

**A Contemporary Biography of Ras Alula: A Ge'ez Manuscript from  
Manawe, Tamben--II**



Haggai Erlich

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# A CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY OF RAS ALULA : A GE'EZ MANUSCRIPT FROM MĀNĀWĒ, TĀMBĒN—II

By HAGGAI ERLICH

*December 1886: Alula sent by Yohannes to face the Italian penetration*<sup>1</sup>

After this he (*Yohannes*) gave him a crown of precious jewels and clothes of gold and horses adorned with gold and silver. His appearance was changed before all the nobles, and his face shone seven times brighter than the sun in the month of Nisan, and his clothes were white like ice. And he  
6a (*the king*) said to him, 'Rejoice and / be glad, my son, who have been faithful over one; I appoint you over many. Enter into the joy of your lord. As you have made me rejoice, so I will make you rejoice every day and every hour, and I will give you favour and honour before all the nobles. I will do for you all that you wish, and all that you think'. He commanded the troops and said to them, 'All that he commands you, do; and that which he says to you, observe'.<sup>2</sup>

He (*Alula*) returned to his land with honour and praise, with majesty and favour, and the troops of the king bade him farewell and bowed down to him, saying, 'Command us all that you wish'. There were those who said, 'We will come with you, and make a resting place (*camp*), for  
6b (*you are*) our power and protection'. And / he said to them, 'Return, and do not turn me aside to the right nor to the left, for God has straightened my path and made His mercy great upon me and given me grace and honour'.

He reached the land of Aksum,<sup>3</sup> with ten thousand before him and ten thousand behind him, and adorned with all adornments of gold and silver and precious jewels. The singers were assembled, (*the singers*) of the Mother of Zion, the great land which is greater than all lands. When he entered the portal of the church, they received him with praise and chanting.

There was a monk, chaste and pure, by the name of Abba Tāklä Haymanot, of that place, who used to cense the sanctuary. He wished  
27a to meet with him, for / he possessed knowledge by the grace which had been given to him. He went out with his incense burner. When Ras Alula saw that monk, he girded his clothes, and kissed the cross in his hand, and fell before his feet, and said to him, 'Bless me, O father, with your spiritual blessing'. He blessed him. He said to him, 'The blessing

<sup>1</sup> The Italians, exploiting the absence of Alula, advanced from Massawa into Ethiopian territory and on 23 November 1886 they occupied Wi'a. It was thus proved to Yohannes that Alula's accusations of the Italians were not exaggerated. So, instead of having to explain his failure in Kassala, Alula was put in charge of the future anti-Italian campaign.

<sup>2</sup> For quite a similar description of Alula's and Yohannes's meeting see the Aksum Ge'ez chronicle of Yohannes written by Abba Haylä Maryam. (English translation kept by Dr. R. Caulk, National University, Addis Ababa.)

<sup>3</sup> Early January 1887 on his way from Mäqälē to Asmara.

6b

ቡሎ መጡት መየጡ፡ ወእትኩትኗ  
 ና ረ ኒ፡ ኢላ ጭገ፡ ወኢ ለዘገም፡ ኣ  
 ስመ፡ ኮግዜ ኢላ ቆር፡ ኢርተግ ፡ ፍ፡  
 ፍትደ፡ ወእሳባየ፡ ዓነበሎ፡ ለሌላ የ  
 ወጸገ ወኒ ጸጋ፡ ወኮባረ፡ ወዘጽቆ  
 ሀገራ፡ ኢክሱም፡ ደጃጃ፡ ቆኗ፡ ጭሀ  
 ወኢ ልፍ፡ ጽሓይ ሁ፡ ወእገዜ፡ ኮርግ  
 ወ፡ ያሁሉ፡ ወርጎ፡ ጠርቆ፡ ጠ፡  
 ብናር፡ ወጠኦታቆ፡ ክቡር፡ ወተጋጉ  
 ኢ፡ መህምራ ጸሓ ለኢወ፡ ጽላ ሃ፡ ሀ  
 ገር፡ ግባዓ ፡ ጠተት ሉዓሌ ኢም ክኩሉ  
 ሃ፡ ኢሉ ገር፡ ወእገዜ፡ ዲበውኑ ለተት  
 ኣገቆ ጽ፡ ጤተ፡ ክርከተ ጸ ፡ ገ፡ ጥቀሰላ  
 ወ፡ በሐጃተ ወጠጣላ ሉት፡ ወሀሎ፡ ፍ  
 መደብ ጸ ፡ ገ፡ ግሩ፡ ወ፡ ጸ ጸ ፡ ገ፡ ገ፡ ጠሰ  
 ኣባ፡ ተክለ፡ ሃይጣፍት፡ ጠውኣት፡ ወ  
 ካፕ፡ ጠ፡ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ  
 ካመ፡ ዩት ረከባ፡ በ፡ ጠ፡ ሉ፡ ከብ

