

**INTRODUCING THE ETHIOPIAN LAW ARCHIVES:
SOME DOCUMENTS ON THE FIRST ETHIOPIAN CABINET***

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Introducing the Ethiopian Law Archives

In the course of the academic year 1964-1965, the Law Faculty of Haile Sellassie I University decided to establish the Ethiopian Law Archives.

The creation of this new facility within the Faculty was justified by a triple necessity:

1) first of all it was necessary to start collecting in a safe place all Ethiopian legal documents; they were precious, i.e., difficult to replace in case of loss or damage. It had been noted that some documents of that kind previously existing in the Faculty had been lost with little hope of ever being replaced;

2) once the documents were gathered, it would be necessary to classify them so that they would be easily available to anybody interested in them;

3) finally it was desirable that persons who might be interested in the Archives be kept informed of the progress made on the two points mentioned above.

The first task, that of gathering the documents, began in May of 1965. At that time Faculty members were asked to deposit in the Archives all documents in their possession which could be considered as coming within the jurisdiction of the new department; much of the present collection is the result of their contributions. We also contacted students, some of whom also contributed with generosity to the project by providing us with documents, mostly relating to Ethiopian legal history, which are very difficult to find nowadays. Finally the member of the Faculty in charge of the Archives started a systematic enquiry into the sources of Ethiopian law for the purpose of discovering items of interest for the collection.

The result of the first six months of our activity is that approximately a hundred and fifty items have been deposited in the Archives. Among them, we find:

- the original of a letter addressed to the Journal of Ethiopian Law by His Imperial Majesty in 1964;
- documents, mostly drafts, related to the preparation of the Ethiopian codes;

* This paper is the result of the collaboration of a student at the Law Faculty, Haile Sellassie I University, Ato Selamu Bekele, and a member of the teaching staff, Dr. J. Vanderlinden. We have an equal, although in many cases, radically different share in the preparation of the paper, but as it here stands, each of us is ready to take the responsibility for it as a whole.

- legislation that had been printed when promulgated, but which is now very difficult to find;
- excerpts on legal matters taken out of historical sources, such as chronicles, travel reports, etc.;
- work done by students of the Law Faculty, mostly translations into English of Amharic texts, but also particular studies on special subjects;
- studies by various scholars on aspects of Ethiopian law and society.

While the process of gathering documents is being carried on, every item coming into the Archives is classified according to the Law Faculty library system.

Once classified the items are put into the Archives filing cabinets and book-cases.

Finally, in order to inform people who might be interested in the Archives, the Journal of Ethiopian Law has agreed to publish regularly selected documents from the collection which seem of sufficient interest to its readers. This explains the title of this short paper, which, apart from introducing the Archives will offer to the readers of the Journal some documents related to the constitution of the first Ethiopian cabinet by Menelik II in 1908.

We hope that the publication of these documents will not only stimulate an interest on the part of Ethiopian lawyers in the Archives (it is only through their personal contributions, however small, that the Archives can be developed for the common benefit of all), but will also contribute to a deeper knowledge of Ethiopian law and legal history.

Some Documents on the First Ethiopian Cabinet¹

Although there existed state officials with specific governmental functions before the time of Menelik II (among them the Afe Negus is perhaps the most ancient we know),² it was during his reign, in 1908, that for the first time in Ethiopian history a cabinet was established.³ In fact news about the Emperor's intentions of establishing a cabinet was circulating through the country as early as November or even October of 1907, as the documents reproduced in Appendix I clearly show.⁴

Le Semeur d'Ethiopie, a French periodical published in Harrar, in its issue of November 1907, mentioned the Emperor's intentions and gave a tentative list of four names with corresponding functions. This first list differs

1. The purpose of this section is only to introduce summarily the documents contained in Appendices to this paper; it does not deal with the contents of these documents.
2. See on this point a study by Aba Paulos Tzadua in the Archives (S3), which refers to the relevant Ethiopian literature, and the notes and documents, prepared by G.W.B. Huntingford for his edition of Alvarez' *Prestre John of the Indies* (Archives, S1).
3. For all these historical developments see Balambaras Mahteme Sellassie Wolde Meskel, *Zikire Neger*, Addis Ababa, 1950; Aba Paulos, cited above at note 2, *passim*, and Guebre Sellassie, *Chronique du regne de Menelik II, roi des rois d'Ethiopie* (1932), vol. 2, pp. 527-28, and notes thereto.
4. See the excerpts from *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie*. Year 3, Nov. 1907, p. 301 and Year 4, Feb. 1908, pp. 354-355, in Appendix I, below.

from the final one on two points: Afe Negus Nessibu became Minister of Justice and not Prime Minister (the latter office was never formally established) and Liqe Mequas Ketema became Minister of Interior and not Minister of Justice. But *Le Semeur* also mentioned the names of three other persons as being possible Ministers. Of these, only one received a cabinet post: Negadras Haile Giorgis, who was appointed Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, not Minister of the Pen as predicted in *Le Semeur*. As for Dejazmatch Mechacha Worquie and Negadras Iggezou, they were not appointed.

