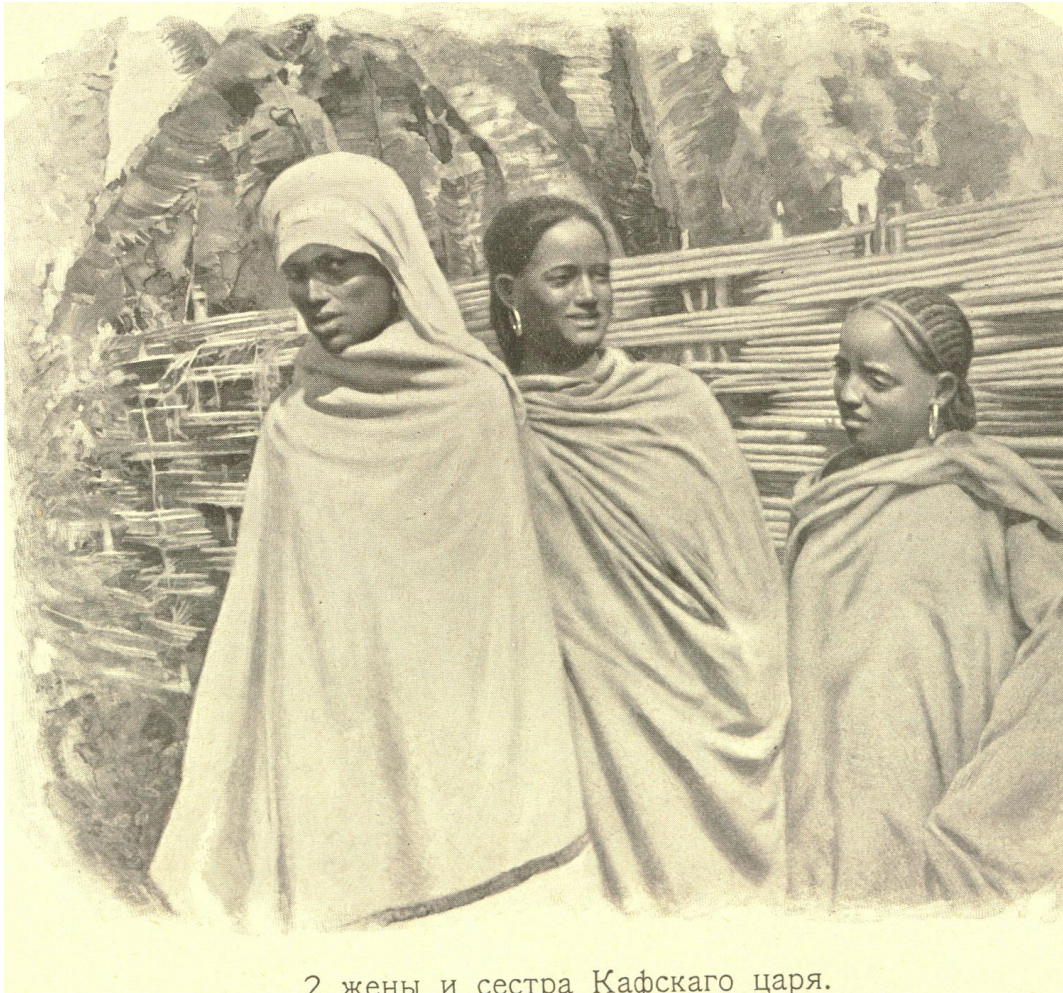
Богатая абиссинка.

Rich Abyssinian Woman



Супруга раса Вальде-Георгиса съ дочерьми.

Spouse of Ras Wolda Giyorgis With Her Daughters



2 жены и сестра Кафского царя.

Two Wives and Sister of the King of Kaffa



Добрыя жана чары Каффы

Favorite Wife of the King of Kaffa



Ato-Bayu



Плѣнный негръ съ семьей.

Captive Negro With His Family

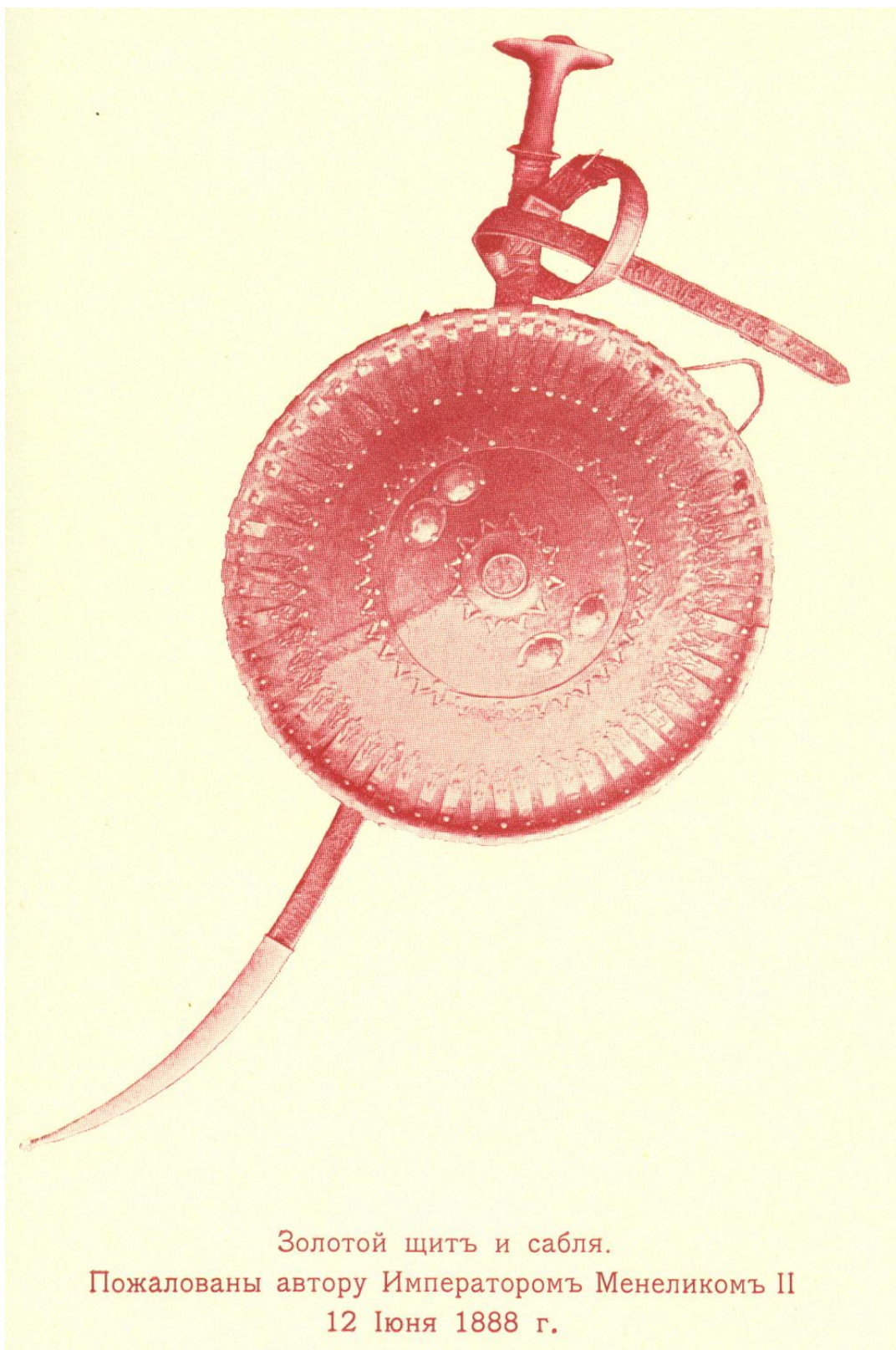


Vaska



Расъ шествуетъ на обѣдъ.

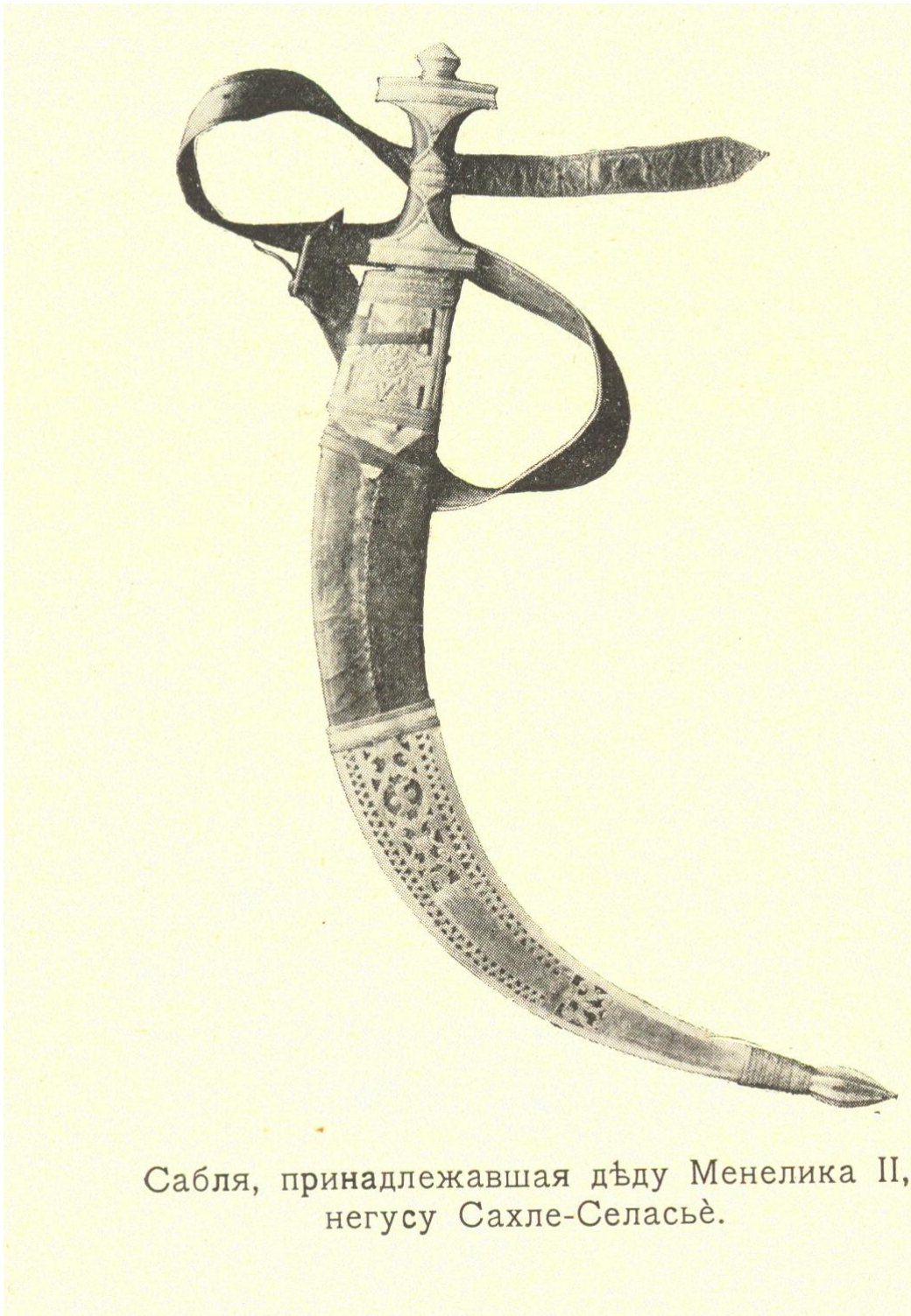
The Ras Goes to Dinner



Золотой щитъ и сабля.  
Пожалованы автору Императоромъ Менеликомъ II  
12 Юня 1888 г.

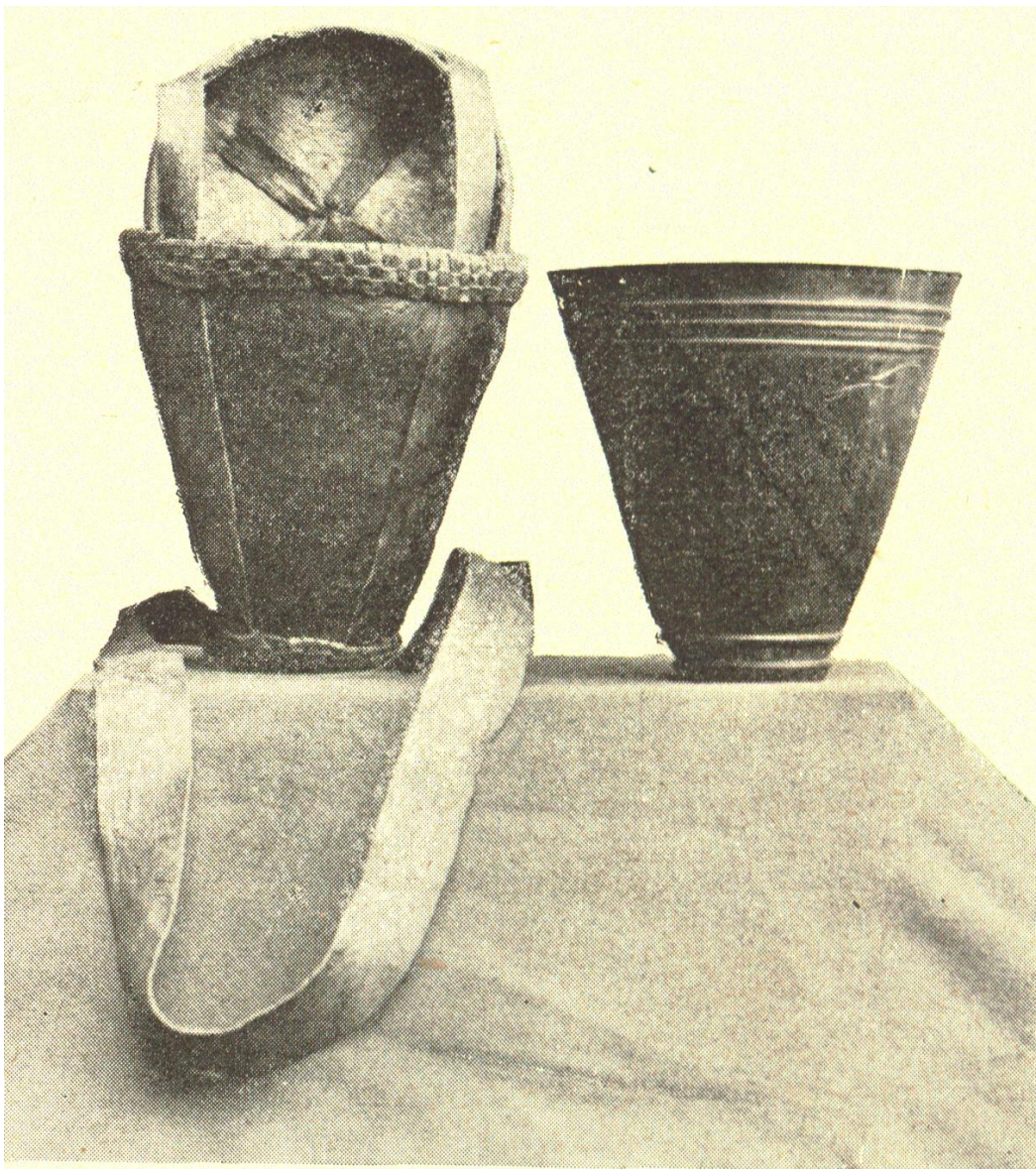
Gold Shield and Saber Awarded to the Author by Emperor Menelik II, June 12, 1888 [sic,  
actually 1898]

### **Other Illustrations**



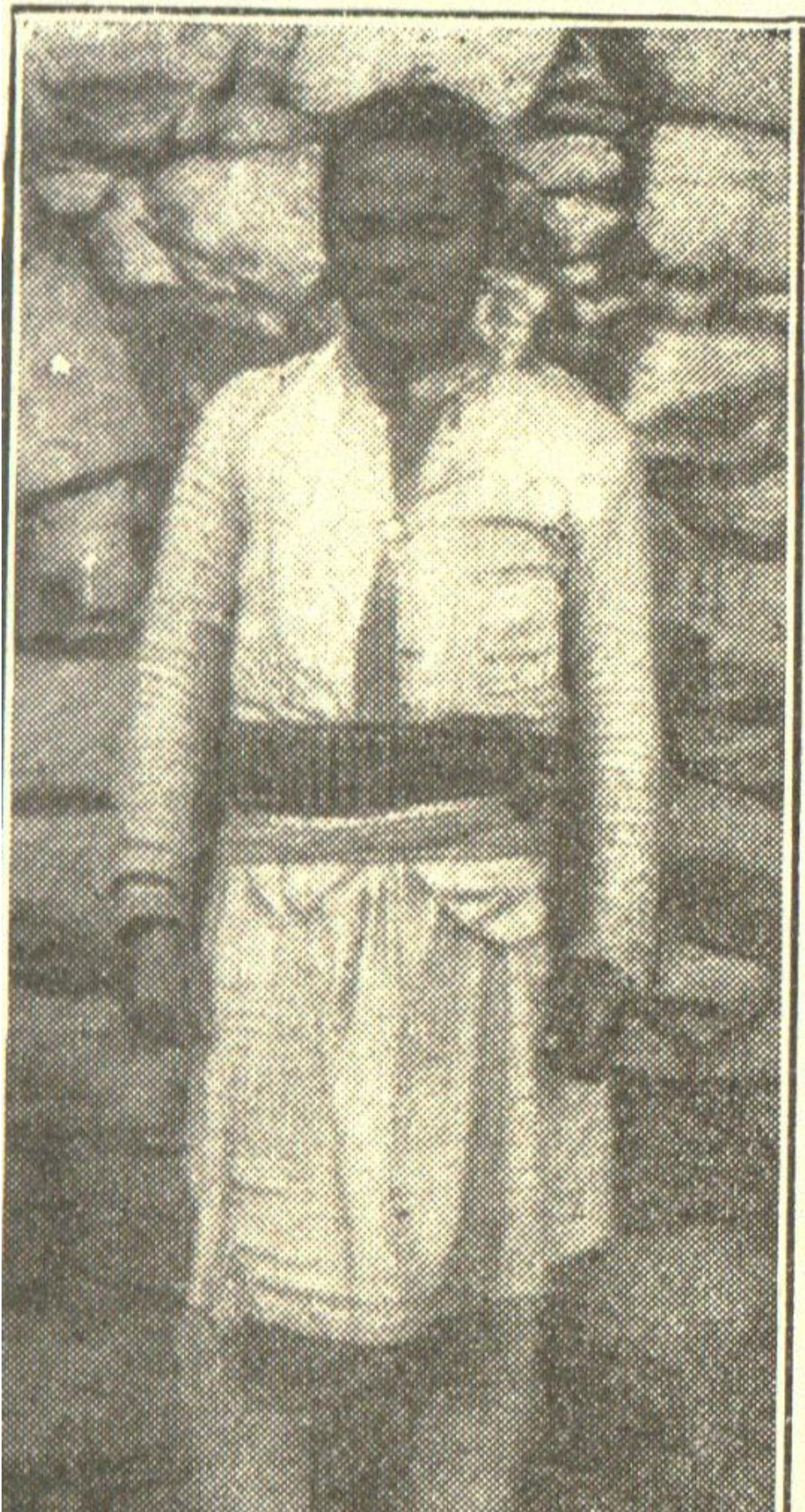
Сабля, принадлежавшая дѣду Менелика II,  
негусу Сахле-Селасьє.

Saber that belonged to the grandfather of Menelik II, Negus Sakhle-Selassie

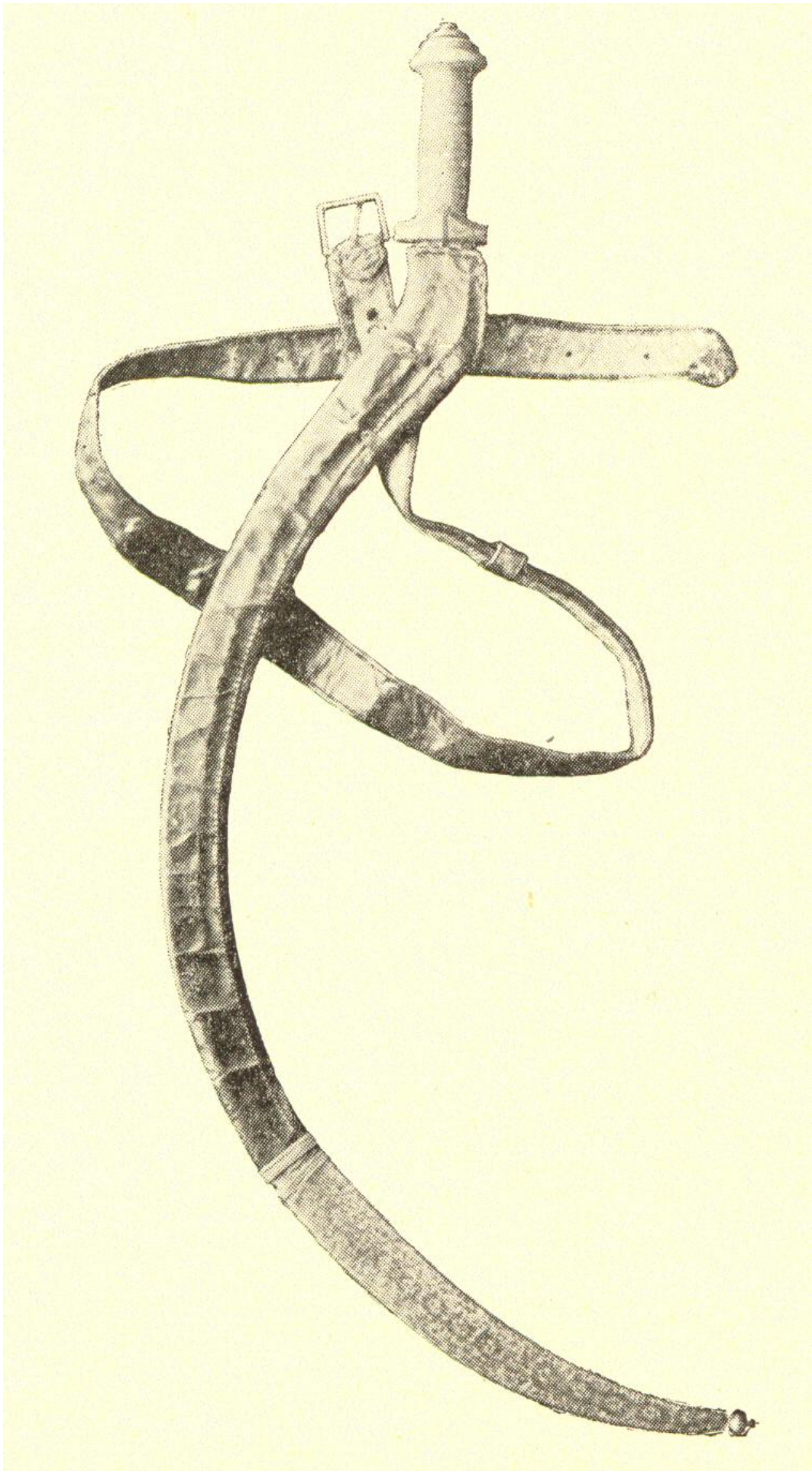


Дорожный стаканъ изъ буйволового рога.