6a

ሓሳይ፡ ወልደ፡ ጠበውቲ ጽ፡ መኣ  
 መ፡ ከግኮ ጸ በ ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ኣሳ፡ ጸ ፡ መ  
 ኡ ፡ ጠ ፡ ከ፡ ወ፡ ከ፡ ጥ፡ ፍ፡ ሥ፡ ሐ፡ ሁ፡ ለኣግዜ  
 ኣከ፡ ወበኮሞ፡ ለኮተ ፍዓኣ ኣኒ፡ ክ  
 ጭሁ፡ ኣክተፊ ሥሐከ፡ ክኩ፡ ፍለተ፡  
 ወኩሎ፡ ሰዓተ፡ ወከፍ፡ በ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ወከ፡ በ፡ ጠ፡ በ፡ ቆ፡ ጽ፡ መ፡ ክ፡ ጠ፡ መ፡ መ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ሃ፡ ፡ ጠ፡ ወኣገ፡ ቆር፡ ለከ፡ ክኩ፡ ጠ፡ ተ፡ ፈ  
 ቆ፡ ወክሉ፡ ጠ፡ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ ጸ  
 ሠረ ጸ ፡ ይ፡ ወይ፡ ጤሎ፡ መ፡ ክኩ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ጠ፡ ክ፡ መ፡ ግበሩ፡ ወጠ፡ ጤ ለከ፡ ሐቆ፡  
 ወተ መ፡ ጠ፡ ሀ፡ በ ፡ ጠ ፡ ኮ ፡ ጠ ፡ ጠ ፡ ጠ ፡  
 ቆ ፡ ጠ ፡ በ ፡ ጠ ፡ ጠ ፡ ጠ ፡ መ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ኣ፡ መ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ወ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ጠ፡ ቆ፡ ቆ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 መ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ መ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡  
 ፍ፡ ከ ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ቆ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡ ጠ፡



19a

ተፈጠሩ፡ በእኩ፡ ወብእኪ ሳ፡ ወሀ  
 ስቶ፡ ወጠረ፡ ወከሰ፡ ያሌ፡ ለም  
 ሃቶ፡ ያዜሃር፡ ትያል፡ ኢጣልያ፡  
 በኑህ፡ ወደኤም፡ ክሎ፡ አሚ  
 ሌ፡ ወከሳ፡ ክመ፡ ያሌ፡ ሀሰ፡ ትያ  
 ለ፡ ለግብር ክ፡ ወኦሮ፡ ሳ፡ ለወል  
 ሂ፡ ሳ መትኩ፡ እሉ፡ ስ፡ ወግቦር፡ በ  
 ኮሎኑ፡ ትኮምርቶ፡ ለሠርያ፡ እ  
 ከመ፡ ተሰጥኮ ሩ፡ ሳብ፡ ወአረዮ፡ ሳ  
 ሰሎሃ፡ ተሰከተዮ፡ ተሰዳዪ፡ ሆመ፡ ላ  
 ኡያመሃኮ፡ ወለክከሰሃኪ ሳውሃሃ፡  
 ወኦምያ፡ ሳረ፡ ደመ፡ ጸሎቶ፡ ቀረ፡  
 ውከተ፡ መከኒ፡ ጸብሱ ክ፡ ሃ፡ ሳ፡  
 ርሰ፡ ከመ፡ ጣሰዋ፡ እጸግቦ፡ ሀሊብ፡  
 ኦመ፡ ወከመ፡ መርግቶ፡ እዩቀው፡ ር፡  
 ውከተ፡ ከብካብ፡ ኢከመ፡ ሃ ጸመር፡  
 ከመ፡ ትረያ፡ እጸግብ፡ ወኦክ፡ ሃ ሳ  
 ቦረያ፡ እጸግብ፡ ሃ ጸግብ፡ ሃ ሳ  
 ተለመዎ፡ በክ፡ ትያላኒ፡ ወኦመ፡  
 ው፡ ሳላ፡ ወጸ፡ ሳጸመ፡ ሃሰ፡ ወ

19b

ሰጥ፡ ጸኑቆቶ፡ ፍጭቶ፡ ወአግቆ፡  
 ጸግቦ፡ ወአግቶ፡ ወ፡ ከምሰር ነ፡  
 ኢከክ፡ ስር ክ፡ ወረገ፡ ግህ፡ ግሳ፡  
 ጸብኤ፡ ወኮቦ፡ ሰምግ፡ ረኮ፡  
 እጸግቦቶ፡ ወጸም፡ ጸግኡ፡ አሉ  
 ጸቆ፡ ወበጸቆ፡ እጸግ፡ ሃ፡ ጸግ  
 ፈኪቆዮ፡ ከብ፡ ጸ፡ ስሶሊ፡ ግሳ፡  
 በ፡ ርክዮ፡ በ፡ ግህ፡ ጸግ፡ ሳ፡ ሳ  
 እውኡቶ፡ ወ፡ ለ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡  
 ሸረፍ፡ በክ፡ መርክ፡ በክ፡ ተላ፡ ወ  
 በክያ፡ ራ፡ ሃ፡ በክ፡ ተላ፡ ጸ፡ ሳ  
 ሉ፡ በክ፡ ያ፡ ከቶ፡ አግ፡ ግሳ፡ ጸ፡  
 ሳ፡ ጸ፡ በ፡ ግህ፡ ጸግሱ፡ ወአሚ፡  
 ጸመ፡ ለ፡ ወ፡ ለ፡ ከከመ፡ ሀሎ፡  
 ጸግሱ ከሎመ፡ ራ፡ ከ፡ ሳ ሳ፡ በከከ  
 በሰ፡ ሳ፡ ወመከተቆ፡ ሳ፡ ወግ  
 ሩ፡ ቆ፡ ሳ፡ ጸ፡ ወጸ፡ በክ፡ ጸ፡  
 ኢመወራ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡ ከሳቆ፡  
 ክላ፡ ሳ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡ ጸ፡ ከሳ፡ ከሳ፡

