Why the Haud was ceded
Monsieur Léo Silberman
The significance of Adowa

1897 is the crucial year of the Horn of Africa. In that year the Rodd mission was sent to Ethiopia, ceded the Haud, and fixed the frontier between Ethiopia and British Somaliland all of which today
is causing trouble. Two world wars, Mussolini and invasion, Ethiopia's loss of independence, and an interim period of fourteen years during which the contested areas were part of the British administration, have not been able to dispose of the 1897 Treaty. When the Haud was handed back to Ethiopia in the arrangements of 1954, it did so in its own words to "implement the Treaty of 1897."1

The Treaty of 1897 requires therefore a detailed examination of the day by day negotiation as well as of the wider picture of African policy, "which in the 1890's dominated all European diplomacy."2 The Rodd mission is part of British advance into the Nile Valley, and the cession of vital Somali territory part of the decline of European influence in the Horn. The decline started a year after the British Protectorate and the French and Italian spheres had been sketched out, in 1896. In 1897 not only England but France and Italy yielded ground in the Horn, the first two because of their preoccupation with the Nile, the drama that culminated at Fashoda; the latter because of Adowa. 1897 followed 1896, the disastrous defeat of Italy at the hands of Emperor Menelik II, which led to the Italian surrender of Eritrean and Somali territory previously held and of Kassala in the Sudan, and a loss of European prestige. Gordon's army annihilated at Khartoum was mainly Egyptian and Sudanese: the Italians at Adowa were almost 25,000 in number.

Italy's defeat at Adowa was immediately realised in London and Paris for what it was. British and French in the Nile Valley had come face to face. On March 1, 1896 Italy was defeated; on March 5, the news reached London in sufficient detail to gauge the results; on March 12, the British Government telegraphed Lord Cromer that it had decided to send a force to Dongola in the Sudan. Cromer comments in Modern Egypt upon the suddenness of the decision which "in the twinkling of an eye"3 reversed the policy of the last decade with regard to the Sudan. He had been told on November 15, 1895 that the reconquest was indefinitely postponed.4 Now Mahdist forces were to be prevented from taking Kassala from the retiring Italians and thereafter the Sudan was to be reconquered. Four months previously "there was not any prospect of the Government consenting to the despatch of a military expedition into the Sudan."5 Kitchener's forward movement into the Sudan began on March 20, a week after the telegram to Cairo. The British Ambassador in Rome thought

1 Great Britain Treaty Series 1955, No. 1, Cmd. 9348.
3 II, 81.
4 In the past, even Gordon did "not advocate the keeping of the Sudan by us; it is a useless possession and we could not govern it, neither could Egypt." Journal at Khartoum, p. 125.
5 II, 110.
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there was a possibility of complete withdrawal by Italy. While the Italian high command favoured continuing with Eritrea, the public dismayed at its yearly costs of £280,000 and outraged by Adowa was for evacuation. The Duke of Sermenata, a member of the cabinet, shared this opinion. Already half the officers and white troops had left Africa.

France was bound to raise the Egyptian question and demand a British evacuation, now bereft of Italian support both in Egypt and in the South, or at least to press for a share in the running of that part of the world over which, as the French Foreign Minister Hanotaux had said, Britain had applied an unwarranted Monroe Doctrine, ever since 1882. The French desire to link West and East Africa was revived simultaneously. It was to cut off the Lower from the Upper Nile and isolate the British in Egypt from Rhodes and his friends in the Cape and further North. Lebon, the Minister of Colonies, later wrote in his book *La Politique de la France en Afrique* (1901):

"The idea of covering Africa from West to East while Mr. Cecil Rhodes flaunted his ambition to cross it from South to North, had prevailed in France for several years. People were unwilling that England, de facto mistress of Egypt and mistress of the Cape, both de jure and de facto, should seize the whole of the Nile Valley."

The French had won the first round. In 1894, on paper at least, a continuous band of British territory ran from Cape to Cairo. The Portuguese had been prevented from claiming Nyasaland. The Anglo-Italian Agreement had assigned the Sudan to the British sphere of interest, while affirming the Italian protectorate over Ethiopia. Seven days later, the King of the Belgians, Leopold II granted Britain a perpetual lease of land between the Lakes Albert, Edward and Tanganyika in exchange for a similar lease to him in the Southern Sudan. A month later a Protectorate was proclaimed over Uganda. But then the French had protested through Hanotaux with such effect that Rosebery and Leopold gave way the latter signed an agreement with France renouncing all political influence on the Upper Nile. Deloncle announced, with that habit politicians have of using the word "forever," in the Chamber on February 28, 1895: "Today the English dream of possessing the whole Upper Nile has been, I believe, forever upset."

When Grey replied in the Commons that a French advance to the Upper Nile would be "an unfriendly act," the French similarly

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* Sir Clare Ford, British Ambassador in Rome, to Salisbury, January 15, 1897. India Office Records. No. 34: Red Sea and Somali Coast Correspondence.
* P. 5.
* Darcy, *Cent Années de Rivalités Coloniales*, p. 386.
* March 28, 1895.
retreated from their East-West idea. Captain Clochette who had been sent to Addis "on a voyage of reconnaissance" was left stranded for eighteen months without instructions. The two-year railway concession granted to MM Chefneux and Ilg to be constructed from French Jibuti to the Nile was not taken up. Money voted for the expansion of French Ubanghi to the Nile was used elsewhere.

This period of tranquillity, "cette période néfaste" as Darcy called it, was now over. It was replaced by one of "excessive haste" as it seemed to Cromer's imperturbable spirit. Haste had brought disaster to Italy. Crispi, the prime minister, had spurred on his general at Adowa with the taunt: "This is military phthisis not a war." A little more patience, even another week's delay, would have forced the Ethiopian soldiers, semi-starved and wanting to get to their homes before the rains made the roads impassable, to retreat and changed the course of history.

Italy's response to the Crispi war was half-hearted, while the emotional response to the British Government's decision to occupy the Sudan was unmistakable:

"The diplomatist said: 'It is to forestall the French.' The politician said: 'It is to score over the Radicals.' The ridiculous person said: 'It is to restore the Khedive's rule in the Sudan.' But the man on the street said: 'It is to avenge General Gordon.' "

Actually, the British and French Governments proceeded more carefully than had at first appeared. Between Adowa and Fashoda lie two and a half years and a series of agreements of which the Rodd Treaty negotiated in April-June 1897 was only one. Its purpose was to cover the flank of Kitchener's advance into the Sudan. The French had preceded Britain with a series of treaties both in West and Eastern Africa.

Monteil and other French plenipotentiaries settled French-German differences over the Dahomey-Togoland frontier, leaving himself or Marchand room to proceed towards the Nile, and Lagarde, the Governor of Jibuti and Obok, negotiated a treaty with Ras Makonnen at Harar and Emperor Menelik at Addis Ababa, which amounted to a "veritable alliance" as Hanotaux heralded it in the Chamber and elsewhere:

"He assured me that French influence in Abyssinia was supreme and that Colonel Marchand would assuredly link up with the Abyssinians and so streng-

10 The German Kaiser commented with "Hurrah" on the margin of the telegram from his ambassador in Paris.
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then the position of France on the Upper Nile as to enable her to throttle Egypt should England continue to ignore French remonstrations."\(^{12}\)

The French Government remembered now the Clochette mission. Lagarde was instructed "to establish on the right bank of the Nile an Ethiopian fortress which part of the Clochette expedition might garrison, while you will construct a French fortress on the left bank, ensuring communication between the two by boats, big or small whichever you can obtain, and upon which you will fly our flag."\(^{13}\) The aim was "to place the British before a fait accompli by linking Ethiopia to our possessions on the Upper Nile by a treaty and by effective occupation."\(^{14}\)

England feared that Lagarde might arm the Khalifa's troops and delay Kitchener in the Sudan. The quality of the Egyptian troops to be used against the Khalifa was uncertain. British preparations were incomplete—the campaign was originally planned to take place after 1900. Ethiopia might also invade the Sudan. She had captured much war material at Adowa, or Menelik might sell arms to the Khalifa. Ever since he was vying with John and the Tigrean chiefs for supreme power in Ethiopia Menelik had been in touch with the Mahdists. Ras Mangasha, John's natural son, had been prevented from avenging his father's death at their hands when Mangasha had submitted to Menelik. In the last nine and a half years the Mahdists refrained from attacks in Ethiopia; the Sudan and Ethiopia seemed to be on good terms. Several Mahdist missions, some of them disguised as prisoners in uniform, had been sighted in Addis and Harar.

At Sabderat a large percentage of Mahdist troops were Ethiopians. Religious fanaticism was much subdued under the Khalifa. Early in 1897 Cromer reported an Ethiopian embassy of four in Omdurman. "On their return they were accompanied by a Derwish Envoy with presents consisting of a coat and 5 cannon."\(^{15}\) Such was the religious tolerance of those days that the Mahdist mission was lodged at the house of Archbishop Mathios. Mathios spoke Arabic. Another mission headed by Mohamed Osman wald Haji Khaled, an important merchant, discussed trade matters and recognised Ethiopian supremacy in Galabat Province. The Ethiopians had befriended Emir Abduraman who broke away from the Khalifa with a considerable following. He ruled between River Rahad and the Blue Nile. He asked for guns and Menelik said that he would send cannon if the Emir came to him.

\(^{12}\) Wickham Steed, *Through 30 Years*, I, 106. Steed was then the *Times* correspondent in Rome, later Editor of the *Times*. See also Hanotaux's book *Fashoda*.


\(^{15}\) Cromer to Salisbury, March 12, 1897, No. 41.
It was high time Rennell Rodd, the First Secretary of the British Agency in Cairo thought, to establish contact with Menelik of Shoa. Nor was he alone in this view. The Foreign Office was glad to avail itself of Rodd’s readiness to lead a mission to Menelik. Preoccupied with the Red Sea coasts, the British had had friendly relations with Tigre but never, unlike the French, with Shoa, which was far inland, isolated until Tigre defeated the Eastern Galla:

"We had up till now never entered into political relations with Menelik—and indeed could not do so as long as he was considered to be under the protectorate of, or at war with, our friends the Italians,—and as the idea is firmly rooted in Abyssinia that it was we who supplied the Italians with money to carry on their campaign, our prestige in the country had somewhat diminished and may be said to have reached its lowest point by the beginning of 1897. Hence our Mission."16

Further information was given to the House of Commons in a reply made by Curzon, then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which explained that:

"The mission is sent to assure King Menelik of our friendly intentions, to endeavour to promote amicable political and commercial relations, and to settle certain questions which have arisen between the British Authorities on the Somali Coast and the Abyssinian Governor of Harar."

The reference to the difficulties on the Somali coast was a reference to the Ethiopian army under Ras Makonnen at Harar which had been sweeping into the Haud, over the Protectorate frontier and lately were penetrating further. The frontier had been fixed without reference to Ethiopia between Italy and Britain in 1894 in circumstances which Menelik’s prior denunciation of the Italian Protectorate and subsequent victory at Adowa had made out-of-date. The denunciation could be ignored, the defeat of Italy could not. Ethiopia had never recognised the frontier—indeed had never been informed of what had been agreed in London and Rome. Hence Makonnen had quite justifiably felt that the establishment of a British blockhouse in Hargeisa was an incursion into his sphere and had protested accordingly to Aden on August 11, 1895.

In December 1896 Ras Makonnen back from Adowa with new equipment wrote to the Political Resident in Aden that he intended to hold the Gadabursi country including Alola. The Resident

16 Count Gleichen, With the Mission to Menelik, 1898, p. 4.
expected that the Ras would “follow up his letter by some overt act of sovereignty. This I have no means at my disposal to make a practical protest against. The question has assumed an acute phase.” The India Office could offer no help: “It seems probable that foraging expeditions will be sent out at an early date from Harar and the Gadabursi country visited by Ras Makonnen’s troops . . . The circumstances are more than usually unfavourable to the despatch of troops from Bombay.”

Makonnen’s actions showed how urgent was the despatch of a mission to Addis Ababa.

On January 11, 1897, Makonnen wrote that he would occupy Arrabi by military force. He denied the British Somali administration the right to punish a murder committed at Damaan, which he claimed to be well in Ethiopia. Aden wanted to make an example and had refused to accept blood money from the ḫisa elders.

When in addition to all this, Cromer reported that Lagarde was on his way to sign a treaty in Addis, Aden was told to refrain from further communications with Makonnen as the whole question of the frontier would be reviewed by the Rodd mission in their talks with Emperor Menelik. The Somali question could be included in the instructions now being prepared for Rodd with the help of the Government of India.