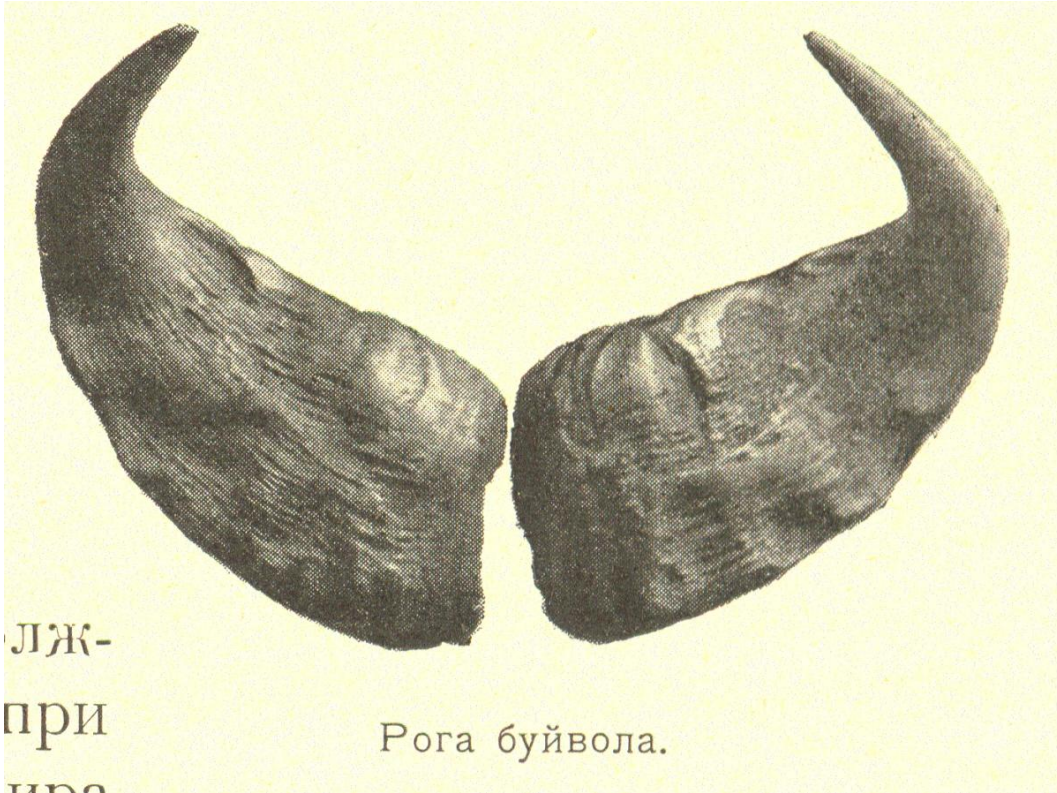
Travel cup made of buffalo horn



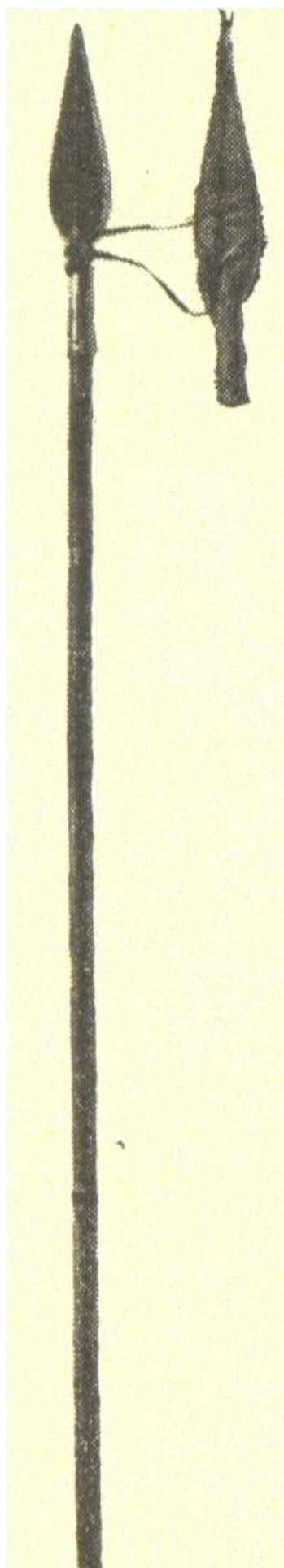
Wolda Tadika



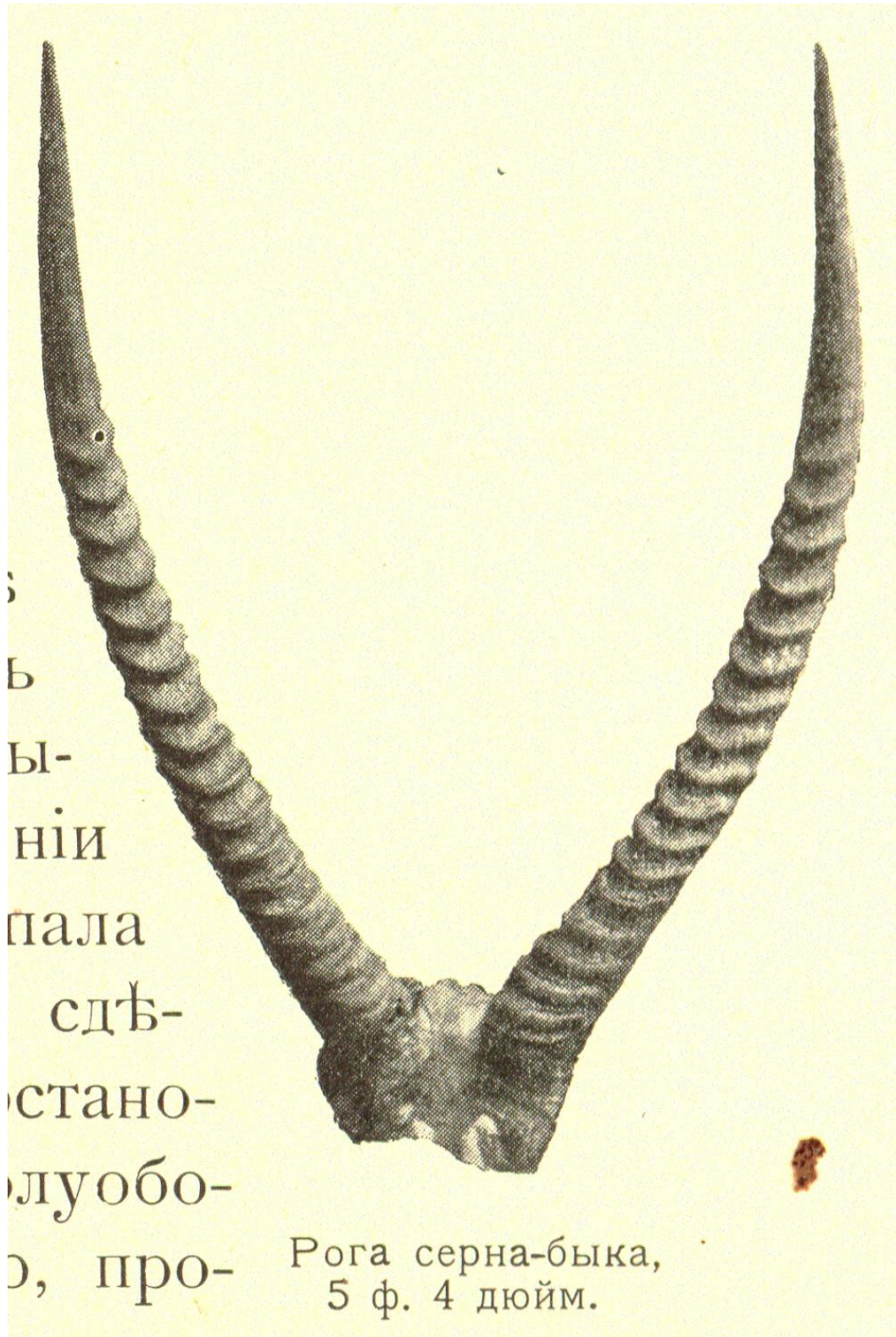
Gift of Dajazmatch Gebra Egziabeer, saber with gold hilt



Buffalo horn



Abyssinian spear, 7 feet 5 inches

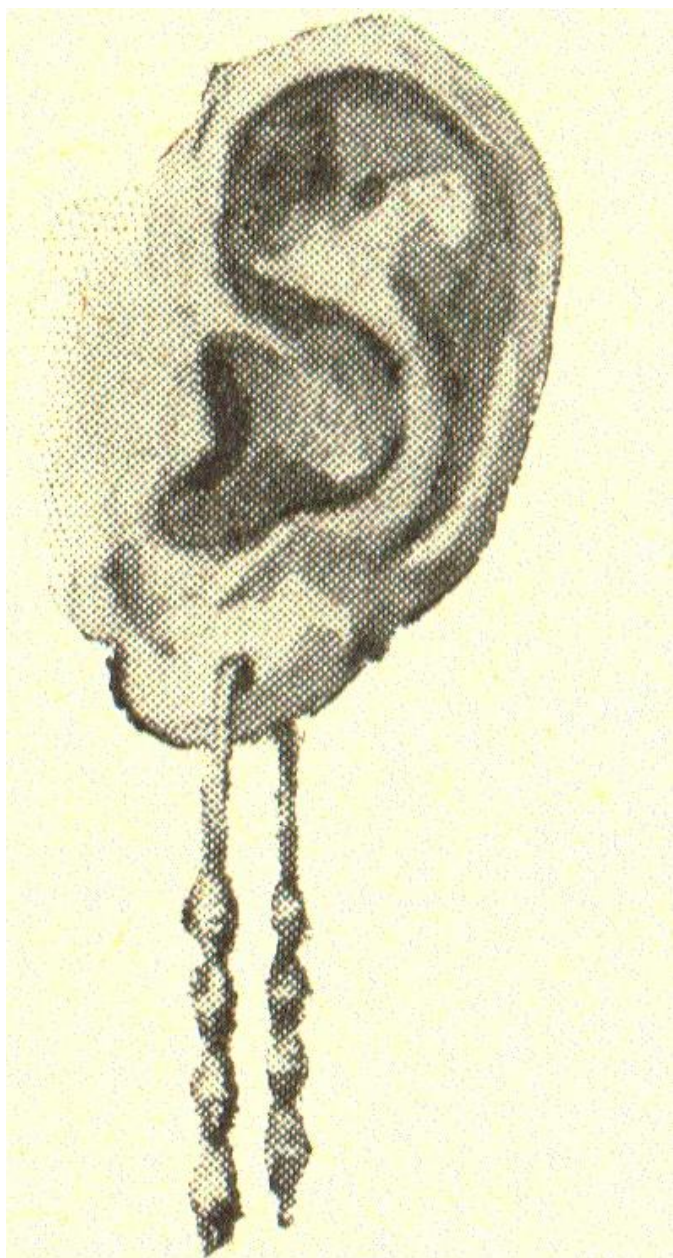


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Рога серна-быка,  
5 ф. 4 дюйм.

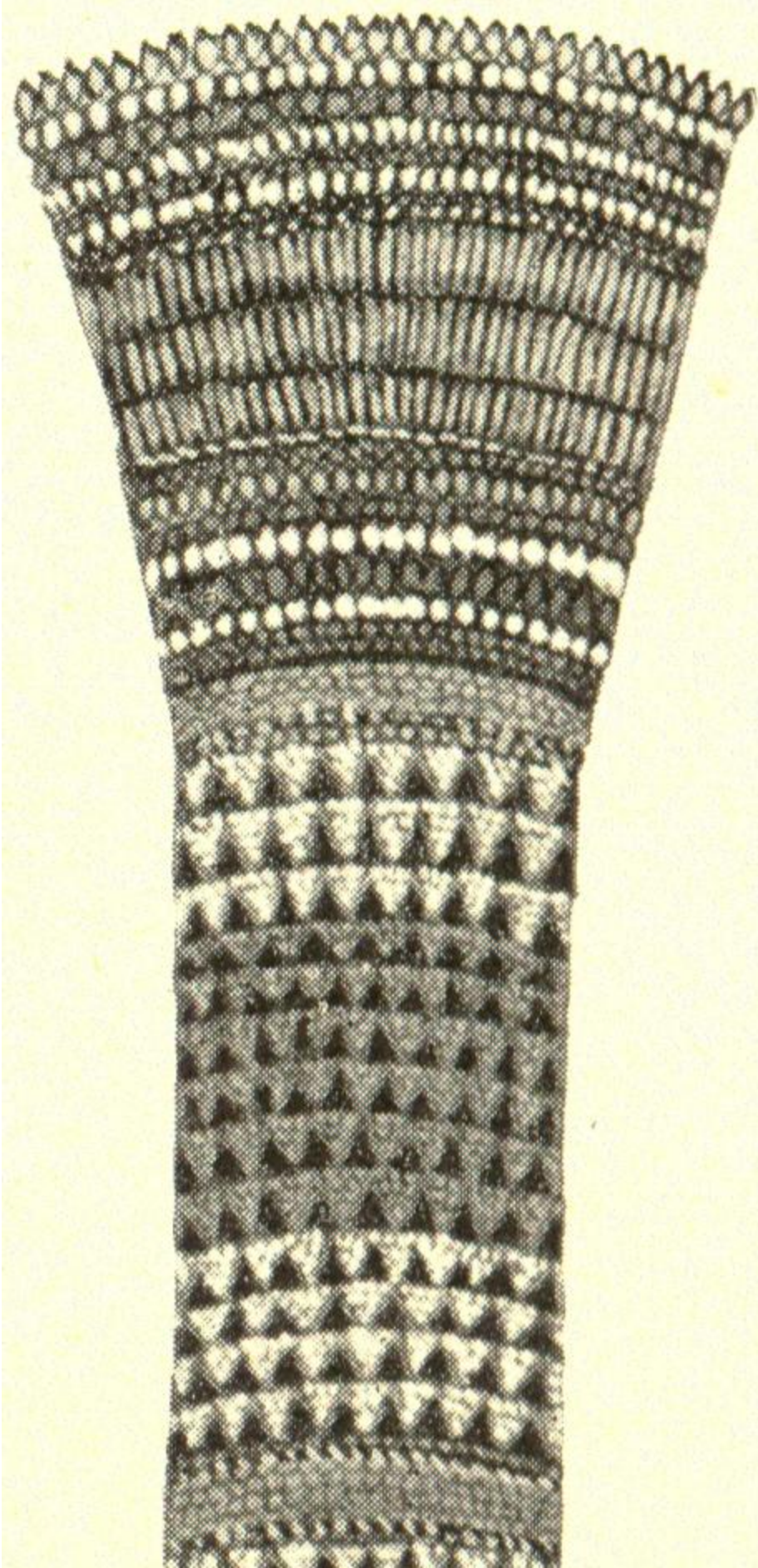
Horn of a chamois, 5 feet 4 inches





Серьга  
галласки  
Джиммы.

Earring of a Galla from Jimma



Basket for coffee service



Галласскій браслетъ  
изъ слоновой кости.

Galla bracelet made of elephant bone

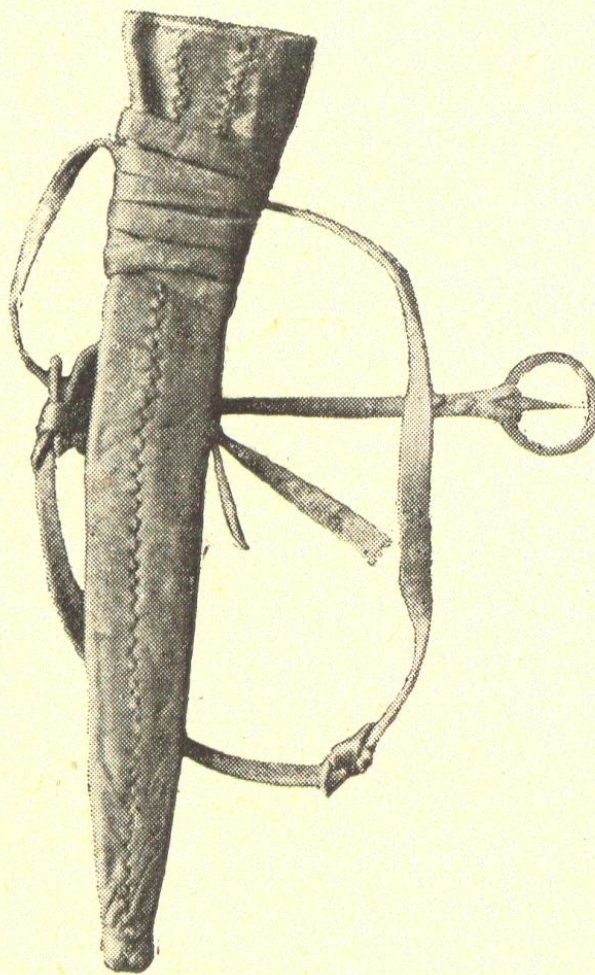
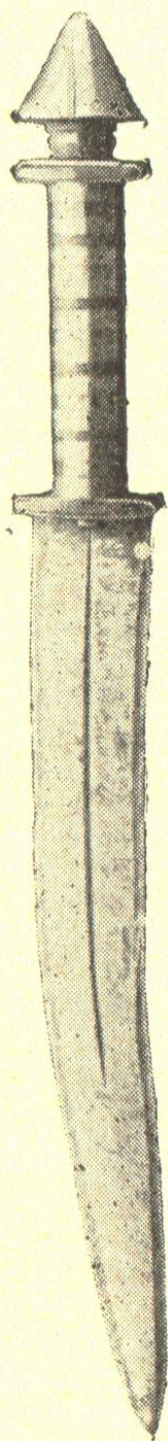




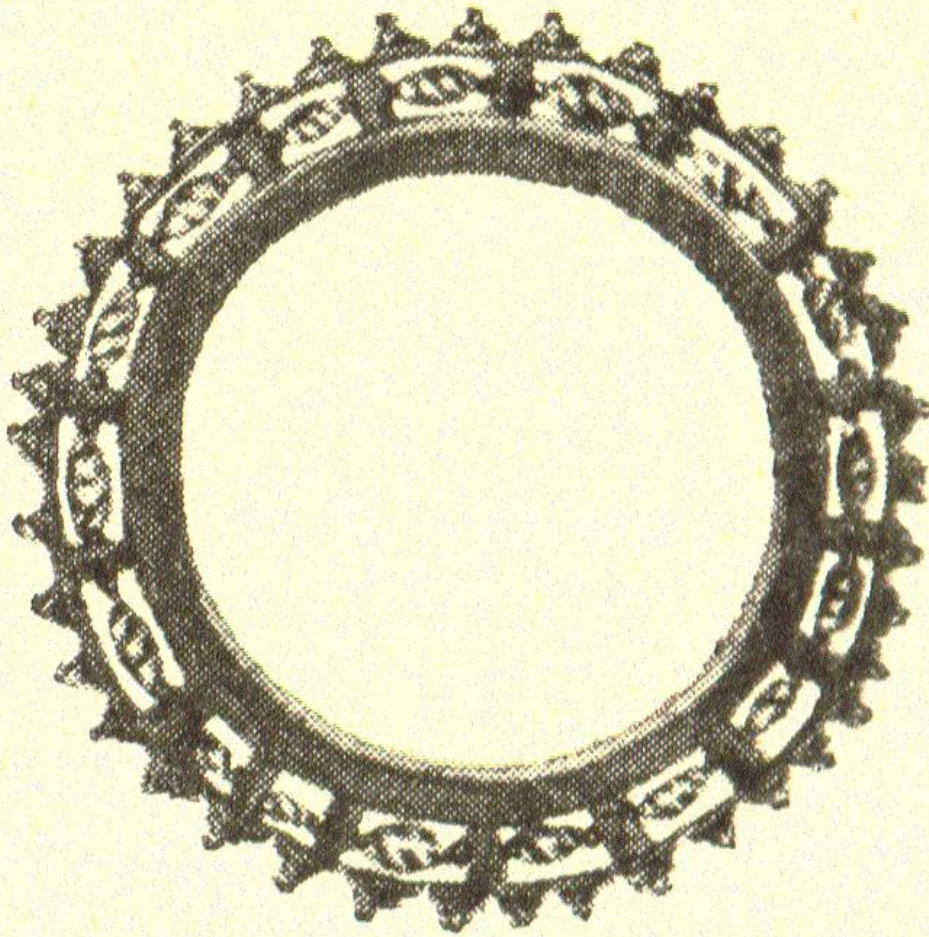
Decanter for mead, belonging to the King of Kaffa

серебромъ щиты, на  
ленты на головѣ.

Меня проводили  
дворца, имѣющій дво  
наго судилища и о

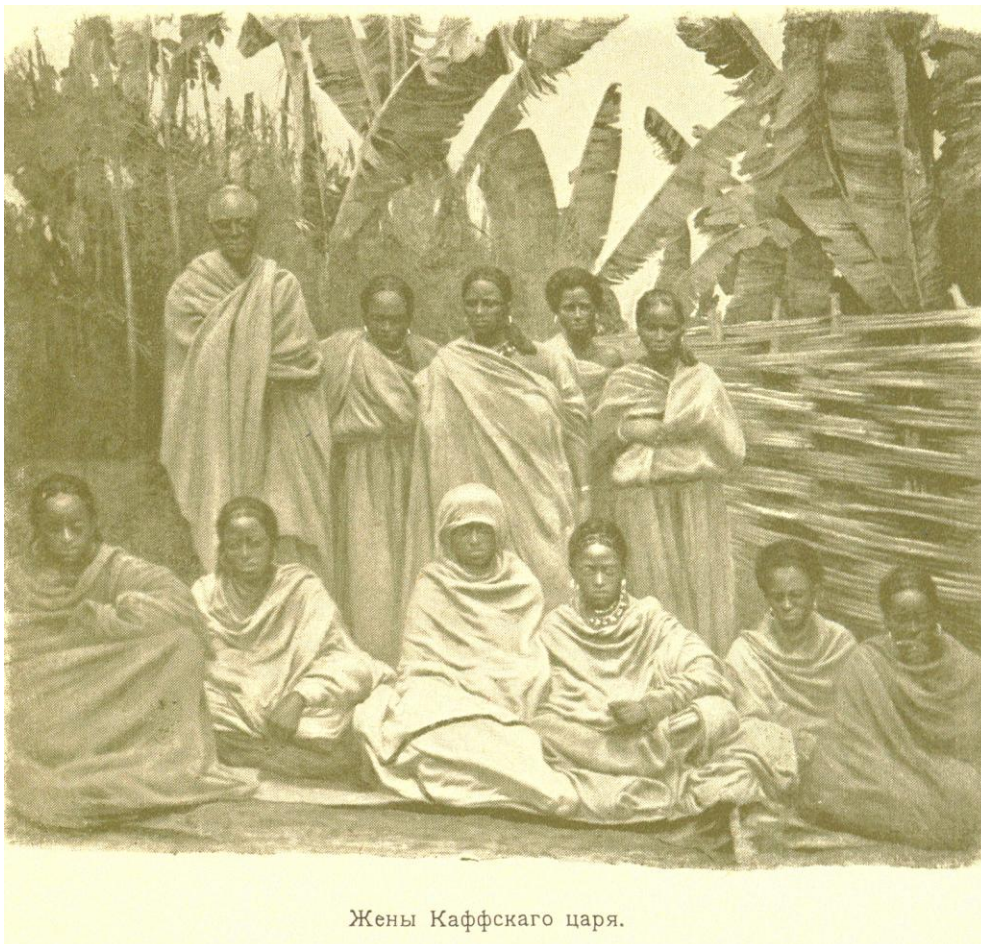


Кинжалъ галласовъ Джиммы.