7b

ሰንዎ ውስተ፡ ስፍራ፡ ሰንዎ ቅዱ ወላ  
 ጸገኩ፡ ይኔከረ፡ ከደግሞ ሆ፡ ወከገረ  
 ስ፡ ስብስ፡ ህሎ፡ ገደ፡ ጸገግ ሊቦላ፡ ኢ  
 ግልዮ ሆ፡ ውከተ፡ ሐቅሎ፡ ስቅጤ፡ ወ  
 ኢኢ ምእግብረ፡ ውስ፡ ስፍራ፡ ለውኢ  
 ትኩረ፡ ራከ፡ እሉሉ፡ ስወጽ፡ እ፡ ደግሞ ሆ፡  
 ብተህ፡ ወጸሎ፡ ሎ፡ ከሃዘ፡ ህሎ፡ ሰግረ  
 ከላ፡ ጸብከ፡ ወተሰም ሳ፡ ቃሉ፡ ከገገ  
 ውከተ፡ ደግሞ ሆ፡ ጸገግ ሆ፡ ወላጽ ሆ፡  
 ጽናዕ፡ ወከደሎ፡ ከሰሙ፡ ኢደተ፡ ራ  
 ለጥ፡ እምረከ፡ ሰሃግደ፡ ከ፡ ወሰከተ  
 ወቅከ፡ እ፡ ሰርዮ፡ እምከ፡ ስለሳቅ  
 ሰከ፡ ሰገሎ፡ ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ሐዮ፡ ወተከ፡ ወ  
 ሰሰ፡ ስጦሳ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ራ፡ ራከ፡ እሉሉ  
 ደግሞ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ለእግብረ ሰሎ  
 ር፡ ወተቆ፡ ትገህ፡ ሰገሎ፡ ሆ፡ ሰላም  
 ከከ፡ ሆ፡ ወሰም ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ወእም ሆ፡ ራ፡ ራ፡  
 ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ወተከ፡ ሰገሎ ሆ፡

7a

ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ት፡ ወከተ፡ ሰገሎ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ቃሉ፡ ወጸሎ፡ ሰገሎ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ከራ፡ ቃ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ደላገ፡ ወቅተ ሰገሎ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ለተሃህ፡ ወሰም ሆ፡ ከሰገሎ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ሐቅ፡ ወሰም ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ኢግልዮ ሆ፡ ወጸሎ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ለእግብረ ሆ፡ ወሰም ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ቀ፡ ወሰከተ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ውከተ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ሆ፡ ወጸሎ ሆ፡ ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ለሙ፡ ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ወጸሎ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ት፡ ወሰከተ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ሰገሎ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ሆ፡ ወሰም ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡  
 ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡ ጸገተ፡ ፡ ገ፡ ሆ፡





28b

ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ

28a

ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ  
 ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ ለግዛቱ





አውኩቱቶ፡ውከሚያ፡አንተ፡ነገ  
 ረ፡ተፈ፡ሠሎ፡በመንፈሱ፡ውድህ  
 ሎሙ፡ለወሳፊዎቹ፡ተፈሥሎ፡  
 ወተቀወላ፡ነኩልከሙ፡ኢከሙ፡ከ  
 ሐዘን፡ቀላ፡መሠተቱ፡ሠሎ፡ው  
 ኣሙብካኮቱ፡ሆሠሐዙ፡ወዘበ፡አሠ  
 ፊተ፡ሙደረ፡ሰራዬ፡ለኸሙኅ፡ኛ  
 ሆን፡ሀኅር፡ዓባዬ፡ከመ፡ደኸን፡  
 ሰሰደ፡ለነደረ፡ወለምከከኛን፡  
 ኣለ፡ሀለው፡ውከተ፡ዓዘደ፡ወደሆ  
 ሎሙ፡ለከብኢ፡ከራዬ፡ቶቀነደ፡  
 ሰኣምን፡ኛዎን፡በፎርሃቶ፡ወላ  
 ኣ ግጵኣብሐር፡ጸባባቶ፡ኣጽግ  
 ፀ ዎ፡ላጥብ፡መሠሎሐዎተ፡ዛ  
 ሠርዒ፡ኸርካቶ፡ከባግባቶ፡  
 ደሙ፡መንኮቶ፡ወከህናቶ፡

ኣለ፡ሀለው፡መከላሁ፡ከሐላው  
 ዜመኛ፡አውኢደሙ፡አባ፡ካላ፡  
 መርደ፡ወላባ፡ካንፈ፡ኪራቤኣ  
 ጻዲ፡ደብሎ፡ከባሐቶ፡ለኣብ፡ዘወበ  
 ቦ፡አመሙ፡ከብራ፡ልራከ፡ላላ  
 ላውከረደ፡ለወለደ፡አላር፡ኣላን  
 ግደ፡በክብር፡ወበካብሐቶ፡አከፎ  
 ቱቶ፡ላመንፈከ፡ቆዶካ፡አከባ  
 ሆወኣለዓሎ፡ኣምክሎሙ፡መ  
 ኪግን፡ዛቶ፡ከቶ፡ህለተ፡ሰለተ፡ፈ  
 ራቶ፡ወከፈቶ፡መዎ፡ዳረተ፡ኣከ  
 ሙ፡ጸጸው፡ባቶ፡ኣምቶ፡ውከተ  
 ኣላውቶ፡ውተንብራ፡ቆዶኣ፡አ  
 ቶንብራ፡ጌዛ፡ለደቶ፡ሰወል፡ፈ  
 ኣካመ፡ከመ፡ከካብ፡መርዎሙ፡  
 ላከብኣ፡ከሰላ፡ወከካላ፡ደግላ