On February 24, 1897, Rodd was commissioned as H.M.’s Special Envoy to King Menelik. The instructions enumerate five purposes of the mission:

“(1) To assure King Menelik of the friendly feelings towards him of Her Majesty’s Government;
(2) to explain that the operations against the Khalifa are not to be considered hostile to Abyssinia. A civilised government will be more advantageous than the continuance of the present state of depredation. Broadly speaking H.M.G. has no objection to recognizing an Abyssinian frontier between the 10th and 15th latitude North;
(3) H.M.G. cannot pronounce on Italian claims in the S.W. and S. You should bear in mind the Protocol signed with Italy, May 5, 1894.
(4) One of the principal objects of your mission is to come to arrangements for a definite understanding as to the frontier between Abyssinia and the Protectorate and for friendly intercourse and relations between the British and Abyssinian authorities and the inhabitants on either side. You are authorised, if absolutely necessary, to make concessions in regard to these frontiers provided such concessions are not of a nature to interfere with the main objects for which the Protectorate was assumed. These are to secure adequate supplies for the support of Aden, and the administration of the Protectorate itself on a basis which shall, as far as possible, be at least self-supporting, and should afford some prospect of further development of the resources of the country.

17 India Office to Foreign Office, January 5, 1897. No. 8 : Red Sea and Somali Coast Correspondence.
18 Cromer to Salisbury, January 11, 1897, No. 18.
19 Cromei to Salisbury, January 17, 1897, No. 38.
(5) Offer every facility for trade to the coast including the importation of arms. The route to Gildessa should remain under British protection. If Zeila is asked for, this question should be referred to H.M.G.”

On the insistence of the India Office, Rodd’s instructions were made more explicit. The phrase was added:

“In the event of your finding it necessary to agree to the transfer of tribes under British protection you will be careful to obtain pledges that they will be treated with justice and consideration.”

Rodd with his Cairo background was naturally primarily concerned with the Sudan, but he had been in the Horn when the Sultan of Zanzibar was disposing of his ports on the Benadir (Somali) coast. The Sultan of Zanzibar had written to Rodd on May 14, 1893:

“As to the wishes of our friends the Italians regarding the Benadir ports, I hereby appoint you and give you full power in that matter to do what may seem good to you, as it is better to have this matter settled by your Honour. I have faith in you that you will do nothing but good for us. Written by the Sultan’s order, the slave Salem bin Mahomed.”

Rodd had successfully negotiated the transfer and he had thereafter been concerned with the Red Sea problem. He had handled the Alola problem with Makonnen. He had been to Brussels over the exchange of territory in the Sudan in 1894. His appointment was a foregone conclusion.

He now selected formidable but evidently agreeable company. There was first of all Lieutenant-Colonel Wingate, then head of Intelligence in Cairo, later to be Governor General of the Sudan and sirdar of the Egyptian army. He advised on the Sudanese frontier and was supposed to keep the official journal, though he left this frequently to Captain Count Gleichen, a guards officer, and of the Intelligence Division of the War Office, later a major-general. He was to build up an intelligence system in Ethiopia. Captain the Hon. C. Binghan, also a guardsman, later a lieutenant-general, was Rodd’s brother-in-law. He and Lord Edward Cecil were to “befriend the natives.” They were to learn about trade possibilities. In everyday transactions, the surgeon of the party, Pinching Bey, lent by the Egyptian Sanitary Department, “proved an excellent bargainer.” He had control over the champagne and kitchen arrangements. Old Captain T. C. S. Speedy had been with Napier in Tigre in 1867 and somehow picked up languages. There was no Englishman who spoke Amharic but Rodd had engaged a personage, an Ethiopian

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who described himself as a treasure hunter among the pyramids, "who proved invaluable." Captain H. G. C. Swayne, R.E., was to advise on Somali tribes and look after transport.

No Egyptian, one will see, formed part of the mission which was among other things to deal with the Sudan. The Khedive's views had not been sought; and he asked the French to make this quite clear to the Emperor. A letter had been sent by the Coptic Patriarch together with a new pair of gloves for the Abuna. The letter might have been useful but against all eventualities the mission was served by a Somali police escort, native servants, muleteers, twelve dhooly bearers, twenty coolies, eighty camel drivers. Aden supplied thirty riding mules, ten horses and five ponies. Gleichen and Speedy brought their own riding camels, which joined the hundred and eighty-nine baggage camels. Twelve of these were needed to carry the presents for the Emperor, Rases and clergy. The mission did not want to be outdone by Lagarde, already ahead in time. The gifts for Menelik included:

(1) A portrait of the Queen—"a full face portrait,"—profiles being thought in Abyssinia to have an untoward significance;
(2) silver gilt plate;
(3) a microscope;
(4) a telescope rifle of high finish;
(5) some silk prayer carpets;
(6) braziers for charcoal such as are used in Turkish houses;
(7) some brocade;
(8) skins of animals unknown in Ethiopia;
(9) a double barrel, gold inlaid rifle.

Such was the quality of Victorian silver work that when one camel with a box of it fell into a ravine, the plate was quite unharmed.

"Our little army" set out from Cairo on March 10 and landed in Zeila on March 19. Next day they proceeded to Harar and arrived there on April 7. Makonnen gave them a dubious welcome and let the party hang about so that animals went astray and Rodd lost his temper. The Ras lent him ninety-three soldiers to look after the additional pack mules, but they were more mulish than the animals. They refused to obey orders from Rodd and to load the animals with more than they had been assigned with at the outset of the journey. The leather thongs were not only expensive but chafed the animals.

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11 Social and Diplomatic Memoirs, II, 125. Rodd's African interest was formed at the Berlin Congress. In 1894 it was he who rescinded the Anglo-Congo Convention. In 1897 he was second in command to Cromer and his wife was acting hostess to Cromer who had lost his wife. When later Rodd was in Rome he got entangled in the Somali frontier question and the Libyan War.

12 The Emperor told the mission he would have preferred a single-barrelled one as it was lighter.
due to the soldiers' negligence. "The want of method and organisation which exists in the Province of Harar was responsible for delays and troubles." Perhaps it was not want of method, but just the Ethiopian method of wearing down the English, whom they considered allies of the Italians. Anyway, in Shoa, outside Makonnen's jurisdiction, it was difficult to obtain supplies, "no preparations having been made for the mission." Easter was on April 25 and the country preoccupied with the festivities. Ten miles outside Addis, Herr Ilg, "councillor of the Kingdom," greeted them in a frock coat, apologetic that the Emperor was busy dedicating a new church. He wanted Rodd to wait three days. The mission was left in ignorance where they were to be housed. Rodd protested.

"But the incident was not to be regretted for in a country where European prestige has suffered a severe blow it enabled me to give practical demonstration from the moment of our arrival that we did not intend to accept less than was due to our position."

Gleichen offers a somewhat more harmless explanation. As there was only one modern house available at Shola, deep in the country, i.e. that of the defunct Compagnic Franco-Africaine (where also Lagarde and the Russian medical mission had been lodged), it had not occurred to the Emperor to provide his English visitors with special instructions. Rodd was of course correct in assuming a loss of European prestige, not so much for the actual defeat of the Italian army which was achieved by Menelik, as Rodd wrote in the same despatch.

"at great cost of life and by the vast superiority of numbers but by the deplorable behaviour of the Italian prisoners who turned on their officers, treating them with every form of contumely. The men lost all sense of dignity. In fact, Europeans with whom they have been of recent years familiar have not always inspired respect."

The soldiers' behaviour can be explained. Torrigiani's motion against an African expedition was voted with a large majority in the Italian Chamber on December 20, 1895. The people objected now to having the prisoners billeted on them and to feeding them better
than themselves. "Prisoners would have been treated very differently in John's time." Some of them did not want to return to Italy. Members of the mission heard small boys shout "Ali" at them. Before Adowa, the Italians had called all Ethiopians "Ali", now the Ethiopians teased the Europeans by casting the name in their faces.

However, when Rodd and the Emperor eventually met, both were impressed. Menelik showed, unlike many Oriental monarchs, an undisguised pleasure at the gifts. He marvelled at the tiger and polar bear skins, as well as at the silk Persian carpets. The Abyssinian history of Alexander the Great, printed by the generosity of Lady Meux "evidently interested the Emperor in no small degree. He asked many questions about the Abyssinian MSS in England. He would be grateful to be furnished with a list of them." The presents to the Empress were given in her apartments. She asked after Victoria whose "long reign seemed to have extended over all living memories." She gave a gold filigree necklace to Rodd to transmit to Queen Victoria, the copy of the one worn by Ethiopian queens, allegedly since the time of the Queen of Sheba. Swayne described the whole reception:

"... it would scarcely be exaggeration to say that nearly every native Abyssinian figure in the hall, if put on canvas by a capable hand, would have formed a picture to take the art-world by storm.

Through the open door could be seen the green, rolling, sunlit plains of Addis Ababa, and from the comparatively prosaic episodes (to an eye sated with Eastern durbars) of modern political intercourse, the attention perforce wandered to the scene round that grey wall, to the green plains, and the great red and white army waiting outside. The mind soon realised that this state of society into which we had thrust our modern personality was an ancient and original one, which after a few years of contact with commonplace civilisation must vanish for ever.

The King, his raised platform covered with silks and carpets, the silken canopy above him, the princes, râses, and generals on his left, his state prisoners Râs Mashasha (son of Theodore) and Râs Selassie seated on the ground at his feet, and the Europeans in broadcloth or uniform standing to one side, have already been described by Count Gleichen. The King is certainly a fine man, with no humbug or visible conceit about him. Commanding in figure, sensible and open in face, he has the dignity of a thoroughly simple man. It is said that he rises early and works till evening, giving justice to the Shoans and managing his empire. He has a courteous and really genial smile, and appears to be a gentleman naturally and easily, without dramatic effort. His kind treatment of the Italian prisoners, when he was in the midst of success, seems to bear out this character."

Negotiations began on May 3, 1897. Menelik wanted a recognition of Ethiopia's historic frontiers, which he had already stated. Ethiopia

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27 H. G. C. Swayne, Seventeen Trips through Somaliland and a visit to Abyssinia, 1900, p. 276.
was an ancient nation. She had a literature of her own. The illuminated manuscripts which had been printed so gorgeously in England were proof of that. She had fought valiantly and with success. She was also a Christian power. All had been set out in a Circular Letter to the Powers on April 10, 1891. It emerged that Italy had not communicated it to Britain but a copy had appeared in *La France Militaire* on March 12, 1896. “Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries,” it ran, “an island of Christians in the midst of a sea of pagans.” The point was important because in international law a clear distinction was made at the Berlin Congress and elsewhere between the Christian powers and the rest of the world. Rodd was taken aback by his vast territorial ambitions. Evidently flattered by the French and Russians “whose interests were not affected, Menelik was confident that as a Christian African Power his claims to a sphere of influence were better founded than those Powers whose seat of Government was on another continent.” Indeed, he thought to speak for Africa. “We shall not stand idly by,” the Emperor warned, “while Africa is being partitioned.” The Emperor claimed as his territory—now known as the Sudan—parts of the Atbara river, and Gedaref, the granary of the Sudan, the Sobat River—and all southwards as far as Lake Rudolf.

“In the East are included the Galla country, known as Borani, all the territory of the Arussi up to the Somali country, but including the Ogaden province.

“Towards the North the frontier includes the Habr Awal, the Gadabursi, and finally arrives at Ambos. Leaving Ambos the frontier takes in the Lake Assal, the province of our ancient vassal Mahamed Anfale (Anfari), hugs the coast and rejoins Arafale (the Italian post).”

His last paragraph disclosed wider notions:

“Indicating the present limits of my empire to you today, I shall strive, if God grants me life and strength, to re-establish the former frontiers of Ethiopia as far as Khartoum and down to Nyanza with all Galla country.”

What today is called the Greater Ethiopia policy was then known as “Menelikism,” “one of the most potent movements of Africa,” Consul Wylde wrote at the time, “which shall give us a lot of trouble in the future.” It had, as Rodd knew from the Somaliland despatches, already given trouble. In Addis, Wingate could take the measure of Ethiopian power at the time.

“Unfortunately Menelik's claims are not mere declarations on paper, but our researches and investigations have shown us that King Menelik has been

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28 Rodd to Salisbury, May 4, 1897, No. 15.
30 *Modern Abyssinia*, 1903, p. 89.
for years actively engaged in rendering his occupation effective with 80,000 men and 200,000 modern rifles, a formidable fact to reckon with.”

Italy, France and Russia had successively armed Ethiopia, each sending Menelik rifles and ammunition as gifts. His three most important commis-voyageurs in this business were Chefneux, operating from 31, Rue Caumartin in Paris; Ghinaud nearby, at 8, Avenue de l’Opéra, was conveniently close to the headquarters of the projected Franco-Ethiopian railway company at 5, Rue Scribe. The third arms merchant was an Armenian, a family still well known in Addis, Serkis Terzian, who also supplied arms to the Mahdists. If Aden’s information is to be believed—they watched the ports—these three between them had bought 80 Krupp guns, 300,000 rifles and 4,000,000 cartridges. Whatever the actual “matériel”, the various armies loyal to Menelik were in occupation of a large part of the areas claimed. The bald list of acquisitions of the last 20 years was itself eloquent testimony:

1875. Parts of Gurage acquired.
1882. First expedition against the Arussi.
1887. Harar taken. Ilubbabor annexed.
1891. Ogaden, Bale and Sidamo acquired.
1893. Kambata conquered.
1894. Gofa and Walamo incorporated.
1896. First expedition to Borana. Victory at Adowa, incorporation of some of Eritrea.

