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Were the Ethiopians in Jerusalem Ottoman Citizens? Ethiopian Essentialism versus Ottomanism (1850–1916)

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[Page 1] Abstract

Between 1850 and 1903 Europeans and Ottomans were in conflict regarding the status of Ethiopians living in Jerusalem. According to the Ottomans, Ethiopians in Jerusalem were Ottoman subjects. European powers like Great Britain, France, and Italy contested this opinion. According to them, Ethiopians in Jerusalem were not subjects of the Ottoman Empire but of the Ethiopian kingdom and as such they held an Ethiopian identity, not an Ottoman one. We will see that the first issue at stake here was the European protection of Ethiopians in Jerusalem. But we will show that the discourse proposed by Ethiopians to their interlocutors in Jerusalem concerning what is supposed to be the Ethiopian identity played an important role. In order to reach their goals in Jerusalem, Ethiopians played the game of Europeans while avoiding directly confronting Ottoman authorities. But in supporting the point of view of the Europeans, Ethiopians developed Ethiopian essentialism, solely centered on the Christian characteristics of Ethiopian identity. Between 1904 and 1916, this essentialism came into conflict with the new social reality of the Ethiopian kingdom.

[Page 2] Introduction

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Orthodox Ethiopians made up a very small community in Jerusalem. It had about 200 people in 1903.¹ But between 1850 and 1903 this small community was at the center of discussions between local authorities and representatives of foreign powers. Europeans and Ottomans were in conflict regarding the status of Ethiopians living in Jerusalem.

In 1894, the Ottoman authorities declared that Ethiopians were Ottoman subjects (*teba'a-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye*).² Considered as such, Ethiopians could in theory have been candidates for Ottoman citizenship-in-the-making. Indeed, Michelle U. Campos has highlighted the processes leading to the shift from Ottoman subjecthood to Ottoman citizenship during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.³ Basing her analysis on the idea of Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood that citizenship is “not only a set of legal obligations and entitlements” but is also “the practices through which individuals and groups formulate and claim new rights or struggle to expand or maintain existing rights,”⁴ Campos defined the rise of what she called the “Ottoman imperial citizenship,” a process encouraged by the *tanzimat* reforms (1838–76) that established new representative institutions like provincial, district, and municipal councils throughout the Empire.⁵ Thus, during the period under consideration here (1850–1916), an individual who was officially a “subject” (*teba'a*) could exert or obtain citizenship rights, even if these were obtained gradually. In addition, the same *tanzimat* reforms gradually established (especially in 1839 and 1853) equality before the law between Muslims and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects.

All this made the Ethiopians living in Jerusalem in theory future Ottoman citizens. But according to European powers like Great Britain, France, and Italy, Ethiopians in Jerusalem were not subjects, and certainly not citizens, of the Ottoman Empire, but subjects of the Ethiopian kingdom.⁶ And as such they held an Ethiopian identity, not an Ottoman one.

We will see that the first issue at stake was European protection of Ethiopians in Jerusalem. Europeans considered that nothing should prevent European protection of the Ethiopian community whereas Ottomans stated

[Page 3] that, because they were Ottoman subjects, Ethiopians were not eligible for it. But how can we explain the insistence of Europeans to place themselves as the protectors of Ethiopians and promoters of an Ethiopian identity? We will show that the discourse proposed by Ethiopians to their interlocutors in Jerusalem concerning what is supposed to be the Ethiopian identity played an important role. In order to reach their goals in Jerusalem, Ethiopians played the game of Europeans while avoiding directly confronting Ottoman authorities. But in supporting the European point of view, Ethiopians developed Ethiopian essentialism, solely centered on the Christian characteristics of Ethiopian identity. Between 1904 and 1916 this essentialism came into conflict with the new social reality of the Ethiopian kingdom.

Ethiopians in Jerusalem and the Need of European Help

Present in Jerusalem since at least the twelfth century, Orthodox Ethiopians saw their future in the holy city highly threatened in 1840s. In circa 1848, Ethiopian pilgrims arrived in the city and found the monastery Dayr al-Sultan closed. Located in the middle of the Holy Sepulcher complex in Jerusalem, Dayr al-Sultan was at that time a unique place where Ethiopians could settle and had been accommodating pilgrims since the sixteenth century.⁷ According to the Ethiopians, the Copts, with the assistance of the Armenians, had seized the monastery and its management by taking advantage of the death of all Ethiopians during a plague that had broken out in 1838.⁸ The Copts eventually accepted accommodating the Ethiopians, but the living conditions for the latter were extremely harsh. Ethiopians without access to the keys of the monastery were not free to move around without authorization, they were locked inside at night and they were cruelly treated by the Coptic monks. The Ethiopians decided to take the case to the Ottoman court, but without success. The Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Samuel Gobat, suggested that the Ethiopians endorse himself as their “protector” to help them.⁹ Following Gobat’s advice, the Ethiopians stole the monastery’s keys. The situation worsened and the Armenians and the Copts appealed to the Ottoman authorities. Finally, Gobat and several Ethiopians living in Jerusalem requested official assistance from the British consul, James Finn, in 1850.¹⁰

[Page 4] The Ethiopians obtained better living conditions in the monastery, but the case was not resolved: the problem of the ownership and management of Dayr al-Sultan remained.¹¹ The Ethiopians and the Copts both claimed it. This was the beginning of the long fight between the Copts and the Ethiopians, which would continue throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.¹²

Periodic violent clashes between Ethiopian and Coptic monks occurred in 1862–63, 1878, and 1881. The long period of 1891–1902 was also characterized by a series of confrontations and violent incidences. These conflicts are known mainly through European consular sources. During each outbreak of violence, the Ethiopians requested the protection of European consuls or their representatives present in Jerusalem. Between 1850 and 1867, mostly British consuls were solicited by the Ethiopians. But between 1881 and 1902, Russians, Greeks, the French, and Italians were asked by the Ethiopians to support their claims and to assume the role of protector.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Ethiopians in Jerusalem faced a major legal problem: they had not been recognized as an independent religious community by the local authorities. At first, Ethiopians could be considered members of the Coptic Church, Ethiopia being a Coptic “diocese” led by a Coptic bishop. Second, the Armenian patriarchate was the “protector” (or “patron”) of the Ethiopians and the Copts in Jerusalem.¹³ It meant that the Armenian patriarchate acted as an intermediary between the Ethiopians and the local authorities, and was responsible for providing food and accommodation for Ethiopian pilgrims if necessary. Even though this situation allowed the Ethiopians to benefit from material support in the city, it no longer satisfied them because of the problem with Dayr Al-Sultan monastery and their confrontations with the Coptic monks. Regarding Dayr Al-Sultan, the Armenians either sided with their other “clients,” the Copts, or opted for a compromise that did not satisfy the Ethiopians. Left with no choice, the latter requested help from British, Russian, Italian, or French consulates. In conflict with their “patron,” the arrival of foreign consulates in Jerusalem was therefore a good opportunity for them.

