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Across the Archives: New Sources on the Ethiopian Christian Community in Jerusalem, 1840–1940

Stéphane Ancel and
Vincent Lemire

The presence of Orthodox Ethiopians in Jerusalem is attested at least from the twelfth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian monks were mainly present in Dayr al-Sultan monastery, which they shared with Coptic monks, with a few other Ethiopians accommodated in Armenian or Greek communities. However, in the middle of that century, Ethiopian monks came into conflict with the Coptic community concerning the occupation and the management of Dayr al-Sultan monastery. Troubles arose between Ethiopian and Coptic monks and gradually the coexistence of the two communities in the same place came to be seen as impossible, with Ethiopians and Copts each claiming full ownership of the monastery. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, monks and authorities from the two communities fought each other. Concerning as it did the last institution in Jerusalem to host Ethiopian monks, this conflict could have jeopardized the Ethiopian presence in the city. But during the same period, the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem saw a great revival: the number of Ethiopians increased in the city and a number of buildings (churches and houses) dedicated to them were bought or erected. In 1876, Ethiopians received as *waqf* a house located in the Old City (on the same street as the Ethiopian monastery) and in 1896, a new church and monastery were completed outside the walls of the Old City (on Ethiopian Monastery Street, presently in West Jerusalem). From that moment, members of the Ethiopian aristocracy bought or erected a number of houses around the new church. In 1930, a large building accommodating the new

Ethiopian consulate completed the so-called “Ethiopian compound” of Jerusalem, part of the new neighborhood designated Harat al-Habash by Ottoman authorities from 1905.

The situation of Ethiopians during that period has been studied in a number of remarkable works. On the one hand are published collections of documentary materials compiled by historians or observers, including: Alexander Devine (in 1868), Enno Littmann (in 1902), Enrico Cerulli (in 1943 and 1947), and the Ethiopian Archbishop Philippos (in 1962 and 1972).¹ On the other hand are essays and analysis of the collected and published documents. The first of these, in 1916, was by Hugo Duensing, and in 1965, Otto Meinardus attempted the first comprehensive history of Ethiopians in Jerusalem.² However, our knowledge concerning the nineteenth- and twentieth-century situation of Orthodox Ethiopians owes much to the work of Kirsten Pedersen.³ As a member of the Ethiopian community, Pedersen had access to unpublished documents from the archives of the Ethiopian community and to her personal relationships with members of the community and used these to bring to light the extraordinary revival of the community at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century. More recently, several scholars used unpublished documents to examine specific events that occurred between 1840 and 1940,⁴ while other studies focused on the post-World War II situation of the community.⁵

These historical works established inventories of available sources and clear chronologies of events. They represented an absolutely necessary step, but they also show the limits of their approach. Pedersen and her predecessors used the same methodology: to collect documents, identify events, and thus propose a chronology. But they offered no analysis of the methods or context of production of these documents. European sources, for example, raise questions as to the European view and discourse regarding Ethiopia and Ethiopian living in Jerusalem in a broader context of European discourse on Jerusalem and on Africa in general at that time. The risk (and unfortunately the result) is that studies on Ethiopians in Jerusalem described their situation through European eyes. Similar concerns apply to the uncritical use of Ethiopian sources. In addition to these methodological problems, other sources have not been mobilized to write the history of Jerusalem’s Ethiopian community. With a few exceptions, Italian and French consular archives do not appear. Even more prejudicial, Ottoman and Arabic archives have been totally ignored.

To be fair, previous works, despite limited documentation, managed important strides toward a better understanding of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem. However, they did not fully present the complexity of the situation in Jerusalem or Ethiopia in the Ottoman and British Mandate periods. They established a chronology of the community’s development, but certainly not an explanation of this process. Indeed, they suggest a simplistic and exaggerated explanation: Because Ethiopians were poor and isolated in Jerusalem during the nineteenth century, they put themselves under Western consular protection; later, the Ethiopian emperor was able to improve the situation of the community mainly because of their piety and devotion. This explanation shows the influence of the discourses found in European and Ethiopian sources, devaluing the role of Ethiopian authorities and their weight on the international scene,

excluding the Ethiopian community from the context of Jerusalem's development, and avoiding comparison with the development of other Christian communities (including Protestants, Russian Orthodox, and others). Finally, the Ethiopian community is shown as a community essentially external to Jerusalem and Palestine, without any connection with local daily life. Thus, the presence of Orthodox Ethiopians continues to be considered an "exotic" phenomenon disconnected from the historical processes that occurred in Jerusalem at that time. This only reinforces the situation whereby the Ethiopian community does not appear, or appears only peripherally, in historical works on Jerusalem.