Rodd enumerated the governors and areas actually under their sway:

Bako, Limmu, Mali to Lake Rudolf—held by Ras Walda Giorghis;
Walegga on the Sobat and Baro, by General Guti;
Buri and Gabba governed by Dajazmatch Tasamma;
Leka Province with its gold exports (investigated by the Swiss) by Dajazmatch Komsa;
Wolamo State by Galla Ras Tana Gobo;
Jimma was under a local king deprived of firearms.

In the South the Ethiopians were within three hundred miles of the British post of Unyoro in the Uganda Protectorate, i.e. far into the

31 Rodd to Salisbury, May 4, 1897, No. 16.
British sphere of influence as defined in 1890. Ras Walda Gabriel had several times raided the Boran, Arussi and the Ogaden. He had reached Lugh on the Juba, 258 miles from Kismayu on July 30, 1895. He lived in the higher land of the Karanie from where he raided the Bari people. The Danakil to the North of the French sphere were spoken of as "ancient vassals" and had been sacrificed by Lagarde. Shilluk and Dinka in the Southern Sudan were mentioned by the Emperor as tribes subject to him. Several neighbouring peoples paid tribute. In the North, within the territory at one time part of the Egyptian Sudan and of immediate interest to the British purpose, Ethiopia and the Clochette mission were operating. Ethiopia was receiving tribute in gold dust (with which she bought more arms) from the Beni Shangul. It was merely a matter of time before they would be incorporated in the Empire. Their importance had been stressed in the notes briefing Rodd:

"The strategic importance of the Beni Shangul district in reference to the S.E. Sudan can hardly be overrated; within easy reach of the navigable portions of the Blue and White Nile the possession of these valuable mountain regions by a Power hostile to the occupiers of the Nile Valley would be a most serious danger to the latter and would render the maintenance of authority there a matter of no small difficulty. If therefore Menelik is anxious to develop the commercial resources of his kingdom, it is by no means unlikely that he would seek to obtain a footing on the Blue and White Niles where he could tap considerable portions of the Sudan trade and also obtain an outlet for that of Abyssinia for which the Sudan offers a good market."

One could now add to this that Menelik had got as far as the 10°, on the Sobat, eighty miles above its confluence with the White Nile and that the

"Beni Shangul serve as the connecting link for commercial purposes between the Abyssinians and the Derwishes—a considerable trade in alluvial gold and ivory passing to both Shoa and Omdurman. Menelik is in a position to occupy these districts, e.g. if the Khalifa forces are preoccupied with us."

Confronted with these facts, Rodd eventually preferred to leave the fixing of the Sudan frontier for another occasion, when Kitchener's army had reached Khartoum. If Menelik's most eloquent argument was occupation and a vast superiority in arms, it was better to wait for Britain to answer in kind until after the fall of Omdurman and when "a fleet of powerful steamers would have that moral (sic) force

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32 They were annexed in 1898.
33 Red Sea and Somali Coast Notes on Abyssinia, No. 50, Encl. 2. January 17, 1897.
34 Rodd to Salisbury, May 4, 1897, No. 16.
behind us in stating our claims and those of Egypt which is wholly wanting now):

"The utmost concessions I have been authorized to entertain even in the eventuality of King Menelik contemplating common action with us against the Mahdists fall far short of the country he actually claims as a portion of his Empire, without reference to the larger area to which he has asserted a theoretical claim. No arguments have had any effect in dispelling the ideas which have been carefully fostered by his French advisers, that he may enlarge his borders without any fear of encountering active opposition from our part, and with the assurance of full countenance and moral support from our political rivals."35

Wingate argued that if territorial concessions were now made, this would merely serve the French intentions. A show-down with the French would best look after them and also chill Ethiopian ardour to expand recklessly into the Sudan. All that the Rodd mission could accomplish in the North was (a) an agreement from Menelik not to cede to any third country land belonging to Ethiopia between the fourteenth parallel North, the White Nile and the second parallel; and (b) a "moral" clause in the treaty assuring Britain of Ethiopia's benevolent neutrality. The Emperor refused to sign an article that prohibited the sale of arms to the Mahdists. The British had to believe him that he hated the Mahdists, and as a Christian monarch would respect the Brussels convention. All he conceded was to declare the Mahdists "enemies of Ethiopia".36 The mission had to concede defeat on the Sudan question, up against superior odds as it was.

THE RIVALS FOR ETHIOPIAN FRIENDSHIP

More dangerous than Mahdist missions were Russian overtures. The Russian Church, a political power all of its own, had tried to win the Ethiopian clergy by inviting the Abuna to preach at St. Petersburg; had sent high ecclesiastics to Harar where they were received by all the priests in their best regalia; had equipped a Red Cross Mission of twenty-seven men and encouraged individuals such as the handsome "Count" Leontieff (now nominated Governor General of the Equatorial Province) to go to Ethiopia. The Czar had sent 50,000 rifles, 5,000,000 rounds of ammunition, 40 cannons, and instruments to equip a band. Leontieff was to train the musicians. But as he could find no one with an ear for music, he joined a French expedition instead. The "graphophone" (a kind of gramophone) offended Menelik who said that he was no child who wanted musical

35 Rodd to Salisbury, May 14, 1897, No. 21.
boxes. A Russian mission under Bulatovitch annoyed Lagarde by
demanding for a caravan of 80 men transport free of charge because
the two countries were allies. Bulatovitch wanted to reach Lake
Rudolf with the Governor of Kaffa.

Ethiopia was warned that Rodd would use "threats, flattery and
gold."37 Gerazmatch Joseph, the king’s secretary (or Minister of the
Pen as he would be called today) had been for many months carrying
on with the Russian Government38 and on his return also stayed at
Constantinople where the Sultan showed him every kindness. The
German Ambassador at Constantinople suggested that Russia might
act as peace maker between Ethiopia and Italy. The Emperor
demonstrated his friendliness to Russia by liberating fifty Italian
prisoners to celebrate the coronation of the Czar. They were brought
to Jibuti by Colonel Leontieff. The Russian press regularly and
sympathetically reported on Ethiopia. Though the monophysite
doctrine could not be reconciled with Orthodox teaching, the Shoan
interpretation given to the doctrine was more in sympathy with
Orthodoxy than the stricter Coptic church of Tigre. The chief value
of the Russians was that they frightened the British. Every move-
ment of Russian ships was carefully reported on by the British consuls.
The Russian flag had been hoisted (and struck) at Sagalla near Zeila.
A letter from the Mahdists reached the Russian Embassy at Constan-
tinople39.

While there was some or doubt the official backing of most of the
Russian exploits, often ludicrously amateurish,40 there was no doubt
about French governmental hopes in Ethiopia and of the ability of
the chief French agents. Of the various French expeditions, that led
initially by Clochette was the most serious. Captain Clochette was
the only European officer who was on the Ethiopian side at Adowa.
As a former teacher at St. Cyr he described the battle. He died in
1897 and was succeeded by Bonvalot.

By the standards of the times the French community was large
(Lagarde thought that it was too large and heterogeneous to escape
suspicion) and in important posts with important titles. One expedi-
tion was led by Prince Henri d’Orléans accompanied by the Vicomte
Edmond de Poncins and a naval engineer, Morichon. They were not

37 Novoe Vreneya, March 3, 1897.
38 Sir N. O’Connor, British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, to Salisbury, March 10, 1897, No. 62.
39 Cromer to Salisbury, January 16, 1897, No. 49.
40 Leontieff before his sudden disappearance was described by Ilg, one of his
many creditors: "He has the ambition of soaking all people of means, stupid
and intelligent, high and low born, white and black. What should one admire
more—human gullibility or the luxuriant flowering of a Northern plant under
the tropical sun? A certain philosophy states that geese have feathers to be
plucked." (C. Keller, Alfred Ilg, p. 268.)
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approved by Lagarde. A third party was under the Prince de Lucinge and Count Kergonédec. Count de Choiseul was looking after Red Cross matters. M. Mondon-Vidailhet, a correspondent of Le Temps, was Postmaster-General and a “councillor” and wrote the Emperor’s letters. M. “Dubois” was Inspector in the Forest Service. Cheffneux, the largest merchant in the country, owned a stock of 20,000 rifles. A French merchant and shipper was M. Savouré. But for a few Indians and Armenians, all merchants in Shoa were French. This development started early. The French had obtained an agreement with Shoa (not to go back to Louis XIV) as long ago as 1842. The published versions of the 1842 Treaty bore neither signatures nor date but it was important enough to be inserted in the Yellow Book presented to the Chamber of Deputies in 1885 as an annex to the report by M. de Lanessan on Obok and Tadjura. The French agreement with the Danakil, consisting of nine articles had been signed on March 11, 1862 and explained to Shoa in 1885. The French-occupied territory was small, just enough to annoy the British but not to disturb the Ethiopians. Of this enclave the gifted Lagarde was governor. Lagarde was, as the British Intelligence Division wrote, “a man worth watching” as his present friendship with Menelik and Makonnen proved. He had been secretary to the Minister of Colonies. He kept a close connection with all European princes. With the taking over of Madagascar his stature was growing further. When Makonnen left for the campaign in the North, he demonstratively entrusted his son, the present Emperor Haila Sellasié, to his care. To this day Haila Sellasié speaks only French to Europeans in his entourage. Lagarde’s instructions were: (1) to organize two exploring parties through Ethiopia under Clochette and Bonvalot to connect with Marchand on the Nile; whoever came first was to erect posts on the left side of the Nile; (2) to induce Menelik to implement his declaration of 1891 to the powers; (3) to form an alliance with Ethiopia.

This was an ambitious programme but, at first sight, the French position was overwhelmingly strong. As opponents of the Italians, they and their Russian allies had been Menelik’s friends. In British reports, Bishop Taurin-Cahagne at Harar is described as a French agent. He was in direct and constant touch with Jibuti to which a postal service was organized. The new silver coinage was minted in France. France collected the war indemnity from Italy. French officers were asked to train the Ethiopian army. Lagarde had been made an Ethiopian duke, a new title and thus not resented by the Rases; and his duchy was Entotto, near the capital. Menelik signed

41 He really was the bearer of an illustrious name but as a fugitive from France chose this protectively colourless one.
42 Hanotaux to Lebon, March 14, 1897, No. 148.
a secret convention with Lagarde that the French should raise their flag on the left side of the White Nile from the 14th degree South down to the 5th degree 30’ and the Ethiopians on the right side (Article 1 and 2). A further clause forbade French occupation of the right side except in case of emergency (Article 3). There was no reference to Menelik’s Circular Letter of 1891. In the Lagarde-Makonnen agreement of January 1, 1897 Jibuti was declared “the official outlet for Ethiopia’s trade.” At Jibuti land was reserved—to be the Emperor’s personal possession—for the use of Ethiopian subjects. The projected railway, for which Chefneux had now gone to France to drum up financial support, was at last to be built as far as Harar, 300 kilometres inland. Jibuti meanwhile was to get 100 million francs for various harbour works. Free land was provided for a station and a railway workshop. Lagarde failed to obtain freehold rights for French citizens but Jibuti imports were relieved of Customs duties in Ethiopia in the Treaty of March 20, 1897. In exchange France yielded territory. Within the French sphere Lake Assal, which produced salt sticks used also as small change on the market, was reserved to Menelik. French Somaliland was reduced in size, placing the Danakil more firmly into Ethiopia. The territory ended at 100 kilometres from the coast. All France cared about was trade for Jibuti and the overall goodwill of the Ethiopian ally, and for obvious reasons.