46a

ል፡ ወኑብኑ፡ ሎቅ፡ ለምኑ፡ ወርቅ  
 ወከኛ፡ ወከቂ፡ ወከቅ፡ ወከቅ፡ ወከቅ፡ ወከቅ፡  
 ሎብ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ኢርምደካ፡ ወካቅ፡ ወካቅ፡ ወካቅ፡ ወካቅ፡  
 ከሙ፡ ለልቂ፡ ወካቅ፡ ወካቅ፡ ወካቅ፡  
 ግወ፡ ከሙ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ተከሎ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሎ፡ መጻሕፍት፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ድከት፡ ለከሎታ፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሐርሃከሙ፡ ቅጽሙ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ወከቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሃይማኖት፡ መግቢት፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ወትብሎ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ከ፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለ፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሐዋርያት፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ደሙ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ከ፡ ቅጽካካት፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡

46b

ግብ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ግብ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ቃል፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ቅጽ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ቅጽ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሃል፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ሃር፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ላር፡ ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ክፍ፡ ከሙ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ግብ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ወከሎታ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡  
 ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡ ለቅ፡

47b

ራዲሆግ። እሌቤ፡ ደቀቶ፡ ለቆደርሙ።  
 ወኦልቦ፡ እውደቶ፡ ውኦከቶ፡ ህገር  
 ሙ፡ እከመ፡ ደቦልሑ፡ ኦምሰደ፡ ቃ  
 ለ፡ አቶሁ፡ ለጌኩ፡ እሎሳ፡ ወእመግ  
 ርማሁ፡ ቶርህድ፡ ምድር፡ ወደቶሙ  
 ሰው፡ እደግር፡ ወኦውግር፡ ወእምድ፡  
 ጌደ፡ ተግባ፡ ሳውደግ፡ ወከሐድ ዓፂ፡  
 ሃሎሙ፡ ወግባሩ፡ ቶኦደ፡ ሃቶ፡ ውኦከቶ፡  
 ዳግኦቶ፡ ውግቦ፡ ምድር፡ ከመ፡ ደቶ  
 ፊደም፡ ቀለ፡ መደሐ፡ ፍ፡ እደቤ፡ ለጌ፡ ርድ  
 ሕረ፡ ግቦብ፡ በሎአክመ፡ ከመ፡ ቁርድ፡ ለ  
 እደቶሙ፡ ሃኩ፡ ከማሁ፡ ደቶሙ፡ ሃ፡ ለ  
 ቀለ፡ እግሪ እባሕር፡ ወከቆቦ፡ እደቤ፡ ቶ  
 መሃሙ፡ ወእቃሐሐዳ፡ በግደሙ፡ ወወህከ  
 ም፡ በባድው፡ ወግብረ፡ ነጥቶ፡ እሎቶ፡ ከደ  
 ሎ፡ እግዚአ፡ ነጽር፡ ውኦከቶ፡ ጌደ፡ ኦቶ፡ ለ  
 ግዚአ፡ እፍ፡ ጥ፡ ጌድ፡ እቶ፡ ደር፡ እደ፡ ጸ  
 ስኦቶ፡ ወደቶ፡ ቀጌ፡ ፊደ፡ ምክራ፡ ለሎ።

47a

ህግ፡  
 ሙህደሙ ከሎ፡ ወቶ፡ ጥ፡ እደ፡ ከሎ፡  
 ወቶሎ፡ ቶ፡ በደ፡ እቶ፡ ለቶ፡ ስሙ እሕ  
 ፊደ፡ ወሐመ፡ ኮ፡ ኦሊ፡ ቶግ፡ ምክራ፡  
 ውኦከቶ፡ እቶ፡ ግደ፡ ወእርኦ፡ ሕግ  
 ሳ፡ እዳኮቶ፡ ጣሐመ፡ ቀሎ፡ ወሰሐከእ  
 እቶሁ፡ ለእባ፡ ቶከላ፡ ማርሃም፡ እከ  
 መ፡ ደ፡ ወጽኦ፡ እደ፡ እቶሁ፡ ቀለሙደ  
 እ፡ እሰቶ፡ ወእምድ፡ ጌ፡ ጌቶ፡ ሳቶ፡  
 ሳደ፡ ማርቶ፡ ወእሙላካዳ፡ ለቃልሳ  
 ሎ፡ እራኩ፡ እሎሳ፡ ቶእክኩ፡ ለቃሕ፡ መግ  
 ነደ፡ ለቶ፡ ስቶ፡ ውኦኦቶ፡ ለእኩሙ፡  
 ለግደ፡ እባሕር፡ እዳእ፡ ደብላ፡ እሐግ  
 ኩ፡ ለግ፡ ግ፡ እማሙ፡ ጌ፡ ወከሙቶ፡ ከ  
 ሊቶ፡ ወተቀደሰቶ፡ በኪደቶ፡ እግቶ፡  
 ለራኩ፡ እሎሳ፡ ምድር፡ ሐማሱ፡ ምክ  
 ለግ፡ በጌከቶ፡ ምድር፡ ወፍጌ፡ ግራ፡  
 ህ፡ እሐሐሙ፡ ቶሆሙ፡ ወእባግደ፡ ስሙ  
 ብኩቶ፡ ደቶ፡ ሞላደ፡ ወደቶ፡ ሞላ፡ ስሙ





