A new approach is necessary: we must re-analyze known sources to offer an explanation for the revival of the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem. However, this will be not sufficient. New documentary material should be collected. But such an endeavor cannot be the task of one scholar alone. The Open Jerusalem project, funded by the European Council of Research, provides the opportunity to engage a new approach and new thinking concerning the Orthodox Ethiopian community.⁶ This project aims at collecting sources from archives of different communities' institutions in Jerusalem, and at connecting them in order to understand religious, sociological, or political dynamics within the local population between 1840 and 1940. Open Jerusalem thus offers a new framework for studying the revival of the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem between 1840 and 1940. Neglected sources (Ottoman and local Arabic documents) can be collected and analyzed; and newly available sources (Ethiopian) can be mobilized.

Concretely, members of the Open Jerusalem project have access to unpublished documentary material from the Ethiopian archbishopric archives in Jerusalem and from the Ethiopian National Archives in Addis Ababa. The archives of the Ethiopian archbishopric preserve a heterogeneous set of documents, many of them concerning the daily life of the community, as well as numerous manuscripts on parchment and paper. In Ethiopia, the National Archives in Addis Ababa has recently accommodated the archives of the Jerusalem Memorial Association of Ethiopian Believers. This is a small collection dealing primarily with the association's activities during the second half of the twentieth century (especially the 1960s–1990s), but several documents concern our period. Open Jerusalem also engaged in a large-scale investigation of the Imperial Ottoman Archives in Istanbul to identify documents in Arabic, Ottoman, Amharic, or French. European consular archives, especially those of the French and Italian consulates in Jerusalem, are currently being examined to complete our knowledge of the documentary material possibilities concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox community of Jerusalem between 1840 and 1940.

New Findings in the National Ethiopian Archives in Addis Ababa

Scholars have long been constrained by the small number of available documents produced by Ethiopians concerning their community in Jerusalem. This situation can be explained in part by the original characteristics of Ethiopian archives, particularly their

organization and their methods of preservation. Prior to the twentieth century, important documents were copied or recorded on blank leaves of parchment manuscripts, usually religious texts. These manuscripts were then preserved in different monastic institutions. This particular system of conservation led to a wide dispersion of sources. In 1908, Emperor Menilek II (1889–1913) embarked upon a significant reform and asked to all ministries of the kingdom to establish their own archives and to stop copying documents into parchment manuscripts. But nothing was decided concerning preservation or centralizing the process of archives collection until Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930–1974) created the National Archives and Library of Ethiopia in 1944. However, this institution did not collect archives preserved in the different ministries or institutions until 1999. Thus, Ethiopian archives remain extremely difficult to access. They are dispersed and preserved in different ways. Many sources are still preserved into their original ministry or institution and access to these is usually forbidden. Further, numerous archives disappeared (having been destroyed or simply lost) because of changes in the administrative organization of the Ethiopian state, or because of natural disasters, war, or political troubles. So the first aim of a scholar studying Ethiopian history is usually to look patiently for archives, to situate them, and, when their existence is confirmed, to negotiate access. This work entails an intensive process of investigation, one that is often unsuccessful.

Scholars saw a definitive opportunity when the National Archives in Addis Ababa recently received and inventoried the archives of the Jerusalem Memorial Association of Ethiopian Believers. Since its creation 1963, this association aimed to organize Ethiopian pilgrimage to holy lands. Inventoried in 2013 under the archival code 6.1, this collection is small, comprising seven folders (from 6.1.1 to 6.1.7), containing a total of 71 files. The documents preserved inside are mainly dated from the 1960s to the 1990s and deal with the administrative life of the association. However, the collection contains some unpublished documents dated to the 1920s and coming from Ethiopian institutions in Jerusalem. Particularly interesting is a document from the 1924 visit to Jerusalem by Ras Täfäri Makonnen (later known as Haile Selassie I). This is the original version of an agreement between the Greek Orthodox patriarch in Jerusalem, Damianos, and Täfäri Makonnen (files 6.1.1, figure 1). Written in Greek and English and signed on 17 April 1924 in Jerusalem, this agreement states that the Ethiopian community entered into full possession of a room inside the monastery of Abraham, connected by a door to the monastery of Dayr al-Sultan. In return, Ethiopians gave a piece of land to the patriarchate in Addis Ababa and its vicinity.