The Trade and Arms Articles

Jibuti did not have to export great quantities of meat as Berbera had to Aden, and so Lagarde could let go of the nomads. By surrendering his hinterland Lagarde forced Britain’s hand. Rodd, bereft of trumps, had to follow suit, thereby inviting enmities in Somaliland and in Aden during the succeeding years, the years of unrest and costly expeditions. With Menelik, Rodd tried to do what he could to safeguard the trade relations of Somaliland. He fought for “most-favoured-nation treatment.” Unless British and Somali traders had parity with the French they could not compete. Menelik sheltered behind his much-advertised ignorance: “He could not or would not understand.” Menelik was, of course, eager to divert as much trade as possible through Jibuti and to favour the projected railway of which he was part-owner with a large parcel of shares. Finally Rodd succeeded in having the five per cent octroi remitted for goods coming from Somaliland by conceding that the Emperor’s imports were exempt from customs duties, a concession which Menelik widened to include “imports exclusively for the Ethiopian State on application
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of His Majesty the Emperor.” Rodd kept the Zeila-Harar route open to Somali trade; Menelik was not interested much in this route, destined to decay as the railway developed. The Emperor was much more concerned to have an article written into the Treaty that guaranteed him the right to import arms. He was not interested in the Brussels Convention, his nephew Makonnen having had shipments stopped at Aden before the battle of Adowa. So Rodd had to give way, again disregarding Cromer’s authoritative formulations: “to treat Menelik as a Christian Power and make him a party to the Brussels Act. This would solve the arms and slavery questions.” By side-stepping any reference to the Brussels Convention Menelik avoided the slavery issue. No article on the slave-trade was argued. Menelik did not want a Red Sea port which the British were inclined to give him, nor an agent in Zeila. Menelik knew that he would get representation in London once he accepted a British consul or minister at Addis. He saw in a port a menace to the compactness of his Empire most safely surrounded by awkward lowlands and recalcitrant peoples, and by European powers all of whom had given up land. Italy had done so in the Peace Treaty of 1896, France in March, 1897 and Britain was now about to do so. Jibuti served all his purposes. The special arm clause put Ethiopia in a different category from other Africans, especially the Somalis. In 1894 Italy made a special treaty with the Sultans of the Mijertein and of Obbia which forbade them to import firearms. The British strictly observed the policy of refusing arms to the Somalis. The Treaty finally weighted the balance of power against the Somalis, Danakil and Galla, and therefore was at the time considered a greater injustice than the cession of the Haud, which Ethiopians had only infrequently and always briefly penetrated. As Rodd himself pointed out to Menelik:

“He was really under considerable obligations to us for having closed the door at Zeila, as none of the tribes with whom he was at war had been able to obtain supplies. He replied ‘You have acted as honourable men.’”

When occasion demanded it, if Lagarde wanted to cause discomfiture to the British he could do so by letting arms reach anti-British Somalis or rebellious Arabs outside Aden through Jibuti. As the mission was well aware:

“In Jibuti there is no proper supervision. A tax of $10 is levied on each gun, R$10 per 1,000 cartridges. Somalis can buy these rifles too. While Aden scrupulously forbids the sale of rifles, the Arabs can buy them in Jibuti.”

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13 Red Sea and Somali Coast: Memorandum, January 25, 1897, No. 50.
15 Rodd to Salisbury, May 4, 1897. Commercial No. 4.
With Harar, Jiggiga, Gildessa and Milmil under Ethiopian control, Somalis friendly to Ethiopia, because at loggerheads with British tribes, could be armed by Ethiopia.

BACK TO HARAR

Negotiations had at last come to the vexed Somali frontier. On seeing the British boundary (as marked out in 1894) seemingly for the first time, Menelik exclaimed: “But you are advancing right to the gates of Harar.” Rodd countered that the British were the reversionaries of Egypt so that really Ethiopia had by taking Harar advanced on the British sphere. “His Majesty then propounded the extraordinary doctrine that the Somalis had been from time immemorial, until the Moslem invasion, the cattle keepers of the Ethiopians who could not themselves live in the low countries.”

“The Emperor confessed himself much disappointed that I did not immediately adopt his views. I then told him that I was ready to meet him in a spirit of concession. He complained of our proximity to Harar; I would suggest, therefore, cutting off the triangle included between Biyo Kaboba, Gildessa, and Makanis, which would transfer the White Esa tribe to Ethiopia and remove the line of demarcation a good many marches further from Harar. I was also prepared to offer concessions on the eastern side, but I considered the Gadabursi and certain other tribes indispensable to us, in view of the main object for which our Protectorate is maintained.”

The Emperor wanted time to reflect on these proposals. When they resumed, Menelik said that he preferred the status quo: each to stay on what he occupied. This, Rodd well knew, would not meet with Aden’s approval.

“His Majesty’s attitude was distinctly Oriental. England was a great power, could we not cede these small parcels of territory which meant so little to us and so much to him? He looked to all these regions as part of the Harar province.”

Rodd now deserved the honour he was awarded on his return to England. He exploited the Emperor’s desire to have a treaty and his pretended innocence. If Menelik did not know the country would he empower Makonnen to come to an Agreement on the Somali frontier? This the Emperor at last accepted “as the best way out of the impasse.”

“I believe the Emperor has acted quite straightforwardly in this matter, and that he honestly wished to come to terms with us. But he states his ignorance of details with perfect frankness.”

1 Rodd to Salisbury, May 13, 1897, No. 15.
The Somali frontier was to be settled at Harar after the mission had talked it over with Makonnen. The finesse was clever, unusual, and dangerous: clever because Makonnen would not dare to upset the whole Treaty by making impossible demands, unusual because no Treaty that London had ever heard of had a frontier agreement appended as an annex at the end of it, and dangerous because Makonnen at Harar was more interested in pushing the frontier east than Menelik was in Addis Ababa. Makonnen was more deeply committed to the French and known as a hater of the British who stood in his way with the Somalis. However, Makonnen, who could not daily consult with Menelik—the telegraph was only in process of construction from Harar to Addis—simply had to come to terms. As he saw, Article I prohibited frontier raiding, thus establishing that in this area a frontier was to be defined. Article II said that this frontier should be defined in concert by Makonnen and Rodd and a letter attached to the Treaty expressly promised:

“the Somalis who may by boundary arrangements become subjects of Ethiopia shall be well treated and have orderly government.”

Rodd could present all this as a clear instruction from Menelik to Makonnen. Makonnen was sufficiently familiar with diplomacy to know that each word and even the language in which the treaty was signed had been carefully chosen. Menelik had been duped when the Amharic and Italian versions of the Treaty of Ucciali diverged and had to be annulled by a costly war. The present Treaty bore testimony that there was to be no repetition. The Emperor refused to sign an English version simply because Ilg, his adviser, had a poor knowledge of that language. Rodd vainly protested that his prestige would not allow him to sign a French rendering of the text but wisely devised the satisfactory solution by annexing a French version to the Treaty which, it was agreed, would, in case of misunderstandings, be the text of reference. The Emperor’s suspicions of complicated wordings actually produced some tidier phrasing. Article I is an example. Rodd proposed:

“Armed men from either side are prohibited to cross the frontier for purposes of intimidating the local populations, or raiding them, and carrying off their cattle.”

Menelik’s version was free from any innuendo and was adopted:

“It is forbidden for armed bands from either side to cross the frontier of the other on any pretext whatsoever without previous authorization from the competent authorities.”

* Menelik to Rodd, May 14, Inclosure 2 in No. 21.
Similar slight changes can be traced in each of the six articles that make up the Treaty signed at last on May 14, 1897. The signatures, the exchange of letters, the exchange of honours had been transacted with due ceremony and attention to a pleasing etiquette! Rodd presented the Emperor with a G.C.M.G., and the Emperor was happy to hear that this was the highest distinction of its class! Rodd in his report home made the most of the despatch given to the mission on the morrow:

“As if to atone for any shortcomings we might have experienced on our way up, we found our camp stocked with provisions, including a flock of 30 sheep and 1,000 cakes of native bread. Ras Mangasha Tekkem, the doyen of all the Rases, rode down, with him came the Royal drummers who outride before the Emperor himself, and then with striking rapidity, this vast and seemingly little organized mass of troops amounting to 25,000 men.”

The Emperor’s uncle Ras Mangasha Tekkem rode the mission out of Addis Ababa. In less than sixteen days, it was welcomed at the gates of Harar by the Emperor’s nephew Ras Makonnen. The mission lost no time—the journey was usually accomplished in a month or more. But it was as well to get the hardest job done before there was time for too many second thoughts. The negotiations with Makonnen were characterised by Rodd as “most wearing and trying”. Rodd’s brief was indeed a difficult one to present to the hero of Adowa and the best armed and most experienced of Rases; the outcome of the commissions and omissions of a whole decade, and familiar enough to the two men who now met, it raised all the dilemmas of the Horn.

**HOW PROTECT THE PROTECTORATE?**

The first problem of Somaliland was its subordinate importance to the Government of India. Always ruthlessly clear-sighted about its objectives the old Bombay Government which controlled Somaliland and Aden, would not allow their administration to bite off more than they could chew, i.e. inexpensively administer with a small number of soldiers. Always ready with a homely saying the Government admonished its officers to cut their coat without frills according to the measured cloth—in this case what the customs and excise income allowed them to spend on the protection, the good government and

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48 With the Somali frontier according to Article II still “to be determined subsequently by exchange of notes between James Rodd, Esq., as Representative of Her Majesty and Ras Makonnen, as Representative of His Majesty the Emperor Menelik, at Harar.”

49 Rodd to Salisbury, May 17, 1897, No. 22.
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the other essential services of the country. The Indian Government was receiving no aid in men or money from Great Britain, hence the Protectorate had to restrict its limits to the fewest number of tribes consonant with its primary objective—which was the supply of Aden, now a town of 44,079 inhabitants and annually importing 70,000 heads of cattle and sheep from Somaliland. Aden was unable to grow food itself, hence the Somali caravans had to be made safe from raids, i.e. the Harar-Zeila and Harar-Hargeisa-Berbera and possibly the Gildessa-Berbera routes had to be kept open. The immediate danger was the to Harar-Zeila road. The Bombay Government when asked to state its instructions to Rodd was prepared to give up some “Gadabursi country” (as the Haud was called) but not to forgo the caravan road.50 Swayne and Harrington knew that whatever their personal feelings about protecting the Somalis beyond the primary objective, the Indian Government would not spare either more money or troops on Somaliland, while Aden had its own public works programme and was having to compete increasingly with Jibuti and so could not afford money for Somaliland. Turkish authority in the Yemen was menaced, as Turkish troops were needed for the Graeco-Turkish war and frontier trouble could be expected in the Aden protectorate. In case of trouble there Aden would have priority over its African dependency. If Makonnen expanded his realm this was one more reason to be on good terms with him. There had been little opposition shown to him in the past and little could be expected in the future. Rodd retraced the story.

The Bombay Government acquiesced in the conquest of Harar though it upset the original conception of the Protectorate which required a weak buffer state between the Ethiopians and the Somalis. This was the first retreat that could only lead successively to 1897. There was talk already in the 80’s that Ethiopia might penetrate further, encouraged by Italy, or that the Italians might themselves take possession of Harar. The French insisted that balance between the three European powers on the coast would be upset if Italy annexed Harar. The French possession in Tadjura Bay would become valueless. Assab would have replaced Jibuti. The Anglo-French Agreement over Harar in 1888 somewhat quizzically guaranteed that neither France nor England would annex Harar, but made no provision about Italy. On an official French map of 1889, produced by the “Service Géographique de l’Armée”, Harar was shown as an Ethiopian town. Britain officially accepted the Ethiopian conquest when Colonel Stace, the Somali Coast Consul, was sent to Makonnen with presents, but at the same time recognized Italy’s Protectorate over

50 India Office to Foreign Office, January 25, 1897.
Ethiopia. It was hoped to make Italy responsible for the pacification of the Ethiopian war lords.

In 1886 Harar, the Timbuctoo of Eastern Africa, was set up as an independent town under an indigenous Emir. After the Egyptians left he commanded a force of five hundred armed men with rifles, and three thousand spears of Galla and Somali friends. He had the moral support of England. On January 22, 1887 Baring (later Lord Cromer) however, telegraphed to Salisbury: “King Menelik three days’ march from Harar. Said to be accompanied by several Italians, which is not improbable.” Italy and her ally Menelik hoped to gain access to these fertile areas hitherto denied to her. Menelik had 900 horses and men equipped with muzzle loading Krupp guns in addition to 1,500 trained men contributed by Italy. Altogether Menelik descended with 24,000, one tenth of whom were described as Somalis (then hoping to hem in the Danakil). On January 23, two days earlier than expected, Harar fell. Baring again reported: “Menelik’s troops did not plunder or massacre people. But they will allow no one to leave. No news about Europeans or Indians.” The battle was a short one, five Italians and two hundred Ethiopians were killed. Officially Menelik was avenging the murder of Count Porro and Count Montiglio and seven other distinguished men who had defied the warning of the Emir not to approach Harar. The Emir’s dislike of the Italians was understandable and in no way assuaged by the innocence of the two counts who on moving into the country had the habit of surrendering their guns to the inhabitants. Menelik saw in the Emir’s action a sign of Mahdist malevolence. Harar was known for its religious fevers. The Emir had written to Menelik claiming land as far as the Awash. He might in such a campaign proclaim himself a Mahdi or an Imam like Grañ in the sixteenth century. Menelik wrote in this sense to the British Resident at Aden on January 26, 1887:

“From Menelik, King of Shoa, and of all the Galla good and bad. How are you? By the grace of God I am well. Amir Abdellahi would suffer no Christian in his country. He was another Grañ. But by the help of God I fought him, destroyed him, and he escaped on horseback. I hoisted my flag in his capital and my troops occupied the city. Grañ died. Abdellahi in our day was his successor. This is not a Moslem country as everyone knows.”

The fall of Harar was noted without protest: The Anglo-French Agreement of 1888 was a mutual promise not to occupy Harar. Presumably Italy was, and wanted to remain, the senior partner in the alliance with Menelik and so would prevent Menelik from becoming too powerful in the area. “The Italian or watchdog policy” gradually
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became an essential part of British arrangements. The watchdog policy had failed.