መጥ፡ ብ፡ ጠቀደሚ፡ ግብ ራ፡ ወተዳ  
 ውቀ፡ ነከዩ፡ ምክን ራ፡ ወገ፡ ሕሉተ፡  
 ለቡ፡ ብኅብ፡ ራ ኩ፡ መገገክ፡ ወራ ኩ፡  
 ባ ሉሳ፡ ኢጋጋ ሕግኻ፡ ራ ገ፡ አላዛ፡ ራ  
 ኩ፡ ኢሉሳ፡ ብዩሚ፡ ነዴሆ፡ ለውአቶ፡  
 ወብፀ ግሚዩ፡ ነዴሆ፡ ክሂ፡ ሆ፡ ወኢ  
 ሂ፡ ቀላቀሉ፡ መገገ፡ ራ፡ ሕኮ፡ ወ  
 አቶ፡ ክቡደ፡ መግኢ ራ፡ ሕኮ፡ ክመ፡ ሐዎ  
 ስገ፡ ወገ፡ ቡህ፡ ክመ፡ ኢሂ፡ ኢብ፡ ወግ  
 ቀሕዎ፡ ብጽገ፡ ሕ፡ መቀሂ፡ ወተመ  
 ቢዎ፡ ወሐዳ፡ ወኩተ፡ ዩብር፡ ለሀላ  
 አዩተ፡ ብሀል፡ መቀብ ራ፡ ሆ፡ ለኢብ፡ ስለ  
 ማ፡ ወክመ፡ ክ፡ ራ፡ ራ ኩ፡ ኢሉሳ፡ መ  
 ገገለ፡ ሐሚኪግ፡ ወቀ ራ፡ ሆ ሎ መ፡  
 መ ኪግግግ፡ ለሀ ገራ መ፡ ራ ኩ፡ መ  
 ገገክ፡ ተር ራ፡ ባሕ፡ ገ፡ ብ ሕዳ ፍ  
 ቡተ፡ አቡሆ፡ ወክ መግ፡ ራ፡ ሕ፡ ብ  
 አወ፡ ራ ላ፡ መጽ አ፡ ሳቡሆ፡ ዩጌግ  
 ማቶ፡ ስዩ ም፡ ጽፈተ፡ ወኪ ከ፡ ገሃደ

ወክብ፡ አኦመ ራ፡ ጌ ር፡ ም ጽኦቶ  
 ለክከ፡ ኦራ ኩ፡ መገገክ፡ ግብ፡ መ ኪግግ  
 ቶ፡ ጸገጽ፡ ዩብለ፡ ግቡ፡ ሳቡሆ፡ ወኦለ  
 ብ፡ ጠመ ጽኦ፡ ወብ፡ ክምገ ሆመ፡ ጠግ  
 ር ራ፡ ብፍር ግቶ፡ ወብ፡ ጸኦቶ ር ራ፡ ብ  
 ገሕሉ ቶ፡ ወግ ገቶ፡ ክ ራ ኩ፡ ስሉ  
 ሉ ራ ቶ ሕ፡ ክኢለቦ፡ ጽላሁቶ፡ ወኪ  
 ቦ ኢ፡ ፍር ግቶ፡ ወክ ቶ፡ ለቡ፡ ተገ  
 ሠኢ፡ ብወ ቡሂ፡ ለብ፡ ወመ ጽኦ፡ ብ  
 ግግ፡ ወብ ጽሑ፡ ወ ስቶ፡ መ ክግ  
 ጸብለዎ፡ ዩሰይ፡ ቶ ክለ፡ ወኦገጽ  
 ሀሉ፡ ወኩ ሕ፡ ቶ፡ ለኦ ከ፡ ሳቡሆ፡ ዩጌ  
 ግቶ፡ ስዩ ም፡ ክገጽ፡ ዩብለ፡ ር ራ፡  
 ትቤሆ፡ ክግኢ ክሂ፡ ወክ ቶ ብኩ፡ ክከኩሕ  
 ገ ራ፡ ቀ መግ ግሠቶ፡ ወሰሚ ም፡ ጠገገ  
 ክራ ኩ፡ አሉ ግ፡ ቶ ም፡ ግ፡ ገቶ፡ ወክ ክ፡ ክ  
 መ፡ ስሳቶ፡ ወደብ፡ መ ገ ገ ግ ም፡ ግ ም፡ ግ ም፡  
 ክሌ ክ፡ ሊ ተ ስ፡ አላብሂ፡ ገ ገ ግ ም፡ ግ ም፡ ግ ም፡