One can also find a copy of a deed of sale (file 6.1.3), dated 25 January 1928 and signed in Jerusalem, stipulating the sale of a piece of land (including a house and a garden) by a certain Paulos Menameno to Ras Täfäri Makonnen and his wife Mänän Asfaw, through their attorney Wäldä Mika'él. Folder 6.1.1 also contains a document containing an agreement signed in Addis Ababa between Empress Zäwditu (1916–1930) and Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich Romanov of Russia, the leader of imperial Russian forces who had taken shelter in Addis Ababa (figure 2). Dated 24 August 1925, written in French on a single flyleaf of paper, and signed by Grand Duke Alexander

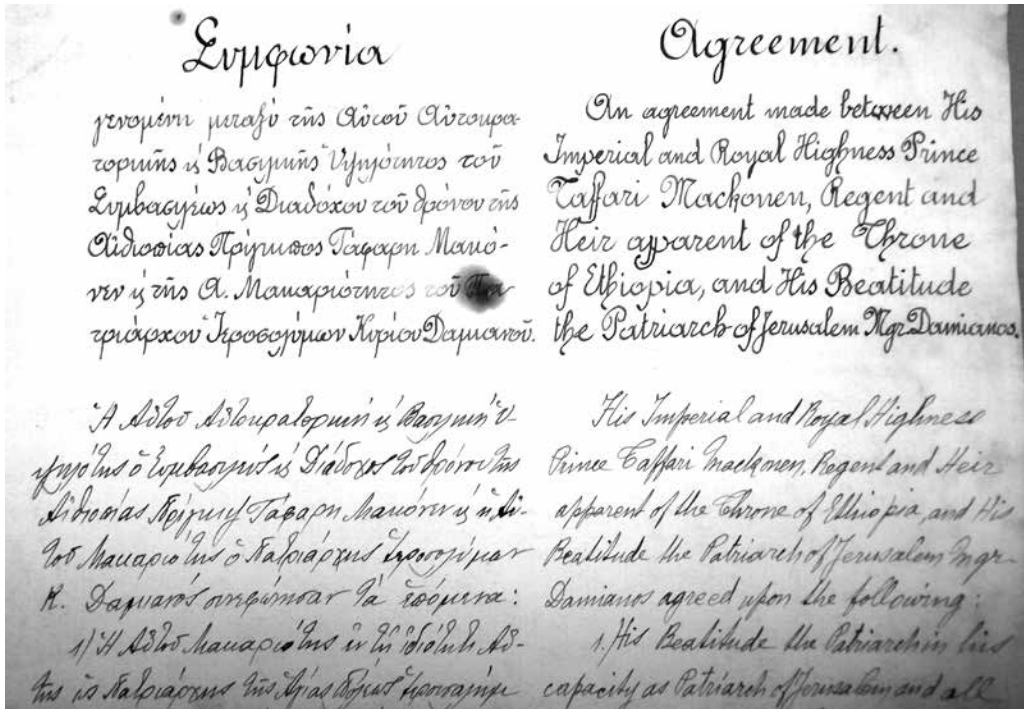


Figure 1. Agreement between Damianos, Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem, and Ras Täfäri Makonnen, 17 April 1924, Jerusalem. Addis Ababa National Archives, file 6.1.1.



Figure 2. Agreement between Queen Zäwditu and Grank Duke Alexander Mikhailovich Romanov of Russia, 24 August 1925, Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa National Archives, file 6.1.1.

and Ras Täfäri Makonnen, this agreement states that in the event of Ethiopia's full recovery of its ownership rights in Jerusalem, it would give two-twelfths of this property to Russia (though only if the Russia imperial government was reestablished). The association archives preserved also a 1966 report written by a certain Moulatou Kassaye of the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance concerning the accounting system used by the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem (file 6.1.7). This document gives us some information about the state of archives of the community at that time. According to the author, archives were in poor condition: the author pointed at the absence of any real organization, the loss of documents, and the incapacity of pious monks to classify documents properly. For a scholar interested in the period from 1840 to 1940, it is disheartening to read that already in the 1960s the archives of the Ethiopian community had deteriorated.

Revealing the Ethiopian Archbishopric Archives in Jerusalem

As far as we know, Kirsten Pedersen is the only scholar to have accessed the archives of Ethiopian bishopric in Jerusalem. But this access was restrained; she could not see and study the entire archive and, until today, these archives have not been accessible to other scholars.⁷ In an effort to change this situation, Open Jerusalem project members opened discussions both with Ethiopian authorities in Jerusalem and with the Ethiopian patriarchate of Addis Ababa. After hearing the scholarly goals of the project, the Ethiopian patriarch of Ethiopia Abunä Matthias and the Ethiopian archbishop of Jerusalem Abunä Enbakom enthusiastically granted access to the archives of the community in Jerusalem.

This paper reports only on Open Jerusalem's initial investigation in these archives; others will be done in the near future. The archives of Ethiopian bishopric of Jerusalem, located in the archbishop's residence in the Old City, are divided into two main sections: the archives proper, which preserve all types of administrative documents; and the manuscript section, where numerous parchment and paper manuscripts are carefully stored. At the time of writing, the "administrative" archives were almost fully examined, and the manuscript section only partially. (For the moment, no unknown documents have been found in the latter, though the text called "History of Der Sultan," previously known but still unpublished and preserved in a large manuscript on paper, is deserving of reexamination.)⁸ The former preserves administrative documents concerning the community from the end of the nineteenth century until the present. The archives apparently underwent many changes in terms of organization over the last fifty years, and actual folders represent the latest in a long succession of rearrangements. Some of the oldest documents show marks of fire and attempts at conservation (see figure 3). These are clues to the poor condition of these archives until the 1960s, as described in the 1966 report found in Addis Ababa.