As India was not committing troops it was hoped that Italy would. Twenty-three Italian battalions were sent to Eritrea in 1887, consisting of 710 officers and almost 17,000 men. Italy was opposed to John and his chief lieutenant Ras Alula, and hence befriending Menelik, John's rival and, if he could be armed sufficiently, successor. Pursuing the watchdog policy it was hoped by the two Anglo-Italian agreements of 1891 and 1894, to draw off the Ethiopian fire from the British Somalis and balance Italian and Ethiopian forces.

The Treaty of Ucciali consisted of twenty clauses. Apparently Menelik only signed the Amharic version. Apparently Count Antonelli who signed for Italy only took home the Italian version; this was the one published in the Italian Green Book of 1890. By Article V it was agreed that a loan of four million lire should be contracted by Menelik with an Italian bank, on security of the Harar custom house. Article VI gave Italy the right to take over the administration of the Harar custom house in the event of non-payment of the loan. The French therefore studied the treaty carefully. Eleven days after the signature Crispi sent letters to the Powers notifying them, under Article 34 of the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885, of the contents of the treaty and especially of its Article XVII. The Italian text gave in Italian Protectorate over Ethiopia:

"The Negus consents to make use of the Government of His Majesty the King of Italy in treating of all matters that may arise with other powers or Governments."

The Amharic text only "consented that the Negus may make use of Italy." At his coronation on November 3, 1889 Menelik wrote to Queen Victoria and the Kaiser. From their reply he learnt that he must communicate with them henceforth through Italy, in short that Ethiopia had become a Protectorate in the eyes of Europe. By September 27, 1890 Menelik addressed a letter to the King of Italy pointing out the discrepancy of the two texts. The delay was occasioned by the terrible famine which ravaged Ethiopia and the disorder that reigned after John's death. Little heed was given to his representations, but Antonelli journeyed twice more to Addis. Antonelli could only confirm the suspicions. British policy had already based itself on the Treaty dispensation. In his Mission to Abyssinia (1891) Sir Gerald Portal, another perambulating diplomat in East Africa, said about the Treaty of Ucciali:

"Thus has ended the independence of Abyssinia. With the death of King Johannes died also that autonomy which had been the pride of this race for so
many centuries. Although the benefits of a civilized Protectorate are very evident it is, I confess, with a feeling almost of sadness that I reflect that since I said farewell to Johannes at Afgol, on December 16, 1887, no other European can ever grasp the hand of an independent Emperor of Ethiopia. In assuming the Protectorate Italy has undertaken a task of great responsibility, in the performance of which she may find obstacles put in her way by nations of Africa and by nations of Europe, but meanwhile we in England can only wish her every success in developing the immense natural resources of that beautiful, fascinating, but wild and unruly country.\(^{51}\)

British observers admired the progress of Massawa in the last years. A railway had been built to Keren. In Eritrea there was public safety. "The horrors of the old mountain path to Asmara which so severely taxed our strength and tempers, have passed away for ever, their place being taken by a well constructed road fit for the passage of cavalry and artillery."

However, as Menelik's star rose so could he disown the Italian backing, and above all Italian restraint. In February 1893 Menelik received two million cartridges, and no sooner had they arrived, than he formally denounced the Italians, the Protectorate and the Treaty of Ucciali: "Under the pretence of friendship one has tried to engross my country," he told the Powers. Hostilities broke out when a chief of Akala Guzay revolted, incited, it was said by the French Lazarists. Pope Leo XIII had recently transferred the area to Italian Capuchins. The revolt was crushed but the chief did not disband his forces as Baratieri, the Italian commander ordered. So the Italians advanced and took Adowa. The Italian force was not large enough to hold the Tigre capital but was able to defeat, though outnumbered, the Tigreans at Koatit. Efforts were made to tamper with Menelik's vassals, but the Emperor aroused a wave of enthusiasm; he collected an army of between 90,000 and 200,000 men. Baratieri had 17,700 men and 56 guns.\(^{52}\) The Empress Taitu, a Gondar princess from the North, was particularly anti-Italian. The country entered the war as a united nation.

Menelik defeated a small Italian force and then cautiously made proposals for peace. They led to no result. Three months passed in various manoeuvres. On March 1, 1896, the two armies came into touch. The Italians advanced at night in three columns but their maps were defective. The Italian columns failed to concentrate and the result was a series of detached battles ending in a complete rout. The Abyssinians without maps knew the country. The Italian losses were estimated at 6,133 dead and 1,428 wounded. 1,865 were taken prisoner. Italian reinforcements arrived too late. Kassala was

\(^{51}\) *My Mission to Abyssinia*, pp. 250-251.

\(^{52}\) F. Schindler, *Die Armee des Njegus Njegest*, Troppau, 1898.
blockaded by the Khalifa. The Italians could just extricate the garrison of 2,000 men of Addigrat. Menelik did not penetrate further into Eritrea but retreated to Shoa. The peace treaty was signed on October 26, 1896 at Addis Ababa. It ended the “Italian policy” to which London had clung, long after Makonnen had swept over the 1894 border and fortified Jiggiga and Biyo Kaboba without any Italian counteraction. So we are led on to the British administrators. And again Rodd knew the weakness of his side.

The “Italian policy” had never been endorsed by the men-on-the-spot in Berbera. Preoccupied in the North, the Italians could do nothing to stop Ethiopian raids in the South. The fortified Ethiopian port at Jiggiga “was a constant menace to the large village of Hargeisa,” as Swayne wrote. He and his brother were actually the first Europeans to visit the area. Hargeisa was able to withstand an attack with spears but could not resist against musketry fire. It was unable even to hold off the Bertiri using Ethiopian rifles in their raids on Hargeisa:

“Ordinary feuds by our neighbours, we Somalis think fair play but the Bertiri raids are a losing business for us all round as we are not allowed to import firearms. We ask the British who have occupied our ports either to protect us, or to allow us to import guns with which we can protect ourselves.”

Many therefore attached themselves to the Swayne caravan for a brief protection. Others asked for a “chit.” “They were sure a scrap of paper written on by an Englishman was enough alone to keep back an Abyssinian army.”

On his arrival at Gildessa a war of nerves took place with the Ethiopians, who refused to let the Swaynes’ caravan pass, both their firing power being about equal. A group of young ᨿǐsā warriors insisted on dancing the Dibaltig or acknowledgement of sovereignty to the British visitors and the Ethiopians marched up soldiers to stop this.

“A young ᨿǐsā of splendid physique came forward and asked whether we would like them to go on, for ‘the ᨿǐsā were the obedient slaves of the English’. Thanking him and his comrades, we said they were under Abyssinian control here, and must do as they bid.”

53 Swayne, op. cit., p. 115. Today Hargeisa is the capital of British Somaliland
54 P. 116.
55 P. 125.
56 P. 142. “The ᨿǐsā are accounted the bravest Somalis. They seldom or never use light throwing spears but run up and stab at close quarters, with the large heavy broad bladed spear.” (P. 143.) The ᨿǐsā were punished by Makonnen for having guided the English to Gildessa. They were banished from the town with repercussions as far as Zeila.
Swayne was hastily recalled to Zeila as his trip was given a deep local significance.

“The Bertiri, I found, loving to make mischief, had magnified my difficulties into a great British victory over the Abyssinians. I believe that half the Abyssinian suspicions of English designs is due to Somali gossip.”

Hence a conciliatory mission, to Makonnen, was decided upon in the following year. The trip to Harar in 1892 gave Swayne a chance to hear Makonnen on Ethiopian ambitions, which included Uganda in the South West and Massawa in the North East. “Now that the coast line is being divided among the Europeans, the Africans are entitled to their share,” Makonnen thought. He wanted Europeans to advance the country, not advance into lands Ethiopia claimed of old. For the rest, he preferred rifles of English make and asked about Indian methods of taming elephants. Burton’s description was translated to him by one of his entourage who had been to a mission school in Zanzibar and had a Goanese wife. It was found correct in every detail. The two Italians in the town, Count Salimbeni and Signor Felter tried to persuade Swayne that Italy’s inactivity was deliberate and that Ethiopian expansion was all to the good. Properly guided they would civilize Central Africa. Swayne commented:

“My own hopes fall far short of this; for though enlightened and honourable Abyssinians of whom Ras Makonnen may be taken as the type, may have high ambitions, yet the ruck of the people, as the specimens of soldiers whom I saw at Harar, appear to be certainly no better than the nomad Somalis, except in their possession of rifles.”

Swayne preferred the Somalis for pluck and cleanliness. He however admitted that Ethiopians were well led and hardy in privations. “Christianity may have done less for the lower classes than the Koran, but the Abyssinian feudal leaders are superior in every way.” They had dash and dignity. “No doubt, also, much of the reputation for courage of the Abyssinian army is due to the charges of spearmen, belonging to outlying or subject races who are probably not Abyssinian at all.” They were better organizers and nations builders than the Afghans, whom he knew personally.

Swayne’s still indecisive sociological reflections troubled him in the Ogaden, visited on his next trip inland. The Ethiopians who had begun their serious raids into the Ogaden in 1890 had got as far as the Rer Ali country. The Bagheri, Bertiri, Abbasgul, Malingur, had

57 P. 166.
58 P. 172.
59 P. 173.
60 P. 290.
61 P. 291.
become their subjects. The Isa still were divided. The Garad of the Bertiri had lost all influence, deprived of all his cattle he had "to trot about like a dog," and fetch more cows for the soldiers to eat. The border country was given to Banguse, a man who had distinguished himself in the capture of Harar, but was reputed to be a lazy official, arbitrary and levying double road tolls on the road from Hargeisa, though Menelik had sent an investigator to check the caravan fees. Naturally enough the Ogaden tribes appealed to Swayne, hoping he would act as a counterweight to the Ethiopians:

"The Ogaden appear to have the idea, however erroneous it may be, that the English will help them in the case of Abyssinian encroachments, which encroachments are steadily going on now. I told Sheikh Mohamed Sufi at Milmil that I had not come to fight the Abyssinians, but I would listen to their complaints in my tent. He said: 'We Darod tribes are with the English. We wish for English rule. We are your children. We quiver under the oppression of the Abyssinians who have every year for the last six years visited us and levied large numbers of sheep, goats, horses and camels. They have taken what they liked from us. The Abyssinian soldiers get no pay but live upon what they can pick up. It is a shame if the English do not help us.' "

On his return Captain Swayne fervently advocated a forward policy:

"A glance at the map will show the confidence we felt in the friendship of the natives of Ogaden to be able to cut ourselves adrift from the caravan in unexplored country so far in the interior. Imé is 400 miles from the coast. In 1884, at the time of Mr. F. L. James's journey to the Shebelli district such a ride would have been hazardous but since things have been changing for the better every day."

There were many among his friends who thought that Britain should spend some money and imagination on Somaliland and include the Ogaden. The trade from Harar to Zeila trebled in three years. Its volume was higher than that for the whole of Central Africa, £310,000 against £85,000. Berbera and Zeila were a week nearer to England and India than was Mombasa. The roads even into Imé in the Ogaden, 400 miles inland, "present no difficulties to caravans, either owing to physical causes or the temper of the natives. The whole country through which it passes is exceptionally healthy." Colonel Stace coolly disabused Swayne's mind of any such false expectations. There could be no question of a British Ogaden Protectorate, as sitting in Zeila, Stace wondered indeed what was left of existing Somaliland:

"The Abyssinians from Harar are encroaching more and more upon the Gadabursi country, as I anticipated would be the result of their unopposed

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62 Swayne to Stace, July 27, 1892.
46 P. 374.
64 P. 374.
occupation of Biyo Kaboba. I fear that they will make a permanent settlement in the Harrawa Valley from whence the encroachments and exactions will extend further into the Protectorate." 

Nur Robleh, the rebellious Ugaz of the Gadabursi already had gone over to the Ethiopians. It was now a matter of urgency for Britain to realise that the Italian watchdog policy was a mirage and the only course open was to get Makonnen and not the Italians to recognize a fixed frontier, and at the same time to establish British posts in the interior.

"We must not forget that the Abyssinians claim the whole of Somaliland. We ought to treat with Abyssinia, make a Treaty, and define the boundary. The Italians will never obtain either control or possession South towards Harar or the Ogaden, and their mythical claim down there only hampers and injures us. They should content themselves with Massawa Colony... What if Abyssinian soldiers (which we know wander under no control in small parties) come at our tribes and demand cattle? Have we (without a fixed boundary) the right to fire on the Abyssinians? The longer the settlement is delayed the more the danger of a grave difficulty some day."

Sealy, the head of the Berbera administration, added some political considerations of his own when he wrote further to Bombay: "Every day the danger increases of the Somali finding out that the so-called Protectorate is a hollow sham." One could not arm the Somalis, this would increase raids and murders, kill off all the game, and unsettle the caravan routes. But at the same time, in the state of inactivity the Abyssinians, "seeing no white faces creep nearer to the coast, absorbing the Gadabursi under our very noses. Anyway, we have no protectorate treaties with the Gadabursi and the Ogaden so cannot, under the Brussels Convention arm them." They had no single representative or ruler, nor had the British any administrators in the interior.