[Page 5] The Immediate Interest of the European Powers

The immediate interest of the European powers in Jerusalem was in line with that of the Ethiopians. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, European powers took a new interest in Jerusalem and Palestine. The British were the first European power allowed to open a consulate in the holy city in 1839. Other foreign powers soon opened their own consulates: Prussia in 1842, France and Piedmont-Sardinia in 1843, the United States in 1844, Austria in 1849, and Russia in 1856. These foreign powers were in competition in the city. Each of them tried to extend their influence in the city by establishing various services (e.g., banking and postal) and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals) for their own citizens visiting on pilgrimage as well as for the local population. Foreign consuls decided to play a crucial role in city life despite the Ottoman rule.

In order to impose their influence in Jerusalem and Palestine, foreign powers used a specific instrument: the capitulation system. A capitulation, in its original form, was a trade treaty between the Ottoman Empire and a European power that guaranteed privileges to the latter's subjects (e.g., merchants, diplomats) during their stay in the Empire. In general, it guaranteed consular protection and immunity.¹⁴ The opening of Jerusalem in the nineteenth century and the arrival of a population from Europe (merchants, entrepreneurs, and clergymen), who settled and founded institutions and services, made consular protection an essential instrument for the foreign (especially European) powers to assert their influence in the city and the Ottoman Empire. So, the Ethiopians were not the only ones in Jerusalem during the 1850s to be offered the possibility of protection by Europeans. European protection was a process that stirred up all the religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire, and in particular in Jerusalem where the presence of foreign consulates exacerbated the phenomenon.

In particular, the situation with the Ethiopian community offered an opportunity for European powers to increase their influence in the management of the Holy Sepulcher, because of the location of Dayr Al-Sultan.¹⁵ In addition, there was growing European interest in the Horn of Africa. Helping the Ethiopians in Jerusalem meant ensuring the goodwill of the Ethiopian government and thus gaining influence in a part of Africa that was

[Page 6] considered strategic in terms of trade, politics, and religion.¹⁶ The prospect of making Ethiopians dependent on them, of increasing their influence in the town and in the Horn of Africa, and of accessing the management of the Holy Sepulcher was enough to stimulate the desire of the British, French, Russians, or Italians to support Ethiopians in Jerusalem between 1850 and 1902, jointly or separately.¹⁷ But, even though the Ethiopians could find different means, thanks to European powers, to facilitate their travel toward Jerusalem and their money transfer from Ethiopia, the case of Dayr Al-Sultan has not been solved in their favor.

Ottomans' Opposition to Ethiopians' European Support

Foreign consuls in Jerusalem had to face a major difficulty: the Ottomans were totally opposed to European support in favor of the Ethiopians. According to the Ottomans, the Ethiopians who settled in Jerusalem were Ottoman subjects. They held this line until December 1901. Because of that, the British were rebuked in 1862.¹⁸ The French were obliged to justify themselves in 1881 to avoid suspicion of unauthorized protection, like the Russians and the Greeks.¹⁹ In 1886, the Ottoman governor refused to recognize Italian passports held by Ethiopians.²⁰ And in 1891, the provision of a building by the Italians for the Ethiopians was not allowed by the Ottoman administration.²¹ The first problem highlighted by Ottomans was the international status of the Ethiopian kingdom itself.

In 1862, the Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, Sureya Pasha, met British Consul James Finn and contested British action in favor of the Ethiopians.²² According to him, the Ethiopians could not benefit from European support because the Ethiopian kingdom had not been recognized by the Ottoman Empire as an independent state. Moreover, he considered Ethiopia part of the Ottoman Empire. There can be no doubt that the governor mentioned the Egyptian attempt to expand its rule in Sudan and the Horn of Africa.²³ To complete his argument, the governor compared the situation of Ethiopians and Algerians. Even though Algiers was de facto separated from Istanbul rule by a French occupation in 1830, Ottoman authorities continued to consider it part of the Ottoman Empire, so their inhabitants were Ottoman

[Page 7] subjects when they came to Jerusalem. The governor of Jerusalem was quite clear: the only important factor concerning the independence of a country, whether it was located in the Maghreb or in the Horn of Africa, was official recognition by the Empire. In fact, as far as we know, official diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Istanbul had not yet been established at that time. The only “Ottoman” interlocutor for Ethiopians was not Istanbul, but Egypt. The fact that the British or the French had at that time established diplomatic relations with Ethiopia like any other independent state held no value for the governor of Jerusalem.

In 1881, when the French, Greeks, and Russians had been criticized by the Ottoman authorities for supporting Ethiopians, neither the context nor the arguments had changed since 1862. Istanbul still did not recognize the independence of the Ethiopian kingdom. At that moment, Ethiopia and Egypt were still in conflict over territories along the northern frontier of the Ethiopian kingdom (present-day Eritrea). The Ethiopian victories against Egyptian troops in 1875 and 1876 did not provoke a reaction from Istanbul, though it definitively ensured Ethiopia’s independence from Ottoman rule. In line with Ottoman central authorities’ idea concerning the Ethiopian state, in 1886 the Ottoman governor seized the Italian passports of Ethiopians arriving in Jerusalem.²⁴ In 1891, the Ottoman authorities kept the same line. To oppose the Italian donation of a building for the Ethiopians, the Ottoman administrator was obliged to remind the Italians of the official position of Ottoman authorities concerning the Ethiopians in Jerusalem: “The monks in question, originally from Ethiopia, have inhabited in the Empire for many years and they have become Ottomans . . . or they have recently settled there, and so the Sublime Porte [i.e., the Ottoman Empire], which has not formerly recognized the independence of their country before, cannot admit that the [Italian] embassy covers them with its protection.”²⁵

Again, on September 10, 1894, the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul officially reasserted that Ethiopians living in Jerusalem were Ottoman subjects.²⁶ But if we look at the circumstances that led to this reassertion, we can say that the Ottomans eventually considered, for the first time, the Kingdom of Ethiopia an independent state. There was a double problem in Jerusalem: first, there were violent clashes between Ethiopians and Copts in 1890–93 to which local authorities had to find a solution; second, the problem of

[Page 8] Italian passports held by an increasing number of Ethiopian pilgrims. These passports were delivered to them in Massawa by the Italian authorities following the creation of the Italian colony of Eritrea in 1890. The problem was here twofold for the Ottomans: on the one hand, the Ottomans did not recognize the Italian occupation of Massawa, a city they held until 1885; on the other hand, the possession of these passports automatically makes the holder a beneficiary of Italian consular protection.