Among the folders stored in the place, seven contains documents produced during the time investigated here: folders 6, 154, 356, 358, 359, 360, and a last one titled in Amharic "yä-leyu leyu guday däreseññoč kähiz yegäññalu," which contains different

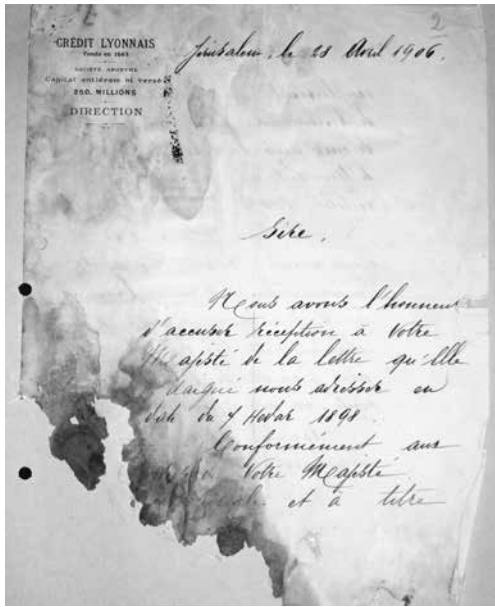


Figure 3. Example of marks of fire and conservation work. Here is a letter from the French Crédit Lyonnais bank to King Menilek II, dated 28 April 1906, crudely pasted on a thick page of paper. Ethiopian Archbishopric in Jerusalem, folder 6.



Figure 4. Proxy in Arabic given by the Ethiopian abbot Mähsäntä Sellassie in 1917 to a certain George Faris for bringing cereals from the municipality to needy people under the jurisdiction of Ethiopian authorities. Ethiopian Archbishopric in Jerusalem, folder “Yäleyu leyu . . .”.

types of unclassified documents. In addition to these folders, an Amharic manuscript book written between 1903 and 1906 is classified as “folder” 172, and a 1925 report is “folder” 216. Documents in these folders (about 150 documents total) include administrative and financial documents, such as payment receipts, checks, bank documents, financial reports, letters and correspondence concerning daily problems of the community, and so on. The vast majority of these are written in Arabic, English, French, and German. Amharic marginalia are often added to documents in order to give a clue to the topic of the document. Very few documents are fully written in Amharic. As a whole, these documents open a window onto the daily life of the community and their problems and opportunities concerning installation, supplies, access to public services, administration, and worship.

Ethiopians in Jerusalem employed different interlocutors, according to needs and opportunities. Each interlocutor offered the use of a specific language: for example, English with the British municipality, French with the Russian community, and various languages (Arabic, Greek, German, and French) with local merchants. Receipts and payment document are witness to Ethiopian involvement in local networks. A document written in French by Pascal Seraphin in 1913, concerning a house in Jericho, indicates that Ethiopians used middlemen from Jerusalem to search

for houses to rent. Ethiopians’ use of dragomen is clearly stated in another document, written in Arabic (figure 4). This is a proxy given by the Ethiopian abbot in 1917 to a certain George Faris for bringing cereals from the municipality to needy people under the jurisdiction of Ethiopian authorities. Another document, in French, is a payment made by the Ethiopian community to the Russian community in 1914 for use of a water pump (*pompe à eau*) (figure 5), showing links between Ethiopians and other Christian

communities. We also find receipts and records of payment to the municipality of Jerusalem, including a receipt, in English and dated to 1934, for cleaning the cesspit of an Ethiopian building (figure 6).

Other documents present the Ethiopian community as the owner of houses rented to institutions or individuals, bringing to light the Ethiopian community's role as a landlord in Jerusalem. On 14 March 1938, for example, the Emeth W'emouna congregation, which rented a flat on Abyssinia Road, sent a letter to the Ethiopian abbot complaining about the conditions of the building. Such documents are crucial to understand how the community built and managed its properties in the Holy Land. Managing places of worship in Jerusalem required great flexibility, in using specific languages with specific interlocutors, in establishing relations with different middlemen involved in local social network, in using specific networks of merchants for supplies, and ultimately in establishing the community itself on the Jerusalem scene.