"To control this heterogeneous collection of tribes what have we? Three European officers on the coast 'at the receipt of customs' as Colonel Stace has aptly said; a small police force at each port; and some native infantry detachments, who cannot be moved from the coast without the express sanction of Indian Government, and lastly a force of one Jemadar and twenty-five camel sowars. Even this small force is armed with unserviceable old Snider carbines, whereas the Abyssinians have excellent weapons of precision, chiefly Remingtons."

For some time Aden had been disconcerted by the French who had moved in and while England was still dealing with Italy which exercised

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65 Stace Memorandum enclosed in Hardings to Rosebery, August 22, 1893, No. 52.
66 Stace to Sealy, October 24, 1893. Incl. 6 in No. 19.
67 Sealy to Bombay Government. November 11, 1893. Incl. 4 in No. 19.
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no control over Addis. Menelik and Makonnen were making friends with Lagarde at Jibuti.

In Jibuti after Abu Bakr was superseded, the Somalis replaced the Danakil, and ጥיסה and the French were deviating British caravans. French influence in Harar and Shoa ousted all Italian influence. They were advising Menelik. Menelik had denounced the Italian Protectorate.

"The instigator and translator of the letters is said to be Bishop Taurin. He and M. Ilg have received French decorations. Menelik and Makonnen recently received the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour brought by a M. Chifney (sic) from Paris."

In order to beat the French at their own game, in full realisation of the implied danger of further Ethiopian advances, Ras Makonnen was therefore allowed to use Zeila for the importation of rifles "so that he was not entirely dependent on Jibuti." 68

No one was so deluded as to think that more arms whether through Jibuti or Zeila would bring peace or safeguard the Protectorate assumed over the mentioned Somali tribes. Yet should not in fairness the Somalis be armed? The Government of India sought the advice of all its senior officers at the coast, Stace, Sealy, Cox and Abud. All of them saw the dilemma and all with Stace thought that

"it would be madness simply to place arms in the hands of the Somalis. They would undoubtedly be used for murders, raids, and intertribal wars. If it is decided that the tribes must be protected I would suggest the establishment of at least three or four posts (defensive) to the S.E. of Hargeisa and along the line towards the Harrowa valley, and towards Gildessa. But even suppose that this be adopted, you must come back to the fact that it must be determined how far that protection is to extend, in other words a definition of the boundary line." 69

At this stage Italy's suggestion for a demarcation of the Italian and British Protectorates was taken up. Italy had been pressing for this throughout 1893. By enlarging Menelik's domain she felt that she could regain some control over him and convince him of the value of the Italian protection. Antonelli, with ten years' experience of the Horn, was now Under-secretary of Foreign Affairs. He told the British Ambassador that the "annexation of the Northern Ogaden by Ethiopia is a fait accompli, so that the Ogaden will be a part of the Italian sphere." If the neighbouring Isa and Gadabursi could be added then Ethiopians would fear no more for Harar, as they now did, not convinced of the British disengagement there. Italy was prepared

68 Rosebery to Hardinge, 25 August, 1893. No. 50.
69 Colonel E. V. Stace to Bombay Government. Incl. 4 in No. 19 (A).
to trade the Mijertein and Cape Gardafui for the Isa and Gadabursi, so that the line in future would run from 43°20' East longitude to the 9th parallel North and on to the 49th degree East. Italy could also now use Zeila, offered to her by Lord Granville in 1884 as well as on several subsequent occasions to stop raids.  

The Italian boundary suggestions were submitted for comment to India. Neither the Government of India nor the Bombay authorities could see any value in them as a solution of the local problems, however advantageous in Britain's Mediterranean policy concessions in the Horn might be. The Italian line annexed to Ethiopia a vital area—the Haud. The responsible officers could not accept the cession of the Haud in which British tribes must graze their animals, a phenomenon clearly brought home by Swayne in his journeys to the area. The Ogaden could not be included in the Protectorate but the Haud had to be. The line had to be to the South not the North of the Haud:

"Italy's proposed line along the 9th parallel of North latitude from 43°20' to 49° East is entirely unacceptable to all Indian authorities. We are asked to abandon a large extent of territory to Italy, a Power whose influence over its Protectorate is of an illusory character. The line favoured by the Government of Bombay would follow the Northern edge of the Haud, or waterless desert, but as recent surveys have shown that the tribe on the North of the Haud, within the British Protectorate, graze within the Haud, the Government of India are of opinion that in these circumstances it would be expedient to include with the British zone of influence that part of the Haud to which the said tribes usually resort. The line suggested is as follows, from Gildessa to Makanis, then to Harrle, thence South West to Tug Fafan, Ime, Bari and Mudugh. From Mudugh to the point of intersection on the Karkar Hills of the 49°25' meridian East and the 10th parallel North. The frontier would include the whole of the Dolbahanta and Ogaden countries... But one of the earliest results of the inclusion of the Ogaden within the British zone of influence would be an appeal for protection against Abyssinian marauders. We are at the present moment face to face with such a difficulty on the Harar frontier. The extension would lead to conflicts and involve an outlay out of all proportion to the Indian interests concerned. Lord Kimberley is therefore willing to accept a line from Gildessa excluding the Girrhi and Bertiri tribes to Harrle, thence along 43° East longitude to meet the 8° North latitude, thence to the 49° East longitude."

The Governor General for India, Lord Lansdowne went even further inland:

"The Italian proposal follows approximately the northern edge of the Haud, or waterless desert, and has been chosen with special reference to the fact that the Haud forms a good natural boundary. The recent surveys by Captain Swayne and his brother show, however, that the tribes on the North of the Haud

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70 Ford to Rosebery, January 17, 1893. No. 2. Enclosed Memorandum by Antonelli.
71 India Office to Foreign Office, November 10, 1893, No. 67.
WHY THE HAUD WAS CEDED

within the British Protectorate graze within the Haud, and under these circumstances we are of opinion that it would be expedient to include within the British zone of influence that part of the Haud to which the said tribes usually resort. It is, however, difficult to demarcate a satisfactory dividing line in the Haud, which, without doubt, belongs to the Ogaden. We are of opinion that we should include the whole of the Ogaden and Dolbahanta countries. The natural outlets for the Ogaden trade, which is considerable, are the ports of Northern Somaliland."\(^{72}\)

This was Swayne’s inspiration and policy. Never before or after did it receive such powerful endorsement. Perhaps Lansdowne, knowing the mood of the British Government was deliberately asking for more than he could hope to get so that at least the Haud would be held. In the next month we find the British Government, in fact, taking up just this position, conform with the Bombay despatch. Rosebery assumed that the Ethiopians had not made further conquest since Swayne was in the area:

"The Italian suggestion cut in two the Habr Awal, Habr Gerhajis, and Dolbahanta tribes and would deprive those tribes as well as the Habr Toljaala of their great grazing ground, the Haud. The Italian Memorandum of January 9, 1893 states that the line proposed so far as it regards the western portion of it, coincides with the frontier of Harar to the North and East of that province. This does not, however, tally with the information gathered by the several British travellers and officers, who have visited and surveyed the country. That information shows that the Bertiri is the most easterly of the tribes which is in any way administered by the Abyssinian Chiefs and that the territory of the Habr Awal which are under British protection extends as far West as meridian 43° East of Greenwich. With regard to the Ogaden country the Memorandum states that following the direction of the valleys the tribes naturally gravitate on the North to Abyssinia, and on the South to the Indian Ocean. Here again the information supplied to the Italian Government differs materially from the facts ascertained by British officers. The natural outlet of the Ogaden trade is through the ports of Northern Somaliland. We, however, are prepared to concede much of what they might with reason put forward as our well-founded claims, and I am able to inform your Excellency, that the Secretary of State for India would be willing to accept as a compromise a line of division from Gildessa round the Girrhi and Bertiri to Harrle thence due South along 43° East to meet the 8th parallel North thence along the 8th parallel to meet 49° East longitude and thence due North to the sea."\(^{73}\)

The Minutes of two Conferences called by the Foreign Office to hear the arguments of the Italians show both the toughness with which the British officials—Sanderson, Neel and Swayne—fought and the concessions which the ministers eventually made. A cession of Zeila was rejected outright. An enlargement of the Mijertein Protectorate was on the other hand accepted. The issue was, however, the fate of

\(^{72}\) loc. cit. (72)

\(^{73}\) Rosebery to Tornielli, December 29, 1893, No. 72.
Gildessa and the Milmil wells, which tribes in the Haud had to use, as the alternative, Hargeisa, was a hundred miles away. The Ogaden could use the Sassawani wells in the South. The Rer Harun, Rer Ali, and Sheikh Ash in whose territory Gildessa and Milmil lay looked to the British, their akils were receiving stipends, litigants justice in Berbera. Free passage would be granted to the Italian caravans. In reply, Silvestrelli produced two Italian Protectorate treaties of 1891 with these tribes, which though they had not been communicated to the European Powers showed an old Italian connection. Swayne examined these treaties and disposed of them. The signature of the principal headman was missing. Milmil must be secured if Britain was to dominate the Haud and check raids. Sanderson wondered whether it was not premature to delimit a country so little known: “the tribes, being nomadic, shift in ill-defined limits,” to which Tornielli rejoined that if all was known “we would delimit territories not spheres of influence.” The whole discussion was somewhat ghostly. Italy admittedly did not exercise any influence in Harar and had not prevented the Biyo Kaboba fort from being built despite repeated British protests, yet she spoke for Harar. Biyo Kaboba was on the Anglo-French caravan route:

“Italy’s wish that we should not deal directly with Menelik had been deferred to. We had even abandoned our intention to send an officer to Makonnen with presents. In these circumstances we considered that we were entitled what means the Italians now possessed of restraining the Abyssinians from attacking our tribes. Silvestrelli admitted that Italian influence at Harar was not very effective owing partly to French intrigue. With regard to Biyo Kaboba Makonnen had erected the post for protection of the caravan trade.”

Neel, restraining himself no longer, wondered how Milmil would satisfy Menelik who had asked for the whole of Somaliland. The exchange proceeded somewhat like this:

“Silvestrelli: Menelik has claimed so many lands in vague terms.
Neel: He has made this one in writing and in definite terms.
“Silvestrelli: The pretensions of Abyssinia need not deter us from proceeding with the negotiations. It is not likely that the Abyssinians would know of this agreement or at all events that they would be annoyed by it.”

As the Minutes conclude:

“This did not seem a very satisfactory reply but no further assurances were given.”

A second conference brought the parties no nearer. Then suddenly when a British member warned that reparations would be asked from
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the Italians if British tribes were molested, the Italians said they would not object to punitive British expeditions in the Ogaden.

The Government seized on this. Milmil was yielded with all that this meant (to the consternation of the Government of India which did not however feel strongly enough about the wells to object) but the Haud retained. Moreover, British officers could pursue raiders into the Ogaden. The British were to be free to send a mission to Makonnen, Jiggiga, Gildessa and Milmil and the Rer Harun, Rer Ali, Sheikh Ash, the Girrhi and Bertiri were to be excluded from the Protectorate or rather, as the Protocol (not Treaty) called it, "the British sphere of influence." Initialled at the Foreign Office on April 21, 1894, the object was "to complete the delimitation of the spheres of influence of Great Britain and Italy in Eastern Africa which formed the subject of the Protocols signed at Rome in 1891." The new Protocol consisted of three articles:

"Article 1

"limited the spheres of influence of Great Britain to a line running from Gildessa towards the 8th degree of North latitude that skirts the North East frontier of the territories of the Girrhi, Bertiri, and Rer Ali tribes, and leaves to the right the villages of Gildessa, Darmi, Jiggiga and Milmil. On reaching the 8th degree the line follows the parallel as far as the intersection with the 48th degree of longitude. It then runs to the intersection of the 9th degree (latitude) with the 49th degree (longitude) and follows the meridian to the sea."

The second article engaged both Governments to allow their subjects and protected persons to trade freely. The third and last article gave equality to Italy in Zeila.75 A secret British and Italian explanatory note allowed the British

"to take any temporary measures in the vicinity of the demarcation line of the Italian sphere until Italy has established an effective control and she also is to have the right of entering into direct communication with the authorities of Harar."76

Thus was born the notion that frontiers should not preclude temporary police actions across them if agreed to by both powers. "These exceptional measures shall be of a short duration and . . . the provisional arrangement for direct communication with the Harar authorities shall not throw any doubt on Italy as the Protecting Power of Ethiopia and its Dependencies."