Браслетъ изъ слоновой  
подошвы, носятъ  
каффскіе аристократы,  
убившіе слона.

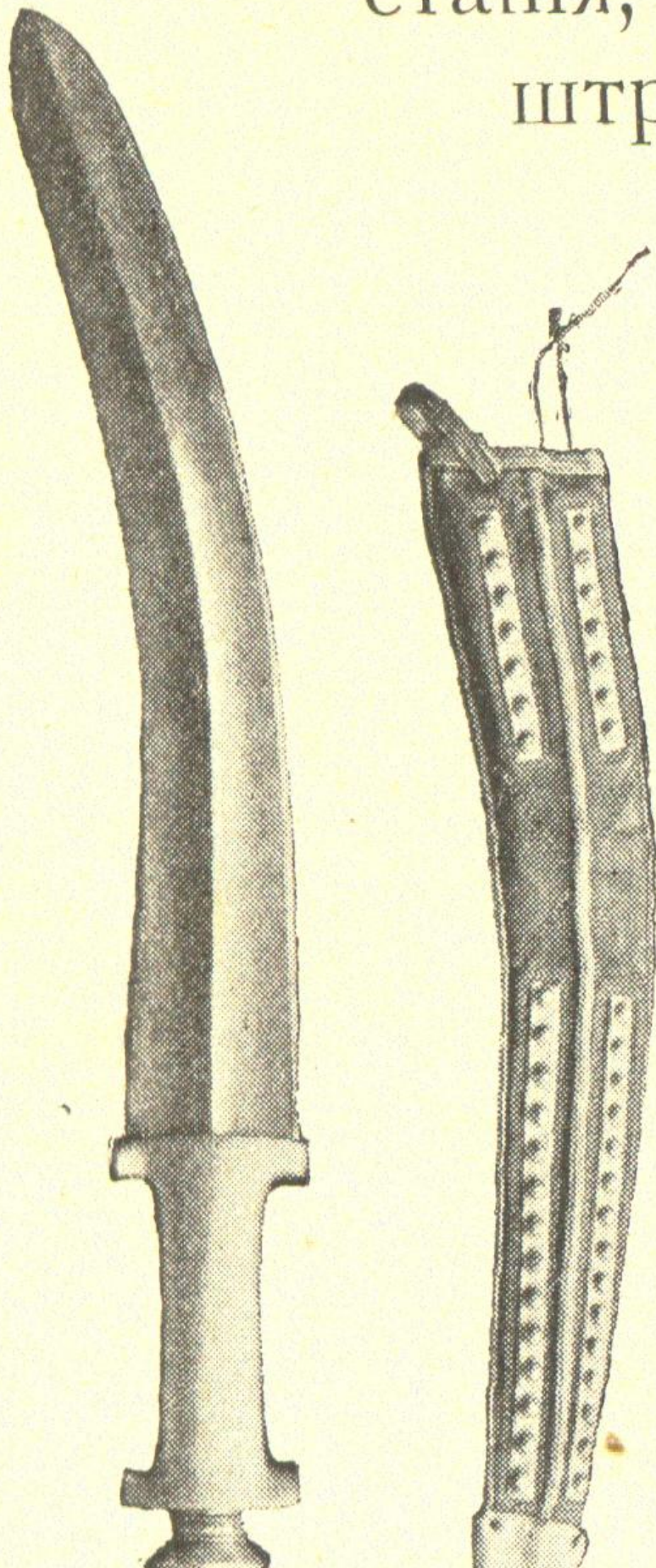
Bracelet made of elephant foot, worn by Kaffa aristocrats who have killed an elephant



Жены Каффского царя.

Wives of the King of Kaffa

станія, бь  
штраф



## Gift of the King of Kulo

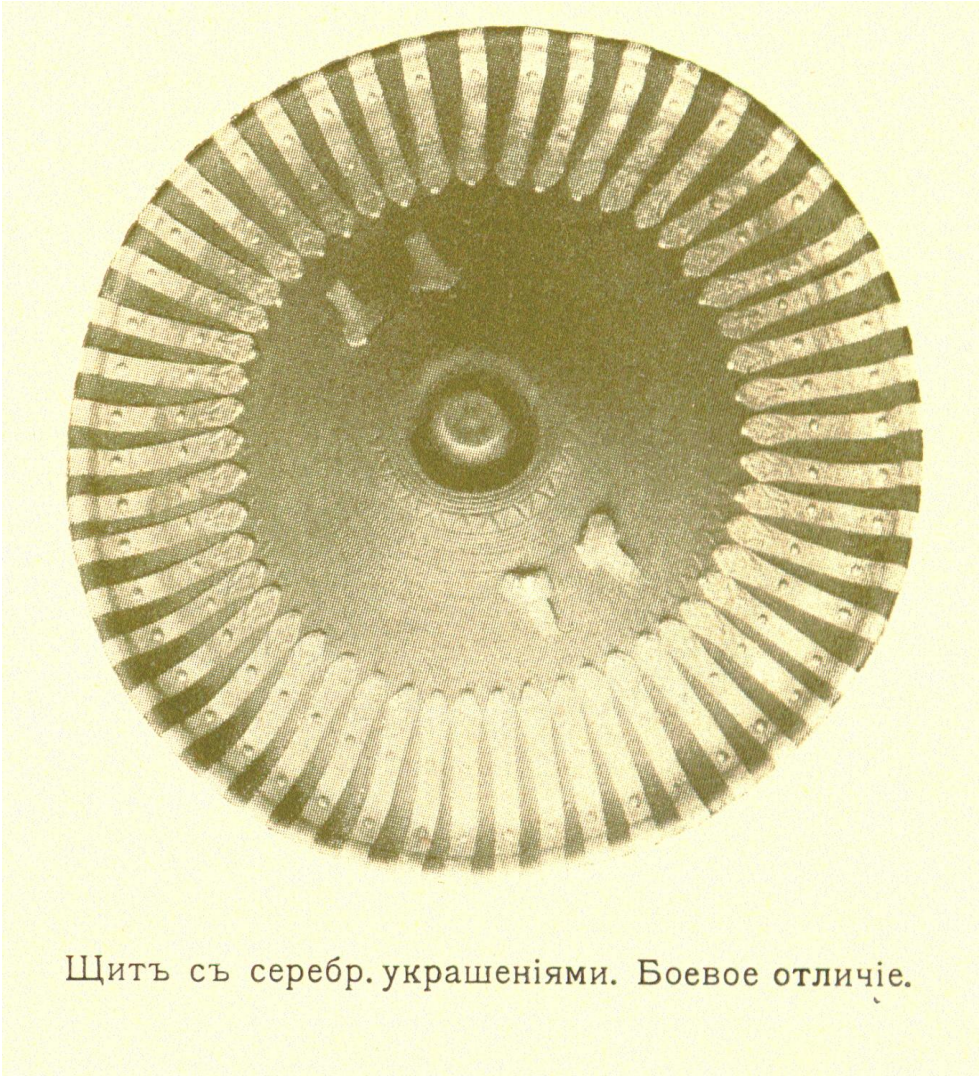


## War Cloak Made of a Lion's Pelt



Боевая накидка.

War Cloak



Щитъ съ серебр. украшеніями. Боевое отличіе.

Shield With Silver Decorations



Головная повязка изъ львиной шкуры.  
Боевое отличіе.

нной изъ львиной гривы—  
вующій нашему Георгію. У  
раненыхъ въ бою, сабли съ  
ками, а у убившихъ врага од-  
ными кольцами.

лся, спокойно и съ глубокимъ  
о достоинства выступилъ впе-  
—фитаурари Имамъ со своими

съ серебрянымъ украшеніемъ, серебря-  
и наши ордена съ мечами. Украшенная  
ордкое отличіе, дается только старшимъ

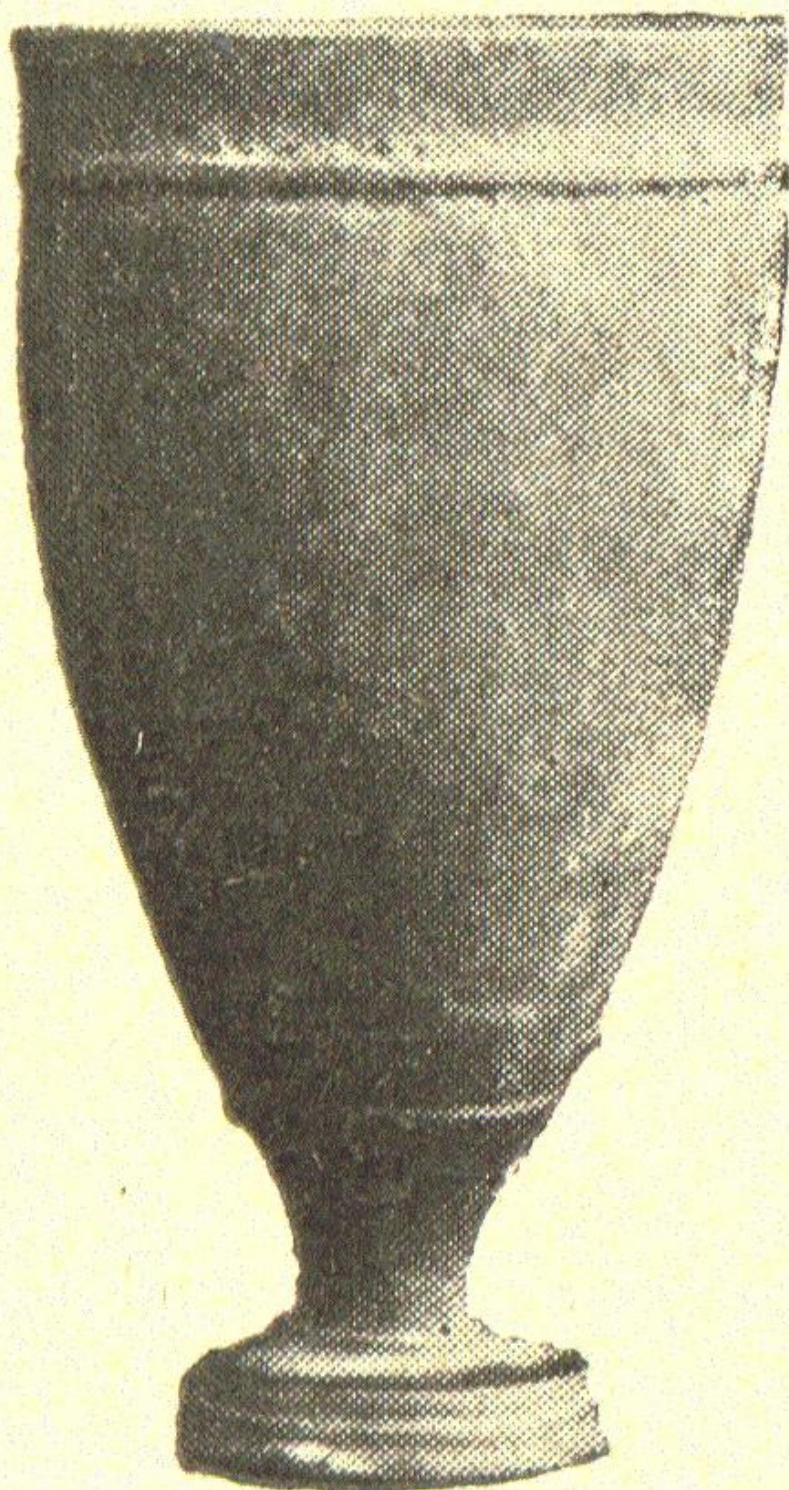
Head Band Made of a Lion's Pelt. A War Distinction.



К атамараша Каффы.

Katamarsha of Kaffa [chief spokesperson of the high council, which was the highest court of law]



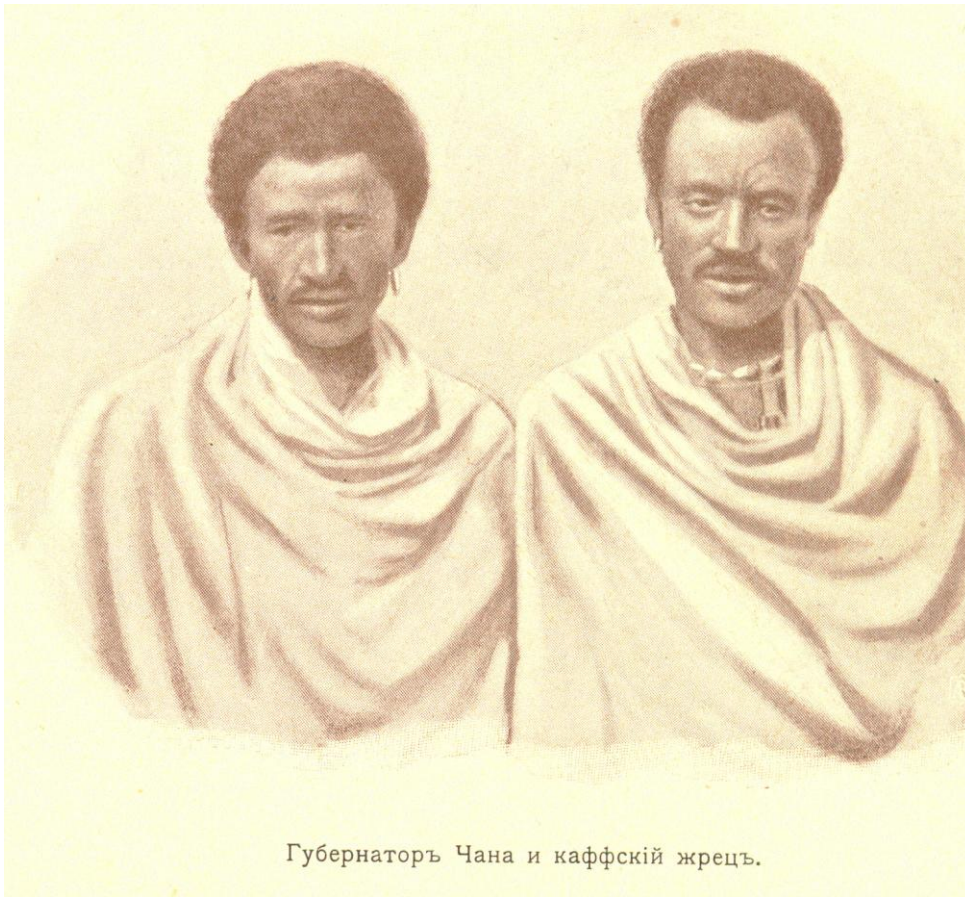


Роговая чашечка  
для кофе.

## Horn Cup for Coffee

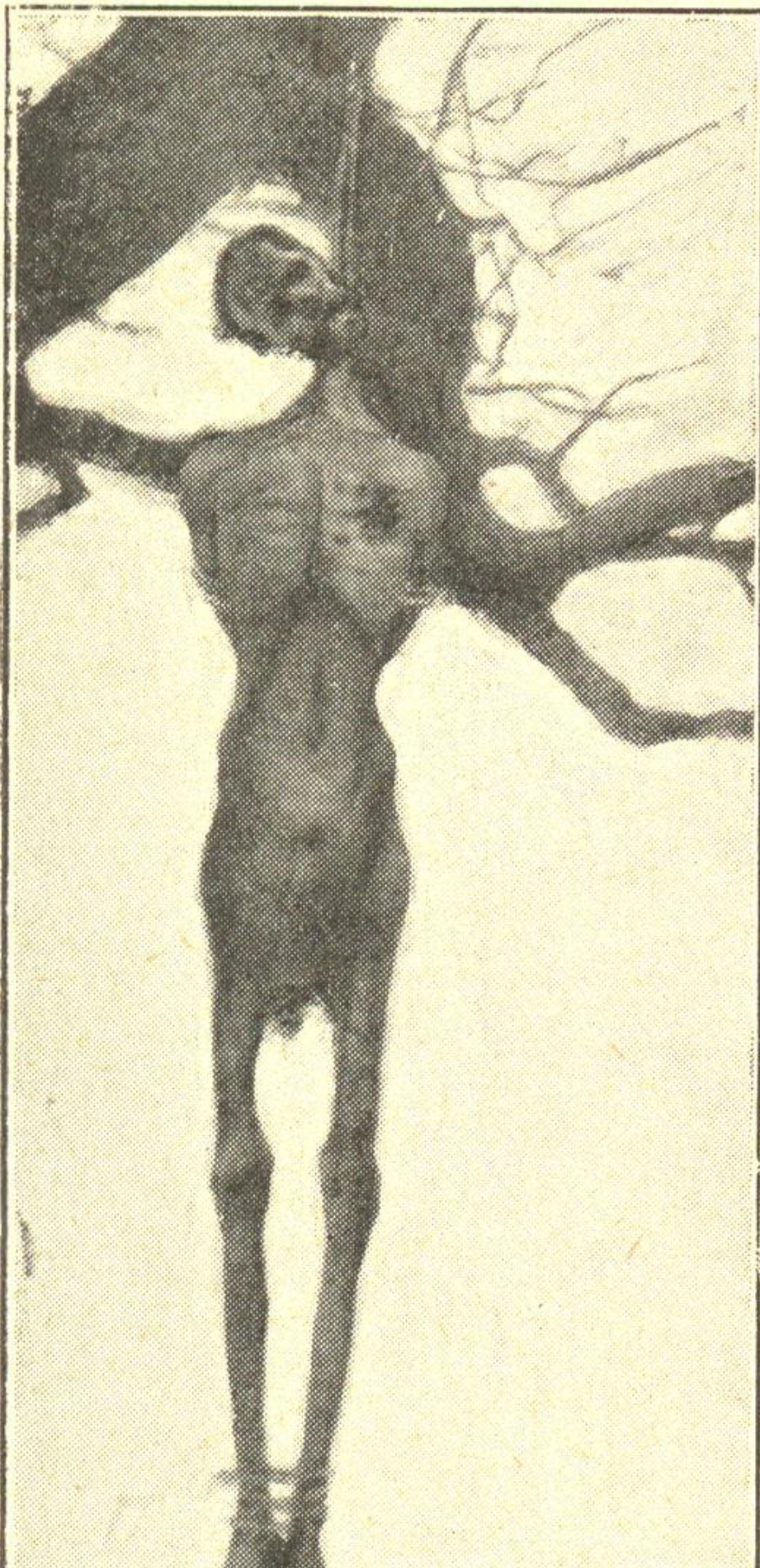


## Hungry Kaffas



Губернаторъ Чана и каффскій жрецъ.

The Governor of Chana [region of Kaffa] and a Kaffa priest



## A Hanged Man

средство,

медь

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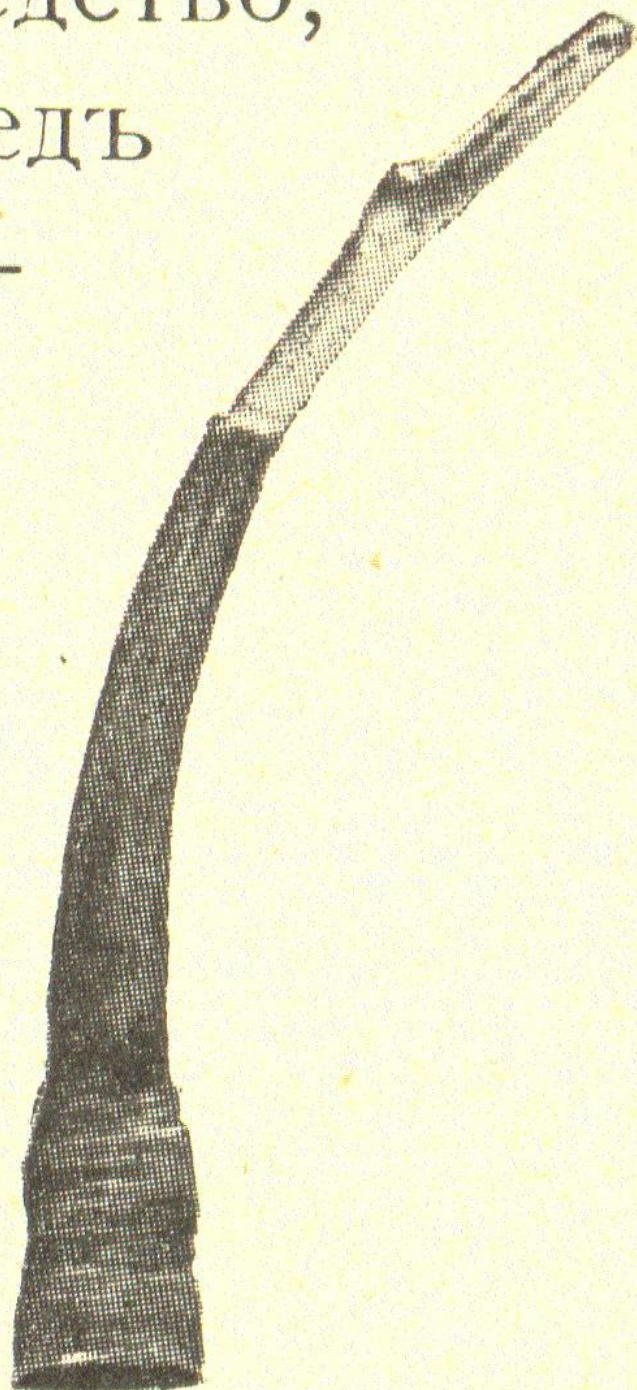
ь

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Рогъ изъ сло-  
новаго клыка.