To solve these problems, the Ottoman authorities decided to use the problems created by the Treaty of Wəččale, signed in 1889 by the Ethiopian kingdom and Italy. In fact, the Italian version of the treaty varied from the Amharic version. In the latter, Italy was a mere adviser to Ethiopians in diplomatic matters, whereas in the Italian reading Italy controlled all of Ethiopia's foreign and diplomatic relations, which effectively transformed the country into an Italian protectorate. Discussions between Italy and Ethiopia quickly started to amend the treaty. And these discussions did not prevent King Mənilək II from seeking Italian protection for the Ethiopians in Jerusalem in March 1890.²⁷ However, the situation deteriorated as people in Ethiopia learned that Germany and Britain were taking note of the Italian protectorate over Ethiopia. In 1893, Mənilək denounced the treaty. So, according to the Ottomans, there was no valid agreement on consular protection, Mənilək having cancelled the validity of the treaty.²⁸ Thus, members of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem could not claim Italian consular protection, even though some of them possessed Italian passports, which were otherwise worthless because the Italian colony of Eritrea was not recognized by the Ottoman Empire. The Ethiopians therefore had to remain Ottoman subjects. Let us note the ironic situation: before 1894, the Ottomans prevented consular protection on the pretext that Ethiopia was not an independent country, but in 1894, they did the same because it was not an Italian protectorate but a sovereign country.

But what should be decided concerning Ethiopian pilgrims? The governor of Jerusalem complained to central Ottoman authorities and asked for a new regulation in 1896 and again in 1901.²⁹ However, starting in 1894, the situation had changed from the point of view of the Empire's central authority. Though in 1890 Mənilək II had sent, according to our knowledge, the first Ethiopian embassy to Istanbul,³⁰ the establishment of official

[Page 9] diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Ottoman Empire really started with the arrival of the Ethiopian abbot of Dayr Al-Sultan monastery to Istanbul in 1897.³¹ On that occasion, the Ethiopian sovereign informed the sultan of Ethiopian claims and complaints concerning the Dayr Al-Sultan situation.³² The direct dialogue made it possible to find an acceptable solution. On February 10, 1902, the Ottoman Empire decided that Ethiopia was indeed a “separate” state and as such it could transfer the protection of its citizens living in the Empire to a foreign country.³³ Menilik having officially informed the Ottoman authorities in May 1901 of his wish for Italian assistance in Ethiopian business in Jerusalem,³⁴ Italy became the European power protecting the Ethiopians in Jerusalem.

But the Ottomans set some constraints: if the business of Ethiopians in Jerusalem can be managed with the help of the Italian consulate, however, these same Ethiopians remain under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman courts and they do not enjoy any of the privileges of Italian citizens. The decision of Istanbul was confirmed a year later, on March 17, 1903, and was brought to the attention of the other foreign consulates in Jerusalem.³⁵ Thus, this decision definitively clarified Ethiopian nationality and citizenship in Jerusalem. Being considered subjects of an independent state, Ethiopians in Jerusalem finally left Ottoman citizenship-in-the-making.

Ethiopians, Candidates to Ottomanism?

In 1862, from the Ottoman perspective, the integration of Ethiopians within the Ottoman identity group did not pose any problem. When the governor of Jerusalem spoke with the British consul, the Ottoman Empire had already begun a series of great reforms, called *tanzimat*. Initiated by Sultan Abdulmecid (1839–61), the *tanzimat* reforms brought together a set of edicts and laws that generated an institutional reorganization intended to centralize power, but also reform the judicial, penal, and educational system and encourage the development of infrastructures and the modernization of the economy. As a whole, these new rules involved a great change in the Ottoman identity. The 1839 edict envisioned for the first time the principle of equality of all Ottoman subjects, without distinction of religion. In the 1856 edict, this

[Page 10] principle was reasserted and the prohibition on the construction of churches and synagogues by indigenous people was officially abandoned. The same edict also was intended to reorganize the “millets,” which were institutional structures organizing the legal life of non-Muslim communities. Represented and judged by a specific millet, an individual was in theory “protected.” The reorganization of the millets was intended to grant non-Muslim communities more autonomy in terms of personal status, education, and institutional organization.³⁶

The criticism expressed by the British consul James Finn in 1862 about the Armenian “protection” of Ethiopians in his discussion with the governor reflects their antagonism about Ottoman identity and the place of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.³⁷ According to the British consul, it was not legitimate to put Ethiopia under the authority (and thus the protection) of the Armenian patriarchate. But the institutionalization of the millets was seen by Ottomans as a means of avoiding the fragmentation of the population of the Empire as well as involving them in the great institutional reform movement. A more efficient millet system was supposed to permit the involvement of non-Muslim elites in a new Ottoman society organized by new administrative organs and new Ottoman identity (so-called “Ottomanism”).³⁸

Following the same idea, the Ottoman authorities decided to reduce the status of subjects under foreign “protection” (“protégé” status). The 1863 regulation obliged Ottoman subjects who were “protected” by a foreign power to choose the foreign nationality or the Ottoman jurisdiction (the millet for non-Muslim people). This decision was based on the idea that, according to the Ottoman authorities, foreign protection was no longer useful for such people because of the regulations enacted between 1839 and 1856, which established equality among all the population and institutions (i.e., millets) for their protection.³⁹ So the Ethiopians, being Ottoman subjects, did not have any reason, from the Ottoman point of view, to request foreign protection.

In 1869, the Ottoman authorities promulgated a law establishing the conditions for the acquisition and loss of Ottoman nationality; it was still open to all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religion. More interesting for our topic, the ninth article of this law stated that “anyone inhabiting

[Page 11] the Empire is considered (as Ottoman subject) by default, unless they can demonstrate otherwise.”⁴⁰ So, according to this law, the Ethiopians living in Jerusalem had to be considered Ottoman subjects under the protection of Armenian patriarchate until the official recognition of the independence of Ethiopia by the Ottoman Empire.