43b

አቡ-ኩ-ሞ-ጌ-ኮ-ወ-ለ-ደ-ጄ-ዝ-ሞ-ቸ-፡-ከ-ዩ  
 ም-፡-ጸ-ሳ-ሂ-፡-ወ-ሞ-ጽ-አ-፡-አ-ራ-ኩ-ሞ-ፃ  
 ገ-ሸ-፡-ባ-ፍ-ሥ-ሐ-፡-ወ-ባ-ሐ-ሣ-ቸ-፡-ወ-ጸ-ወ  
 ፈ-ሃ-፡-ሞ-ገ-ባ-ራ-፡-አ-ቡ-ሁ-፡-ዮ-ሐ-ገ-ከ-ኦ-ኦ  
 ከ-ከ-፡-አ-ሃ-ከ-ገ-፡-ሞ-ኪ-ገ-ገ-ቸ-፡-ወ-ሠ-ራ-  
 ዊ-ቸ-፡-ወ-ዊ-ብ-ሉ-፡-ሞ-ሠ-ራ-፡-ኸ-ሉ-፡-ገ-  
 ብ-ሩ-፡-ለ-ዝ-፡-ኮ-ራ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-ላ-፡-ቦ-፡-ኦ-ሉ-ዊ-  
 ብ-ሉ-፡-አ-ገ-ከ-፡-ኦ-ሞ-ኢ-ወ-ሠ-ብ-ኩ-፡-ለ-ባ-ጌ  
 ዩ-፡-ኮ-ባ-ራ-፡-ሞ-፡-ኦ-ሉ-፡-ዊ-ብ-ሉ-፡-ሠ-ራ-ሃ-  
 ገ-ብ-ራ-፡-ወ-ከ-ሞ-ደ-ሩ-ራ-፡-ላ-ደ-ዮ-ሞ-ፃ-ጌ  
 ል-፡-ተ-ሞ-ደ-ጠ-፡-ኦ-ሞ-አ-፡-አ-ሞ-ሰ-ጠ-፡-ቦ-ቱ-  
 ሞ-ኮ-ገ-፡-ደ-ጄ-ዝ-ሞ-ቸ-፡-ሠ-ሄ-ሞ-፡-ጠ-ባ-ጽ-  
 ሐ-ሙ-ኮ-ተ-፡-ም-ጽ-ራ-፡-አ-ገ-ሞ-፡-ወ-ሐ-ባ-  
 ሩ-፡-ባ-አ-ሐ-ቲ-፡-ም-ኮ-ር-፡-ወ-ባ-አ-ሐ-ቲ-፡-ፈ-ታ-  
 ዩ-፡-ደ-ጄ-ዝ-ሞ-ቸ-፡-ከ-ብ-ሐ-ቸ-፡-ወ-ደ-ጄ-ዝ-ሞ-  
 ቸ-፡-ሠ-ደ-ም-፡-ወ-ከ-ሞ-፡-ኦ-ሞ-፡-ኦ-ራ-ከ-፡-ሞ-ገ-  
 ባ-ሸ-፡-ወ-ራ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-ላ-፡-ከ-ገ-ቸ-፡-ሐ-ሩ-፡-ባ-ቤ-  
 ሆ-ሞ-፡-ወ-ተ-ራ-፡-ኮ-ባ-ሞ-ሞ-፡-ለ-ሞ-ኮ-ገ-፡-ዘ-ደ-

43a

ባ-ሉ-ሁ-፡-ለ-ራ-ከ-፡-ሞ-ሳ-ገ-፡-ወ-ላ-ደ-፡-ለ  
 ዮ-ሐ-ገ-ከ-፡-ገ-ገ-ሠ-፡-ባ-ሐ-ቱ-፡-ደ-ገ-ሐ-ራ-፡-  
 ወ-ኮ-ቸ-፡-ሞ-ኮ-ገ-፡-ዘ-፡-ራ-ደ-ከ-፡-ኦ-ከ-  
 ሞ-፡-ሃ-ደ-ሞ-፡-ፍ-ባ-ደ-፡-ለ-ራ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-  
 ላ-፡-ወ-ኦ-ገ-ዝ-፡-ደ-ራ-ል-ፍ-፡-አ-ገ-ቸ-፡-ደ-ሞ-፡-  
 ለ-አ-ከ-ከ-ም-፡-ተ-ባ-፡-አ-ገ-ደ-፡-ባ-ጽ-ሐ-ወ-  
 ከ-ቸ-፡-ም-ሐ-ራ-ባ-ሃ-፡-ለ-ደ-ኦ-ተ-፡-ሠ-ገ-ራ-፡-  
 አ-ከ-ከ-ም-፡-ወ-ሞ-ጽ-አ-፡-ዮ-ሃ-ሐ-ቸ-፡-ደ-ጄ-  
 ዝ-ሞ-ቸ-፡-ከ-ሄ-ም-፡-ወ-ገ-ባ-ገ-፡-ቸ-፡-ቀ-ቸ-ለ-፡-ወ-  
 ን-ፍ-ጸ-ቀ-፡-ሞ-፡-ገ-ገ-፡-ለ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-ላ-፡-  
 ወ-ቸ-፡-ዮ-አ-፡-አ-ሐ-ራ-፡-ፍ-ሩ-፡-ወ-ከ-ደ-ባ-  
 ዝ-ባ-፡-ሠ-ራ-ጥ-ቸ-፡-ቸ-ዘ-ር-ወ-፡-ለ-ለ-ር-ኦ-ኮ-  
 ሙ-፡-ወ-አ-ኮ-፡-ሳ-ቡ-ራ-፡-ሙ-አ-ቸ-ከ-፡-አ-ሞ-ከ-  
 ሞ-፡-ኦ-ም-ኦ-ደ-ሁ-፡-ለ-ራ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-ላ-፡-ባ-ገ-፡-  
 ሐ-ሉ-ቸ-፡-አ-ገ-ዝ-፡-ደ-ባ-ሰ-ል-፡-አ-ገ-ደ-ከ-፡-ደ-፡-  
 አ-ገ-፡-ም-ከ-ላ-ከ-፡-ወ-ለ-አ-ከ-፡-ኮ-ራ-ከ-፡-አ-ሉ-  
 ሳ-፡-ባ-ባ-፡-ኮ-ራ-፡-ኮ-ሞ-ገ-ገ-፡-አ-ገ-ዝ-፡-ደ-ባ-ሰ-ል-፡-  
 ገ-ባ-ባ-ሰ-ላ-፡-ወ-ከ-ተ-፡-ቤ-ቸ-ከ-፡-ኦ-ከ-ሞ-፡-አ-ገ-





of the prophets and the apostles, the blessing of the righteous and the martyrs, and the blessing of our Lady Mary rest upon you, and may God give you that which is after your heart, and fulfil for you all your requests and your desires, and keep you from all evil'. And he (*Alula*) went out of the sanctuary in honour and praise, leaving all his adornments for our  
 27b Mother of Zion, for he loved her from / the depths of his heart.