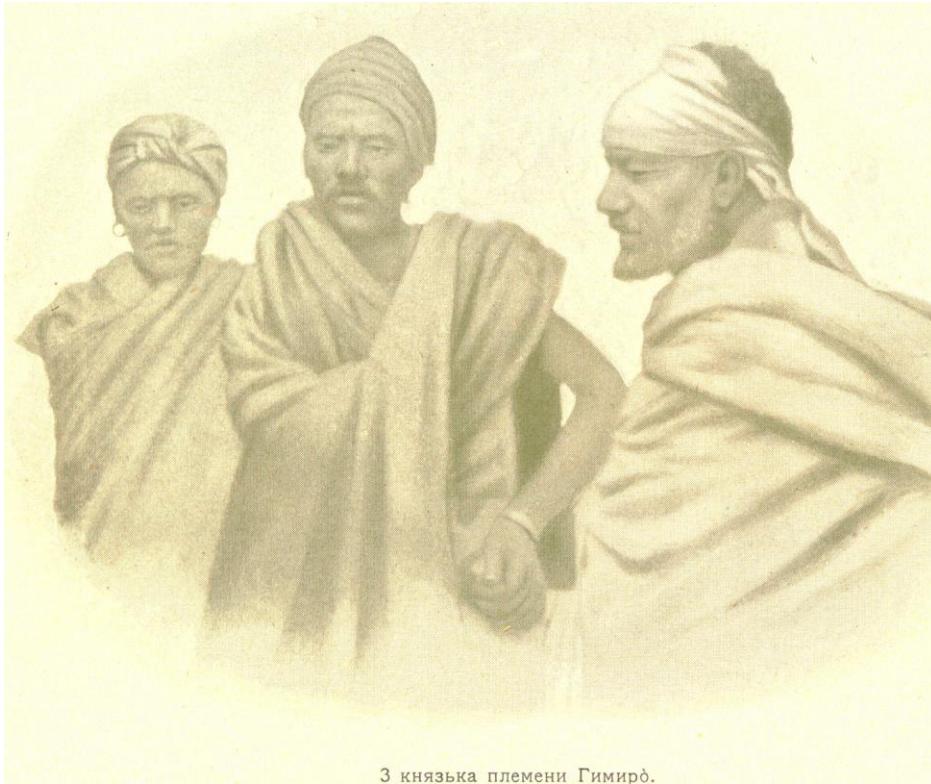


## Horn Made of Elephant Tusk



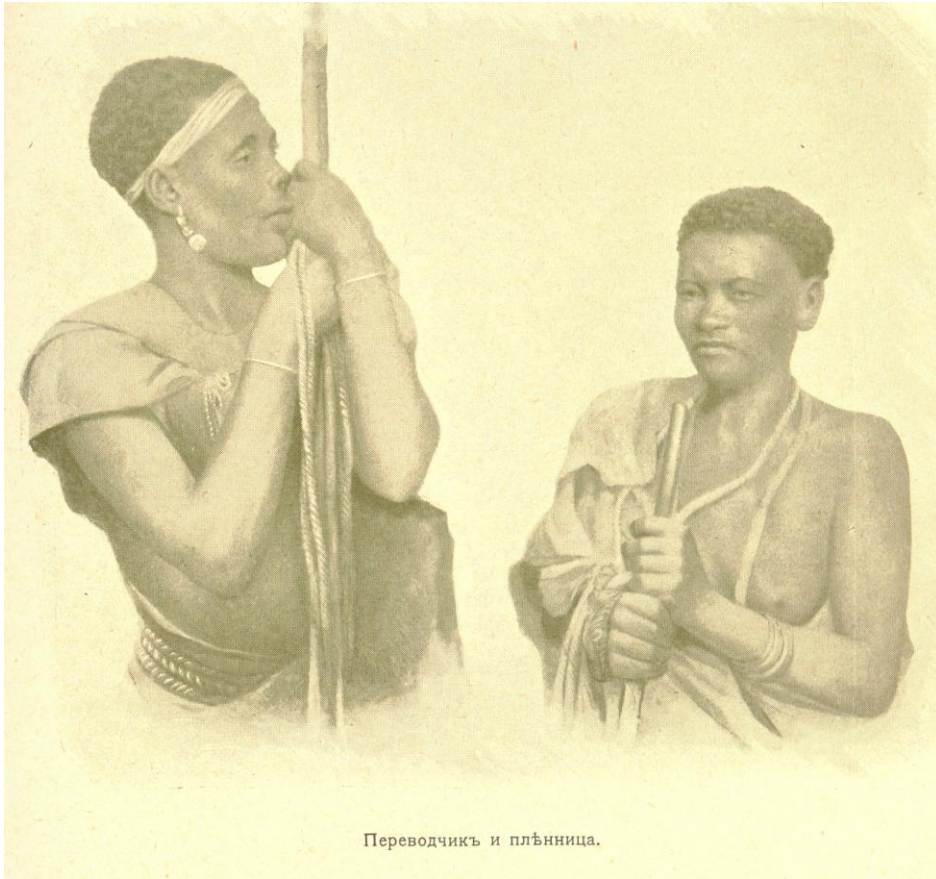
Гимирѳ.

## Gimiro



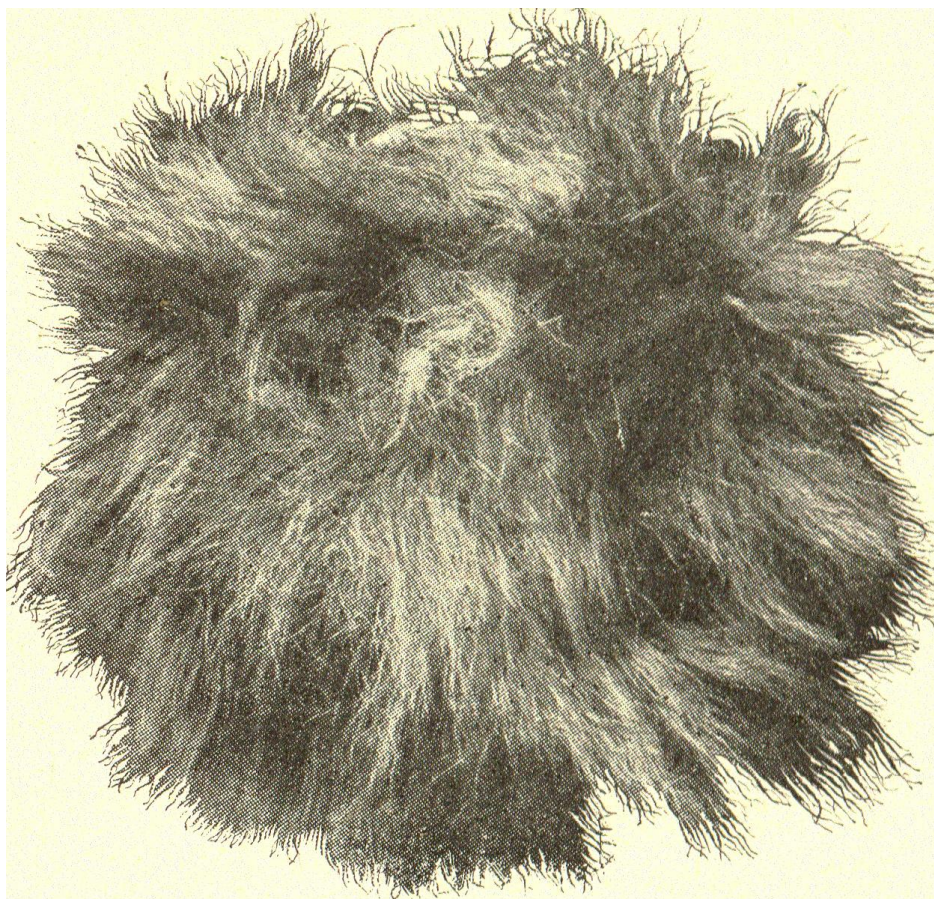
3 князька племені Гимирѣ.

Three Princes of Gimiro Tribes



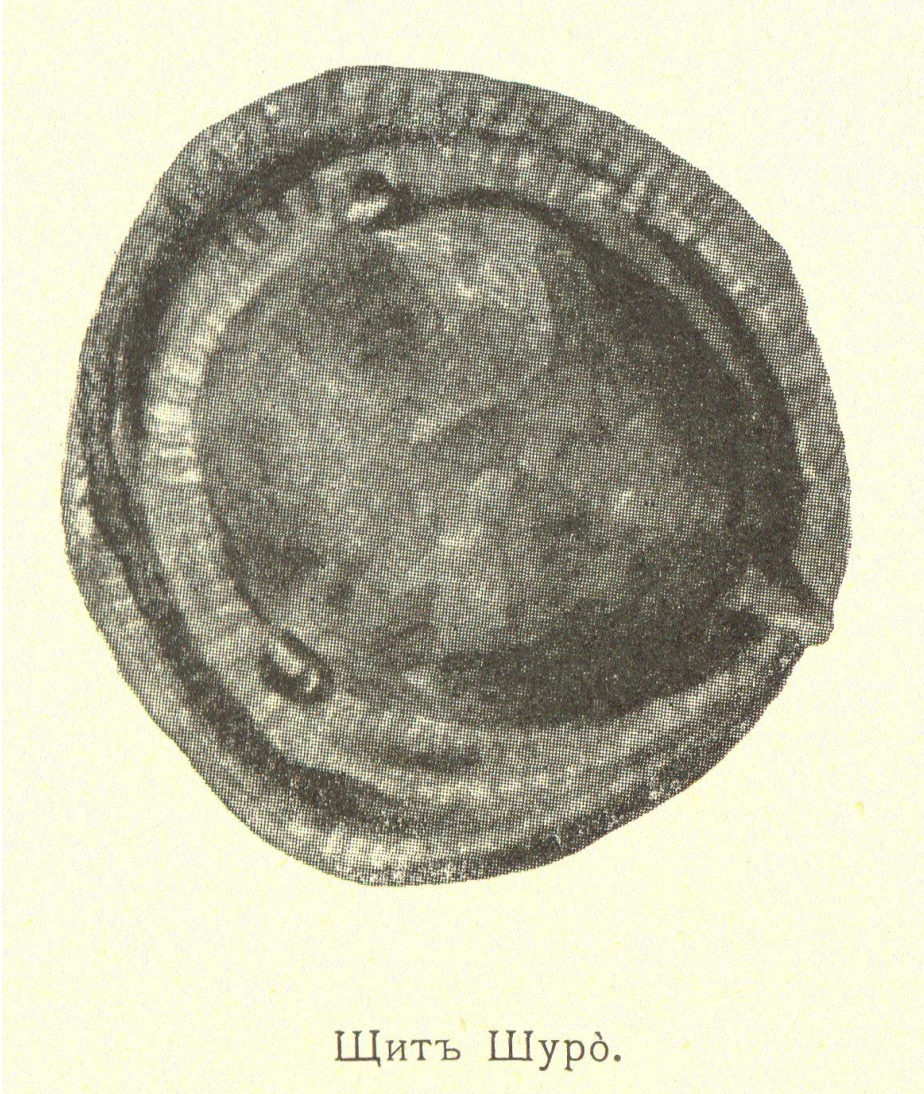
Переводчикъ и плѣнница.

Translator and Female Prisoner



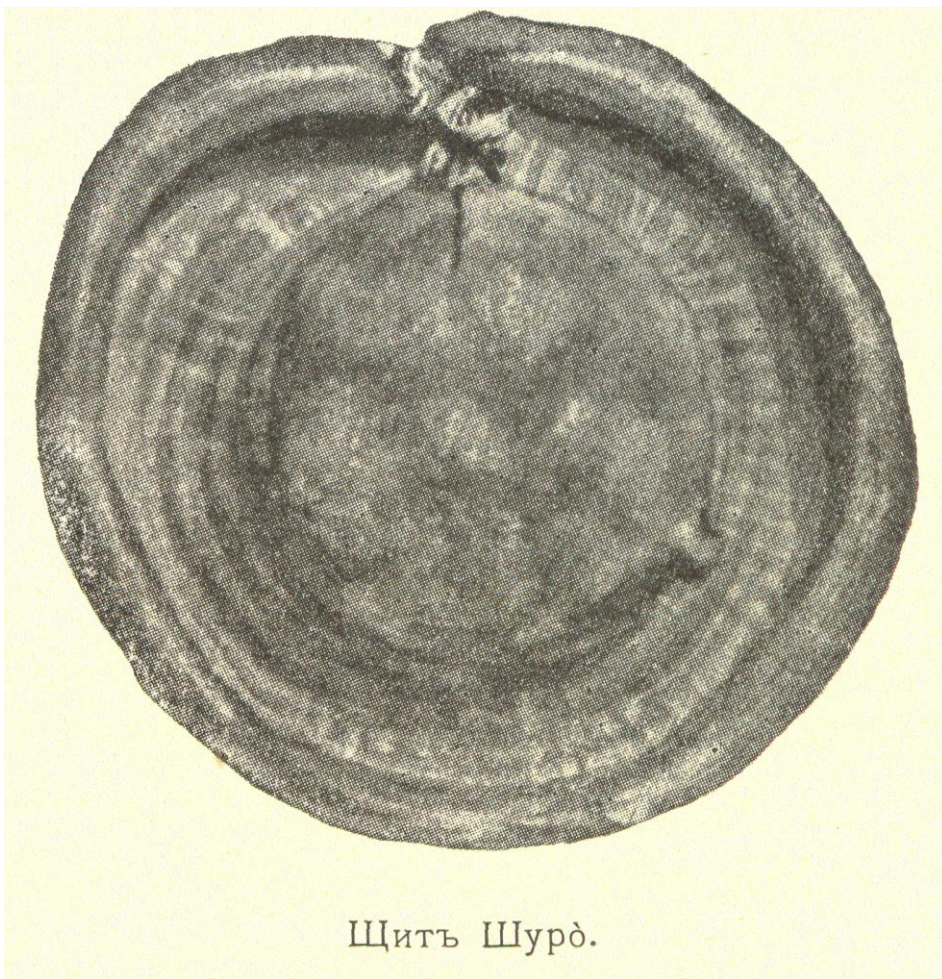
Шапка изъ шкуры обезьяны.

Hat Made of Monkey Skin



Щитъ Шурò.

Shuro Shield



Щитъ Шурѡ.

Second Shuro Shield



Белемуса.

Belemusa [woman found in the Sebelimu River, who became a guide for the army of Wolda Giyorgis]



Snuff-box of the Shuro Queen



King of the Shuro, Komoruti-Geda

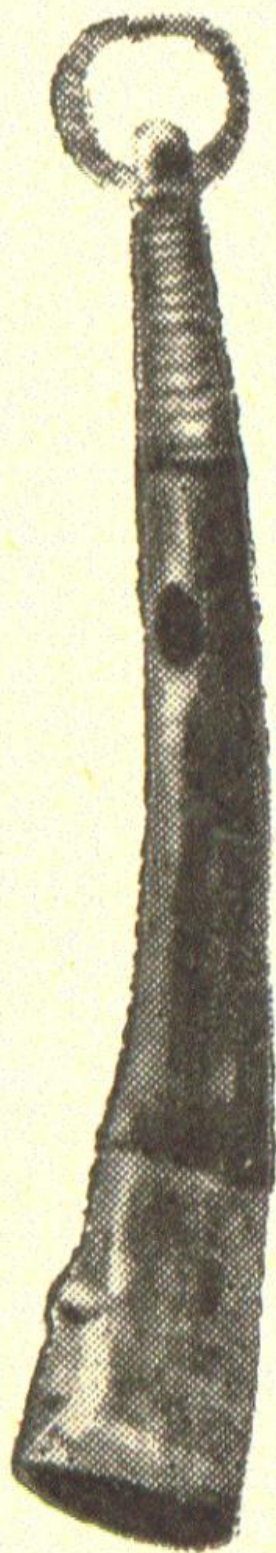


Абиссинскій рогъ для меда.

Abyssinian Horn for Mead

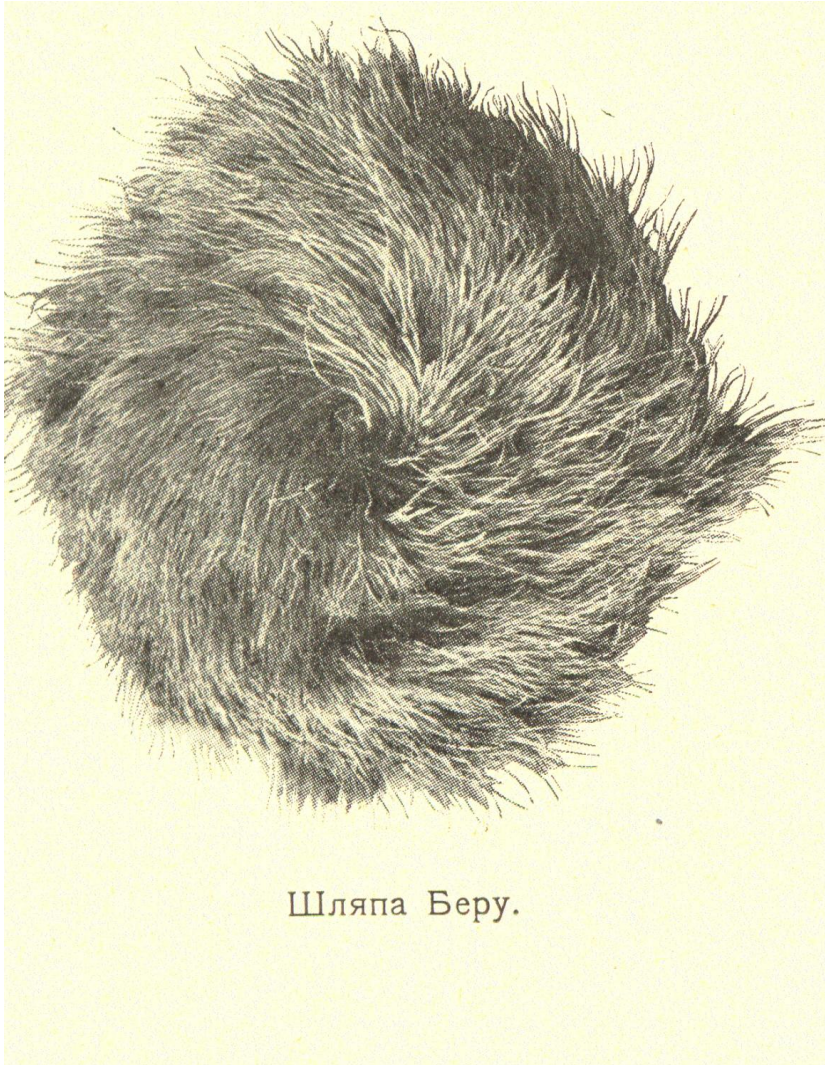


Head Decoration Made from the Plumage of a Bird of Paradise



Труба  
изъ слоновой

Trumpet, Made of Elephant Bone, of the Beru tribe



Beru Hat



Щитъ Бѣру, 20 дюйм. діаметра.

Beru Shield 20 inches in Diameter



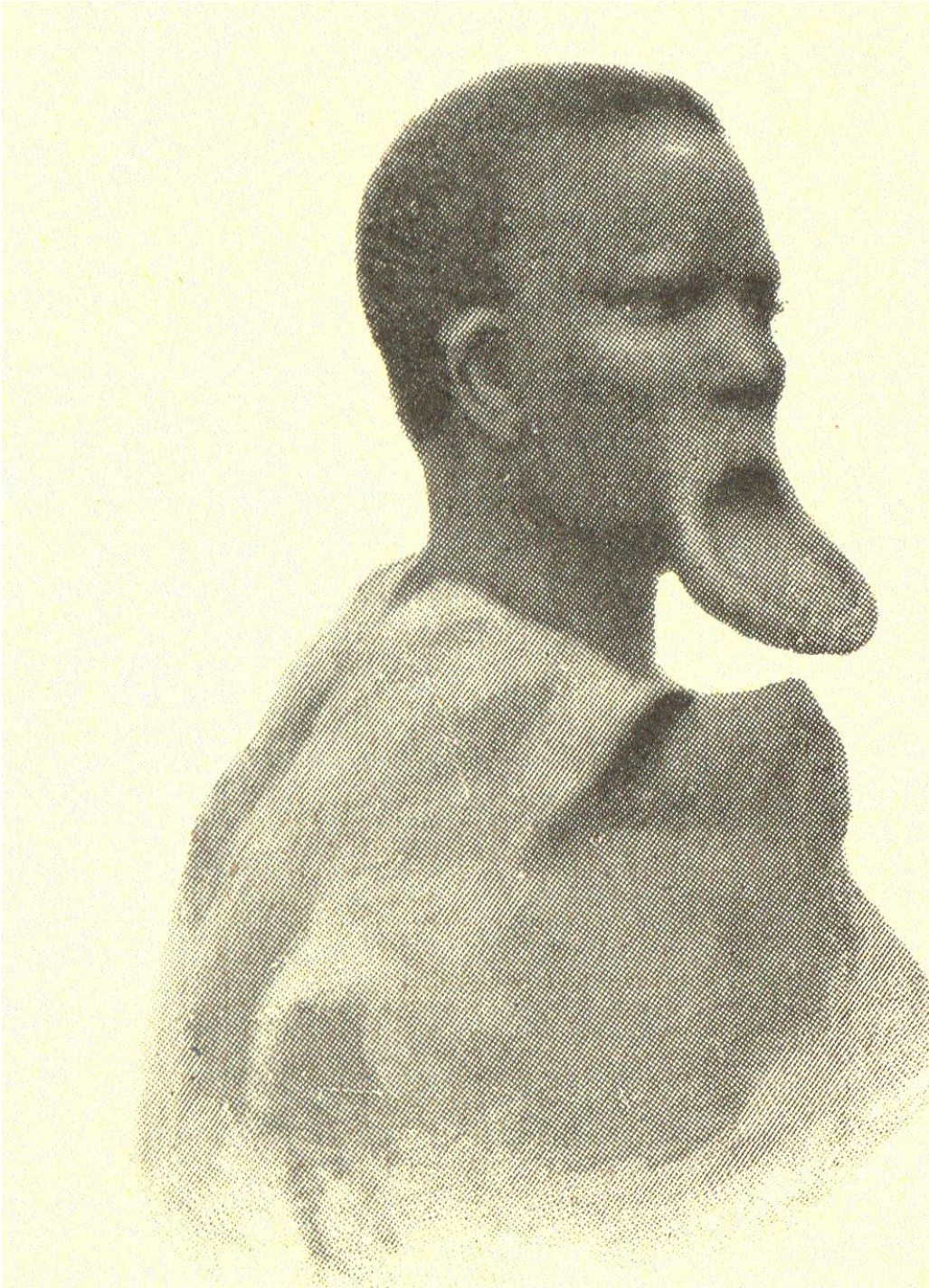
Женское шейное  
украшение пле-  
ни Касси.