There are still discussions among researchers about the opening of Ottoman “citizenship” to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects at that time. Some, like Kemal Karpat, estimated that the regulations of 1839, 1856, and 1869 introduced and confirmed the opening of Ottoman citizenship to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects.⁴¹ Others, like Will Hanley, point out that such regulations did not intend to establish Ottoman citizenship but simply an Ottoman nationality or subjecthood, and thus qualified the idea of opening such citizenship to non-Muslims.⁴² However, the principle of Ottoman citizenship had strong defenders among the intellectuals, civil servants, and general population of the Empire, and the idea of Ottoman citizenship had gradually taken root in Ottoman society.⁴³ Indeed, the establishment of new representative institutions and the persistence of some institutional means permitting citizens to make complaints and claims in the public sphere reflected the development of a “citizen behavior” among Ottoman subjects.⁴⁴ Finally, even the Ethiopians acted like Ottoman “proto-citizens” and used their right to petition. Whenever there was a problem with the Copts, Ethiopians brought their complaints before the Ottoman courts, through legal proceedings, like in 1845–52, 1862–63, 1880–83, 1890–93, and 1898.⁴⁵

In saying this, therefore, one must not minimize the obstacles to the development of Ottoman citizenship.⁴⁶ It is a fact that despite the regulations of 1839–69, non-Muslim communities remained politically subject to an Islamic state. And the 1876 constitution did not remove the ambiguity of Ottoman citizenship, supposedly open to the whole population, but whose beneficiaries remained under the authority of a sultan officially proclaimed as protector of Islamic values. Thus, one should be aware of the rhetorical aspect of Ottomans’ points concerning the Ethiopians living in Jerusalem. It is not certain that Ottomans had seriously imagined Ethiopians exercising rights and duties (e.g., participation in assemblies, voting, or involvement in armies) that would be guaranteed by “future Ottoman citizenship.” The main goal of the Ottoman Empire was to avoid letting the Ethiopians become

[Page 12] European clients in Jerusalem. But whenever events justified it, the Ottoman Empire based their argument against the European protection on the potential Ottoman subjecthood of Ethiopians, which—in theory—permitted Ethiopians to aspire to a new Ottoman citizenship-in-the-making.

Europeans were totally opposed to this idea. In 1880, the French consul explained this to his government in extremely clear words: “In principle, Abyssinian subjects, belonging to an independent nation, without official representation at the Ottoman Porte [i.e., Istanbul], have the right to place themselves under our protection.”⁴⁷ The opinion stating that the Ethiopians had been without representation in Jerusalem was actually not true. They had been represented by the Armenian patriarchate. And the Ottoman authorities had already reminded the British consul, James Finn, of this fact in 1862,⁴⁸ and to the Italian consul in 1886.⁴⁹ But the opposition of the European and Ottoman points of view persisted until 1903. Europeans’ insistence can be explained partly by the immediate benefits they could have expected from their protection over the Ethiopians. But, beyond immediate political benefits, neither the Ethiopians nor the Europeans simply could imagine that Ethiopians in Jerusalem could be considered Ottomans. Thus a twofold factor must be taken into account if we want to understand the opposition of the Ottomans and Europeans: the Europeans’ idea of Ethiopian identity and the role of Ethiopians in establishing criteria to define it.

The Ethiopian Discourse in Jerusalem: An Ethiopian Essentialism?

The Ethiopians, in requesting foreign powers’ help and protection, produced letters and documents in which they described their situation in Jerusalem. Some of these letters are still available in the archives of foreign institutions in Jerusalem, others are known thanks to the reporting of their content done at that time by foreign consular officers.⁵⁰ In addition to these documents, the Ethiopians produced two texts in Amharic in 1893 and 1904.⁵¹ One can say that the Ethiopians proposed to their foreign interlocutors a specific and “stereotypical” discourse about conditions in Jerusalem. The Ethiopians insisted on two specific aspects that touched on their situation: first, they systematically distinguished themselves from other communities living in

[Page 13] Jerusalem; second, they focused on their poor material living conditions in the holy city. The result was a presentation of Ethiopian essentialism.

In all foreign sources, Ethiopians were not called “Ethiopians,” but “Abyssinians” (“Abyssins” in French, “Abessini” in Italian, “Habeş” in Turkish, “Abessynier” in German). It is clear that the use of the term “Abyssinians” reflected Ethiopian self-perception. As far as I know, the Ethiopians in Jerusalem always presented themselves as *habäša*, never as “Ethiopians.” In Ethiopia, *habäša* has been used to refer to the population living on the actual Ethiopian highlands, including Amhara and Tigray, thus it used to distinguish them from people living in the lowlands. Outside of Ethiopia, the term had strong ethnic and political connotations. The term was not supposed to include a religious dimension, because some *habäša* people were Muslims, for example, in Tigray. But because it was only used in Jerusalem by Ethiopian Christians, the term acquired a religious meaning and Christian character. In their writings, Ethiopians did not forget to insist on their Christian belief, even though they distinguished themselves from other Christian communities. For example, the authors of the Amharic texts about Dayr Al-Sultan written in 1893 and 1904 stated that the Ethiopians (referred to as *habäša*) and Copts (referred to as “Egyptians”) do not speak the same language and do not have the same personality.⁵² In essence, in all their correspondence with foreign powers, the links that could bind members of the Ethiopian community to other social and religious groups in Jerusalem were either deliberately omitted or presented as problems for the community. That is why the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem was seen as extremely isolated despite many clues showing the opposite.⁵³ It is clear that the Ethiopians in Jerusalem wanted to distinguish themselves ethnically, religiously, and politically from the other inhabitants in Jerusalem (i.e., Christians, Jews, and Muslims). It is obvious that the Ethiopians did not see themselves as candidates for Ottoman citizenship.

Thus, in their correspondence with foreign consuls, the Ethiopians in Jerusalem presented themselves as a uniform and homogenous group, ethnically clearly identified, and speaking with a unique voice. A letter dated December 6, 1880, arrived at the French consulate in Jerusalem signed by a so-called “Ethiopian community assembly.” The letter began: “Monsieur le Consul, we members of the Abyssinian community in the Holy Lands, have

[Page 14] the honor to say to you that we are poor pilgrims who remain at home in the Convent of the Sultan [i.e., Dayr Al-Sultan], in the accommodation of indigent Abyssinians.”⁵⁴

We immediately notice the emphatic use of the theme of poverty. Such documents have systematically pointed out the deprivation of the community, its isolation, and the brutality of other communities towards it. And the assistance requested from Europeans was always described as the only possible way to free Ethiopians from their terrible situation. In 1875, when the community was in conflict with the Armenians, the Ethiopian representative described their situation to the Russian archimandrite: “We are at the mercy of absolute necessity and I come to ask you, my most reverend father, to please lend us your generous support in a financial assistance that you will please give us.”⁵⁵

It is impossible to deny the difficulties faced by the Ethiopian community in the 1850s. But one should wonder about the relevance of such a discourse in the years that followed, when in 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, the community’s conditions were undeniably improving.⁵⁶ The recurrence of this type of formula and description points less to the persistence of economic problems than to the continuity of a discourse that had been successful. Such a discourse in letters requesting aid was not in itself a strange phenomenon. These formulas and signs of humility may seem more formal than anything else: a monk addresses a civil authority, a consul for example, and highlights his inferior condition. If this speech had been limited to the circle of protocol letters of Ethiopian monks, there would have been little to say. But on the contrary, what was said by the Ethiopians in these letters was taken literally by consular authorities.