In its issue of February 1908, *Le Semeur* provides us with the full and accurate list of the new Excellencies and, at the same time, enables us to date with precision the new institution, which was proclaimed, according to this source, on January 26, 1908. In this Proclamation, the Ministers⁵ were nine some of them being responsible for more than one branch of public administration. They were:

1. Afe Negus Nessibu	Minister of Justice
2. Fitawrari Habte Giorgis	Minister of War
3. Tsahafi Tazaz Gebre Selassie	Minister of Pen
4. Liqe Mequas Ketema	Minister of Interior
5. Bejerond Mulugeta	Minister of Finance
6. Negadras Haile Giorgis	Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs
7. Kentiba Wolde Tsadiq	Minister of Agriculture and Industry
8. Azaje Metaferia	Minister of Imperial palace
9. Kegnazmatch Mekonnen Tewondbelai	Minister of Public Works

We do not have the proclamation by which the new framework was established but, fortunately, the rules that were devised by Menelik for the nine Ministers were preserved through the *Zikre Neger* of Balambaras Mahteme Sellassie Wolde Meskel.⁶ Each set of rules defines the jurisdiction of a Minister by giving a list of his powers and duties. Some texts are fairly long, one having twenty six articles (for the Minister of Finance), and some others are very short (there are only four articles for the Minister of Justice, but this could very well be because the functions of the Afe Negus had been sufficiently defined in the course of time). There was one set of instructions for each Minister with the exception of the Minister of Interior, who also had under his jurisdiction Public Health and received special additional instructions on that subject, and the Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, who received instructions for each of his two responsibilities.

5. Translator's note: The Amharic word for Ministry is *ministair* and the Amharic words for Minister is *ministir*. The two terms are used in the regulations of the Ministries interchangeably. The most commonly used term in the regulations is *ministair*. Only in three instances is the term *ministir* used, but without a difference of sense in meaning. Note as well that Memere Besserat in his allegorical essay (Appendix II, below) all through uses the term *ministair* and never *ministir*. But in his case the meaning is clear: he means the person and not the department.

6. Cited at note 4, above. We must express here all our thanks to Balambaras Mahteme Sellassie Wolde Meskel, for having so generously allowed the reproduction and translation of these documents.

We are reproducing these rules in the following pages (Appendix II) as they were published a few years ago in the *Zikre Neger*; the texts have here been translated into English for the first time.

Some time after Menelik established the Ministries, a man whom we know under the name of Memere Besserat of Manz published a short pamphlet dealing, in allegorical fashion, with the new institutions. That pamphlet is interesting not only because it was the second book ever to be printed in the country,⁷ but also because it was the very first to be totally devoted, even indirectly, to a legal subject. The pamphlet is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix III, below.

The allegory representing the newly created cabinet is that of the human body and was borrowed from various passages of the Bible.⁸ Its general purpose was to show the unity existing between the new institutions and the Emperor, in reaction, it seems, against those who saw in the new organs a division of the Imperial power and a weakening of Menelik's authority. The relevance of the biblical texts to the description of the cabinet generally is very clear (in some cases the author has reproduced passages almost without change), but at times one cannot see where the parallel lies. However, analysis of the texts is not our task here. Our only purpose is to introduce them to the reader as we did the rules drafted by Menelik for each Minister. Let us hope that starting from these narrow bases some scholar will one day be able to relate the full story of the first Ethiopian cabinet.

APPENDIX I

Articles in *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie* concerning the appointment of the first Ethiopian Cabinet (*Le Semeur d'Ethiopie*, 3d year November, 1907, p. 301 and 4th year, February, 1908, pp. 354-355).

1. November, 1907. Constitution of a Ministry.¹

During the month of October, Emperor Menelik took the initiative of a reform unprecedented in the history of Abyssinia, by constituting a Ministry in the European way.

Here are, by way of information, the names of the candidates known up to now.

President of the Council:	Afa Negous Nezibo. ²
Minister of war:	Fitaorari Apte Guiorguis.
Minister of Justice:	Likemoikois Katama.
Minister of Agriculture:	Kantiba Wold Tsadek.

7. See S. Wright, "Book and Manuscript collection in Ethiopia," *J. Eth. Studies*, vol. II No. 1 (Jan., 1964), especially pp. 14-15.

8. For the convenience of the reader we have supplied in footnotes to Appendix III the text of all biblical references cited in the text.

1. The following texts are a translation from the French original.

2. The names of the Ministers are here reproduced in the original spelling of the article.

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One considers also as possible Ministers, the following persons: Dedjazmatch Mechacha Worquie would be in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nagad-Ras Iggezou would take charge of Finances. Nagad-Ras Haile Guiorguis would fill the post of Minister of the Pen.

2. February, 1908. Proclamation of the new Abyssinian Ministers.

In one of our last issues we announced the constitution of an Abyssinian Ministry. Today more precise information coming from Addis Ababa allows us to rectify and complete the list of Ministers which have been elected and proclaimed.

The seven² already appointed were proclaimed in the Ghebi on Sunday the 26th of January and two others were appointed and proclaimed at the same time.

Old.

Justice:	Afa Negous Nazibou.
Foreign Relations and Commerce:	Negad - Ras Haile Guiorguis.
Finance:	Badjironde Moulou-Gueta.
Agriculture:	Kantiba Wold Tsadek.
War:	Fitaorari Apte Guiorguis.
Pen.	Alaka Guebre Sellassie.

New.

Public Works:	Kagnasamatch Mekonnen.
Palace:	Assallafi Matafaria.