Woman's Ear Decoration of the Kassi Tribe



Деревянная  
палка-обтесан

Wooden Trumpet Covered with Lizard skin, of the Valis tribe

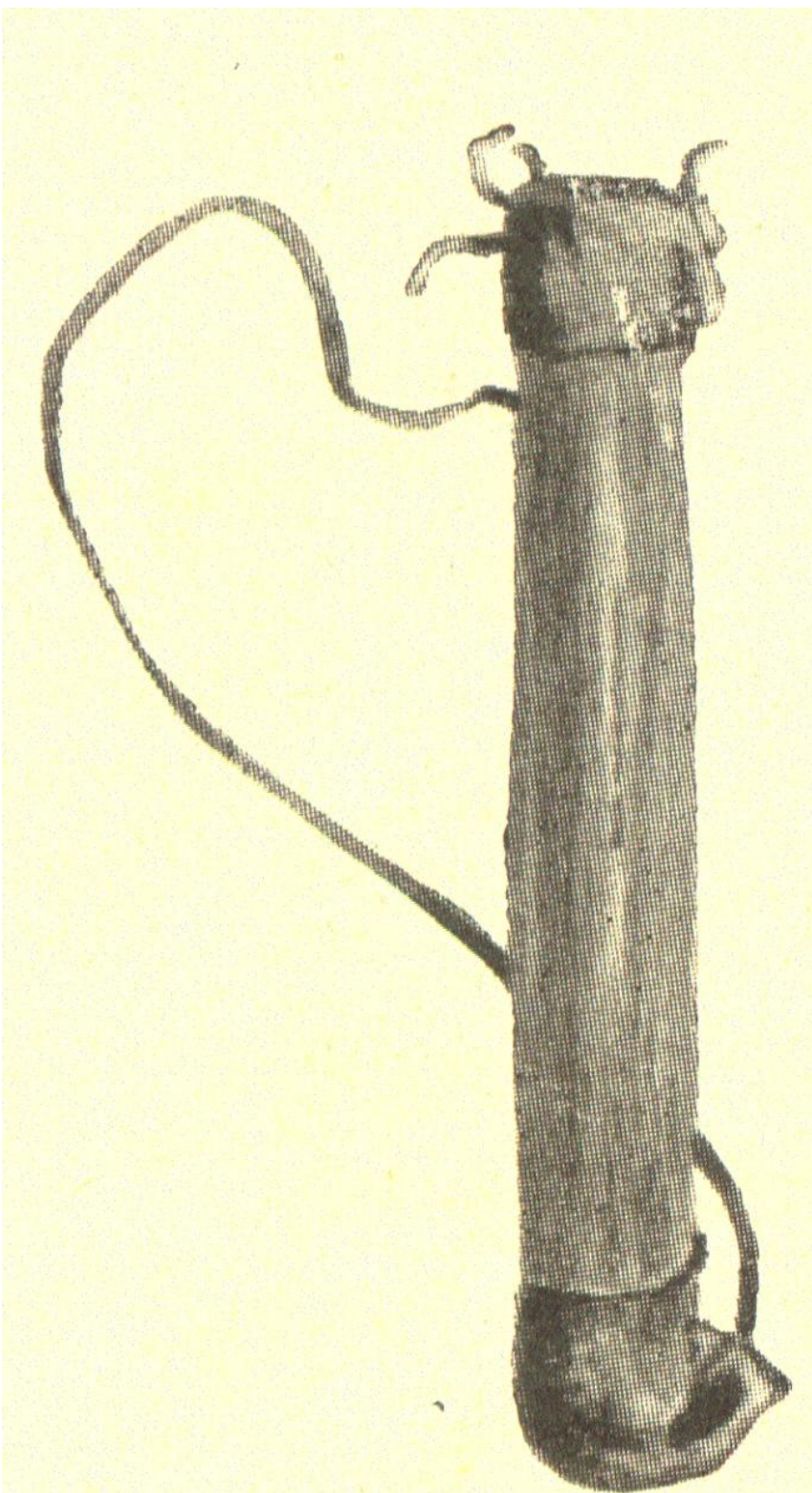


No Caption [native from near Lake Rudolf, with artificially distorted mouth]



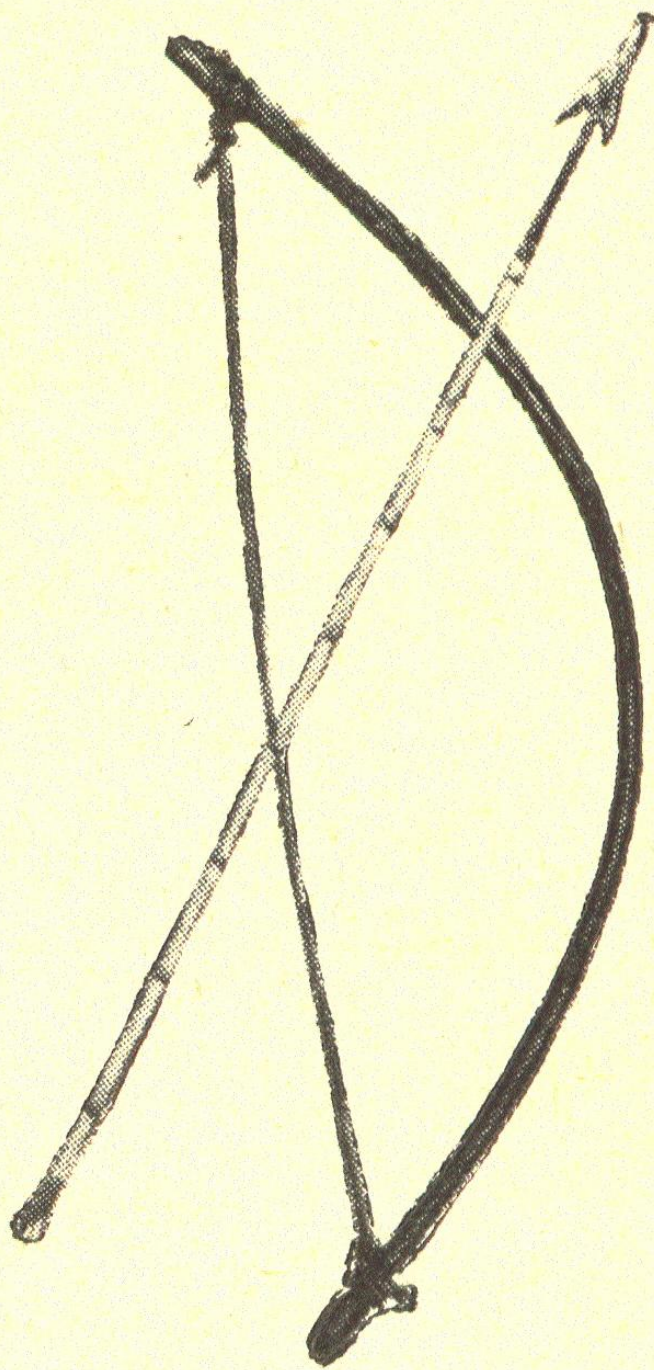
Крѣпостца.

Serfs



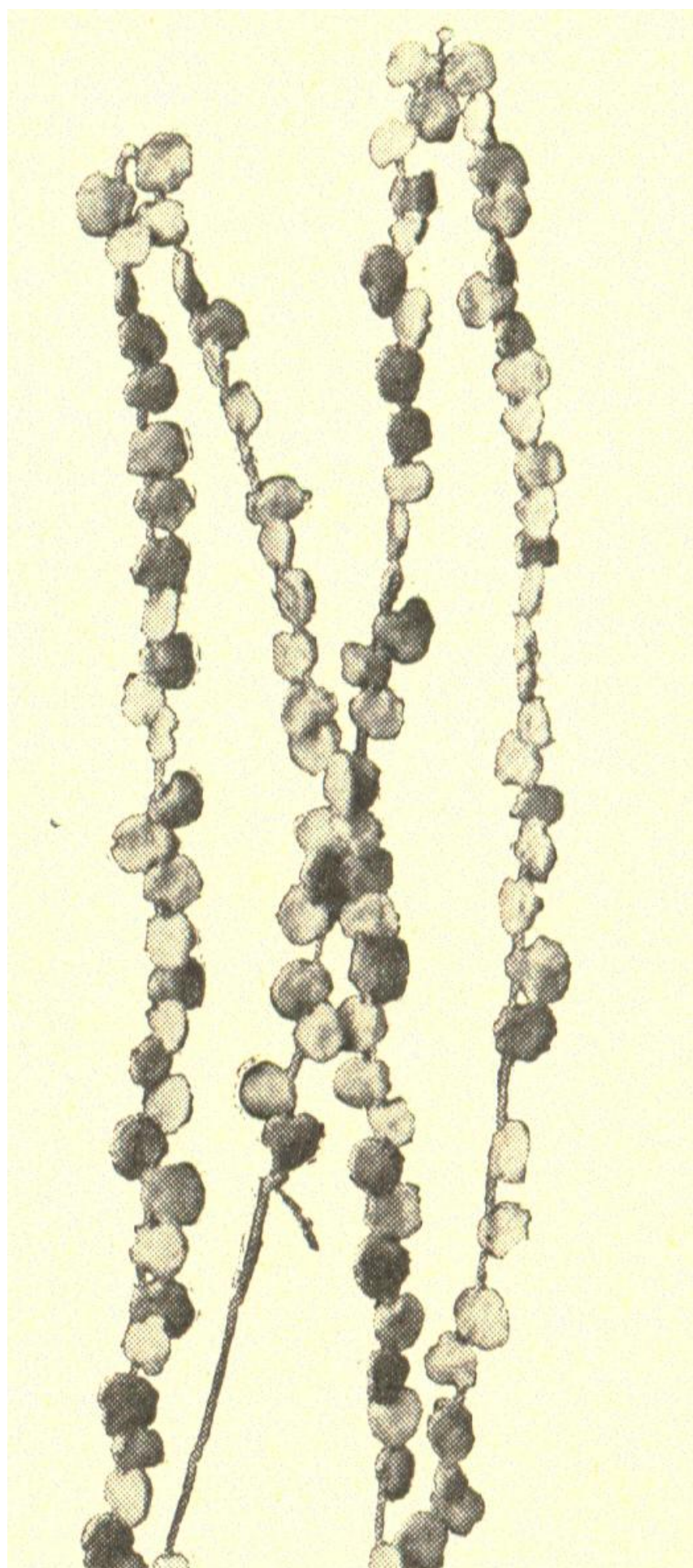
Колчанъ  
Иденичъ.

Idenich Quiver



Лукъ и стрѣла  
Иденичъ.

I denich Bow and Arrow

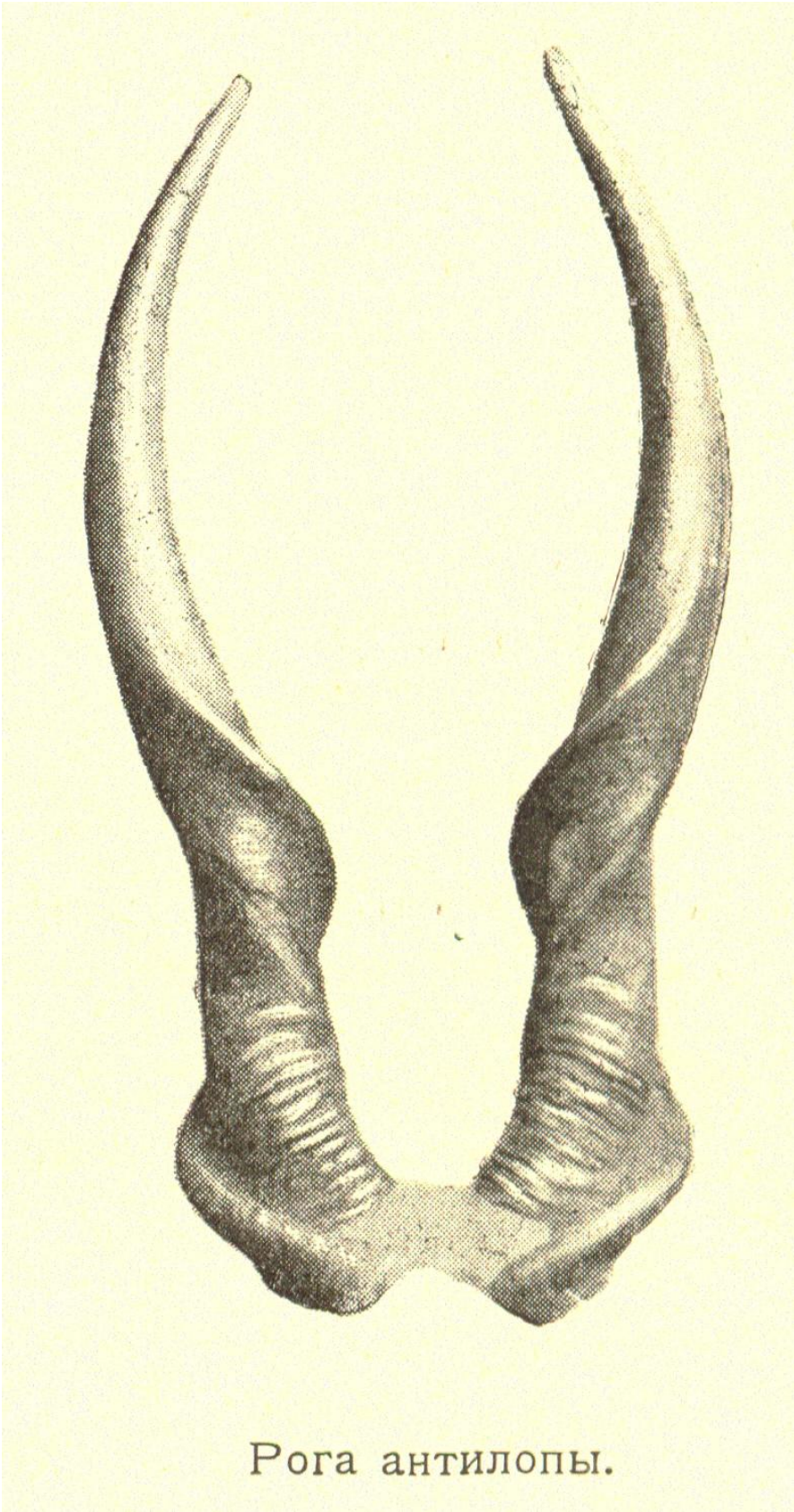


Beads from Beans, Idenich Tribe



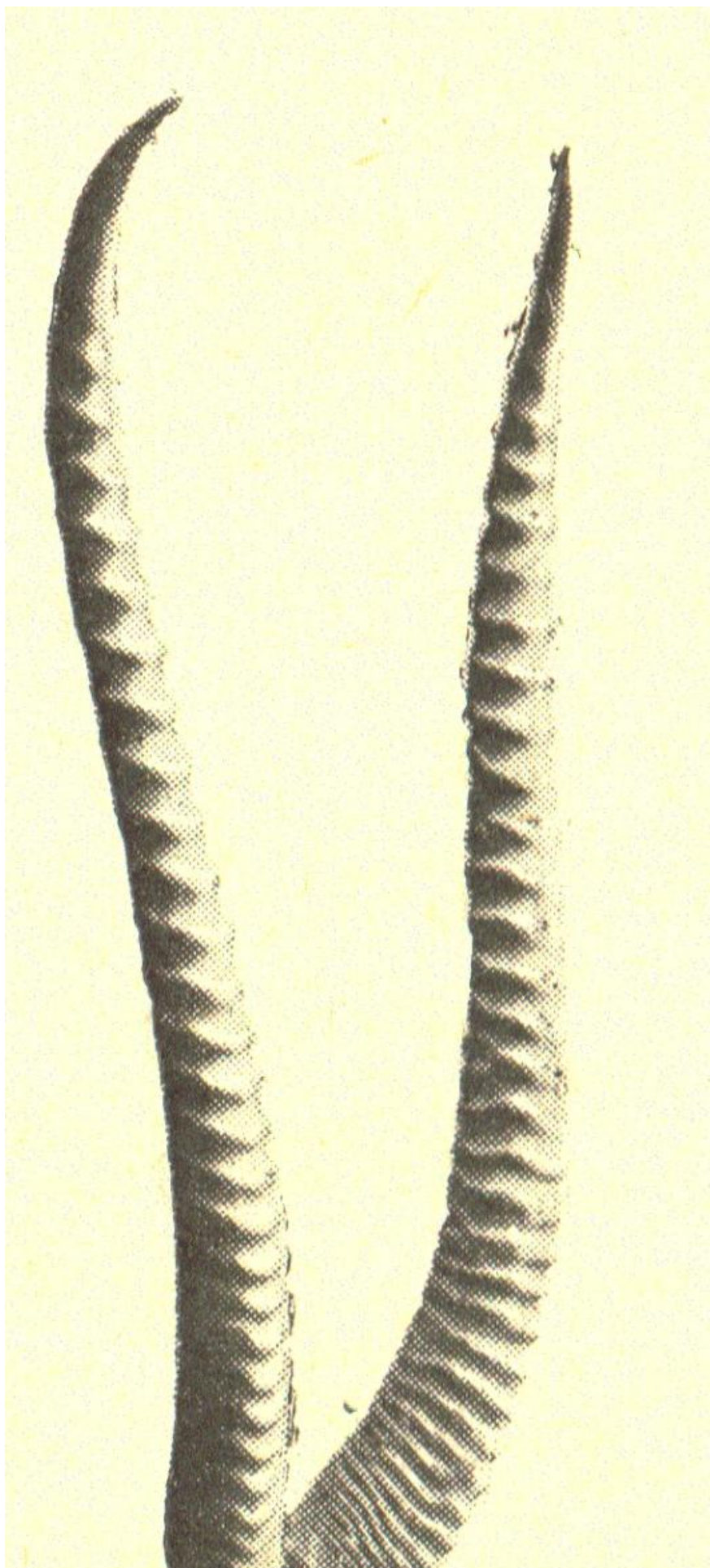
Женская одежда племени Мену.

Women's Clothing of the Menu Tribe



Рога антилопы.