Europeans: Agents of Ethiopian Essentialism?

The Ethiopians’ discourse on the conditions in which they lived was in line with the image that Europeans had of Africans at the time. Ethiopians were alternately described as “poor and oppressed” (1852 by the British),⁵⁷ “poor Abyssinian religious more abused than ever” (1881 by the French),⁵⁸ or “humble, poor, without any effective help” (1894 by the Italians).⁵⁹ We

[Page 15] have seen that the isolation and poverty of Ethiopian monks was a *topos* of Ethiopian discourse. Undoubtedly it was also a *topos* of the European discourse concerning Ethiopians. Such an image was extremely useful for European consuls: it permitted them to explain and justify consuls' actions to their superiors.

According to Europeans at that time, Africa was an empty land without efficient political power (except cruel and corrupted ones). Living conditions of Africans were, according to them, extremely rude and poor, and this was because Africa had been separated from "magnificent," "rich," and "prosperous Europe."⁶⁰ Europeans considered themselves the holders of civilization, and as such they intended to impose it on Africa through colonization. The fact that the Ethiopians we are concerned with in this article were living in Jerusalem did nothing to change their mind. On the contrary, the Europeans' perspective on Jerusalem and the Middle East was not far from the image they had of Africa.⁶¹ According to them, Ottoman rule in Jerusalem was vile and corrupt; the inhabitants were seen as poor and fanatic people deprived of the benefits of European civilization. In that picture, Christians living there were considered poor hostages under an oppressive Islamic rule. Thus, according to the Europeans, the Ethiopians in Jerusalem had two handicaps: they were Africans, therefore poor, and they were Christians who lived in Jerusalem, so they were oppressed in a city that would be better governed if it had been governed by Europeans instead of Ottomans. Called upon to help by the Ethiopians, the Europeans made it their duty to intervene. In an 1898 letter, the French consul Auzépy justified the French involvement in the 1893 conflict between Copts and Ethiopians: "It was difficult for me not to take into consideration these complaints [of Ethiopians] and, like my [Russian] colleague M. Yacolew, I did not miss the chance, in the name of humanity and of public hygiene, to intercede informally to Tewfik Bey [Ottoman governor]."⁶²

Auzépy's arguments were similar to those of British Consul James Finin 1852: compassion officially guided European intervention in favor of the Ethiopians.⁶³ Hiding the real political and economic motivations, this European discourse justified the "civilizing" actions of Europeans in both Africa and the Middle East. Thus, the Ethiopian discourse told the Europeans what they already believed about Africans and Jerusalemites in general.

[Page 16] In addition, Ethiopian discourse denied any positive role to interactions. Furthermore, it denied any social, economic, or political movements in Jerusalem that would cross religious or ethnic divisions. According to the Ethiopians, there was no “one people” in Jerusalem, but a mosaic of religious communities working independently for their own interests. Thus, the Ethiopian community was an ethnically differentiated component of Jerusalem that intended to defend its rights against the others.

This image of the population of Jerusalem as an aggregate of different religious identities echoed how the European powers understood Jerusalem. The Europeans had deliberately ignored the convergence of interests between people of different faiths or ethnic groups. But the mobilization factors that led the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go beyond religious distinctions were not lacking at that time, e.g., linguistic kinship, region of birth, access to property, defense of economic interests, education, and knowledge.⁶⁴ In fact, European powers had no interest in recognizing that a Maronite, protected by France, had (in certain circumstances) the same economic or political interests as an Orthodox Christian under Russian protection. The system of capitulation, extended to a religious group, permitted European powers to ensure their influence within the Empire. But each religious group had to have a clear definition and well-established identity in order for this system to work. That is why European powers always considered the population of the Ottoman Empire as one divided into different religious and ethnic groups, each one with, according to them, specific characteristics that justify these divisions. In presenting the population of the Empire in this way, Europeans promoted the essentialism of religious and ethnic groups in the Middle East, i.e., the establishment of unbreakable boundaries among different social groups, despite the existence of common interests that could unite them.

However, Europeans were not the unique factor in the process. Local identity aspirations, based on religious affiliation, could feed European opinion. And the local instigators of identity aspirations could in return acquire, through the eyes of Europeans, a real existence, as the historian Bernard Heyberger states about Maronites.⁶⁵ As stated by Roderic Davison and Michelle Campos, the attitude on the part of non-Muslims religious leaders contributed to undermining the Ottoman citizenship project, which

[Page 17] had much to lose, both financially and politically.⁶⁶ So, like some other communities, and because there were many advantages to doing it (especially because of the Dayr Al-Sultan problem), Ethiopians distinguished themselves from the “others” by proposing to European powers a specific definition of Ethiopian identity, based on ethnicity (*habäša*), religion (Christian), and political power (Ethiopian state). At the same time, Europeans already had their own prejudices about Ethiopian identity (e.g., poverty, helplessness). They integrated elements furnished by the Ethiopians in addition to these prejudices, the latter not having been denied by the Ethiopians. This idea of Ethiopian identity was eventually born thanks to this “coconstruction” process, which then spread throughout Jerusalem and elsewhere. This Ethiopian and European coconstruction of Christian Ethiopian identity in Jerusalem had one advantage for the Ethiopian community: European powers could not consciously consider them Ottoman subjects and immediately saw the advantage they would gain in supporting them.

Shift of the Citizenship Problem to Ethiopia

Nevertheless, in 1897 Mənilək seems to have been obliged to slightly amend Ethiopian essentialism. In a set of letters to the Ottoman sultan Abdul Hameed II, the Ethiopian monarch did not use the term *habäša* but the expression “from Ethiopia” when referring to Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem.⁶⁷ Thus, the ethnic specificity of Ethiopian monks was not specified, but their subjecthood to the Ethiopian monarch was. The idea here was clearly to avoid Ottoman subjecthood for Ethiopians in Jerusalem. But in a letter to the Ottoman sultan dated June 9, 1897, Mənilək wrote: “We are also pleased to inform Her Imperial Majesty that we have given all Muslims in our territory the freedom to profess their religion freely and to live equally with Christians.”⁶⁸ So, as early as 1897, Ottomans apparently showed some interest in Muslim conditions in Ethiopia.