Concerning Dayr al-Sultan monastery, the archives of Ethiopian bishopric of Jerusalem contain a 122-page manuscript on paper, written between 1903 and 1906 by an Ethiopian monk called Wäldä Mädhēn, inventoried as "folder" 172 (see figure 7). Makonnen Zāwde gave a brief description of this book in the early 1970s, but Kirsten Pedersen did not have access to it.⁹ It likely represents the earliest Ethiopian discourse concerning the problem of Dayr al-Sultan's ownership. Wäldä Mädhēn probably aimed to report on what was known at that time, from the Ethiopian side, concerning Dayr al-Sultan monastery. In his manuscript,



Figure 5. Receipt for a payment made by the Ethiopian community to the Russian community in 1914 for use of a water pump (*pompe à eau*). Ethiopian Archbishoric in Jerusalem, folder “Yäleyu leyu . . .”.



Figure 6. Receipt for a payment to the Jerusalem municipality in 1934 for cleaning the cesspit of an Ethiopian building. Ethiopian Archbishoric in Jerusalem, folder “Yäleyu leyu . . .”.

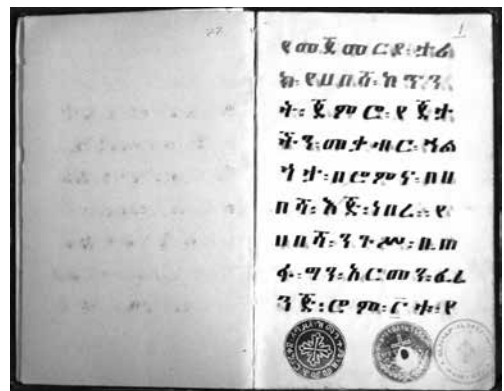


Figure 7. The first page of the 122-page manuscript, on paper, written between 1903 and 1906 by the Ethiopian monk Wäldä Mädhēn. Ethiopian Archbishoric in Jerusalem, folder 172.

Wäldä Mädhen describes a number of events concerning Dayr al-Sultan, including the destruction of Ethiopian belongings by Armenians and Egyptian authorities in 1838; and clashes between Copts and Ethiopian monks in 1863. Some events reported in that book are known thanks to the writings of British consul James Finn, who described his active participation in resolving such problems. Notably, however, this book does not mention the British consul, instead describing the role of Ottoman authorities.

Digging in the Imperial Ottoman Archives in Istanbul

The Ottoman Imperial Archives (Başbakanlı Osmanlı Arşivi or BOA) in Istanbul is one of the crucial sites for reconstructing Jerusalem's history in the late Ottoman period because of the city's direct dependence on the Sublime Porte, the richness of sources collected at the BOA, and its highly efficient archival management. These archives also contain many documents dealing with Ethiopia because of nineteenth-century Ottoman claims over several territories in the Horn of Africa and its confrontation with Christian Ethiopian kingdom. Open Jerusalem has engaged in a colossal collection of documents in the BOA. Under the supervision of Yasmin Avcı of Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Denizli, more than ten thousand files (“gömlek”) concerning Jerusalem and its administration for the period 1840–1917 have been collected.¹⁰ Among the files dealing with the Ottoman administration of Jerusalem (petitions, administration of justice, public works, and so on) one can find also many documents concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox community. More than 185 files (representing more than 600 documents) concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem have been found and inventoried to date.

Documents concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox community are preserved in archives of different sectors of Ottoman administration. They include letters, reports, or decrees produced by Ottoman officers as well as letters produced by Ethiopian authorities. Documents located during this initial survey are preserved primarily in fonds produced by Yıldız palace (code YA.HUS. or Y.EE.) and by Ottoman foreign office (code HR.SYS.; HR.TO.; or HR.HM.İŞO.), but also by the office of *irade*/decrees (code I.HUS.) and the office of correspondence of the grand vizier (code BEO.). A number are also found in archives produced by the ministry of domestic affairs (code DH.ID.), the office of judicial affairs (code A.DVN.), and the Ottoman *conseil d'état* (code ŞD.).

At the highest level, personal correspondence between Ethiopian kings and Ottoman sultans can be found in the archives from Yıldız palace. For example, Ethiopian emperor Yohannes IV (1872–1889) sent a letter to Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1882 to complain about a Coptic archbishop named Baselyos (figure 8).¹¹ Letters from Menilek II are more numerous: a number of these are simply courtesy letters, while others mainly concern registration of Ethiopian dignitaries and Ethiopian ownership of property in Jerusalem. For example, in 1897 (*säne* 1889 EC),¹² the Ethiopian monarch sent two letters to the sultan: the first recounts some steps relating to the conflict over Dayr al-Sultan monastery and the primary Ethiopian claims in this matter; the second thanks the sultan for his help and his personal involvement in resolving these problems.¹³ All letters from Ethiopia

are preserved in a file in which notes and comments by Ottoman officers can also be found. These documents are crucial for our understanding of the Ottoman point of view concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox community in Jerusalem.