APPENDIX II

Menelik's Decrees on the Organization of Ministries.

I. Rules of the Ministry of Interior (Zikire Neger, pp. 109-110).

1. This Minister shall be the *Negus'* Minister and shall govern the governorate of Shoa as the *Negus'* deputy. It is he who is the *Negus'* deputy before all the governors.
 2. It is his duty to send the orders of the *Negus* to the governors. If the Government appoints officers in the towns, these officers shall obey this Minister.
 3. The Minister of Interior is chief of the Police Force. In this matter all governors shall take orders from him. Since he is the securer of human life, he shall protect the inhabitants of the country: the Amharas the *ferengis*, Gallas and others.
 4. They shall notify the Minister of Interior (sic). In cooperation with the Minister of Health, they shall protect the health of the people, doing all things necessary,
3. Although *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie* only mentions six Ministers in the following list, forgetting Likemoikais Katama as Minister of the Interior.

5. The Minister of Interior shall facilitate the taking of a census of the population in all areas. It is he who shall order the governors to have censuses taken in their governorates.
6. He shall have annually registered into a large register the censuses sent to him from the governors.
7. The Minister of Interior shall also have births, deaths and marriages of persons registered in the Honor Book.
8. He shall show the report of the governors every year to the *Negus* and the other Ministers and after having it copied into a large register, he shall deposit it in the State Treasury.
9. It is he who levies personal and income taxes. Therefore, he shall send the population data of the governorates along with the revenue accounts and the copy of the books to the Minister of Finance as soon as he is asked to do so.
10. The functions of the Minister of Interior are divided into four (sic) departments:
 - a) The administration of the Governorate of Shoa.
 - b) The administration of the governorates in the north up to the east of Shoa; from Gojjam to Adal country along the Tigre and Wollo countries.
 - c) The administration of countries west and south of Shoa; from Harrar to Gojjam and along Kaffa and Jimma.
 - d) Census.
 - e) Police and Security Forces.

II. Rules of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Zikire Neger, pp. 178-181).

1. The main function of this Minister is concerned with foreigners. He shall deal with ministers of other States.
2. The *Negus* alone shall decide upon a major political issue that may arise between Ethiopia and any other foreign State. Even then, the Minister shall study the whole matter before hand and present it to the *Negus*. It is he who shall write the final letter of agreement or settlement executed by the *Negus*.
3. It is this Minister who shall present to the *Negus* any guests or ministers of foreign States who come to Ethiopia.
4. The ministers of other countries shall present their credentials from their governments to him.
5. Foreign consuls and resident ministers deserve respect. Representatives of foreign States should enjoy some sort of immunity. A foreign representative, his family and secretaries should not be harmed, assaulted, troubled or arrested, because such can be a cause of War. Also it is forbidden to enter with force into embassies, consulates or legations, since because of this hostilities may arise. The State enforces such law in every country where there is law and order. Therefore, the Minister of Foreign Affairs shall be the chief protector of foreign consuls and ministers.
6. It is his duty to make agreements concerning post, telegraph and telephone with other States.

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7. Also to make agreements with other States for the aid of the sick and the wounded, so that they may not be harmed.
8. Any foreigner coming into Ethiopia shall show his or her passport to this Minister or his deputies.
9. This Minister should first see all agreements of trade or contracts of farming or house building tendered to foreigners. After such agreements have been formed he shall copy them in his registers.
10. He shall receive on behalf of the Ethiopian Government land grants from and execute loan agreements with a foreign State.
11. If a foreigner brings a law-suit against an Ethiopian before his own consulate it is this Minister who shall protect State interests in the trial.
12. If the Ethiopian Government intends to deport a foreigner from the Ethiopian territory on political or any other grounds it is this Minister who shall discuss and settle the matter with the particular consulate of the foreigner.
13. There is an agreement between the Ethiopian Government and ministers of foreign States concerning the extradition of criminals or the granting of asylum. The Foreign Minister shall execute this agreement in cooperation with the consul involved.
14. Provincial governors shall be deputies of this Minister in matters concerning passports and visas and extradition.
15. The Minister of Foreign Affairs shall be head of all Ethiopian consuls, ministers and ambassadors abroad. All Ethiopian envoys in a foreign country shall take orders and directions from him. When there is a need of establishing a new consulate in any country this Minister shall present the matter to the *Negus*.
16. This Minister shall appoint and send Ethiopian envoys to other countries on behalf of the *Negus*. Until the Ethiopian Government appoints Ethiopian envoys in Europe this Minister can appoint there *ferengis* as consuls. Since these persons have other jobs they shall serve as consuls for the Ethiopian State only for its honour, without remuneration, except for stationery and postage expenses.
17. The Ethiopian Government has a consulate in Djibouti. There must be other consulates in Jerusalem, Aden, Massawa, Khartoum and at the at the frontier of the British Sudan.
18. The Minister of Foreign Affairs shall divide his work into four departments:
 - a) To discuss matters with foreign consuls and foreign States.
 - b) To discuss matters with other States and their ministers.
 - c) To translate contracts, passports (visas),
 - d) books, writs, newspapers concerning or belonging to foreigners in Ethiopia.