The Russians and French were disturbed by the confirmation of the Italian Protectorate despite Menelik's denunciation of it and the violation by Italian troops in Eritrea of the Ethiopian frontier. But

75 Kimberley to Ford, April 21, 1894, No. 33 Incl. 1.
76 Incl. 2 and 3.
Italy did not accept denunciation \((a)\) because according to Article XVI the Treaty could not be denounced, only in mutual agreement modified “therefore the Treaty was perpetual” and \((b)\) “because it does not lie with those natives to invalidate Protectorates established by the European Powers according to conventional rules.”\(^77\) Baron Meyendorff enquired whether Italy meant that there were two systems of public rights, one for European countries and the other for African ones. The Italian spokesman, Baron Blanc, said that he “certainly did not suppose that Meyendorff considered that the position of one of the African Chiefs was analogous to that of our respective Sovereigns.”\(^78\)

Once more the press took up the religious issue:

“Abyssinia is almost orthodox, and consequently she professes the same faith as Russia. Can we therefore abandon our fellow believers of Abyssinia to be devoured by Jesuits and Catholics? This consideration is all the more important in view of the circumstance that Western European free thinkers indulge in such free thinking only at home while in the colonies and foreign countries the Jesuits are their best friends.”\(^79\)

On the French side, Le Temps thought the “territorial concessions made by England considerable.”\(^80\) The French Government protested at the inclusion of Harar into the Italian sphere. Kimberley explained that the Protocol merely “recognises the actual state of things which has existed for several years past.”\(^81\) Makonnen had “extended his authority up to Gildessa and to the East and North East of Harar as far as the limits recently mentioned in the Protocol,” and thus Harar was part of Ethiopia, which in turn was an Italian Protectorate. To this Hanotaux observed that “it was to King Menelik that we should have applied for facilities to enable us to make the arrangements contemplated in the Confidential Declaration.”\(^82\) The local officials, of the same opinion, asked for instructions how in fact they should in future behave; for instance when, as the Assistant Resident in Berbera conjectured, “the Ogaden come to Berbera with complaints upon which we should formerly have taken action.” They were told not to read too much into the Protocol:

“The status quo as regards the system of administration should be adhered to, until such time as the Italian Government formally intimate that they have established effective control.”\(^83\)

\(^77\) Instructions to Italian Ambassador at St Petersburg respecting Russia’s non-recognition of Somali Delimitation. Ford to Kimberley, July 9, 1894, No. 79 Incl. 7.

\(^78\) Incl. 2.

\(^79\) Moscow Gazette, July 5, 1894.

\(^80\) May 12, 1894.

\(^81\) Kimberley to Decrais, May 31, 1894, No. 43.

\(^82\) Phipps to Kimberley, July 24, 1894, No. 93.

\(^83\) Governor General of India to Mr. Fowler, October 24, 1894. Incl. 1 in No. 127.
WHY THE HAUD WAS Ceded

The delimitation was really a piece of paper designed for European consumption. "I shall act for the present," Sealy said with his usual bluntness, "as if no Protocol existed." Little enough was done in the past for and in the Ogaden. Hitherto the policy was as political officers well knew,

"as a rule to avoid intervention (a) except when the trouble occurs on the caravan route; (b) within the 10-mile radius at the ports. We have only to deal with aggressions made by our tribes upon an Ogaden on the caravan route. Avoid the chance of the Ogaden obtaining double compensation by appealing to the Italian Government or Harar authorities. If aggressions on our tribes happen beyond our sphere of influence, then reference should be to the Consul, Somali Coast. The Assistant Resident should advise the Ogaden to have recourse to the Italian Government or the Harar authorities."84

Jopp dissented from Sealy’s advice to refer the Ogaden to Harar “as it would be virtually acknowledging its sway over this tribe, which would be impolitic and dangerous,"85 but this was a rearguard action, he fully well knew that the Ogaden was now far beyond Aden’s reach, that his objection was for the record only. Italy had no influence but Britain had little either.

THE RODD-MAKONNEN FRONTIER

Rodd took up at this point. His despatch from Harar said:

"It was obvious that without our being prepared to assert our claims in some more convincing manner than we have hitherto done, or, as far as I could judge from my instructions, intend to do, any understanding would be impossible without much larger concessions than I had at first proposed to make. The Abyssinians were to some extent, practically in the position of beati possidentes, and, while not actually wishing to risk a quarrel, would undoubtedly push on gradually further and further, being the more encouraged to do so by the fact that their former encroachments had met with no material opposition."86

The first of Makonnen’s proposals was to continue the French line 100 kilometres parallel to the coast. What was right for the French could not be wrong for the British. Rodd flatly refused to discuss this as he had in Addis when Menelik advanced the same idea. Makonnen then drew a line midway between the 1894 Anglo-Italian frontier and his initial line. The British could not claim territory containing Ethiopian forts. Rodd was adamant. Various lines were then discussed. Makonnen had one for the Zeila-Harar road. Rodd preferred the Domadu mountain. Makonnen wanted Hargeisa; Rodd

81 Incl. 3 in No. 127.
82 Incl. 4 in No. 127.
86 Rodd to Salisbury, June 4, 1897, No. 35.
declined; this was "a sacred Somali city." When he produced his own frontier suggestion he was told that this was too close to Jiggigga. Rodd said that he could not endanger the whole British position. A difficulty was again experienced in interpretation, the pronunciation of names, the Ras's ignorance of the country (he relied on Somali advisers) and his suspicion of geographical expressions—"another fruit of the Ucciali treaty." After much argument the line was to start near Biyo Kaboba, and to lie somewhere between the ninth and tenth parallels. The Ras hoped to deflect it towards Hargeisa, "the chief object of his ambitions, but I met him with a simple non possumus."

"I read to him the clause in the Treaty which provided our instructions; and put the blame of the breakdown on his shoulders. In face of this attitude he abandoned the point reluctantly murmuring that we had taken all the land that had any value and only given him the desert, an observation which our experience of the Western side of the Somali Coast leads me to think is not without justification . . . After long and weary efforts I succeeded in a line starting at Domadu passing through the Saw and Egu hills on the edge of the Marrar prairie to Arrhan Arrhe at the intersection of the 44th meridian with the 9th parallel—the grazing rights being reserved to the occupants on either side of the line."

Yet Rodd could not disguise from himself that Makonnen had got good areas too:

"I tried very hard to bring the line to the northernmost wells of Milmil but the Ras fought for the 9th parallel to its intersection with the 44th meridian cutting off from us some of the best food supplying country to the West."

Finally Rodd defended the compromise he achieved in the following manner:

"On the South of the new boundary line will be found a certain number of small tribes connected with the Ogaden, while those connected with the Habr Gerhaji and most tribes who go to Berbera are retained in the Protectorate."

The Protectorate had lost territory and was not only 67,000 square miles smaller, but the ceded tribes were really mostly Ogaden people.

"I believe that with the reservations which are made with respect to the grazing rights and access to wells, the actual conditions of the tribes on the borders of the new line will not be greatly modified and that everything will go on very much as it does at present."

The Abyssinians after all did not like the lowlands. They rarely bothered to administer their outlying districts. It could be safely hoped that the new boundary was a blessing to the Somalis,

"A limit will be set to the encroachments and raids of the Abyssinians which should produce in the long run a great feeling of security among the population retained under British protection."
The Haud anyway was only usable in certain times of the year.

"The greater part of the territory ceded comprises temporary grazing grounds not under permanent occupation. I am of the opinion therefore that the ceded strip will become a sort of neutral zone or buffer district."

The eisa could be kept permanently anchored at Zeila:

"Nor will the Esa be drawn towards Jibuti. And we are after all retaining the greater part of the sphere we claimed which will outweigh any local difficulties which may arise but for which a solution can easily be found locally. The Abyssinians will not come into the country themselves as they are a little afraid of the Esa, and they cannot remain in the plains."

What amounted well-nigh to a squaring of the circle had been asked of Rodd:

"According to my instructions I was to find a form which would involve Abyssinian recognition of our Protectorate without in any way admitting recognition on our part of a cession to Ethiopia. I succeeded in doing this in the Treaty. But it required much tact and management to get the Ras to adopt similar language."

A number of undertakings had been made on both sides. Rodd promised not to build a railway now which Makonnen greatly feared, partly because it might serve for military purposes against Ethiopia, partly because it would compete with the planned railway from Jibuti. But Rodd also insisted that the British Government could not be dictated to. Then there was some difficulty over the diplomatic convention of exchanging letters, which the Abyssinian negotiator regarded as an absurdity since the two gentlemen were sitting in the same room. A simple document signed by both would do; but Rodd persuaded the Ras.

The sceptical eye of officialdom reading the despatches was still worried. The phrase that "the Treaty comes into force as its ratification by Her Britannic Majesty shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia" lacked the element of reciprocity. The Foreign Office wanted to be sure that Menelik substantiated the Rodd-Makonnen frontier. In the previous case of the Hewitt Treaty with John nothing more had been demanded, by way of ratification than his seal, but in view of the odd construction of the new Treaty, Rodd had to write to Menelik on August 30, 1897 that the Treaty "will be made public when I have received a letter signifying that this Treaty, thus ratified and approved, has come safely to your Majesty's hands." An anxious period followed, as Rodd waited for several months for an answer. No more concerned with Mr. Rodd, Menelik at last addressed

87 [loc. cit. (?)]
the Queen "that we have received the Treaty with the Great Seal with joy. Peace is now between your Government and our Government which we hope will ever wax and last for ever." So the year 1897 ended with the Agreement safely brought to port.

**The Assessment of the Treaty**

Rodd got to London just in time for a Jubilee garden party at Buckingham Palace. Empress Frederic spoke to him. "I little anticipated then that it was to be our last meeting." Her brother, the Prince of Wales asked about his trip "with the keenest interest and Chamberlain engaged me in a long conversation." Later he received from the Queen a C.B. He also had a long interview with Salisbury:

"He was not much preoccupied about Abyssinian encroachments in Somaliland. He was never much concerned with the fate of 'light lands in Africa'. The French advance towards the Nile was in his eyes a more serious matter, so as I could diagnose his thoughts. For he listened with great attention to my reports, sitting huddled up at his table with a rug on his knees." 88

Rodd urged that "we should stick to the Nile" and that we should hurry towards Fashoda before Marchand got there. This would have meant a British contribution to expedite the transportation but needless to say Salisbury declined. Salisbury's coolness had the backing of the War Office. General Sir John Ardagh, the Director of Military Intelligence, hitherto a man favouring the extension of British influence over the Horn thought that the Agreement was nothing more than an acceptance of the real position and gave away nothing of value:

"The territory abandoned of which Abyssinia was to some extent in practical possession, also includes tracts pervaded by certain tribes with whom we have protective treaties, and who own camels employed in the caravans from our coasts ports. These tribes are more or less nomadic, and their chief interests lie on our side of the new boundary, within which they may be said to be domiciled and by trifling concessions, they may be induced to remain more permanently than hitherto. The concession is therefore, but a slight loss to us, and no great advantage to Abyssinia." 89

Some qualms persisted, however. He thought a delimitation on the ground would be dangerous, and had better not be attempted. The delimitation of "the Boundary may give rise to disputes. Menelik would probably appoint a foreigner who might be disposed to aggravate rather than settle any differences that may arise."

88 Memoirs, II, 1, 185.
89 Intelligence Division to F.O., July 30, 1897. Incl. in No. 218.
Irrespective of any delimitation, the Government of India, closer to the scene predicted trouble with the Somalis, for which India should not be made to bear the cost:

"The new line gives Abyssinia a strong position from which she can dominate the Gadabursi and the Zeila-Gildessa route, and have opportunities of interfering with the Habr Awal and with the route to Berbera. We lose a good natural line offered by the Western and Southern limits of the Harrar prairie and the Haud. We do not wish to object as we accept your opinion that better terms could not have been obtained, and local interests must give way to Imperial. Complications may arise or precautions be necessary on the new frontier leading to extra expenditure, which should not fall on Indian revenues."  

Prompted in this manner the Foreign Office took over from the India Office in 1898. As the initiative for the mission had come from the Foreign Office and Rennell Rodd was its man, it now added Somaliland to its own already large Empire in Africa; the Somali administration henceforth corresponded through Cairo. The "Political Resident of the Somali Coast" was renamed "Commissioner and Consul General." The Protectorate so as to make it quite clear where its centre of gravity lay, was still called the "Somali Coast Protectorate."

Most remarkable in the various critical assessments is the absence of any thoughtful commentary on the Haud. Several explanations offer themselves—ignorance about nomadic movements, years of good rainfall making for smaller migrations than are necessary now, fewer sheep than today and thus better kept pastures near the wells inside the truncated Protectorate, need to stay near permanent wells because the then numerous horses and donkeys needed for defence and raids had to be watered. Very probably there has been a progressive shift towards camel owning over the recent decades and thus an increased dependence on the Haud by the Isaq and the Ogaden. The mission itself crossed the Haud before and after the rains. On the way up Gleichen remarked about the emptiness of the land:

"No villages enliven the route, and, except for the numerous travellers that one meets to and fro between Abyssinia and the seas the only human beings seen are wandering Somalis pasturing their flocks or camels on the scrub and grass aforesaid or watering them at the wells. To the uneducated eye there seems little nourishment for the camel in the dry thorns of the sun tree (mimosa) or in the yellow and scanty patches from which the goats and sheep derive their sustenance. Yet they seem to thrive on it, all the animals looked active and healthy."