Documents produced by different Ottoman administrative offices and preserved in the archives of the Ottoman administration itself (that is, outside Yıldız palace) are particularly interesting. These documents open a window onto our understanding of the Ethiopian Orthodox community's relations with the Ottoman administration and its legal status in Jerusalem according to Ottoman officers' points of view. For example, a document from the Ottoman foreign office states that, in 1894, Ottoman authorities were especially concerned to see numerous Ethiopians in Jerusalem bearing an Italian passport (figure 9).¹⁴ Often, different organs of the Ottoman administration were involved in the handling of a single event. For example, in 1904–1905, an Ethiopian delegation led by Däggazmač Mäššäša came to Jerusalem and Istanbul to present claims of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem and to negotiate a solution. Documents concerning this delegation can be found in archives of the ministry of domestic affairs (DH.MKT.907.10), the foreign office (HR.SYS.412.48), the office of *irade*/decrees (I.HUS.122.6), and in the correspondence of the grand vizierate (BEO.2552.191354). Thus, a large part of the administrative process of this delegation can be followed.



Figure 8. Letter of Yohannes IV to Sultan Abdul-Hameed II dated to 1874 E.C. (1882 AD) [BOA, code Y.A.HUS.170.97].



Figure 9. Ottoman foreign office document dated to 1894 stating that numerous Ethiopians in Jerusalem bearing an Italian passport [BOA, code HR.HMS.İŞO.179.19].

Revisiting the European Consulates Archives

Despite previous studies, much work remains to be done in European consular archives, particularly in the French and Italian archives. Focusing on the French consular protection of Orthodox Ethiopians in Jerusalem, Alain Rouaud analyzed documents produced by the French consulate of Jerusalem and preserved in these archives. Yet, Rouaud admits that he could not conduct a complete inventory or analysis of all documents concerning Orthodox Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, instead undertaking what he called “carrotages” (“corings”) in order to give some glimpses of this phenomenon.¹⁵ In fact, these archives are rich and include a sub-fond dated from 1840 to 1947. This sub-fond is divided into four series: series A, gathering documents concerning holy places (1840–1914); series B, gathering thematic files created by consulate members (1840–1941); series C, gathering documents dated from 1941 and 1948 (and therefore fall outside the scope of this study); and series E, gathering all the registers from 1843 to 1947.

Series A includes a large number of documents dealing with Orthodox Ethiopian community. The problem posed by potential French consular protection of the Ethiopian community is well documented in that series and most of the documents used by Rouaud come from it. But many have not been studied yet, especially those concerning the Italian protection of Ethiopians, the different Ethiopian missions send to Istanbul by Ethiopian authorities, or the problem of Dayr al-Sultan. At least two archival boxes (134 and 135) encompass these documents. Series B is more difficult to grasp, because it gathers a large number of files organized by consular members at different time on heterogeneous topic, including water supply in Jerusalem, taxes, Ottoman laws and regulation, and so on. However this series deserves systematic analysis, because it is meant to be the continuation of the series A (series A and B originally belonged to the same series). This rich series remains basically unstudied. It comprises 71 archival boxes for the period from 1843 to 1914 and 234 boxes for the period from 1914 to 1941. The full description of this series by a member of the Open Jerusalem project is in progress.

Series E gathers all the registers in which consular correspondence is preserved. Representing 130 registers, this series has not been analyzed except for a few exceptions. Rouaud has shown that the register of correspondence to the department of political affairs contains material especially interesting for our topic. Further, a sub-fond in series D, which gathers the correspondence between the French consulate of Istanbul and other consulates, includes 17 archival boxes of correspondence with Jerusalem represent a sub-series with 17 archival boxes. Records of the different Ethiopian diplomatic missions from Jerusalem to Istanbul should appear in these documents.

The Italian consular archives offer similar possibilities. The historical archives of the Italian Foreign Office (“Archivio storico degli affari esteri”), especially the series concerning the ministero dell’Africa Italiana, have already been visited by scholars interested by Ethiopian history, of course.¹⁶ But the archives concerning Jerusalem and the Orthodox Ethiopian community there deserve a new systematic analysis. The archives of the Italian consulate of Jerusalem have been, for the most part, unstudied. In 2015, archivist Antonella di Domenicà inventoried a series from the archives of

the Italian consulate of Jerusalem, comprising 16 boxes for the years 1863 to 1925.¹⁷ Another series, corresponding to 17 boxes covering a period from 1878 to 1951, is now under investigation on the initiative of the Open Jerusalem project. Both series need to be studied more deeply. Additionally, two boxes (42-1 and 42-4) from the sub-fond of the ministero dell’Africa Italiana concern the Ethiopian community of Jerusalem, the first covering the years 1885 to 1890 and the second for the years 1904 and 1905. Another series seems to have been neglected by scholars: the archives of the Italian embassy in Istanbul (code Turchia Busta 72) contain files concerning the Ethiopian community of Jerusalem for the years 1894–1901.