And she (*Mary*) appeared to him in a dream, and she said to him, 'Go to the land of Ḥamasēn, and there you will find many Italians. Do not fear or be startled, for you will conquer them by your power, and you will save your people'.<sup>4</sup>

*January 1887: the Battle of Dogali*<sup>5</sup>

He rose up and travelled by night, while an angel led him. Fear did not enter his heart, because our Lady had given Ras Alula assurance from the beginning to the end. He prayed and besought God, saying, 'Rise up, O Lord, help me and save me. Against You alone have I sinned. Look upon my request, and do not leave me. Let our enemies see and be  
 19a ashamed, for You have helped me and / [the man and woman rejoiced and] made me rejoice'. And further he said, 'Why does the powerful Italian boast in his evil, and rebel all the time?'. And a third time he said, 'Give power to your servant and save the son of your maidservant, Alula, and perform among us a sign for good. For they have counselled together, they have made preparations against me, they have plotted together in the camps of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites'.

After he had finished his prayer, he went to the place of battle shaking like a calf filled with its mother's milk, and like a bridegroom going to the wedding. For he knew that our Lady Mary would help him with her all-powerful help. When he went, many powerful men followed him, and passed away from him, and waited for them (*the Italians*) in ambush  
 19b on / a difficult path and a narrow pass. They surrounded them from one evening till the next, and in the morning they joined battle. When Ras Alula heard the battles and the sound of battle, he drew near and arrived while the Holy Spirit, which rested on him, inspired him. And when his

<sup>4</sup> The anti-Italian campaign was undoubtedly discussed by Yohannes and Alula in their meeting in Mäqälē. Yet the author of our MS suggested that it was only later, in Aksum, that Alula decided to attack. This may support the assumption that in authorizing Alula to go and face the Italians, Yohannes did not expect that his general would initiate such a massacre of European troops (see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 188–90).

<sup>5</sup> On 26 January 1887 at Dogali (Täd'ali), after two weeks of futile diplomatic effort to persuade the Italians to return to Massawa, Alula ambushed and massacred an Italian battalion consisting of 500 troops. (For sources see a bibliographical list in the entry 'Dogali' in the *Enciclopedia italiana*.) The battle of Dogali was undoubtedly one of the most important events in the history of Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century. It created open enmity between the Tigrean Emperor Yohannes and the Italians, and this contributed significantly to the rise of the Shoan hegemony over the empire. The personality of Ras Alula, whose activities were a main factor in the history of Ethiopia during the forthcoming years, became identified with that event.

powerful men—namely Lejj Fänta Täsämma Šärif, Baša Märša, Baša Tälla Wäddi, Bašay Fänja, Baša Tälla Addi Mellalē, Baša Dästa, Abba Ga'i—when they saw him in time of battle, they were strengthened and given power in the time of battle, and they did not turn their faces from side to side, for Ras Alula, a man resolute, powerful, and warlike, was among them. They made a great slaughter, and many of the troops died, 7a those called Šaläqa Täklä Haymanot, Assällafi Kaḥsay, / Baša Gäbrä Mika'el Addi Kwe'enti.

This Baša Tälla Addi Mellalē was powerful and strong. His spear never went in by itself except it was covered with the blood of powerful men and the killed. That day his two cheeks were wounded, and his lower jawbone, which supports the lips, fell in four pieces, two to the right and two to the left, behind his teeth. He had killed many Italians and had shown the strength of the power of his lord. His lord found him fallen to the ground and bathed in blood; he was startled and said, 'Pick him up and carry him on a bed'. All the troops carried him, and they brought him to the place which is called Asmara.

At that time Ras Alula recalled the strength of the power of Šaläqa Ar'aya,<sup>6</sup> and the glory of the majesty which was upon him. He repented, and said, 'Why / did I put him in prison and order that they bind his hands and feet? If he had been here, the Italians would not have come to the field of Sähäṭi, and would not have made a wall on it'.

A cloud, bright and dark, came to this Ras Alula, while he was in the midst of battle. And a voice was heard from this cloud, which said, 'My son, be strong and powerful, because I, Mary, your mother, who have protected you all the days of your life, will not be separated from you in all your travelling and your returning'. When Ras Alula heard this matter, he said, 'My soul exults towards God, and my spirit is glad in my God and my Saviour'.

After this he unsheathed his sword and became as (*lightning*). /

*Late 1885: Alula's correspondence after his victory at Kufit* <sup>7</sup>

20a After this he sent a message to the king of Shoa and the king of Gojjam,<sup>8</sup> in order that they might see the wonder of his deeds and know the glory of his authority. He sent the spear and the axe with the message.

<sup>6</sup> Šaläqa Ar'aya was, like Alula, a native of Zuqli, Tämbän, and as a follower of the Ras he was appointed governor of Ginda'. In November 1886, before leaving for Kassala, Alula found out that Šaläqa Ar'aya had contacted the outlaw Däbbäb, Alula's personal enemy. Däbbäb, a son of Ras Ar'aya Demšu and a brother of Amläsu, was living as a robber among the Assawurtä tribes, and frequently co-operated with the Italians. Alula arrested Šaläqa Ar'aya and sent him in chains to Kärän (ASMAI 2/2-13, Genè to MAE, 25 November 1886).

