



Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879: Acta Aethiopica

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Acta Aethiopica collects, translates, annotates and publishes 19th-century letters, and other brief documents which throw light on the emergence and development of modern Ethiopia. For the Horn of Africa, as for the rest of the continent, the 19th-century was a period of great change. Eurocentric views and interpretations dominate because most historical sources consist of documents written by Europeans. Therefore, it is all the more important that preserved letters from Africans, and the treaties and other agreements which exist in both an African and a European language become known in their African versions. Ethiopia, with its ancient Christian church and literate elite, has much to offer in this respect.

Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879 covers little more than a decade following the reign of King Tewodros who is often regarded as the first ruler of modern Ethiopia. After a power struggle between three contenders for the supreme position, Yohannis in Tigray was crowned king of kings in 1872. It fell on him to lead the resistance of his people against the first full-scale 19th-century attempt to conquer the country. The war was nominally a war between Egypt and Ethiopia, but the intrigues and planning leading to it were European, and officers from several European countries as well as the United States were very much in charge.

The 235 documents in this volume are written by princes, governors, and chiefs, both Christian and Muslim, by diplomatic envoys, and other court officials acting on behalf of their superiors or in their own private interest. Others are written by Orthodox and Catholic clergy students and other private citizens. No treaties between Ethiopia and other states were officially concluded during the period covered but private contracts documenting the purchase of land and more or less authentic drafts, mandates and concessions reveal the initial steps towards the creation of the coastal colonies as well as the exploitation of economic resources by Europeans. This book will be of interest to scholars concerned with African history. So that nothing in the handwriting and orthography, the style and flavor of the originals is lost, the volume includes Amharic and Arabic texts published in facsimile with translations and notes in English. If letters are preserved only in a European language copies alone are published in English.

Sven A. Rubenson was born in Sweden and educated at the University of Lund where he received degrees in Philosophy. He went to Ethiopia in 1947 and spent 30 years there in teaching, research, and administration. He established the Department of History at the Haile Sellassie I University in 1962 and was dean of the Faculty of Arts 1968-70. After his return to Sweden in 1977, he taught for ten years at Lund University. His publications include *Wichale XVII: The Attempt to Establish a Protectorate over Ethiopia* (1964), *King of Kings Tewodros of Ethiopia* (1966), *The Survival of Ethiopian independence* (1976), and numerous articles on the Horn of Africa.

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