Having played, between 1850 and 1902, a great role in defining Ethiopians in Jerusalem as members of a community with clear, strict ethnic and religious characteristics, Ethiopian discourse in Jerusalem became a problem because the religious and social context of the Ethiopian kingdom changed

[Page 18] dramatically at the same time. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Ethiopia conquered large territories in the south, west, and east. The main consequence was the emergence, within a new political space, of religious plurality among the population. From now on, a large Muslim population, an equally large population faithful to the “traditional” cults (also called non-Abrahamic cults), to which can be added the faithful of Catholic and Protestant missions, were living in the Ethiopian kingdom.

As noted above, in 1897 Ottomans began to show increasing interest in Ethiopian Muslims, and decided to bind the fate of the Ethiopian Christian community in Jerusalem with that of Muslims living in Ethiopia during negotiations concerning the ownership of Dayr Al-Sultan monastery. In July 1904, an Ottoman delegation, led by a certain Şādik pasha Al-Aẓm arrived in Addis Ababa.⁶⁹ The Ethiopians saw Ottomans requesting their “protection” over Muslims living in Ethiopia.⁷⁰ In doing so, the Ottomans used the same argument that the Ethiopians had used about a foreign power protecting their subjects in Jerusalem. Thus, the problem posed by the citizenship of Ethiopians in Jerusalem was immediately followed by one of Muslims living in Ethiopia.

This situation was obviously not well-received by the Ethiopians. In December 1904, Mənilək sent a dignitary from the city of Harär to Istanbul in order to discuss with the Ottomans.⁷¹ The Muslim representative of the Ethiopians, Abdullahi Ali Şādiq, arrived in Istanbul in March 1905.⁷² Among the letters in his possession was one written by Fäqädä Egzi’ə, the abbot of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, to the sultan. In this letter, dated March 1905, Fäqädä Egzi’ə reminded the sultan that the Prophet Mohammed “had recommended to his successors not to wake Ethiopia up” and he continued: “Since the Prophet’s death, peace has constantly reigned between the two states [Ethiopian and Muslim ones]; many Muslims have arrived from Arabia, Syria and Egypt. In the four corners of Ethiopia, Muslims live in large numbers, cultivate and trade, have complete freedom to live and are treated and favored more than Christians. Muslims are never recruited as soldiers unless they commit themselves.”⁷³

Fäqädä insisted not only on the freedom of Muslims in Ethiopia but on their “Ethiopian” citizenship. The Ottomans do not seem to have been satisfied by the Ethiopians’ arguments. And they decided to not give the

[Page 19] Ethiopians satisfaction concerning Dayr Al-Sultan monastery. The Ethiopians were obliged to continue the negotiations. The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Ethiopia was now well-established, and it was decided in 1910 that Ottomans could be represented by the German consul in Ethiopia.⁷⁴ At this time, power in Ethiopia changed. *Ləǧ* Iyasu was officially nominated ruler of Ethiopia in 1911. Iyasu remains a controversial figure in Ethiopian historiography. For some, he was the Ethiopian ruler who converted to Islam and favored Muslims in Ethiopia to the point of challenging the Christian roots of the monarchy. For others, he was the one who tried to reform Ethiopian power by considering the Muslim population by appropriating Muslim codes—without, however, giving up Christian ones.⁷⁵ Despite the controversies, one can say that he contributed to undermining Ethiopian Christian essentialism, which had been promoted some years before by establishing an alliance with the Muslim elite in the newly conquered territories and by adopting some regional political codes. The European powers panicked. The image reflected by Iyasu no longer corresponded to what Europeans had imagined about power and people in Ethiopia. Moreover, Iyasu seemed to be increasingly close to representatives of the Ottoman Empire. The First World War persuaded the European powers to support Iyasu's opponents, who were clearly more attached to the Christian roots of Ethiopian power.

On the other hand, the Ottomans had not forgotten their claims over Ethiopian Muslims. The Ottoman consul, Ahmed Maḏhar, worked for that purpose while arguing in favor of an alliance against the Europeans at the Iyasu's court. The alliance between the Ethiopian ruler and the Ottomans was in good shape in 1916.⁷⁶ That same year, Iyasu finally accepted the idea of Ottoman protection over Muslims living in Ethiopia.⁷⁷ This decision contributed to the overthrowing of Iyasu in September 1916 by the Ethiopian Christian aristocracy, who saw Iyasu "selling out of Ethiopia to Turks."⁷⁸

Interpreting Iyasu's decision in light of his policy regarding Muslims living in Ethiopia remains complicated. Why did Iyasu decide to give such power to the Ottomans over Muslims in Ethiopia? This decision surely jeopardized his sovereignty over this population, whether he wanted to make Ethiopia a Muslim state or not. And this seems to contradict his stated intention to integrate the Muslim world into the Ethiopian establishment.

[Page 20] Also, his alliance with the Ottoman Empire in the context of the First World War does not explain this decision: the Ottomans needed Ethiopia and Iyasu was obviously ready to help them. So why did he make this concession? Had the situation in Jerusalem played a role? The Ottoman authorities were ready to change the situation in Jerusalem for the benefit of Ethiopian Christians if the Ethiopians helped them against the Europeans in the Horn of Africa.⁷⁹ In addition, the Jerusalem issue was at the core of discussions on Ottoman protection for Muslim Ethiopians. Thus, one should wonder if Iyasu had anticipated the Ottomans' demands in order to guarantee a change for Christian Ethiopians in Jerusalem. This remains unclear today. Be that as it may, Iyasu's deposition in September 1916 put an end to Ottoman claims and placed the issue of Ethiopian Muslims' citizenship in the hands of the new Ethiopian leaders, who were not willing to change the Christian nature of Ethiopian power.