Another valuable perspective is offered by the personal archives of British consul James Finn. Finn is known in Ethiopian studies thanks to his correspondence concerning the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem, written in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁸ His official correspondence has been published, but nothing is known about the content of his personal diaries. The Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem has preserved many documents from James Finn’s personal archives, among them 39 notebooks containing notes written by the British consul between 1820 and 1872. Open Jerusalem organized an initial survey of these archives, under the supervision of two archivists from the National Archives of Paris (France), Emmanuelle Giry and Marie-Alpais Torcheboeuf. At first glance, these dairies permit to cross information found in his published correspondence about Ethiopians even if the Ethiopian topic seems not to have been one of the main ones. But some new little information can be collected, such as the arrest of the Ethiopian abbot in April 1863 by Ottoman authorities.¹⁹ Here again, a systematic analysis of this source will surely shed new light on the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem.

To Be Continued . . .

The collection and the analysis of archives of the Ethiopian archbishopric or those of the Ethiopian National Archives continue to bring results. But to establish an interconnected history of the Ethiopian Orthodox community of Jerusalem, the archives of the Ottoman administration and European consulates have appeared as keys opening the door to a fuller understanding of daily life for Ethiopians in Jerusalem between 1840 and 1940. Here again, preliminary investigations are yielding results.

Open Jerusalem’s investigations into other archives offer further perspective. First, the project has engaged in the collection and analysis of the Islamic court of Jerusalem, and this work is still in progress. Enrico Cerulli already highlighted the involvement of the Islamic court of Jerusalem in the conflict over Dayr al-Sultan, publishing copies of the court’s decisions of 1845, 1846, and 1848.²⁰ Meanwhile, Dr. Adnan Bakhit and Abla Muhtadi in Amman are supervising the study of *sijilat* registers of Jerusalem’s Islamic court dated from the period 1837 to 1917. Such sources are particularly interesting for our study because of the Islamic court’s role as an appeal court even for cases involving Jerusalem’s Christian communities. The team is also involved in the study of *waqf* archives of Jerusalem, preserved in Abu Dis and the University of Jordan in Amman.

Further, Open Jerusalem project members have access to an incredible source: the archives of Ottoman municipality of Jerusalem. Seventeen notebooks contain notes written by the secretary of the municipal council. Written in Arabic and Ottoman, these notes correspond to minutes of the council (recording the council's activities and decisions) from 1892 to 1917.²¹ Under the supervision of Vincent Lemire, Yasmin Avcı, Falestin Naïli, and Abdul-Hameed al-Kayyali, the analysis of these notebooks is underway. We hope to find within these archives some decisions concerning the establishment and development of the so-called Ethiopian compound.

The Open Jerusalem team has also launched investigations of the archives belonging to different Christian communities of Jerusalem, especially those of the Latin, Armenian, Russian and Greek patriarchates, in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Rome, Athens, Moscow, Yerevan). This work is, again, in progress. However, we know that a strong link united the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem and the Armenian patriarchate, Ottoman authorities considering the latter the official protector of the former. Among the consular archives being examined by the project (in the archives of France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Spain, and the United States), those of the Russian consulate deserve specific attention because of the nineteenth-century attempt to establish a spiritual link between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian community of Jerusalem. Last but not least, Open Jerusalem is also engaged in the collection and analysis of documents from the British Mandate in the National Archives in London. Open Jerusalem is indeed an endless work, but through it we will be able, hopefully, to write a truly interconnected history of Jerusalem, in which communities such as the Ethiopian Orthodox of Jerusalem are given their proper due as a vital part of the rich tapestry of the city.

Stéphane Ancel is an historian specializing in Ethiopia and religious movements in the Horn of Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an associate with the Centre d'études en sciences sociales du religieux in Paris, and a member of the Open Jerusalem project.

Vincent Lemire is Associate Professor of History at the University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée in France and director of the ERC-funded Open Jerusalem project. His latest book is Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities (University of Chicago Press, 2017); he has also published La soif de Jérusalem. Essai d'hydrohistoire (1840–1948) (Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010).