III. Rules of the Minister of Palace, Post, Telegraph and Telephone (Zikire Neger, p. 490)

1. The main job of this Minister is to attend to the Palace.

2. Wherever the *Negus* may be, whether in the Palace or outside it, this Minister is the main attendant to him.
3. He is the one who shall organise and administer the Palace. It is he who shall receive delegates of foreign States at the entrance to the City and shall escort them to the Palace until they are received by the *Negus*.
4. He is the head of telegraph and telephone. All others who are working in this field shall obey him. They shall prepare their account book every three months. The Minister shall transmit this book to the Minister of Finance.

IV. The Minister of Commerce and Customs (Zikire Neger, pp. 377-378).

1. This Minister shall supervise the commercial transactions of the country.
2. He is head of all customs officials and *negad rassotch* officials of the Department of Commerce.
3. He shall present plans and projects to the Government which may increase the commerce of the country.
4. He shall present to the Government plans of customs arrangements which are suitable to the merchants and at the same time increase inland revenue.
5. When it is necessary to impose, amend or abolish a system of taxation it is this Minister who shall present such proposal to the Government.
6. He shall keep customs accounts in two books.
7. He shall record all goods and products imported and exported so that he may report to the Government at the end of each year.
8. The *negad rassotch* shall send to him a quarterly review of the revenue in their districts.
9. This Minister shall transmit the books of the *negad rassotch* at the end of every year to the Ministry of Finance.
10. He shall be a judge for traders. He may appoint a deputy to assist him in the adjudication of commercial disputes. In cases involving *ferengis* he shall appoint some number from among the *ferengis* and decide the case with them.
11. If the consuls apply for the termination of a trade license of one of their nationals the Minister of Commerce shall settle such dispute in person with strict adherence to the law so as to avoid any blemish on the Government's reputation.
12. Appeals from the decision of the Minister of Commerce shall lie to the *Afenequs* or the *Negus*.
13. In matters involving trade agreements with a foreign government the Minister of Commerce and the Minister of Foreign Affairs shall study the matter and present it to the Government.
14. All agreements entered into by the Ethiopian Government with a foreign country are only for a fixed period of time. Thus, the Ministers of Commerce and Foreign Affairs shall notify the Government a year in advance about the date of expiry of the agreement.
15. He shall impose a business and alcohol tax receivable from all merch-

- ants. He shall collect this tax each month and give it to the State Treasury.
16. He shall transfer all tax account books to the Minister of Finance at the end of each year.
 17. The Minister of Commerce shall help the Minister of Public Health in respect to the following matter. In the sale of food-stuff and alcoholic merchandises he shall see to it that such goods are not harmful to health.
 18. The Minister of Commerce shall divide his work into five departments:
 - a) Business Transaction Division.
 - b) Customs Division for the City of Addis Ababa.
 - c) Customs Division for the rest of the territory of Ethiopia.
 - d) Accounts Section.
 - e) Commercial cases Division.
- V. Rules of the Minister of Agriculture and Industry (Zikire Neger, pp. 317-319).
1. The function of this Minister shall be concerned with agricultural wealth and industry.
 2. It is the duty of this Minister to see that the land is well cultivated, old agricultural tools are replaced by good ones, distribute various crop seeds when he has any and accumulate other varieties in addition. He shall also see to it that cattle breeding is done, in order to make the country wealthy. He shall do this after the European manner.
 3. He shall be the protector of the peasants and shall enforce the law concerning them.
 4. He shall compensate with money and honour all those persons who have cultivated their land efficiently, who have harvested a large crop and bred many cattle and those officers who have supervised the works of the good farmers.
 5. He shall have punished those person who have neglected their farms.
 6. If there is a crop failure in a certain area or a country suffers from cattle disease or epidemic the Minister of Agriculture shall present this case to the Government. He shall arrange that the tithe and tax be reduced for such area while it must be increased in another, rich area.
 7. It is the duty of this Ministry to supervise the cultivated land of the farmers in order to avoid crop failure. He must see that the farmers obey the doctors in regard to their own health and the health of their cattle.
 8. This Minister shall find out what part of the governorate is cultivated, forest, pasture land or arable or neglected land.
 9. He shall record all notice from governorates in the Commercial Register.
 10. The governors shall report to this Minister the number of cattle in their governorates and he shall also have a cattle census made.
 11. The Minister of Agriculture shall form and execute contracts of hire of land for commercial establishments or for the opening of factories. He shall also consult in this matter with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs

- and Finance and he shall give a copy of the contract to each Minister.
12. If an agricultural school is established in a province it shall be supervised by this Minister.
 13. This Minister and the Minister of Public Works shall together execute major agricultural projects with the advice of an agricultural engineer.
 14. He shall protect the forest wealth of the country. He shall forbid the indiscriminate cutting of trees, since that will hasten soil erosion. He shall decide which sort of trees may be cut down and which may not. He shall order that young trees should never be cut down. In this job he shall be assisted by the governors.
 15. He shall have government farms cultivated according to the order of the *Nigus*.
 16. He shall impose land, cattle and service taxes. He shall annually require the book for these taxes from the governors so that he may keep his account. After he has closed his book he shall transmit it to the Minister of Finance.
- VI. **Rules of the Ministry of Public Works (Zikire Neger, pp. 426-427).**
1. The construction of roads, railways and other public works is the function of this Minister.
 2. He shall supervise the construction of government buildings. He shall make contracts with engineers and constructors.
 3. He shall maintain and repair all government roads, bridges and buildings.
 4. He shall supervise the cutting of wood for use for public works.
 5. He shall enforce contracts in regard to the cutting of wood or the sale of pumped water.
 6. In cooperation with the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Public Works shall build dams across big rivers for irrigation purposes.
 7. He shall execute contracts into which he has entered according to their terms.
 8. He is the supervisor of railway works to be constructed in Ethiopia.
 9. His agents by his order shall watch all roads and bridges where money has to be paid in order to pass through. They shall also collect the fares.
 10. Since the governors collect such fares in their own governorates on behalf of the Ministry, they shall every year send to him what they have collected.
 11. This Minister shall deposit the fares he has collected, along with the account books, in the State Treasury.
 12. He shall supervise the store for equipment for public works; at the end of each year he shall transfer the list of the equipment along with the register to the Minister of Finance.
- VII. **Rule of the Minister of Finance and State Treasury (Zikire Neger, pp. 195-199).**