Notes

1. Nantes Diplomatic Archives Centre (CADN), Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, April 7, 1903, 294/ PO-A-134, fol. 269.
2. Ottoman State Archives (BOA), BEO. 479-3587, docs. 1–4: 28 Cemaziyelahir 1311 [January 6, 1894]; BOA, HR.HMS.ISO.179-19, doc. 1: 28 Cemaziyelahir 1311 [January 6, 1894].
3. Michelle U. Campos, "Imperial Citizenship at the End of Empire, the Ottomans in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no. 3 (2017): 588–607.
4. Cf. Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, *Citizenship and Identity* (London: Sage, 1999): 4, quoted in Campos, "Imperial Citizenship," 591.
5. Campos, "Imperial Citizenship," 592–93.
6. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, December 15, 1880, 294/PO-A-134, fol. 22.
7. Kirsten Stoffregen-Pedersen, "Dayr as-Sultan," *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. II, ed. S. Uhlig (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 117–18.
8. Ethiopian testimonies reported in British sources, cf. Letter of Consul Finn to Viscount Palmerston, Jerusalem, November 30, 1850, published in Enrico

Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina*, vol. 2 (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1947), 276–78; Letter of Consul Finn to Viscount Palmerston, Jerusalem, December 9, 1850, published in Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 278–79; and Letter of Bishop Gobat to the Earl of Malmesbury, London, June 29, 1852, published in Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 285–88.

9. A letter sent to Samuel Gobat by the secretary of the Ethiopian monarch in 1848 states that Gobat proposed himself as protector of the Ethiopians in Jerusalem. Cf. Sven Rubenson, *Correspondence and Treaties, 1800–1854*, Acta Æthiopica vol. 1 (Evanston, IL/Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Northwestern University Press/Addis Ababa University Press, 1987), 150.
10. Consul Finn to Viscount Palmerston, Jerusalem, November 30, 1850; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 276–78.
11. Consul Finn to Viscount Palmerston, Jerusalem, December 9, 1850; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 278–79.
12. For an overview of this conflict, see Cerulli, *Etiopi*; S. P. Petridis, *La présence éthiopienne à Jérusalem, son statut juridique et ses droits sur le monastère de Dar-es-Sultan* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: n.p., 1961); S. Tedeschi, “Profilo storico di Dar es-Sultan,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1964): 92–160; O. Meinardus, “The Ethiopians in Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 1, no. 2 (1965): 112–47; O. Meinardus, “The Ethiopians in Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 3, no. 4 (1965): 217–32; Philippos, *The Rights of the Abyssinian Orthodox Church in the Holy Places, Documentary Authorities*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Berhanena Selam Haile Selassie I Printing Press, 1967); Philippos, *Know Jerusalem* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Berhanena Selam Haile Selassie I Printing Press, 1972); K. Pedersen, *The History of the Ethiopian Community in the Holy Land from the Time of Emperor Tewodros II till 197* (Jerusalem: Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research, 1983); H. Scholler, “The Ethiopian Community in Jerusalem from 1850 to the Conference of Dar-el-Sultan 1902, The Political Struggle for Independence,” *Ethiopian Studies, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. G. Goldenberg and B. Podolsky (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: A. Balkema: 1986), 487–500; Mäkönnən Zäwde, *Itṓpyya ənna əyərusaləm* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Nəgəd matämiya dərjət, 1998–99); A. Rouaud, “La protection française des Abyssins de Jérusalem (1843–1898), Aperçu,” *Transversalités* 85 (2003): 63–74; H. Erlich, *Alliance and Alienation: Ethiopia and Israel in the Days of Haile Selassie* (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 2014); and Salomon Yohannes, *Der*

Sulṭan gādām yāman nāw? 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: n.p., 2015).

13. Cf. Meinardus, *The Ethiopians*, 128.
14. For more details, cf. Maurits van den Boogert, *The Capitulation and the Ottoman Legal System* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 63–92. See also R. Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottoman to the British*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 54–55.
15. Cf. Chevalier Bunsen to the Earl of Malmesbury, London, July 5, 1852; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 288.
16. Cf. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, September 6, 1881, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 8.
17. For example, French, Russian, and Italian consuls jointly intervened when in 1893 Ethiopians were refused by the Copts to carry the body of a deceased Ethiopian monk through the two chapels depending to Dayr Al-Sultan; cf. Historical Archive of the Italian Foreign Ministry (ASDMAE), Letter of Italian consul in Jerusalem to Italian ambassador in Constantinople, Jerusalem, July 19, 1893, fond “Ministero dell’Africa Italiana” (“MAI”), 42/1, fasc. “1893”; CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, July 1, 1898, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 41–42.
18. Consul Finn to Earl Russel, Jerusalem, May 7, 1862. Cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 314–15.
19. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, August 28, 1881, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 7; CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, September 6, 1882, 294/PO-A-134, fols. 48–55.
20. ASDMAE, Letter of Italian consul to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, November 9, 1886, fond “MAI”, 42/1, fasc. “1887.”
21. BOA, HR.HMS.ISO.176.44, doc. 2: 29 Muharrem 1309 [September 4, 1891].
22. Consul Finn to Earl Russel, Jerusalem, May 7, 1862; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 314.
23. Such a statement reflects the view at that time that Egypt’s imperialist policy in the Horn of Africa was viewed from Istanbul as an “Ottoman” expansion despite the political autonomy of the Egyptian Khedive.
24. ASDMAE, Letter of Italian consul to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, November 9, 1886, fond “MAI”, 42/1, fasc. “1887.”
25. BOA, HR.HMS.ISO.176.44, doc. 2: 29 Muharrem 1309 [September 4, 1891].
26. BOA, MV.81-44, doc. 1: 9 Rebiulevvel 1312 [September 10, 1894].
27. ASDMAE, letter of Mānilək II to the Italian minister of foreign affairs, Hawzən, 11 māggabit 1882 [March, 19, 1890], fond “MAI”, 42/1, fasc. “1890.”

28. BOA, MV.81–44, doc. 1: 9 Rebiulevvel 1312 [September 10, 1894].
29. BOA, BEO.1767-132503, doc. 3: 4 Kanun-i evvel 1312 [December 16, 1896]; BOA, BEO.1767-132503, doc. 1: 8 Ramazan 1319 [December 19, 1901].
30. Pedersen, *The History of the Ethiopian Community*, 58.
31. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, January 2, 1897, 294/PO-E-10, fols. 86–87.
32. BOA, Y.EE.62-36, doc. 2: Letter of Mənilək II to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, first letter, Addis Ababa, 3 *säne* 1889 [June 9, 1897].
33. BOA, BEO.1767-132503, doc. 4: 2 Zilkade 1319 [February 10, 1902].
34. BOA, Y.A.HUS.420-13, docs. 6 : Letter of Mənilək II to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Aläm, 20 *genbot* 1893 [May 28, 1901].
35. CADN, Translation of the Ottoman decree dated to 17 Zilhicce 1320 [March 17, 1903], 294/PO-A-134, fol. 271.
36. A. Dalachanis, “Confessions et minorités,” *Le Moyen-Orient, fin xixe–xxe siècle*, ed. L. Dakhli (Paris : Points Histoire, 2016), 77.
37. Consul Finn to Earl Russel, Jerusalem, May 7, 1862; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 314.
38. D. Stamatopoulos, “From Millets to Minorities in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire: An Ambiguous Modernization,” in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, ed. S. G. Ellis, G. Halfdanarson, and A. K. Isaacs (Pisa, Italy: Pisa University Press, 2006), 259.
39. Will Hanley, “What Ottoman Nationality Was and Was Not,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3, no. 2 (2016): 284.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Kemal H. Karpat, “Millet and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era,” *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. B. Braude and B. Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 162.
42. Hanley, “What Ottoman Nationality,” 278.
43. Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers, Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 64–71.
44. See Campos, “Imperial Citizenship,” 591–94.
45. Stéphane Ancel, “The Ethiopian Orthodox Community in Jerusalem: New Archives and Perspectives on Daily Life and Social Networks, 1840–1940,” in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, ed. A. Dalachanis and V. Lemire (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), 58.