Endnotes

1 Alexander Devine, *Abyssinia: Her History and Claims to the Holy Places in Jerusalem – The Correspondence Respecting the Abyssinians in Jerusalem (1850–1868) Presented to the House of Lords by the Command of Her Majesty* (London: Burlington, 1926 [1868]); Enno Littmann, “Aus den abessinischen Klöstern

in Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 16 (1902): 102–124, 363–388; Enrico Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina*, vol. 1 (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1943), and vol. 2 (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1947); Abba Philippos, *The Rights of the Abyssinian Orthodox Church in the Holy Places: Documentary Manuscripts* (Jerusalem: Abba Philippos, 1962);

- Abba Philippos, *Know Jerusalem* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Salem Haile Selassie I Printing Press, 1972). We should note that the Ethiopian government, probably under the supervision of Philippos, published Alexander Devine's documents and their translation into Amharic in 1961, through a publication called *Zena Ityopya*, under the title "The Correspondence Respecting Abyssinians at Jerusalem."
- 2 Hugo Duensing, "Die Abessinier in Jerusalem," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästinavereins* 39 (1916): 98–115. Otto Meinardus, "The Ethiopians in Jerusalem," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 76 (1965): 112–147, 217–232.
 - 3 Kirsten Pedersen, *The History of the Ethiopian Community in the Holy Land from the Time of Emperor Tewodros II till 1974* (Jerusalem: Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research, 1983).
 - 4 Heinrich Scholler, "The Ethiopian Community in Jerusalem from 1850 to the Conference of Dar-el-Sultan 1902: The Political Struggle for Independence," in *Ethiopian Studies: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference, Tel-Aviv, 14–17 April 1980*, ed. Gideon Goldenberg and Baruch Podolsky (Rotterdam: Balkema, 1986), 487–500; Getatchew Haile, "Empress Tayitu and the Ethiopian Property in Jerusalem," *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 35 (1989): 67–81; Haggai Erlich, "Ethiopia and Egypt, Ras Tafari in Cairo, 1924," *Aethiopica* 1 (1998): 64–84; Alain Rouaud, "La protection française des Abyssins de Jérusalem (1843–1898), Aperçu," *Transversalités: Revue de l'Institut catholique de Paris* 85 (2003): 63–74.
 - 5 Makonnen Zäwde, *Ityopya enna Eyärusalem* (Addis Ababa: n.p., 1991 EC [1998–1999]). See also, Atinsky, B. *The legal dispute over the Deir al-Sultan Monastery : international relations and domestic politics between Israel and the Ethiopian and Coptic churches*. M.A. Ben Gurion University of the Negev (2005); Steven Kaplan, "The Transnationalism of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) in the Holy Land," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3, no. 1 (Summer 2013).
 - 6 For more on Open Jerusalem – whose full name is Opening Jerusalem Archives: For a Connected History of "Citadinité" in the Holy City (1840–1940) – see the project's website at openjlem.hypotheses.org. For an example of the kind of work that Open Jerusalem fosters, see: Yasemin Avci, Vincent Lemire, and Falestin Naïli, "Publishing Jerusalem's Ottoman Municipal Archives (1892–1917): A Turning Point for the City's Historiography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 60 (Autumn 2014): 110–19.
 - 7 Pedersen, *History of the Ethiopian Community*, 41 fn90.
 - 8 The manuscript collection was inventoried in brief by Ephraim Isaac in the 1980s. Ephraim Isaac, "Shelf List of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the Ethiopian Patriarchate of Jerusalem," *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 30 (1984–1986): 53–80. On the "History of Der Sultan" (Ms. JE692E), see Kirsten Pedersen, "The Historiography of the Ethiopian Monastery in Jerusalem", in *Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Goldenberg and Podolsky, 419–426; Haile, "Empress Tayitu."
 - 9 Pedersen, *History of the Ethiopian Community*, 13 fn35. See also: Pedersen, "Historiography of the Ethiopian Monastery."
 - 10 This work, still in progress, has been made possible by the full support and daily help of the administration and staff of the BOA, especially Önder Bayır, director of the Ottoman Archives, and Mustafa Budak, vice-general director of Turkish State Archives.
 - 11 BOA, code Y.A.HUS.170.97
 - 12 The Ethiopian calendar, the liturgical year for the Ethiopian Orthodox church, begins in September in the Gregorian calendar. The additional gap of seven to eight years between the Ethiopian and Gregorian calendars is the product of differing calculations to determine the date of the Annunciation.
 - 13 BOA, code Y.EE.62.36.
 - 14 BOA, code HR.HMS.İŞO.179.19.
 - 15 Rouaud, "La protection française," 66.
 - 16 See, for example, Scholler, "Ethiopian Community."
 - 17 Antonella di Dominicà, "Il fondo del Consolato generale di Gerusalemme nell'Archivio storico degli affari esteri, strutture originarie e versamenti" (MA thesis, Università di Roma, 2015).
 - 18 Devine, *Abyssinia*. Also published in Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina*, and Philippos, *Rights of the Abyssinian Orthodox Church*.
 - 19 A2-28, entry of 21 April 1863.
 - 20 Cerulli, *Etiopi in Palestina*, vol. 2, 211–231.
 - 21 Avci, Lemire, and Naili, "Publishing Jerusalem's Ottoman Municipal Archives."