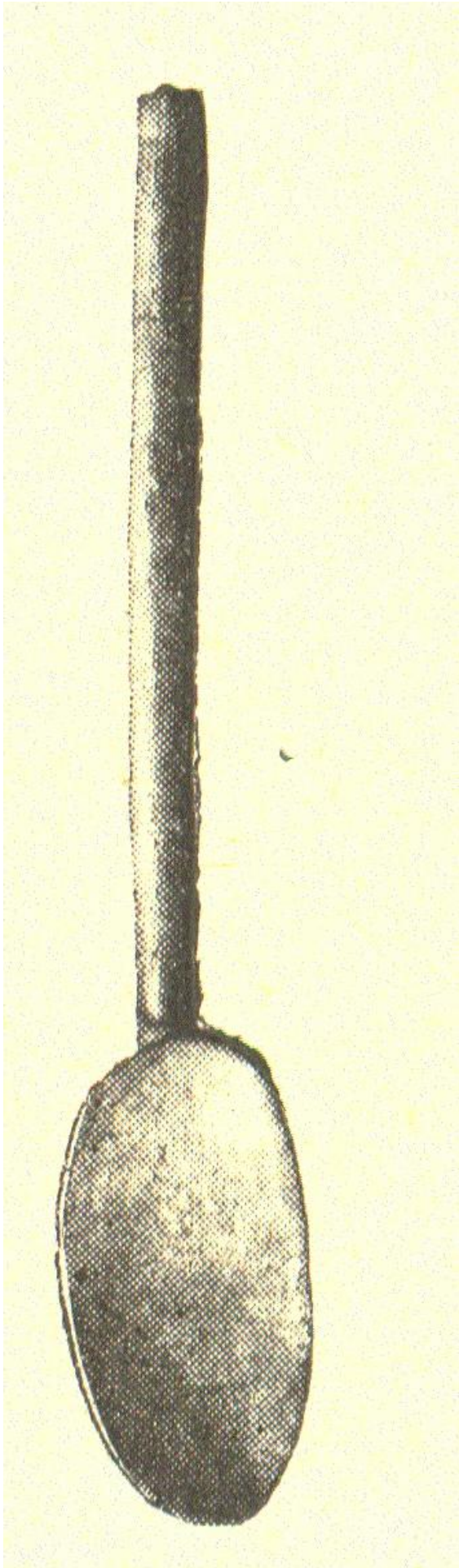
Antelope Horns



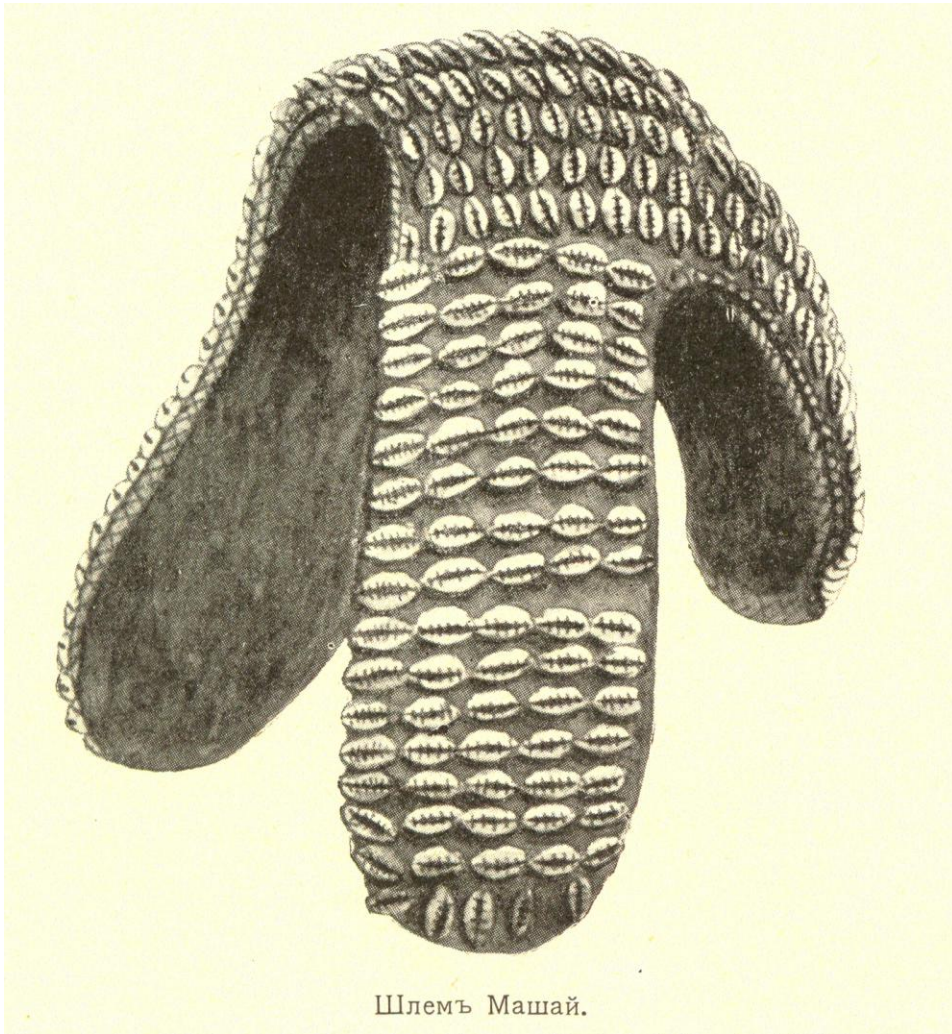
More Antelope Horns



War Hat of the Murdu Tribe

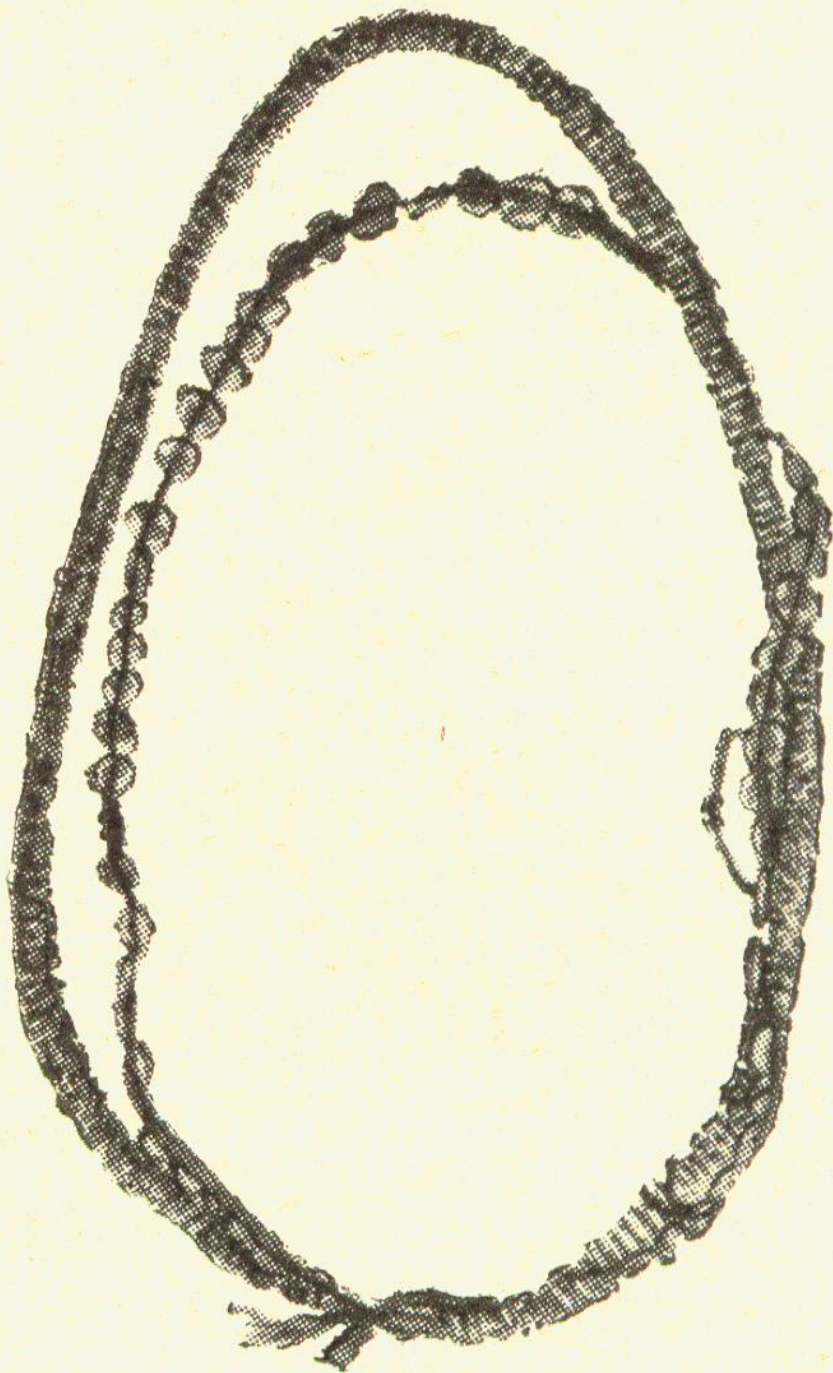


Horn Spoon of the Murdu Tribe



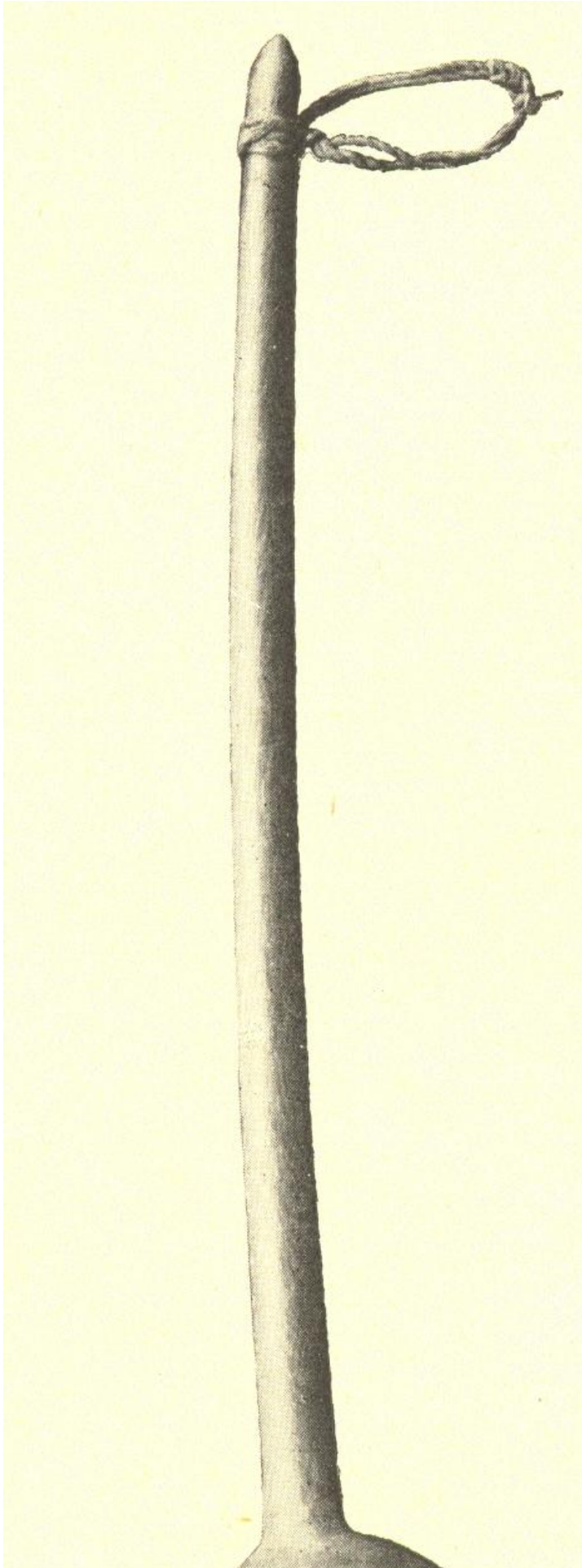
Шлемъ Машай.

Mashay Helmet



Женское ожерелье  
изъ рыбныхъ косто-  
чекъ Машай.

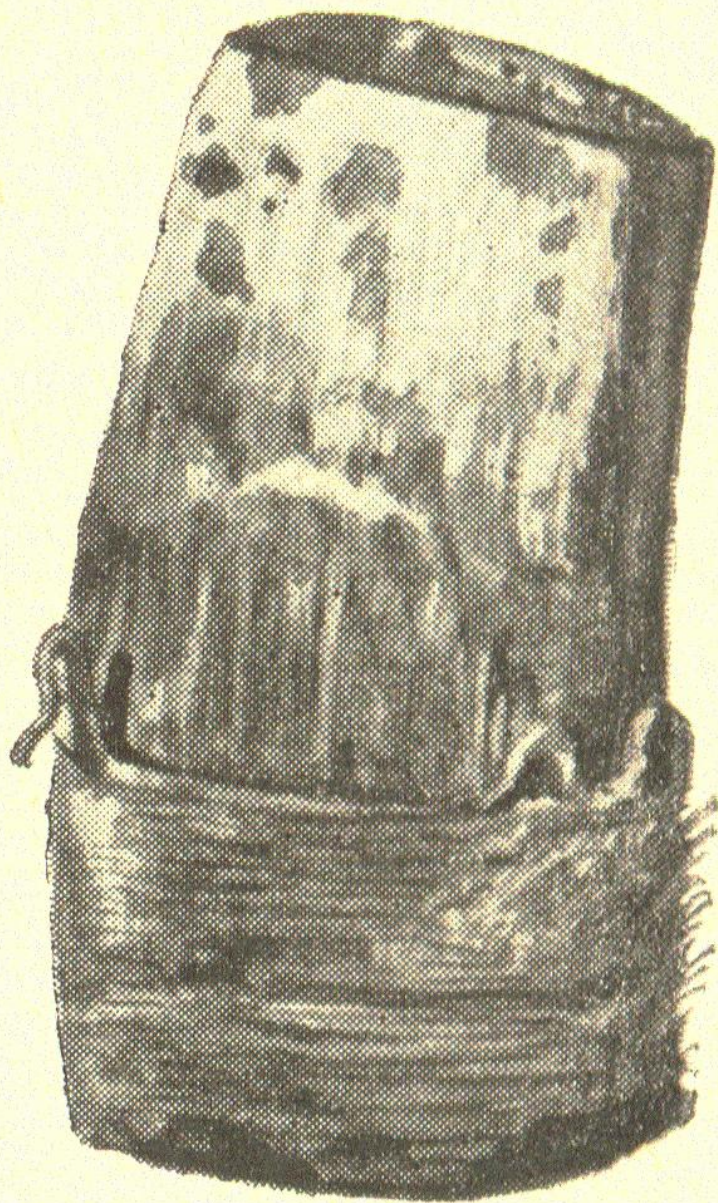
Woman's Necklace Made of Fishbones, Mamay Tribe



Club at the Mouth of the Omo River

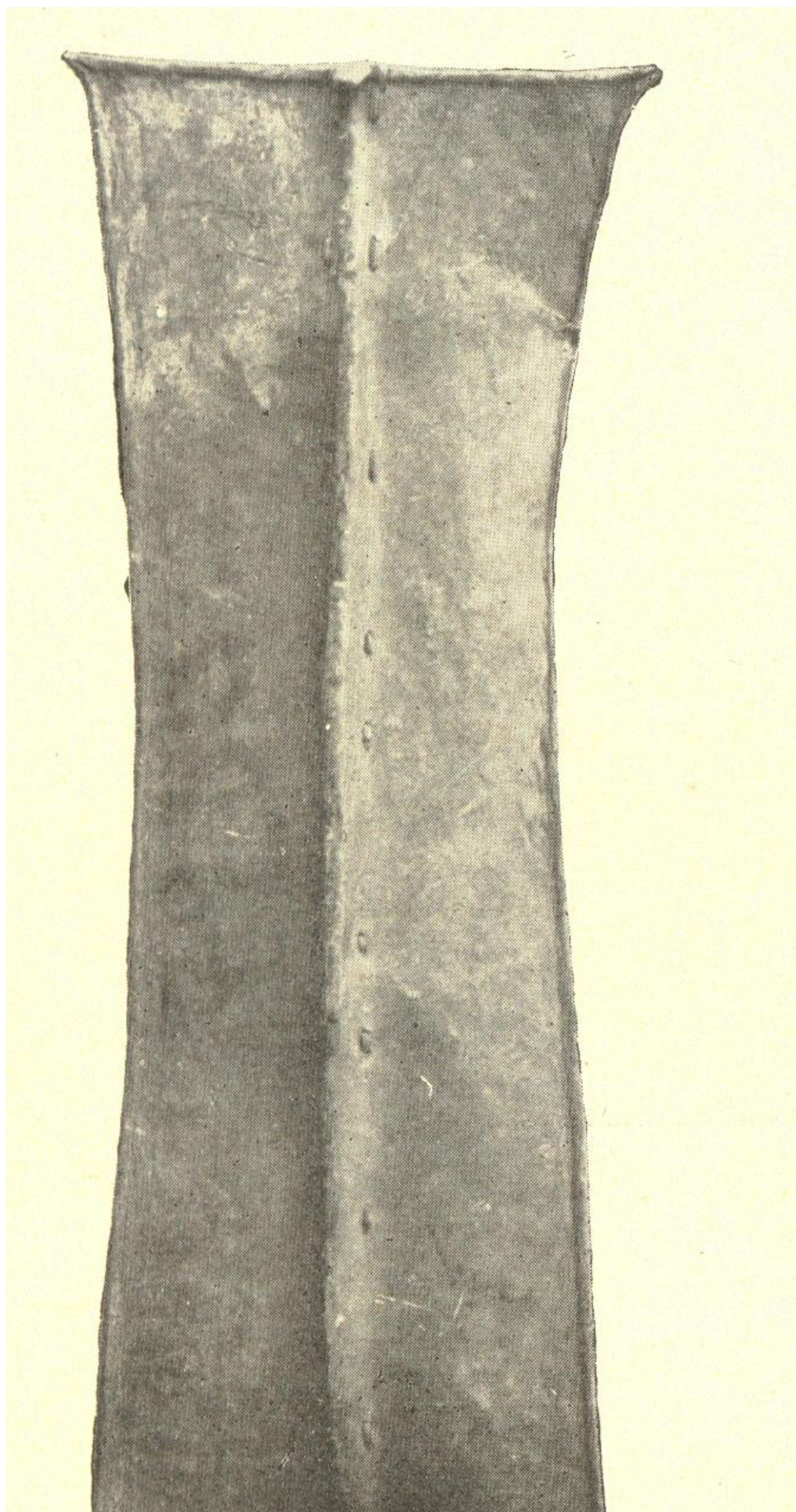


Bench made by inhabitants of the mouth of the Omo River

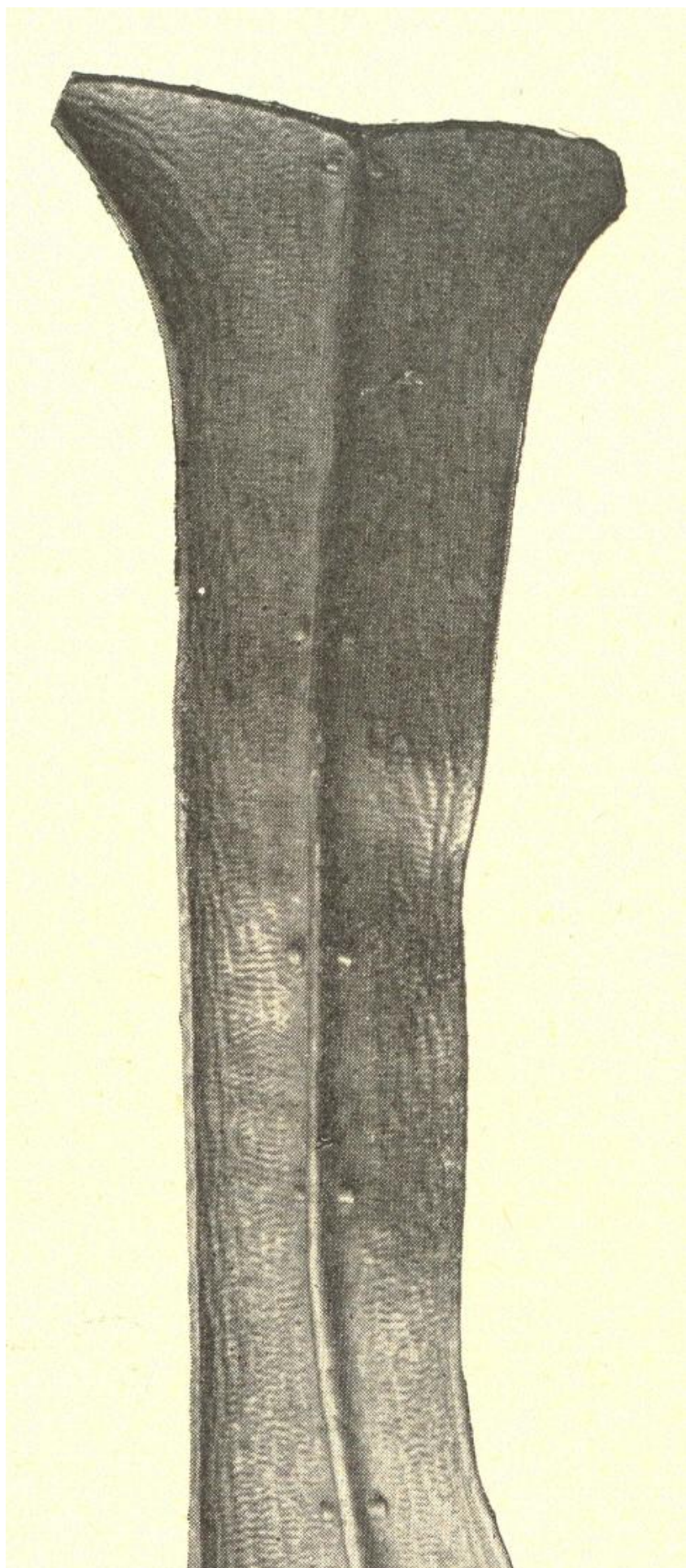


Сосудъ для молока изъ  
слоноваго клыка, обтя-  
нутаго кожею, племени  
Машай.

Vessel for Milk made from elephant tusk covered with leather, Mashay tribe



Leather Shield, 23 inches



Mashay Leather Shield, 2 feet 8 inches



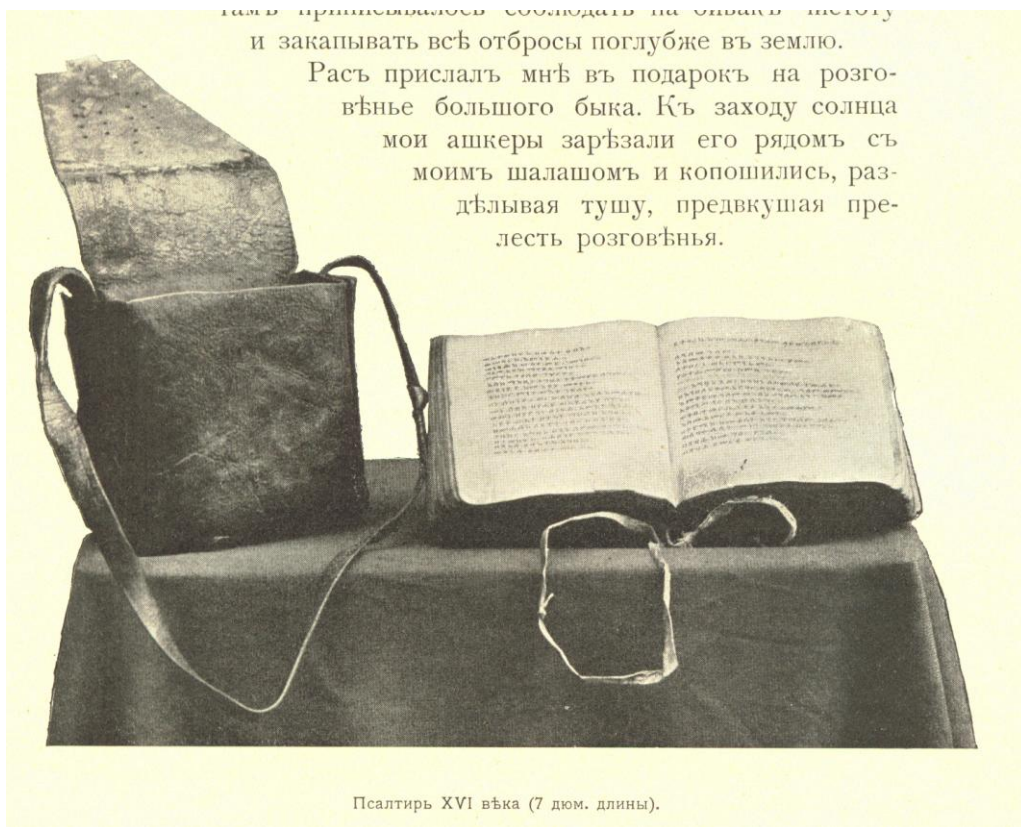
## Ear Decoration of Vaska



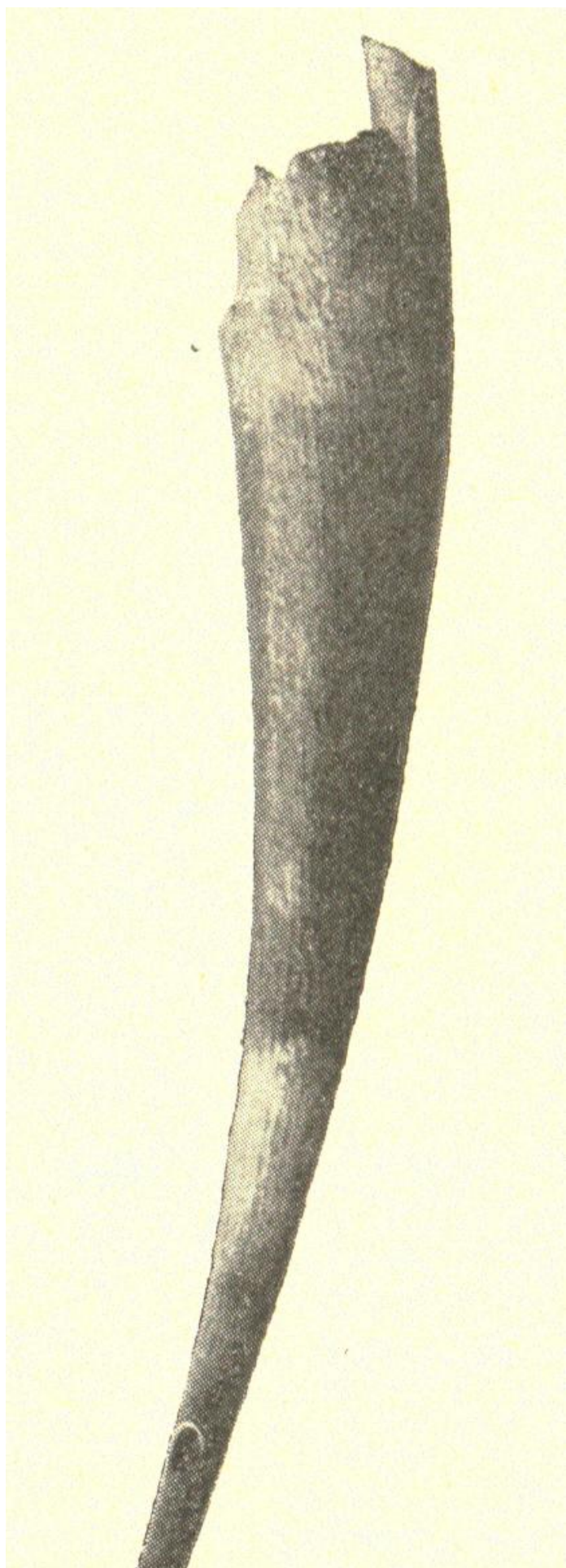
## Captive Negroes



## More Captive Negroes



16th century Psalter, 7 inches long

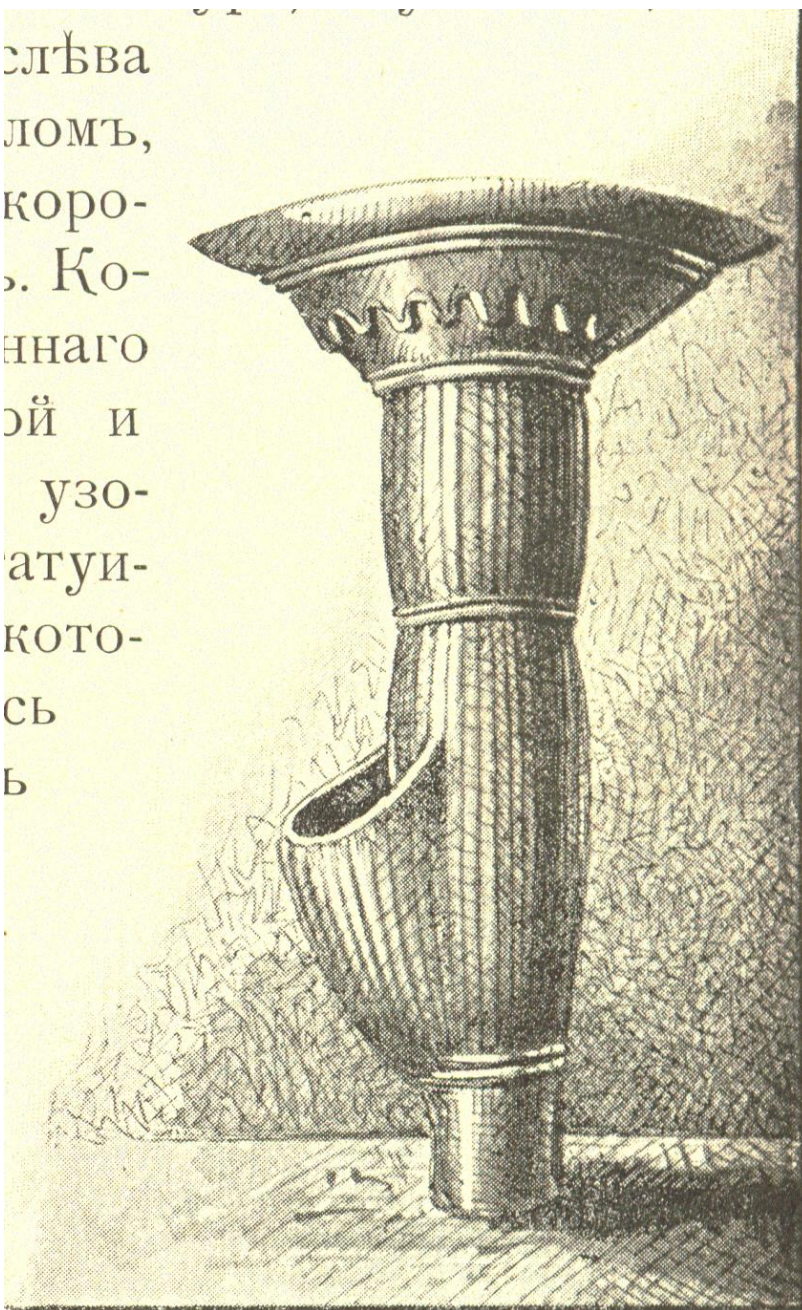


Trumpet made of Elephant Tusk (taken in the skirmish at Say Mountain)



Mountain-dweller

слѣва  
ломъ,  
коро-  
ь. Ко-  
ннаго  
ой и  
узо-  
атуи-  
кото-  
сь  
ь



Колонка.