This Minister is principal keeper of the Government Treasury.

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This is his work.

1. The Government Treasury, the *Negus'* private treasury and the Crown Treasury are three separate treasuries.
2. This Minister shall keep the *Negus'* private treasury and the Crown Treasury.
 - a) The *Negus'* private property shall pass to his heirs on his death, or he may give away from this property as a gift to the Church, to the home for the Sick, for charity or to any person.
 - b) The Crown property shall be the *Negus'* during his lifetime, but after him the new *Negus'* shall inherit such property.
3. Government property shall be disbursed only for the administration of the country and for state affairs.
4. The Minister of Finance is the agent of the Government in its transactions with banks and other treasuries.
5. He is the head of all local treasurers. It is he who shall have them appointed by the order of the *Negus*.
6. He shall collect into the coffer all Government revenues. When incomes from the various ministries, governorates public corporations, banks, monopolies, other government departments, etc. are deposited with the Minister of Finance, the books shall be deposited as well. The books shall be deposited in a safe in the house of the Minister of Finance. The Minister shall give a receipt to this effect.
7. All government expenditures shall be drawn only from the safe of the Minister of Finance; the Minister shall receive a receipt to this effect.
8. Orders about revenues and expenditures shall either be deposited or drawn in the first five days of each month.
9. The Ministers shall send their books of account to the Minister of Finance within the first five days of each month. They shall also return all surplus or repay the deficit from the previous month during this time.
10. Aside from major withdrawals or deposits of money there may be other extraordinary expenditures by order of the *Negus*. Therefore, the Treasury must be open for four hours every day except on Sundays and holidays.
11. The Minister of Finance is the one who shall make government contracts when it is convenient by tender to government suppliers.
12. The Minister of Finance shall be informed of contracts, monopolies, agricultural contracts, etc. made with foreigners. He is the keeper of the Government Treasury.
13. All government account books shall be in the hands of the Minister of Finance.
14. Government account books must be kept in two copies. This should be so because, if one is lost the second one shall remain and it will be possible to find the accounts when they are looked for.
15. The Minister of Finance shall issue a quarterly balance sheet. Provincial treasurers shall also do the same and send the sheets to this Minister.
16. There shall be a budget-expenditure report at the end of every year.

The government books of account shall be deposited with the Minister of Finance and shall be shown to the *Negus* and the Councillors.

17. The Minister of Finance may at his own discretion send to the provinces an inspector who shall inspect the books and accounts of the provincial treasuries.
18. At the end of every year the Minister of Finance shall make an inventory of the goods stored in the Stores, listing the goods in a separate register. The Minister of Public Works may demand the register of goods for government works.
19. The Minister of Finance shall close all books of account, including those of other Ministers, and these will become Government property.
20. After the budgetary year is over and the balance sheet has been issued the surplus shall be kept in separate coffer and shall be a government reserve. There shall be one officer in charge of this reserve account, because the register is separate. When money is drawn from this coffer the assembly of the Councillors must be consulted.
21. In time of crisis, that is, at a time when "cholera" is wide-spread, or in time of war, epidemic or famine, when revenue will be less than expenditure and a deficit accrues, the Government shall draw from the reserve account and cover the deficit.
22. If the Government borrows money to execute a major project it is the Minister of Finance who shall arrange and repay the loan along with the interest in accordance with any such agreement entered into.
23. Withdrawals from or deposits in the coffer of the Minister of Finance shall be made with a double receipt. The copy shall be kept with the books in the Treasury and shall be identical with the original.
24. The accounting of the books of the Ministry of Finance should be accurate. If the account is not accurate the Government may become bankrupt.
25. The *Negus* has ordered the assembly of the Councillors to convene. When this assembly meets, from Tabessas 7th to 15th (E.C.), the Minister of Finance shall give to this assembly a report on the economy of the country every year.
26. The work of this Minister shall be divided as follows and he shall appoint a head for each department:
 - a) Tax and Customs Division.
 - b) Finance Secretariat Division.
 - c) Treasuries Division.
 - d) Banks Division.
 - e) Reserve Accounts Division.
 - f) Imperial Wardrobes and Regalia Division.
 - g) Division for Stores.

Each department shall have its own seal, but for major official transaction the seal of the Minister is necessary.

VIII Rules of the Ministry of Justice (Zikire Neger, pp. 71-72).