46. Cf. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 71–74; Roderic H. Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 59, no. 4 (1954): 864.
47. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, December 15, 1880, 294/PO-A-134, fol. 22.
48. Consul Finn to Sir H. Bulwer, Jerusalem, March 11, 1862; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 312–13.
49. ASDMAE, Letter of Italian consul to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, November 9, 1886, fond “MAI”, 42/1, fasc. “1887.”
50. For the details of archival fonds and series, cf. S. Ancel and V. Lemire, “Across the Archives: New Sources about the Ethiopian Christian Community in Jerusalem (1840–1940),” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 71 (2017): 106–19.
51. The first one, which could be dated 1893, was published in Willy Hentze, *Am Hofe des Kaisers Menelik von Abessynien* (Leipzig, Germany: Eduard Henrich Mayer, 1906), 177–81; the second one was written in 1903–1904 by a certain Wäldä Mädhən in Jerusalem. The original manuscript (which is paginated) is currently preserved in the archives of the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem and is available on the Open Jerusalem Project website: JM-EARJ/AD/172, Memorandum from Wäldä Mädhən Arägawi about the history of Dayr Al-Sultan monastery, see <http://www.openjerusalem.org/ark:/58142/3S1TD>
52. Hentze, *Am Hofe*, 180; Memorandum from Wäldä Mädhən Arägawi, 36, 113.
53. Ancel, “The Ethiopian Orthodox Community in Jerusalem,” 50–74.
54. CADN, Letter of Ethiopians to French consul in Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 6, 1880, 294/PO-A-134, fol. 19.
55. Saint Petersburg Branch of the Archives of the Russian Academy of Science (PFARAN), Letter of Abd Miriem to the Archimandrite Kapustin of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem, Jerusalem, November 12, 1875, fond 214 “Antonin Kapustin.”
56. Cf. Pedersen, *The History of the Ethiopian Community*, 39–61.
57. Consul Finn to the Earl of Malmesbury, Jerusalem, August 17, 1852; cf. Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 290.
58. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, December 15, 1880, 294/PO-A-134, fol. 21.
59. ASDMAE, Report written by Italian consul in Jerusalem for Italian ambassador in Constantinople, Jerusalem, May 11, 1894, fond “Consolato Gerusalemme,” 5

- “Affari Etiopici,” fasc. 210 “Protezione etiopici 1883–1894.”
60. Concerning Europeans’ image of Africa at that time, see W. B. Cohen, *Français et Africains. Les noirs dans le regard des blancs, 1530–1880* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981).
 61. Cf. V. Lemire, *Jérusalem 1900. La ville sainte à l’âge des possibles* (Paris: Armand Colin), 105–8.
 62. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, July 1, 1898, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 39.
 63. Consul Finn to the Earl of Malmesbury, Jerusalem, August 17, 1852; cf Cerulli, *Etiopi*, 290.
 64. For example, in 1865, representatives of the city’s religious groups mobilized to demand from the sultan the renovation of drinking water pipes. Cf. V. Lemire, *La soif de Jérusalem, essai d’hydrohistoire (1840–1948)* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2011), 235.
 65. B. Heyberger, “La France et la protection des Chrétiens maronites, généalogie d’une représentation,” *Relations internationales* 173, no. 1 (2018): 30.
 66. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 72; Davison, “Turkish Attitudes,” 23.
 67. BOA, Y.EE.62-33, doc. 1: Letter of Queen Taytu to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Ababa, 14 ṭər 1889 [January 21, 1897]; BOA, Y.EE.62-34, doc. 1: Letter of Mənilək II to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Ababa, 15 ṭər 1889 [January 22, 1897]; BOA, Y.EE.62-36, doc. 2 and 3: 2 letters of Mənilək II to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Ababa, 3 sāne 1889 [June 9, 1897]; BOA, Y.EE.62-34, doc. 2: Letter of Mənilək II to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Ababa, 3 hamle 1889 [July 9, 1897].
 68. BOA, Y.EE.62-36, doc. 2: Letter of Mənilək II to Sultan Abdul-Hameed II, Addis Ababa, 3 sané 1889 [June 9, 1897].
 69. Wolbert Smidt and Alessandro Gori, “Ottoman Empire,” *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. IV, ed. S. Uhlig (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 78.
 70. CADN, Letter of French ambassador in Ethiopia to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Entotto, July 1, 1904, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 85.
 71. CADN, Letter of French ambassador in Ethiopia to French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Entotto, December 24, 1904, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 88.
 72. CADN, Letter of French consul in Jerusalem to French ambassador in Istanbul, Jerusalem, March 20, 1905, 294/PO-A-135, fol. 89.

73. BOA, Y.EE.62-17, docs. 2–3: Letter of Fäqädä Egzi'ə, abbot of Dayr al-Sultan, to the Sultan Abdul-Hameed II Jerusalem, 16 *maggābit* 1897 [March 8, 1905].
74. Wolbert Smidt and Alessandro Gori, "Ottoman Empire," 79.
75. Numerous publications deal with Iyasu's reign. For a comprehensive overview of recent historical issues of Iyasu's reign, see, Eloi Ficquet and Wolbert Smidt, eds., *The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia, New Insights* (Vienna: Lit, 2014).
76. H. Erlich, "From Wello to Harer: Lij Iyasu, the Ottomans and the Somali Sayyid," in *The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia, New Insights*, eds. Eloi Ficquet and Wolbert Smidt (Vienna: Lit, 2014), 135–47.
77. Detlev Finke, "Maḥzar, Ahmed," *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. III, ed. S. Uhlig (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 895.
78. Wolbert Smidt and Alessandro Gori, "Ottoman Empire," 79.
79. H. Erlich, "From Wello to Harer," 142.