On the way back Gleichen noticed "much more water in the wells although we were supposed to be in the driest part of the year, just
before the rains; this water question evidently wants studying, for it seems to go by contraries."

Even Swayne who knew most about the area in question never stressed the migratory aspect of the surrender of the winter grazing grounds on which the herders depended. The fundamental reason for this nonchalant attitude is that at the time, nomadic peoples seemed far removed from any purposes to which a colonising power could be dedicated—the very antithesis of colonisation—that they could be dismissed with Gleichen's words as "only wandering Somalis." Swayne, hopeful as ever in his appraisals thought their interests would be adequately looked after by the permanent British representative to be posted to Addis. As the man chosen as consul was Harrington and was thoroughly versed in Somali affairs, tenacious and tactful, they would be ably served, a useful achievement of the mission and Treaty.

Somalis have always had one or more M.P.s at Westminster. A. E. Pease was their first—and one elected to his surprise (he did not know he was a candidate) whilst he was hunting in Somaliland in 1897. More outspoken than the rest he immediately sounded the alarm in several public speeches:

"All we have gained in Somaliland has been without bloodshed and lavish expenditure, and it can only be from ignorance of the situation that H.M.'s advisers think it worthwhile to purchase the goodwill of Abyssinia in the Nile Valley by permitting the armies of Menelik to raid, ravage and plunder our friendly neighbours, who have till now delighted to call themselves British, and whom we have rendered impotent to save ourselves. If, as is rumoured, we are abandoning a large area of our existing Protectorate, the result will be most disastrous to British influence in these countries."

With Tories and Liberals he tried to get the Treaty changed and to entrench the British possession come what may:

"Lord Salisbury and John Morley were alike in despising British interests in Africa. Nothing that I could urge at the Foreign Office and the India Office would induce them to believe that British East Africa, Equatorial Africa, or Somaliland was of any importance. Lee Warner at the India Office was as bad as Lord Salisbury in giving up South West Africa, Tanganyika, the Rodd Treaty: all involved us in long and costly campaigns with Germany, with the Somali Mullah, and the loss of strength and prestige."

Salisbury, detesting all fanatical advocates, on the right and left, preferred peace in his time to Mr. Pease and his prophecies of some

12 P. 397.
14 F. A. Pease, Elections and Recollections, 1932, p. 271. One recalls Salisbury's "Africa has been created to plague Secretaries of Foreign Affairs".
future calamities. Salisbury practised and occasionally would preach a policy of live and let live. In his famous Albert Hall speech of May 4, 1898, he summed up his philosophy of a lifetime:

“For one reason or another the living nations encroach on the territory of the dying. Undoubtedly we shall not allow England to be at a disadvantage. On the other hand we shall not be jealous of aggrandizement of a rival in regions to which our arms cannot extend.”

Salisbury disdained talking of “obligations” to protected peoples, to him a cant phrase. He had worries enough, China, Armenia, Venezuela, the Jameson Raid, the Kaiser who spoke of declaring war on Britain and asked Russia and France to join. He had enough in looking after Britain’s immediate interests. Nor did he see the friends of Africa taking all the same view of the Treaty. On the one hand there was Pease in London and his friends, of whom evidently his vice-consul Wylde was one, when he wrote:

“The Somali is really the most harmless person that exists as long as he is fairly treated, and he is the reverse when under an incapable administration. Partly putting him under Abyssinia which our present treaty does, is a grave error for many reasons. When dealing with the African native firmness and fairness makes a lasting impression. Once they see that you do not intend to be imposed upon, they can be led anywhere, but driven nowhere . . . Abyssinia can do nothing for these wild Mohamedans. What has been done hitherto with Menelik is giving him land (and its owners) which does not belong to us, and this shows a policy which shows no trace of firmness and absolutely no fairness.”

On the other hand the contrary (but oddly contemporary-sounding) note was struck in the leading paper of the Moslem world. To the Turkish Journal de Saba, closer to that continent, Menelik spoke for Africa and against European intrigue:

“Abyssinian military strength shown in the late war, coupled with the friendly policy towards his Moslem neighbours and his determination to protect them against all foreign interference add to Menelik’s prestige. The interests of the African tribes require that they should abstain from trifling disputes among themselves and devote their attention to internal progress and afford no opportunity for foreign interference. These disputes have now ceased thanks to Menelik’s policy. Menelik has done everything to show his friendship for the Sultan. He has attracted the attention of all Africans. The Abyssinians are an important factor in Africa, and it is a matter for congratulation that their Ruler is so wise and progressive a Prince.”

Quite truthfully but somewhat cryptically Curzon informed the House of Commons “that the Mission was not without success.” This to the French sounded like “it had not achieved its main objectives.”

\[95 Modern Abyssinia, 1903, p. 62.\]
\[96 August 19, 1897.\]
The Negus, far from committing himself to a joint Anglo-Ethiopian enterprise in the Sudan had barred the way to England on the right side of the Nile and confounded them in the Horn. The MacDonald Expedition from Uganda had therefore been ordered to advance and to detract British public opinion. Prince Henri d’Orléans and Colonel Leontieff, who improved on every situation thought that Menelik was firmly on the side of “the masters of Khartoum,” meaning the Khalifa. Lagarde was more guarded, as the wits weakly said. Menelik showed Lagarde the British Treaty which bore “the most gorgeous seal imaginable,” as Lagarde said, upon what was a British retreat. “Are you satisfied?” Menelik questioned. Lagarde thought it good but not too good. The benevolent neutrality towards Britain could be read as a malevolent neutrality towards the Khalifa. Why were no arms to go to them? The Emperor told him, “I feared the worst when I categorically refused to recognize Egypt or England on the right side of the Nile.”

“I wanted no rupture so I consented to a moral clause. But don’t be afraid we are in agreement, the enemies of your Bahr-el-Ghazal are the Derwishes, as well as the English. We shall manoeuvre together.”

The Emperor was not letting himself in for an embracive alliance with France and the Khalifa. He retained freedom of action and yet pleased everyone. Some play-acting goes with international politics. Menelik was a genius at it. To both French and English observers he spelt sincerity. When MacDonald was reported wounded “he was delighted, which leaves no doubt where his most intimate feelings lie. Hitherto he was all fury and tantrums, now all is sunshine. Blessed be the messenger, say the pages.” At the same time he was allowing MacDonald to pass through his territory. He swore to send 20,000 men against him but, to put the fat thoroughly in the fire without burning himself, suggested that the French make a promenade onto the right side of the Nile, a bait Lagarde wisely rejected.

“It was one thing to persuade Menelik to sign so convenient a treaty and quite another to induce him to carry out its terms. For Menelik was, after all no simple-minded Lobengula but the ruler of an ancient, complex and (in its own way) politically sophisticated society. In order to survive for long as king of kings cunning and dissimulation were as necessary as martial prowess or a reputation for religious orthodoxy. Menelik moreover had had his lesson at the time of the Treaty of Ucciali.”

97 Boutiron, French Chargé d’Affaires at Cairo, to Hanotaux, August 5, 1897. D.D.F. No. 291.
98 Lagarde to Hanotaux, December 24, 1897. No. 386.
99 Lagarde to Hanotaux, ibid.
WHY THE HAUD WAS CEDED

Gently, Lagarde who knew the country, and the habit governments have in Europe of underestimating technical difficulties, and the astuteness of African rulers, tried to infuse some realism into his superiors. He never believed that Bonchamps would arrive at the Nile at the same time as Marchand. He doubted that Menelik would really give the mission sufficient support. Later Bonchamps blamed Lagarde and Menelik for Fashoda. Bonchamps had tried his utmost to acquire territory for the Negus, but as he wrote to Paris, got no encouragement at Addis:

"The Abyssinians have not aided the mission; they have done their utmost to frustrate its departure towards the Nile. Long organized, the departure of the mission has been kept waiting by multiple pretexts."

When the mission was authorised by Menelik, "this authorisation was curiously curt, jejune and informal in style."

Though three Ethiopian columns were on the move—one under Makonnen, headed for the Beni Shangul country, another under Tasamma accompanied Bonchamps; Ras Walda Ghiorgis went West, and Ras Habta Ghiorgis with M. Darragon pushed towards Lake Rudolf,—none of these columns did much for the French. Bonchamps only got as far as Goré at the confluence of the Akobo and the Baro. The Russian Artamanov arrived at the White Nile and gallantly swam into the river to hoist the Tricolore on an island in midstream. The Swiss painter Maurice Potter was killed. But it was the rainy season and fever was prevalent, and the expeditions had to return. Marchand got to Fashoda a month later, after fighting Mahdists and persuading the Shilluk to grant France a Protectorate. Khartoum fell and after three tense months Marchand was told to strike his colours. On his trip through Ethiopia he was given the highest honours. He had several audiences with Menelik. With all show of friendliness, Menelik gave nothing away. While Menelik had consistently opposed the Khalifa’s demand that, as a condition of friendship, "he should expel all Europeans whether travellers or traders from Abyssinia," Menelik always gave the Khalifa due notice of any troop movements, e.g. when the detachment under Dajazmatch Tasamma left for the Sobat valley and the Beni Shangul area in March 1898 which was accompanied—"so as to humour the French who supplied the arms—by MM. Faivre and Potter of the Bonchamps mission and the Russian Colonel Artamanov. It was only a reconnaissance expedition,” Menelik insisted, “not big enough to make effective any occupation.”

101 G. N. Sanderson, ibid., p. 68.
102 Sanderson, p. 66 quoted from Folder 12 of the C.S. Archives Mahdia 1/34, September-October, 1896.
Hence, Rodd had not been so wrong in his assessment of Menelik’s policy towards the French.

“My own impression is that Menelik has been shrewd enough to use the French as in the first instance, he used the Italians, for his own particular ends. He has obtained from them all that he wants in the way of arms and ammunition, together with a certain moral support of the territorial claims he had advanced but now that they come to him to claim their reward, he refers them to their former protestations of disinterested friendship with a somewhat pained surprise that they should demand material advantages which he could concede at the price of offending other Powers whom he desires to conciliate.”

Menelik’s future policy needed a counterbalance to the French who were becoming too numerous and ubiquitous for his liking.

The creation of a railway and the cession of the Somali areas and tribes was shifting the axis of Ethiopia southwards, away from large entanglements in the North. The next military exploit was in Kaffa, the home of coffee, and attacks on the Boran cattle owners. In a moment of enlightenment, Lebon had predicted that the Rodd mission “intended to turn away Menelik’s eyes from the Nile by enticing him with a valuable cession in Somaliland.” Menelik’s and Makonnen’s willingness to meet the British some of the way had further internal and external reasons. They were interested in trade and orderly government in the areas they had integrated. As Ethiopian citizens the conquered peoples could no longer be raided, they had to pay taxes voluntarily on the basis of increasing wealth. Now that the French, Italians and British were cut down to coastal powers they could play a useful part in building harbours, railways and attracting shipping. The country had suffered severely in the wars. Gleichcn noticed fertile but uninhabited lands “once teeming with population.” Menelik knew that the peasants had fled away from the roads into the inaccessible regions with a consequent abandonment of the best areas. They had to be attracted back, and given a chance to restock their stables, indeed to multiply themselves.

The Ogaden was now ready for incorporation. The British did not want it, the Italians could not afford it. Skins and meat were in greater demand than ever before. All commodities for export required skins as packing material for distant freighting. Leather was needed for shoe and saddle work. The price of cattle had increased after the rinderpest epidemic from five dollars to twenty-five dollars. Ethiopia had no time to lose. The British were pushing into the Kenya highlands and were gradually coming up from the South.

“Ethiopia’s feelers in the shape of raids in every direction are extended over a large portion of Africa which is not directly under her dominion; and these

103 Rodd to Salisbury, June 22, 1897, No. 22.
104 Lebon to Lagarde, March 27, 1897. D.D.F. No. 169.
feelers are not only withdrawn from time to time according to the exigencies of the situation, and pushed out in new directions, but the chain of responsibility is not continuous along them up to the head of Government, i.e. the King. It will require many years before even Menelik's strong arm can make itself felt in the out-of-the-way corners of what he considers the 'Ethiopian Empire' and even then there will be no security that the tips of the feelers will necessarily do his bidding. Thus for a long time to come Abyssinia will, by force of circumstances, scarcely be able to take her place in the world as a definite State, bound by defined frontiers and internally responsible to one Head.\textsuperscript{105}

While the mission had achieved a frontier for Somaliland beyond which the Ethiopians had no desire to penetrate they had not reckoned with the repercussions in the entire Horn of the Ogaden campaigns, and, after they had ended, of an ever greater dependence by the Ogaden, in competition with the camels of the British tribes, crowding into the Haud winter grazing areas. Lord Rennell of Rodd as a member and chronicler of the British Military Administration of the Horn had to devote much attention to the Haud and clashes over grazing and wells. His father, Sir Rennell Rodd, in his despatches and Memoirs was still entirely absorbed by the Nile question, caravans and the supply of the ports.

\textsuperscript{105} Gleichen, op. cit., p. 312.