1. This Minister is the head of the judges of the land.

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2. It is he who must review diligently all cases in accordance with the the *Fetha Negast*.
 3. He shall have all judgments in the Palace, from the Chillot and judgments passed in the provinces recorded.
 4. Copies of the judgments of the judges sitting in the various places and thousands (district) shall be sent to him and shall be reviewed by him every year.
- IX. Rules of the Ministry of War (Zikire Neger, pp. 228-229).**
1. The War Minister is the head of the army of the *Negus*. He supervises that soldiers are kept in their divisions and that military training is given to them.
 2. He shall wait on the order of the *Negus* to make war preparations.
 3. He shall keep and be in charge of the munitions, weapons and supply stores of the army.
 4. He shall be the liaison between the Government and the army in all Military matters, including the adjudication of cases.
 5. He is the supervisor of the Shoan regiment and also of the army of the governors when warfare tactics are changed.
 6. In time of war the army mobilises by his command.
 7. He shall order that the army get supplies from the inhabitants of the area through which it passes.
 8. When the people of a region rebel against the Government and the governor of that region cannot bring peace to it, the Minister of War shall mobilise his soldiers, surround the region and invade it until he subdues the rebels. He shall do this job in cooperation with the governor of the region.
 9. If the *Negus* levies a tax for war purposes this shall be the work of the Minister of War. The Ministers of Interior and Finance shall help him.
- X. Rules of the Minister of Health (Zikire Neger, pp. 704-706).**
1. This Minister is the protector of all men and animals.
 2. He shall present programmes to the Government for the eradication of serious diseases in the country or the prevention of one from entering into the country. If the Government cannot prevent the serious disease other States must prohibit the entry of persons, animals or goods into their countries from the area where the disease exists. There is an international agreement to this effect.
 3. He shall have the cleanliness of the country maintained and he shall order medical checkups in regard to the health of persons.
 4. He shall be the supervisor of all places which are open to the public, so that they may not be the cause of harm endangering human health.
 5. No one shall be permitted to open a place which is to be open for the public unless such premise is examined and approved by the Minister of Health. The Minister may submit to the Government that the office in regard to its goods or location is free of harm to the public

6. All Government physicians shall obey him, and they shall be appointed on his recommendation.
 7. He is the supervisor of all hospitals, whether they are Government or private or belong to a foreign State.
 8. All hospitals in the country shall be opened only with his approval. Before approving he shall examine the plan and location of the hospital.
 9. No physician or pharmacist may open a pharmacy and sell medicine in the provinces until the Minister of Health examines their certificates and gives them a licence. He must also supervise them.
 10. If such physicians and pharmacists are caught for a serious offence the Minister of Health may revoke their licences. If their offences are very grave he may deport them from the country by the order of the Government.
 11. The Minister of Health is head of the veterinarians.
 12. If there is a medical emergency he shall inform all physicians in Ethiopia. He shall also collect their licences.
 13. Where an agreement between the Ethiopian Government and a foreign State in regard to health becomes necessary the Minister of Health shall form such agreement together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, so that nothing bad may result.
- XI. Rules of the Minister of Pen (Keeper of the Great Seal) (Zikre Neger, p. 646).**
1. This Minister is head of the secretaries of the *Negus*. He shall work in the Palace of the *Negus*.
 2. He shall copy in a large register every written document to be sent out from the Palace. No written document which is not to be copied on the register should be sent out from the Palace.
 3. He shall keep all copies of documents and old books in the state coffer.
 4. The awarding of decorations is his responsibility.
 5. He is head of all government presses.

INTRODUCING THE ETHIOPIAN LAW ARCHIVES

Appendix III-An Allegorical Essay on the Establishment of Ministries by
Menelik II.

A BOOK OF COUNSEL IN ALLEGORY AND INTERPRETATION BEING
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE HOLY BIBLE WRITTEN FOR ANY
ONE WHO LOVES HIS KING¹ AND COUNTRY

Ethiopian Press at Addis Ababa

Published for the Ethiopian people, big and small, at the City of Addis Ababa in the year 1904 after the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in Year of Grace, in order to make known the functions of the Ministers by way of an allegory, and to explain that the work of the Ministers has power to make King and subjects of one heart and will.

To beloved excellent Ministers:

I do not pretend to increase and enlarge knowledge. I write Symbolising the King as the Head and the Ministers as parts of the body only in order to reveal the idea in my heart² to those children who are eager to learn.

Memere Besserat of Menz.

HERE ARE THE THOUGHTS OF ONE WHO LOVES
HIS COUNTRY AND KING

I write in allegory about the functions of the State, which can be done severally and still reflect unity, after the manner of Saint Paul in whom the spirit of knowledge dwelt and who wrote in allegory about the church.

Menelik II, according to the grace of God, in the bounty of his knowledge, built a foundation as a wise master-builder. But let every man take heed how he builds upon that . . . If any man builds on this foundation his work will stand. And he whose work abides shall receive a reward. I Corinthians ch.3:10, 11 and 14.³

There are differences between ministries, but the giver, who is God, is one. I Corinthians ch. 12:15.⁴ Similarly, in Nature, from our hair to our toe we are one body and one flesh. Nevertheless, there are parts which have differences in name and function.