Water Fountain

вышаю-  
о. моря.  
ько +7°  
и полу-  
ъ хо-  
от-



9 час. утра мы  
шли на западъ  
я въ этомъ на-  
грѣло, туземцы  
и не павали

Желѣзный колоколъ  
и серьги для коровъ  
жителей горы Каститъ.

Iron bell and Earring for Cattle, of the inhabitants of Kastit Mountain

, съ  
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она  
омъ



Kastit Spear



Трофей убившаго слона

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какъ и  
тѣль  
лале э  
стахъ  
черезъ  
я даль  
трехли  
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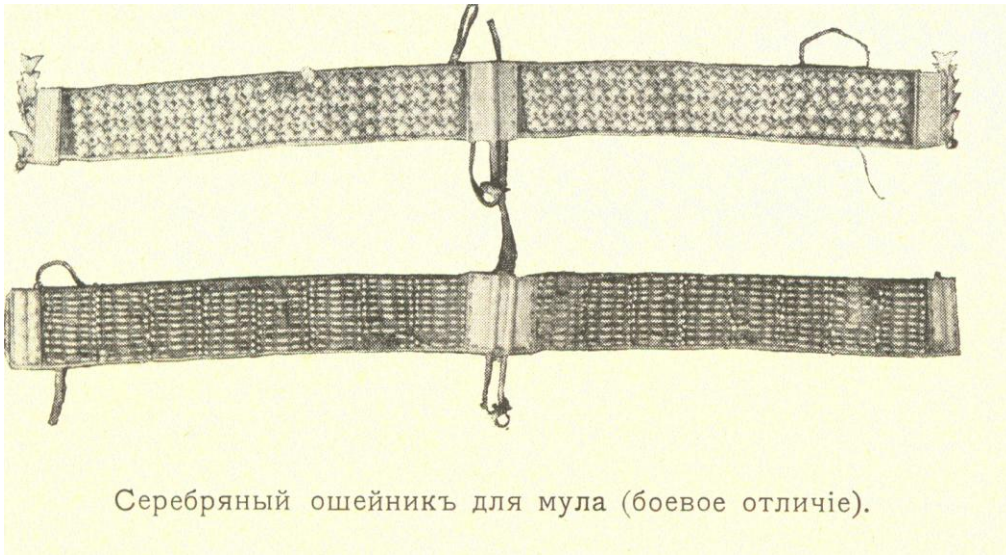
вдалекѣ

дось сѣ

Trophy of a Slain Elephant



[Alamitu] Spouse of the Nagada-Ras



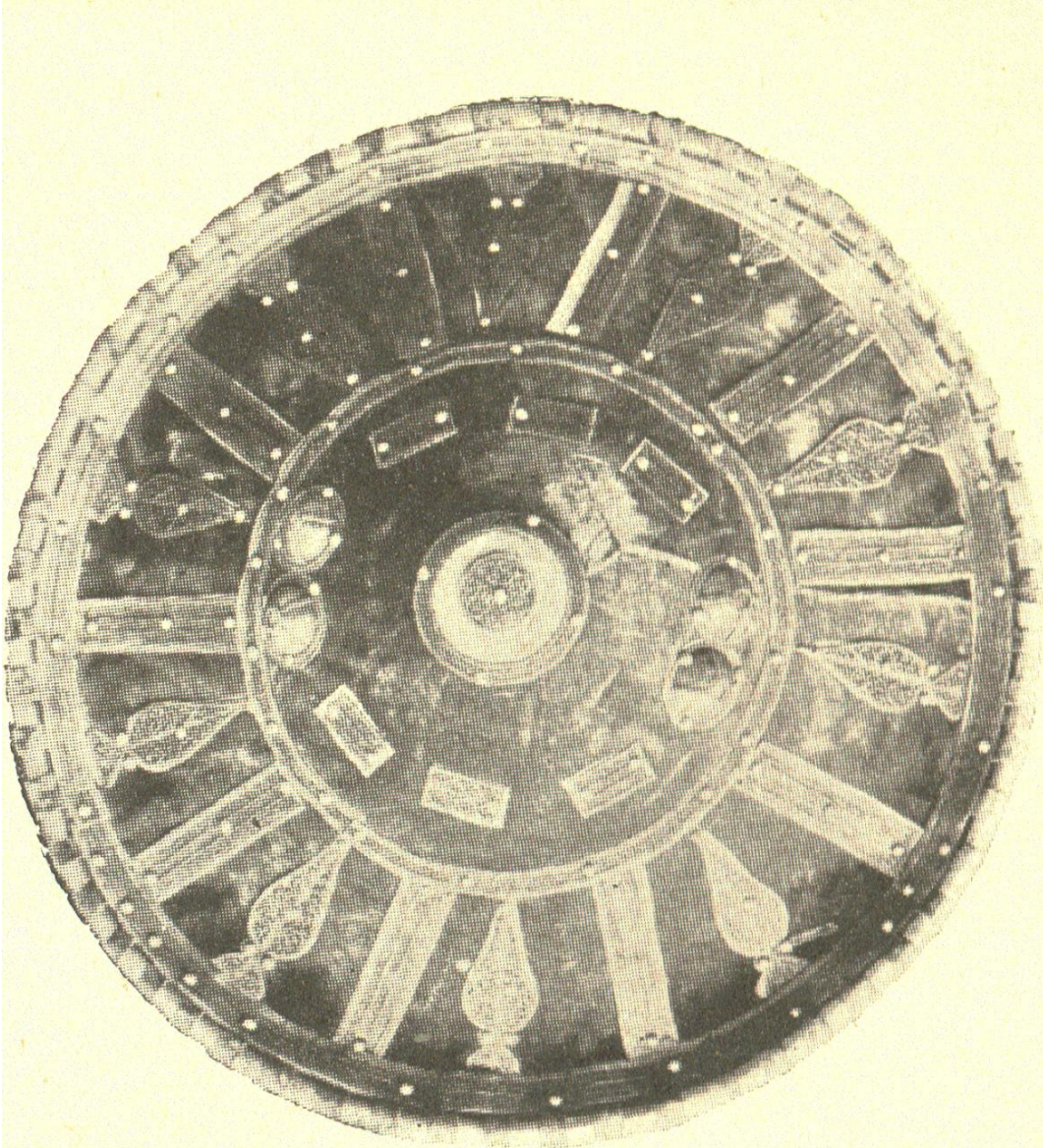
Серебряный ошейникъ для мула (боевое отличие).

Silver collar for a mule, a military distinction



Парадный мундиръ абиссинскаго генерала.

Full-dress Uniform of an Abyssinian General



Щитъ абиссинскаго вождя, украшенный  
серебромъ.

Shield of an Abyssinian Warrior, Decorated with Silver

**Diagrams**

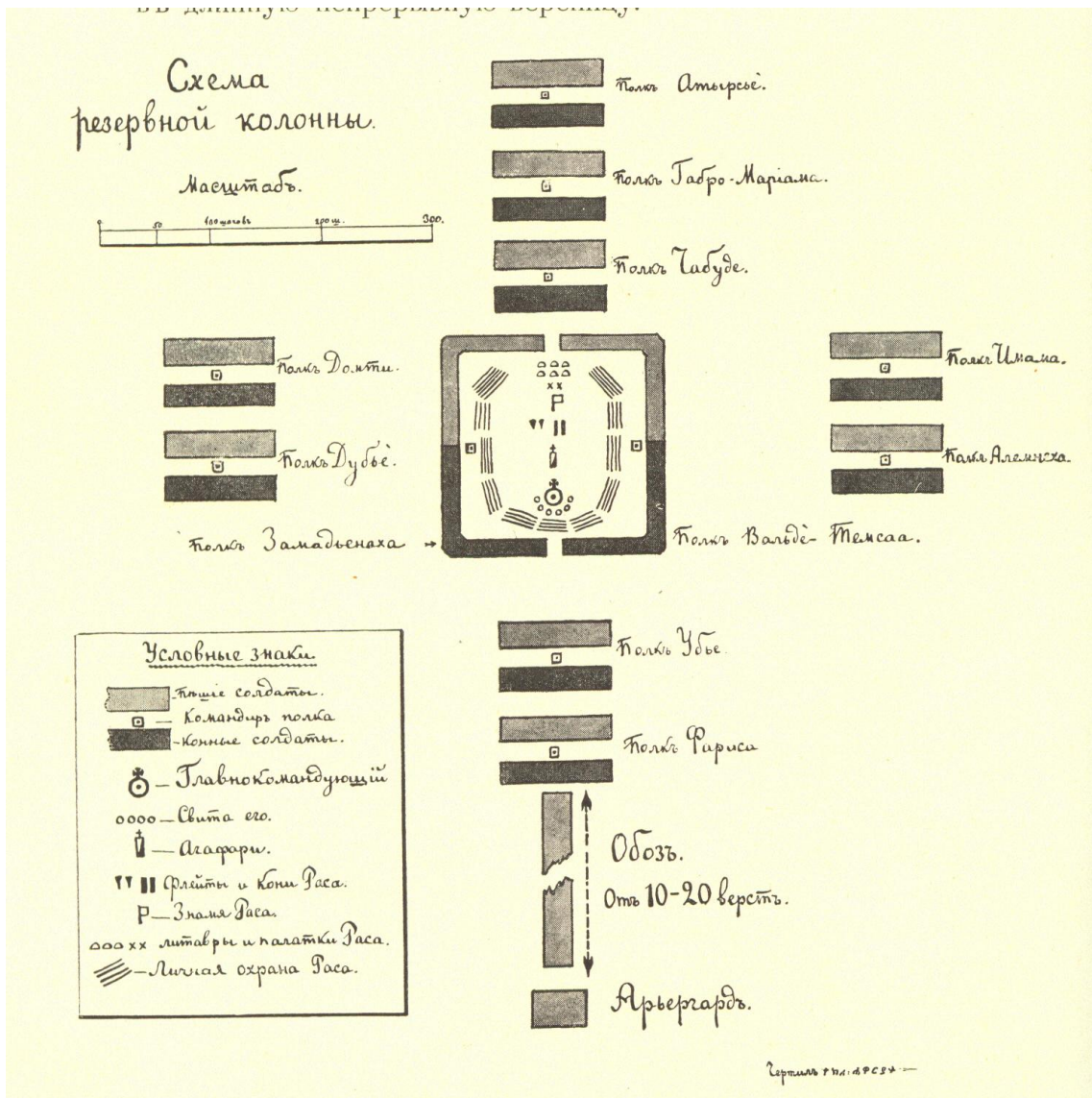
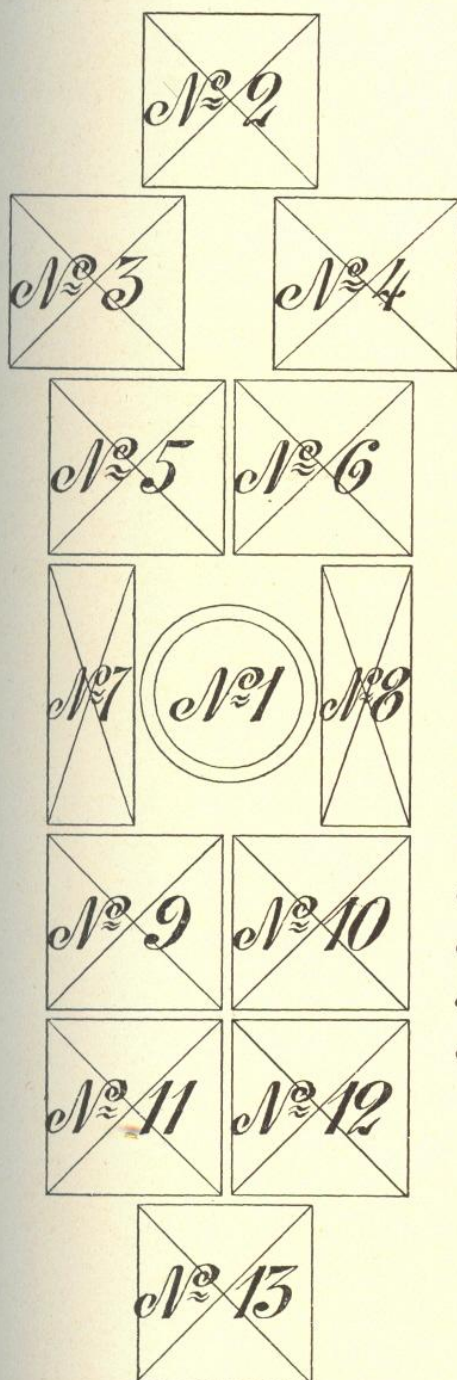


Diagram of a Reserve Column

# Схема бивака корпуса.



- № 1. Штабъ Главнокомандующаго
- № 2. Полкъ Атыреве
- № 3. Полкъ Дуити
- № 4. Полкъ Иамаи
- № 5. Полкъ Чабуде
- № 6. Полкъ Тобро-Маріана
- № 7. Полкъ Замальенаха
- № 8. Полкъ Вальде-Менса
- № 9. Полкъ Дубе
- № 10. Полкъ Кизинеха
- № 11. Полкъ Андарге
- № 12. Полкъ Убе
- № 13. Полкъ Парисъ

Масштабъ.

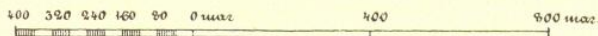
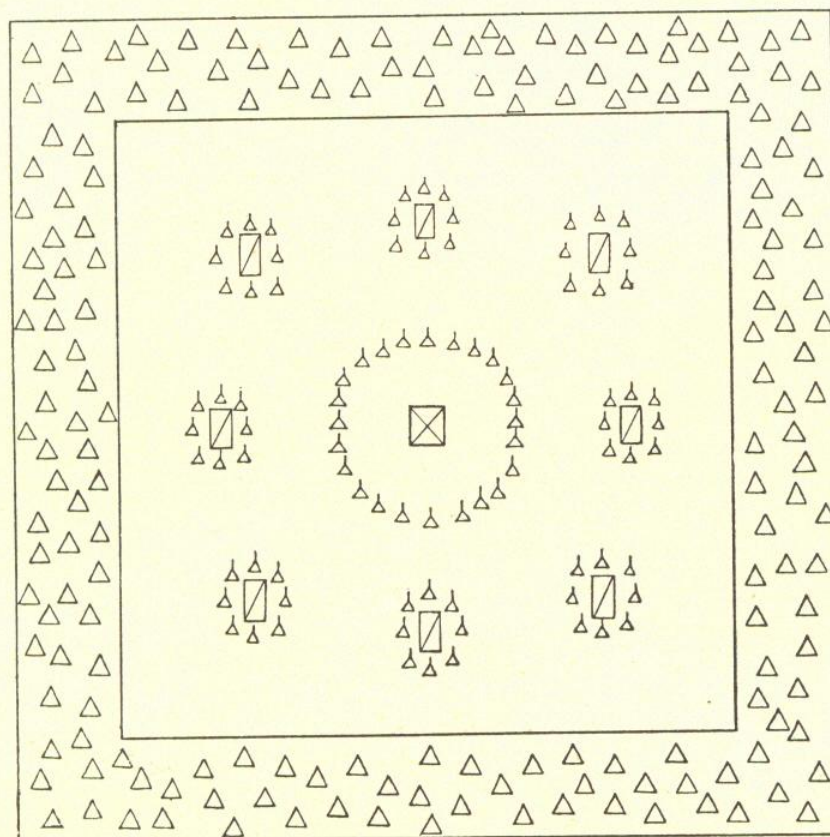


Diagram of the Bivouac of a Corps

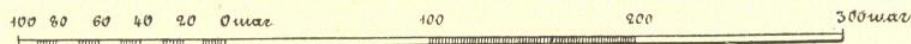
# Схема bivака полка.



## Условные знаки.

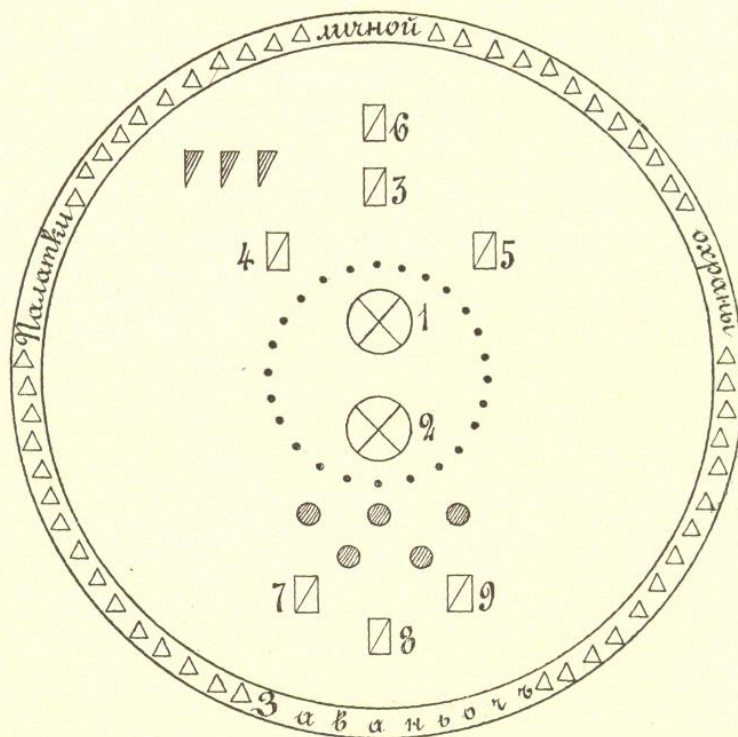
- ⊗ Палатка командира полка
- ▣ Палатка офицера
- △ Палатки личной охраны
- △ Палатки

Масштабъ



## Diagram of Regimental Bivouac

# Схема ставки главнокомандующего.



## Условные знаки.

- № 1-2. Палатки раса
- 3. Палатка Штабъ-Ротмистра Булатовича
- 4. Палатка Давыдова-Балаи
- 5. Палатка Бьета-Чали
- 6. Палатка Агафари-Мхитыр
- 7. Палатка Ато-Байо
- 8. Палатка секретаря
- 9. Палатка священника
- Палатки хозяйственных припасов
- ▨ Литавры
- Ночной караул

Масштабъ

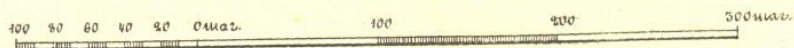
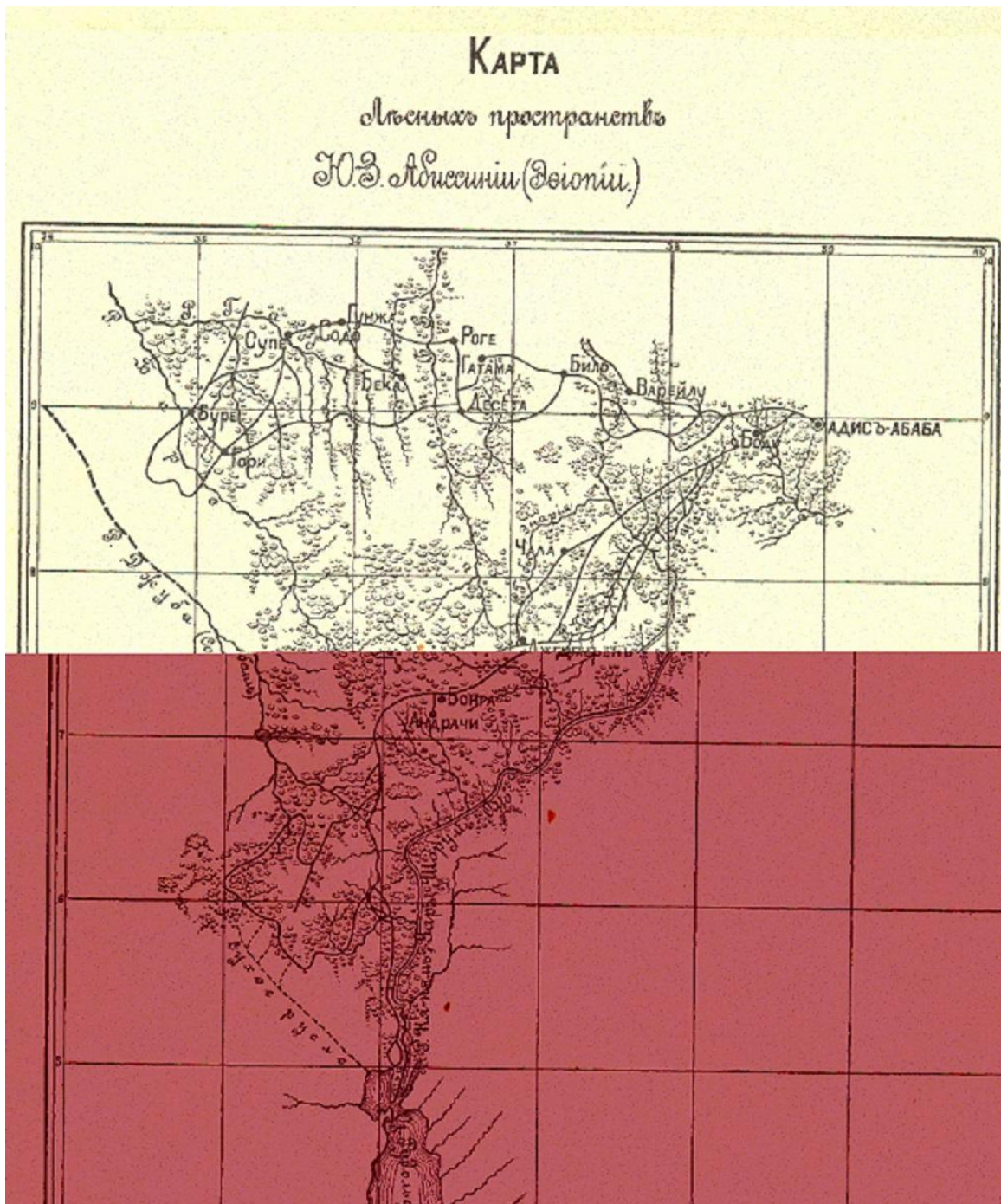