1. Translators' note: The Amharic word *mengist*, from the Geez, is variously used of mean King, State or Government. See Kidane Wold Kifle, *Matsahafe Sawashe Wagissa Wamezegabe Qalat Hadis* (1956), p. 625.
2. Translator's note: The heart is considered as the organ of thought (Matthew, 12:35). See also Kidane Wold Kifle, cited above at note 1, p. 555.
3. "10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ . . . 14. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." This quotation and those following are taken from the King James version of the Bible.
4. "5. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord."

In name they are these: Head, Ear, Nose, Eye, Mouth, Heart, Stomach, Hand, Foot and others.

These various parts are different in function.

The Function of the Head

It is the chief of the parts of the body, exists fitly joined together with soul, flesh, bone and nerve. It is also a box for the accumulation of knowledge. It cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions. Ephesians ch. 4:15 and 16.⁵

The Function of the Ear

The Ear has a mechanism to attract sound waves in order to blend with the Head and the Heart all the wisdom and knowledge that is obtained by learning. Had the Ear not existed, knowledge and fruitful talk would not have been found. Instead, we would have been like other animals. It cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions.

The Function of the Eye

The Eye is the light of the body, created with light for seeing. It is a guide for works done by the Hand and Foot and for wisdom obtained by learning. It can see all things having material body. It cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions. Matthew ch. 6:22.⁶

The Function of the Nose

The Nose is a path for the breath of our life and a smelling organ for good and evil. It cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions. Genesis ch. 2:6.⁷

The Function of the Mouth

The Mouth is the speech organ for talking good and evil whatever it is ordered or not ordered to talk. It cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions.

The Function of the Heart

The Heart is the source of good and evil thoughts. But it cannot perform the rest of the functions. Matthew ch. 19:35.⁸

The Function of the Stomach

The Stomach is a storage place for food and drinks. It distributes in the body the nutritious elements and disposes of the refuse. If our body is not

5. "15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all thing, which is the head, even Christ: 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

6. "22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

7. "7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

8. Matthew ch. 19:35 does not exist. We think that the author refers to Matthew ch. 12:35, which reads: "35. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

fed and nourished, it will not produce blood, and if there is no blood, the soul will separate from the body. The Stomach cannot, however, perform the rest of the functions. Acts ch. 27:34.⁹

The Function of the Hand

The Hand is the instrument of every work achieved through wisdom: machines and factories of different types for work in iron and bronze, silver and gold ; agricultural tools, typewriters, sewing machines, different types of tools for house building, and other similar things. But it cannot perform the rest of the functions. Acts ch. 20:34; 1 Thessalonians ch. 2:9.¹⁰

The Function of the Foot

The Foot is power and strength for all the parts enumerated above to stand on. It also serves for walking where the Heart desires. But it cannot perform the rest of the functions.

These parts of the body are called one body and one flesh, because God has fashioned them harmoniously in one flesh and only separated them in name and functions. And if the foot may say, "Because I am not Hand, I am not of the body," is it not of the body? No, it is. Or, if the whole body were the Eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were the Ear, where would be the smelling? The Eye cannot say to the Hand that it has no need of it. Nor can the Head say to the Feet and Hands and the rest that it has no need of them. If one suffer, all will suffer with it. If one rejoices, all will rejoice with it. If these members, which are different in name and function and are harmoniously joined together in the flesh, together caring for one another, do not fulfill their functions, they will perish together. 1 Corinthians ch. 12:15,16, and 26.¹¹

First

The King is as the Head. The allegory is this: the King is above all creation, protector of all creation, the source of all knowledge and the foundation of all wisdom. The parts of the body of which I write below are the Ministers. However, the King cannot perform the rest of the functions.

Second

The Ministers are as the Ear. The Ear is the first to hear the good and evil. It is the one that attracts knowledge. The Head cannot get knowledge

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9. "34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."
 10. Acts ch. 20:34 reads: "34. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that with me." 1 Thessalonians ch. 2:9 reads: "9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."
 11. "15. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore, not of the body? . . . 17. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 26. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

and cleverness without it. Similarly, the King by himself and without counselors cannot get knowledge and strength, wealth and generosity.

Third

The Ministers are as the Eye. The Eye is the light of the body. No human being can do work without light. Similarly, the King cannot have knowledge or expand his domain or vanquish his enemy without the Ministers. As the Eye is light for the whole body, so is a minister a light of knowledge for the King.

The Eye protects from many harms all parts of the body, from Head to Foot. Similarly, a Minister fully protects the people from coast to coast in order that oppression and strife may not exist with the King and the People.

Fourth

The Ministers are as the Nose. The Nose is the path for the life of the body. The life of the King is the Ministers. The Nose provides to the body a pleasing good smell. Similarly, the Ministers provide to the King pleasing things: the extent of his domain, the number of his army, the development of his country, the knowledge for his people and other good and pleasing things. If the Nose smells a bad smell, there will be sufferance for all the body. Similarly, if the Ministers smell (that is to say, think) bad thoughts *shiffias* and offenders, discomfort of the State, will increase in the country. This honour will be no more. Wealth and gain will be lost.

Fifth

The Ministers are as the Mouth. The Mouth is an organ for the expression of ideas and counsel. Because speaks what is left over from the heart. Similarly, the Ministers in council after deliberation can convict an offender against the King, and can punish him according to the gravity of the offence and can publicise the punishment rendered against him. Proverbs ch 25:2 and 7.¹² Protecting themselves from many bribes and gifts, they may accordingly reward the doer of good. Exodus ch. 23:8; Romans ch. 13:3 and 4.¹³

Sixth

The Ministers are as the Heart. The Heart is a place where good and evil thoughts are bred. Similarly, if good ideas and counsel issue from a good Minister, there shall be peace and health in our State and Country. If there

12. "2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is the search out a matter 7. For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen." The connection with the text of the allegory is here very loose, if not non-existent.