Diagram of Staff Headquarters of the commander-in-chief

## **Maps**

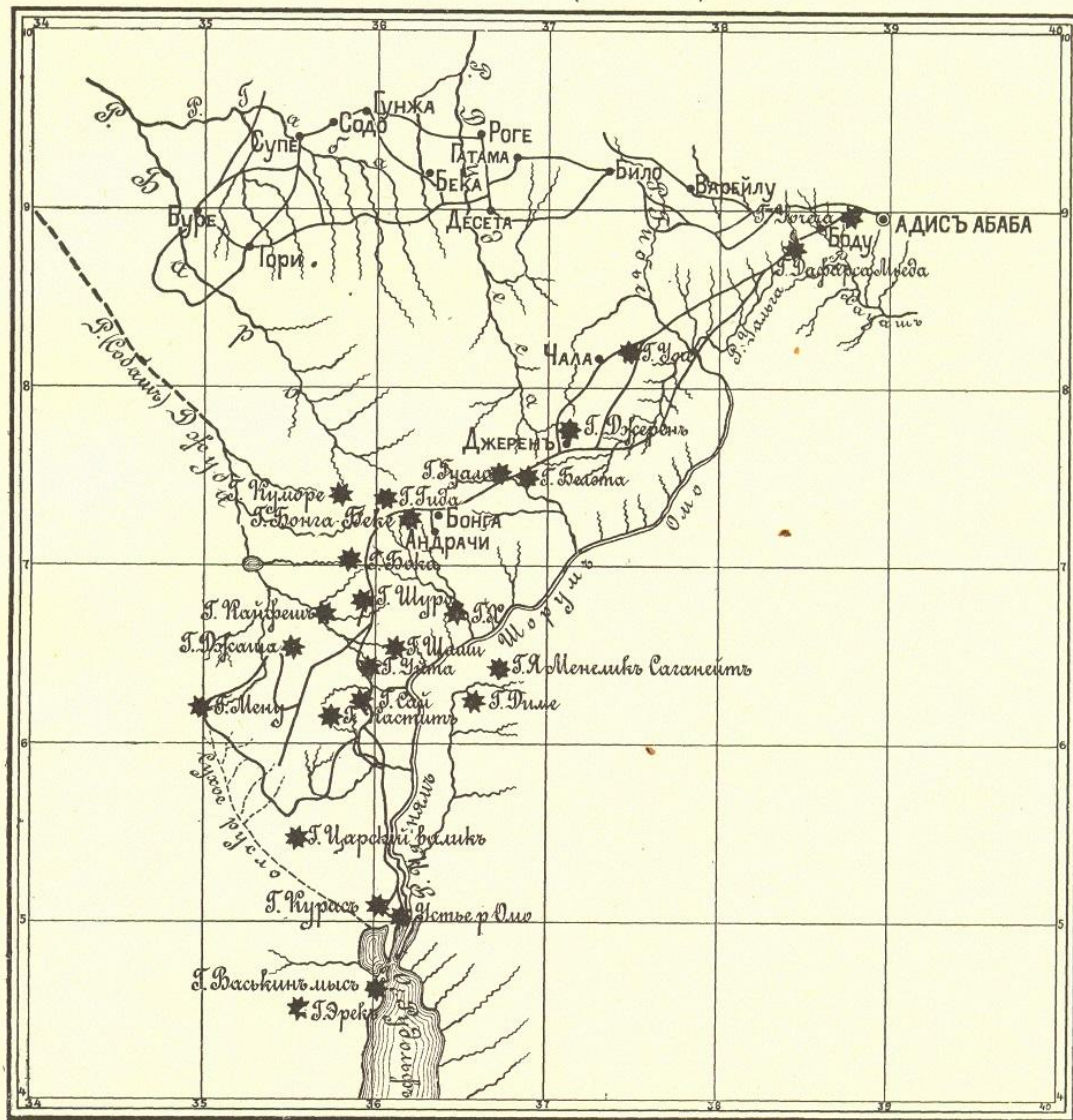


Map of Forested Spaces of Abyssinia

# KAPTA

Астрономическихъ пунктовъ.

NO. 3. *Aduccurium* (*Doionium*)



## Map of Astronomical Points of Abyssinia



Route of Bulatovich

## King Menelik II's Conquering Army by Cynthia Salvadori

a review of *Ethiopia Through Russian Eyes*, published in *Old Africa, Stories from East Africa's Past*, Nairobi, Kenya, August/September 2008

Despite its bland title, this is the most important book on the history of eastern Africa to

have been published for a century. And it was written over a century ago!

The book consists of translations of two books, *From Entotto to the River Baro*, originally published in 1897, and *With the Armies of Menelik II*, published in 1900, both written by a Russian cavalry officer named Alexander Bulatovich, Lieutenant of His Majesty's Life-Guard Hussar Regiment. It is the second book which we are reviewing here. Based on his day-by-day diary, it is not only the sole but an astonishingly vivid first-hand description of how Menelik II created his Ethiopian Empire.

The Berlin Conference of 1884 was the crux of the infamous 'Scramble for Africa', whereby assorted colonial powers carved the continent up amongst themselves. Among the Europeans there was one sole African scrambler; Menelik II, the king of Shoa in the highlands of Ethiopia. The Russians, not being among the European scramblers, deemed it advisable to frustrate those who were and thus were sympathetic to Menelik and his policy of expansion. As Bulatovich says, "In striving to extend the bounds of his possessions, Menelik is only carrying out the traditional mission of Ethiopia as the propagator of culture ... These are the motives which led Menelik to aggressive acts; and we Russians cannot help sympathizing with his intentions, not only because of political considerations, but also for purely human reasons. It is well known to what consequences conquests of wild tribes by Europeans lead. Too great a difference in the degree of culture between the conquered people and their conquerors has always led to the enslavement,

corruption and degeneration of the weaker race." (p 177)

Bulatovich made his first trip to Ethiopia as a volunteer with the Medical Detachment of the Russian Red Cross, ordered to the scene of the Italo-Abyssinian military actions in 1896, when at Adwa Menelik soundly thrashed the Italians in their attempt to take over his domain from the north. Bulatovich stayed on to explore the western part of Menelik's domain, the subject of his first book, *From Entotto to the River Baro*, which he got published just after his return to Russia.

While in Russia Bulatovich did such successful PR that "In September 1897, the Sovereign Emperor [of Russian] was pleased to enter into direct relations with Abyssinia" and an Extraordinary Diplomatic Mission was sent to the court of Menelik — a Mission that included Lt Bulatovich. When he arrived in Addis, the newly created capital, Menelik was on the verge of sending off three generals heading their own huge armies on wars of conquest and he asked Bulatovich if he would like to accompany one of them. Bulatovich was delighted — who wouldn't have been? — and chose to go with Ras Wolda Giyorgis. He quickly made up his own caravan of 30 men, which included a fellow Russian as lackey, Private Zelepukin, "his broad-shouldered bulky figure and sunburnt crimson-colored face making a complete contrast with the light, well-proportioned black-skinned Abyssinians"(251), and dashed off to recently-conquered Kaffa to meet up with the Ras. From the time Bulatovich left Addis Ababa to join the

Ras, his book is basically his daily diary. (Though various retrospective remarks make it clear he edited it for publication.) Being a military man, Bulatovich was particularly observant of the workings of the army, and of the Ras's leadership — for both of which he came to have the highest regard.

He got to Ras Wolda Giyorgis's headquarters in time for the departure that was set for 24 January 1897, and records his first view of the army that was mustering near the southern Gimiro border. "For several versts from the headquarters of the *Ras*, the road was studded with tents on both sides. Soldiers, soldiers' wives, children, mules — all were mixed here in disorder. . . . I found the *Ras* in the little courtyard of his headquarters, surrounded by officers. He sat cross-legged, on a carpet in the shade of a branchy tree and lightly heartedly cleaned his teeth with a little stick." (261) When the army of 30,000 men and 10,000 animals was on the move, Bulatovich climbed a hill to watch. "When I went down from the hill, I found myself amid such a dense mass of people and animals that I couldn't get out of it; and only at the bivouac did I connect with the Ras again. Like an endless worm, the transport wriggled quietly, following the detachment. Dust rose high over the column. Soldiers, women, children, horses, donkeys and mules went alternately in a dense mass. . . . Spontaneously, by an irrepressibly powerful flow, this human sea rushed forward, following its leaders." (274) "The commander-in-chief and his comrades in arms seemed to me like a large family, united by strong bonds of comradeship in battle." (279)

At first some the troops resented the presence of a foreigner. But Bulatovich was a superb horseman and he and his horse changed that. "Defar (my horse) left my fellow travelers far behind me. At full gallop, we jumped off steep banks and again clambered up rising slopes and at a wide gallop rushed across plains ... [I] heard approving exclamations relating to my horse and my riding, as for example '*Ay faras! Ay faras! Frenj faraseny!*' ('There's a horse! There's a horse! The foreigner is a cavalryman!')"(261)

As the army marched south through Kaffa to Gimiro, Bulatovich sympathizes with the fears of the soldiers, for once they left Kaffa, they were in totally unknown lands. Unknown to them – Bulatovich knew, geographically speaking, where Lake Rudolf lay. The conquest began immediately the army entered Gimiro, with its first encounter with the Shuro (a word, like Shankila, used by the Abyssinians to refer to a congeries of black tribes). This set the pattern. "At five o'clock in the evening, we reached the edge of the frontier forest and set up our bivouac in a small clearing ... As far as the eye could see, the valley and hills were densely settled. Smoke arose from the houses. Evidently food was being prepared there. Cattle were returning from pasture, and the sight of marvelous white cows aroused the appetite of my traveling companions ... The field around was cultivated. The quiet hardworking life of a peaceful people was evident in all, and it was sad to think that tomorrow all this would be destroyed."(262)

"The valley of the Oyma River, which I had seen yesterday, now unfolded before us. Its population was in full flight ... By 11 o'clock, the road was cleared, and the Ras's army poured into the valley, where they scattered in various directions, rushing to replenish their supplies. Any prohibition would be unthinkable and fruitless, since the whole provisioning system of the campaign depended on such commandeering."(263–64) The following day the Shuro warriors regrouped and attacked, but "About 10–15 minutes after the first shots, the Shuro were already retreating, energetically pursued by Abyssinians ... To hide from the Abyssinian bullets, the Shuro climbed high trees; but the bullets found them there, and the Negroes, like shot birds, dropped from there to the ground."(270–71)

Again, Bulatovich is impressed by the army: "In this apparently undisciplined army, an astonishing rise of spirit and energy was felt."(274)

According to Bulatovich, the Ras did his best to discourage wholesale slaughter. But, "The Ras's prohibition against entering into battle with the natives now seemed unfeasible."(287). The following day, bands of Shuro warriors attacked — with spears and stones. "It would have been senseless to hold back our men any longer, since we had not come this far just to sacrifice soldiers."(289). "Now the Ras was in no position to stop the bloodletting. A thirst for blood and murder had taken possession of the troops. They showed no mercy, not only to men but also to animals. . . . Only women and children

escaped death and they were taken prisoner. The commander-in-chief was deeply grieved by what had taken place. He practically wept from compassion and rode silently, covering his face with his shamma."(300)

Foraging and fighting, the army descended to the arid, thorny, uninhabited lowlands. Bulatovich points out, "Really, the conditions of this campaign were most unusual. This wasn't so much a military campaign as a geographical expedition by a fifteen-thousand-man detachment in absolutely unknown territory. Outstanding Abyssinian troops were completely unprepared for this activity, which was new to them."(303). So Bulatovich suggested to the Ras — and the Ras agreed — that, having constructed a semi-permanent camp at Kolu, they leave there the weak and wounded and continue with a reduced force to find Lake Rudolf — which only Bulatovich, who had read the reports of the Austrians, Teleki and von Hohnel, knew, geographically, where it lay. "A military council was held on February 27. At this meeting, they finally determined the composition of the detachment that was to go with the Ras. In all, 5,664 guns were chosen."(306)

Yet this unknown area sounded almost like Piccadilly Circus; they find traces and hear accounts of the 'Guchumba' (vagrants) who passed though the previous year, which Bulatovich knows to have been the Italian expedition of Bottego, and then almost run into what Bulatovich deduces, from the objects found, to have been an English scientific expedition.

On March 9, "From Menu the Ras had to make a rather difficult choice of route. It seemed impossible to go farther to the southwest. According to the natives, there were no inhabited lands; the time was already late; and the rainy season should be coming soon. Therefore the Ras decided to postpone farther movement to the southwest to the following year and to take possession now of the mouth of the Omo River, the most important strategic point in these regions; and then return to Kaffa to finally conquer all the tribes on the route which we had followed, and to station garrisons in their lands."(322)

March 10 "We rested. . . . since the natives did not know where to find Lake Rudolf, our natural guide was now the compass. I determined the geographical position of Menu approximately and showed the Ras the direction in which the northern section of Lake Rudolf should lie."(322)

"We left the populated territories behind, and ahead of us again stretched low-lying hot, and almost uninhabited space with little water ... our soldiers were exhausted and our animals worn out ... I do not know if another leader could have succeeded in moving this immense weary army, who felt immediately ahead of them the horror of hunger, in a new unknown and seemingly endless desert. But Wolda Giyorgis, in the highest degree, had the gift of a military leader to control the will of his subjects and to carry them along

behind him."(329, 330)

Then the going got really terrible; deeply cracked black soil, then salt marsh and dense thickets of wait-a-bit thorn through which they had to hack their way while 'the heat was intolerable'. "I had never seen such powers of endurance."(337) But finally they got to the Omo! "At eight o'clock in the morning, we sighted the farms of natives, ripening fields of mashella and corn and numerous herds of cattle and donkeys. . . . Soldiers forgot their weariness and, with a whoop, scattered over the plain. They took cattle and went into houses, looking for milk and bread. The inhabitants fled and only rarely did shots resound, bearing witness to individual skirmishes. At nine o'clock in the morning the detachment set up camp in the very center of the settlement."(338–39)

Finally, at long last, on March 27, the detachment reached Lake Rudolf! "At seven o'clock in the morning, we set up camp on the very bank of the river, in the shade of high trees, where the Nyanaya [the local name for the Omo] flows into the Rus Gulf."(343) With the help of an interpreter, the Ras ordered the natives, "Come submit to us." They replied, "We don't know you. You Guchumba (vagrants), go away from our lands."The Ras replied, "If you don't surrender voluntarily, we will shoot at you with the fire of our guns, we will take your livestock, your women and children. We are not Guchumba. We are from the sovereign of the Amhara (Abyssinians) Menelik."The Ras then persuaded the natives that if they brought tribute, they would not be killed." (346)

Two days later came the climax! "About a hundred men crossed over, and from this side a thousand guns supported them. The last to cross over were Ato-Bayu and I, with a flag attached to a long pole. We raised the flag to the top of a large tree, and from the other side, the troops saluted with a volley of gunfire and the beating of drums ... The Ras did not undertake any more serious operations on that side, since his domain ended at the right bank of the River Omo. In the evening we ceremoniously erected a flag at the mouth of the river ... Each rank of the detachment, including the Ras, carried two stones on its shoulders. We stopped on one of the hills at the very shore and made a high pile from these stones. In the middle we fixed a column 28 feet high, made by connecting several tree trunks; and on the end of it rustled a silk green, red and yellow Abyssinian flag ... In front, the lake glistened, that same long-wished-for lake, to which we for so long and steadfastly had striven. To the right, stretched out lay the low-lying steppe, and there the far mountains; to the left lay the dense forest along the banks of the River Omo. And against this background the front of the Abyssinian army stood out brightly. The silk shirts shone, the animal hides, the gold and silver decorations; and Abyssinian flags fluttered. Finally, a shot rang out, and five thousand Abyssinian guns saluted the new domain of Menelik and again erected his flag. They beat drums, blew on pipes, blew on flutes, and broke out in military songs. Moved, Ras Wolda Giyorgis embraced me, and I, warmly and with feeling, congratulated him."(347–48)

Now it was all over — all but the trip back. They set off on 30 March. "Our marching

column had increased now almost to double what it had been before, from the quantity of livestock that had been taken, and captive women and children. The Ras did not have the spirit to force his soldiers to give up their booty. Our soldiers were in a state of bliss: ... Captive boys carried guns and shields or drove cattle which had been taken. And captive women, quickly submitting to their fate, already went for water, tore up grass for mules and ground meal."(354) But, crossing the arid area to go straight to the Kibish, "Our column spread out, and the weaker began to fall behind. First our captive women and children began to fall and die. . . . Zelepukin, who went with the transport in the middle of column, had seen all kinds of horrors during the march and arrived very downcast. 'How awfully pitiful it is to look at the captive Shankala (Shankala is "Negro" in Abyssinian), your Honor,' he said. 'They walk, then stagger, then fall and lie. The master lifts her, beats her, but already, evidently, she has no strength left. He can't pick her up, so he throws her aside and leaves.' The temperature at noon was 32 degrees Reaumur [104 degrees F] in the shade."(355, 356)

The detachment left at Kolu marched down to join the Ras and the whole army continued back to Kaffa, foraging and fighting on their way. On April 23, during a long day in the saddle, Bulatovich says he "was in some kind of dreamy philosophical mood: how many victims had the conquest of this land cost? It seemed to me brim-full of violence and injustice. Of course, a new phase in the history of peoples is always paid for with sacrifices. But world justice and individual justice are quite different from one another. Murder always remains murder for us, whatever goal it may accomplish, and it is

especially immoral in relation to those peaceful, industrious people who never did any harm to us, whose land we now take away by force, using the superiority of our weapons." But while going along a narrow trail in this benign frame of mind, Bulatovich was attacked by a native, and saved only by a shot from one of his officers. "My dreamy-philosophical mood had completely gone away. War is war, and not a tournament; and the more the one with superior strength can defeat his enemy, the better."(370, 371)

And a few days later, on April 29, the Ras put this into action. "In the morning there was a long meeting of the commander-in-chief and his leaders. The whole territory we had passed through was divided into five bands which extended from the boundaries of Kaffa to the south. In them he stationed those regiments which had had land to the east of the Omo River before."Bulatovich then says exactly who got which part, with Fituarari Damti getting "Kastit, Maja-Tirma, Menu and the lands to the southwest of it. . . . They were then ordered to go to their territories and set about the complete conquest of them."(372-73)

Bulatovich had had enough. He continued back to Andrachi with the Ras where they arrived on May 13. On the way, he killed a female elephant in milk; his account is full of shooting at, and often just wounding wild animals; at one point he writes, "hunting the wild goats was the most fun." On June 5 " I arrived in Addis Ababa and found here our whole mission in assembly (to the great joy of both me and Zelepukin)."(380) After

summing up (in one page) his stay with the army of Menelik II, Bulatovich ends his book, "On July 1, I left on the deck of the French steamship "Iruadi," which sailed that day from Djibouti; and on July 19, I arrived in Saint Petersburg."(381)

At the end of this all, Bulatovich returned to Russia, gave a talk to the Russian Geographical Society in Moscow, wrote his second book, *With the Armies of Menelik II*, which was published, with illustrations and maps, in 1900 — and then became a monk. As Father Antony, he became the leader of a group on Mt Athos that was involved in an arcane theological dispute (hence the article in the *Times*); eventually Bulatovich retired to the family farm, where he was murdered by robbers in 1919.

Within little more than half a century the European colonial powers had all given up their African empires — but the highland Ethiopians had not. The area that Ras Wolda Giyorgis, with Bulatovich's help, conquered became an integral part of the Ethiopian Empire, and remains part of Ethiopia today.

But what is almost as amazing as Bulatovich's adventures is how they came to be translated into English. His speech to the Russian Geographical Society was later translated into French and Italian. Nearly three quarters of a century later, in 1971 a scholar named Katsnelson at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow republished the

two books, with a good biographical introduction on the amazing, colorful man, *A. X. Bulatovich — Hussar, Explorer, Monk*. But still in Russian.

At the same time, in the early '70s, a young American Russian-speaking polymath named Richard Seltzer found an article in the London *Times* of 1913 and, intrigued by this strange soldier-monk, decided to write a novel based on his life. In the course of doing the necessary research, he found the 1971 edition and got in touch with Katsnelson, and also with Bulatovich's sister, then aged 99 and living in Canada. He (Seltzer) translated various passages for his own use in his novel, *The Name of Hero*, which was published in 1981 — the same year Katsnelson died. But in so doing he realized what a treasure the whole two books were. So, with the encouragement of Prof. Harold Marcus at Michigan State, he translated both the books in full, and added an introduction and some notes (to those already made by both Bulatovich and then Katsnelson).

It was by sheer serendipitous chance that I happened upon a copy of the book at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies library in Addis Ababa while I was doing research for my own book, based on the letters of the fourth and last British consul in southwestern Ethiopia (1930–1935). I could hardly believe my eyes. It was the very background I needed, Menelik's conquest of the area where 'my' consul had been posted to attempt to get the Ethiopians to observe the borders with Sudan and Kenya, and to report on the slavery and poaching being done by the Ethiopian administrators based in the town of

Maji. And fortunately I finally found one bookshop in town which handled some Red Sea Press titles — and Seltzer's book was the first thing that hit my eye as I walked in.

In describing his travels, Bulatovich writes frequently of making a map and of taking (and processing) photographs — but there are none in the English translation. So I wrote to Seltzer and asked why? He said the maps and illustrations were too badly reproduced in the Katsnelson edition to be re-reproduced. Seltzer then took the trouble of locating copies of the original books (at Harvard), put all the maps and illustrations (over 90 items) on a CD and generously posted me a copy, with permission to make use of whatever I wanted. When I asked what I owed him, he replied, "You don't owe me anything. I hope you find it helpful." We must be eternally grateful to such amateur historians, people who delight in discovering and sharing information, rather than academicians who make a profession of concocting long-worded theories.