13. Exodus ch. 23:8 reads: "8. And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous." Romans ch. 13:3 and 4 read: "3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

issue bad ideas and counsel from a bad Minister, there will come to our State and Country war, hunger, disrespect, ignorance and things of similar kind. Proverbs ch. 11:14; Matthew ch. 12:35.¹⁴

Seventh

The Ministers are as the Stomach. The Stomach is the carrier of nutrition which gives energy and power to the whole body. It gives to each of the parts of the body proportionally strength and blood. Similarly, the Ministers give to our Country and State the nutrition of counsel, which will be power and energy. Psalms ch. 104:15.¹⁵

Eighth

The Ministers are as the Hand. The Hand becomes prosperous by doing all works which it obtained through knowledge. Similarly, if the Ministers do their work together and with full knowledge, they will enrich the State and make it prosperous as well. 2 Thessalonians 3:8.¹⁶

Ninth

The Ministers are as the Foot. The Foot is the carrier and chair of the body. The parts of the body cannot stand without it. Similarly, the State cannot stand alone without the counsel of the Ministers. The throne and power of the King are the Ministers. Proverbs ch. 15:22.¹⁷

As these parts of the body are different in name and functions and are called one body so are the Ministers different in name and functions and are called one Government. As the Foot cannot dismember itself from the body saying that it is not the Hand, so one of the Ministers cannot say that he is not a member of the Government and a servant of the State. 1 Corinthians ch. 12:15.¹⁸

If the body were the Eye, where would be the smelling? If the whole body were the Ear, where would be the hearing? 1 Corinthians ch. 12:17.¹⁹ Similarly, if all the Ministers were War Ministers, where would be the Ministers of Agriculture and Commerce. If all were Finance Ministers, where would be the Minister of Justice. What is more, the Head cannot say to the Foot and Hand that it has no need of them. 1 Corinthians ch. 12:21.²⁰ All are workers. Similarly, the King cannot say to his Ministers that he has no need of them, because they are his helpers.

14. "14. Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." As for Matthew ch. 12:35, see note 8 above.
15. "15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart."
16. "8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:"
17. "22. Without counsels purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."
18. See note 11 above.
19. See note 11 above.
20. "21. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

God has assigned to each his work, but if one suffers all will suffer and if one rejoices all will rejoice. 1 Corinthians ch. 12:26.²¹ Even if the functions of the workers are different in name, the Ministers are all one in protecting the Country and the King. Proverbs ch. 21:22.²²

The Minister for Home Rule is as the Eye. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Telephone are as the Ear. The Ministers of Commerce and Agriculture and Industry are as the Hand. The Ministers of Finance and Agriculture are as the Stomach. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is as the Heart, because the secrets of foreign States which are deliberated by the Ministers in council are performed through him.

Also, the Minister of Justice is as the Mouth, because he convicts and punishes. The Minister of War is symbolised as the Foot, because in him is found power and strength, All are the employees of the King and they work with the King.

As the Eye cannot become the Ear and hear, leaving aside the function of seeing, so it seems that one Minister cannot leave the work to which he is assigned and do the work of another. But if the functions appears different externally, they are not different internally. They are one, linked like a chain. As the function of the Eye is useful for the body, so is it necessary to realise that the function of one Minister is useful for all the Ministers.

Also, as our Head, which is the chief of the parts of the body, would not like to lose one of its workers, so the King, who is the chief of the Ministers, would not like to lose one of his workers. But each according to his toil shall take a reward. No one should establish an improper foundation in his heart, but his thoughts should be proportional.

Since we have various gifts from the King, the one among us who is given knowledge should proclaim knowledge, and if he is a minister, let him be diligent in ministering, and if he is a teacher, he must be diligent in teaching. Romans ch. 12:6 and 7.²³ A man who obtains knowledge will be saved from evil, but how will knowledge be obtained if it is not learned and how will it be learned if there is no teacher. And how will the teacher teach if the State does not build schools. Romans ch. 10:14.²⁴ A school is the foundation of knowledge and the source of all knowledge. To one who observed and to one who has searched, the school appears superior to the church. As the school is a foundation for the church, so is the State a foundation for the school.

21. See note 11 above.

22. "22. A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof."

23. "6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; 7. Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;"

24. "14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

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Dear excellent Ministers,

Who have been appointed to assort and reconcile all these, do not neglect to build schools beforehand, since you have known that a school is the foundation of wisdom and knowledge. As Ethiopia has been existing protected up to now by the knowledge of Atse Menilik, so you have to extend in Ethiopia the knowledge and thoughts of your heart.

I, being from the nation of the Ethiopian people, who have passed my days in ignorance and from whom knowledge is as far as the sky is, beg of you not to consider my reminding you, in so far as my limited knowledge could permit, symbolising the King as the Head, and the Ministers as the parts of the body, as impudence. There is no one, whether big or small, who is not jealous for his Country and King.

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Ethiopian Press at Addis Ababa.