<sup>7</sup> Leaves 20a, 20b, and 28a are undoubtedly dealing with the period of the battle of Kufit, i.e. 16 months before Dogali. It looks as if the author of the MS preferred to assemble Alula's correspondence, so he combined these letters with those heralding the victory of Dogali.

<sup>8</sup> Menelik and Täklä Haymanot.

When they saw this, the people of Shoa were amazed and the people of Gojjam were astonished. The daughters of Gojjam sang for many days, saying, 'Alula has conquered and the Dervishes are conquered'.

The king of Gojjam and the king of Shoa sent to him a written message, saying, 'May God be blessed, who has had mercy on you, and who has shown His power and authority over you, and has saved you from the downfall and from the destruction of the evil Dervishes. And as for us, when your written message arrived, then our mouth was filled with joy  
20b and our tongue was glad. For you are / the pride of our heart, and the resting place of our eyes'.

They sent the axe and the spear to each country from Egypt as far as Rome. When the people of Rome and Egypt saw these javelins and axes, Egypt trembled and Rome was startled, and all the land was disturbed, saying, 'Alas for us, woe to us, from the great fear and trembling which has come upon us. For this is Ras Alula, who overthrew the tables and scattered the gold of the changers of the law and the ordinances, that is, the Dervishes, who surrounded us, and troubled us with hunger and thirst until we ate the flesh of wild animals, and who pour out potions which weaken and kill'.<sup>9</sup>

And further they said, 'Is it not Ras Alula who destroyed the encampments of the Ishmaelites and overthrew /  
28a harp. And after all this amazement and astonishment, the king sent a written message to Ras Alula, the fulfiller of his wish and doer of his will.<sup>10</sup> [Those who died in the neighbourhood of Kofit were Qäññazmač Ćewa, Šaläqa Gäbrä Sellasē, and Šaläqa Gäbrä Mika'el ---.] /

1887: *Alula's correspondence after Dogali*

28b And after this, he sent a message to the king of Shoa,<sup>11</sup> saying, 'Rejoice'. [O Lord, give rest to the soul of Your servant, Gäbrä Mika'el.] /  
22a and your princely riches.<sup>12</sup> She (*Mary*) strengthened me in the time of battle and I (*Alula*) conquered the Italians, while their height was like a cedar and their strength was like a whirlwind. The ground will guard them, for they became like locusts before me, by Your strong power with which You help those in trouble and with which You support the oppressed'.

When the king heard this matter, he sent to the king of Shoa and the king of Gojjam, and he said to them, 'Behold, our foes and our enemies

<sup>9</sup> A clear reference to the siege of Kassala.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably Yohannes's letter to Alula of 14 October 1885. See *BSOAS*, xxxix, 1, 1976, p. 43, n. 81.

<sup>11</sup> For a report on Alula's letter to Menelik and the latter's ambivalent reaction see Antonelli to MAE, 2 April 1887, *Libro Verde*, xv; also C. Zaghi, *Le origini della colonia Eritrea*, Bologna, 1934, 145; also Antonelli to MAE, 20 March 1887, in Giglio, *Etiopia-Mar Rosso*, vi, no. 50, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> This is still Alula's letter to Yohannes.

are ashamed before the face of Ras Alula, for God has shown His power and authority over him, and many foes and enemies were finished off on a single day’.

After this matter, the people of Shoa and the people of Gojjam  
22b marvelled, / saying, ‘ A marvel has been revealed to the sons of men, so that all the people say, “ This man, is he Samson, who scattered the encampments of the Philistines, or Jephtha, who conquered the king of Moab ; is he Gideon, who weakened the power of the king of Midian, or Barak, who destroyed Sisera before him ? For never before this was done the power and the glory which were done for him, so that fear and trembling entered the heart of the enemies of the king ” ’.

*Late 1885 and early 1886 : after Kufit : Alula at the peak of his career*<sup>13</sup>

In the morning they journeyed very early, and they entered the throne-  
room of the king, and entering, they said to him, ‘ What is this Ras Alula  
23a who has weakened the spear of powerful men and girded the weak with power ? / If you wish, let him be a king beneath you. But let it be by your wish, and not by our wish ’.<sup>14</sup> The king said to them, ‘ That which you say is good ’ ; but he could not speak either good or evil, because this came from God, for the reason that the Holy Spirit gave him to understand that he (*Alula*) would be lord after him.

The king sent to Ras Alula, saying, ‘ When your written message, full  
of joy and gladness, reached me, I rejoiced and returned to life, for I had  
23b been ill a lot this year, when I heard that the wicked men and apostates were many. And it is not you / alone who will be honoured like this, for without you the weak nobles have no strength, and the oppressed troops have no support. Without you the house of the kingdom would not stand, for you are the roof and you are the foundation ’.

When the royal letter, which said this, written in gold ink and with the face of a lion stamped on it, reached him, he rose from his seat and

<sup>13</sup> The following passage undoubtedly deals with the post-Kufit and pre-Dogali period. This is clearly revealed by the last sentence of the passage which refers to the alleged relief of the garrison of Kassala (see below, p. 316, n. 17). Furthermore, after Dogali Alula was in disgrace with Yohannes (Erich, *Ras Alula*, 191-3). After the battle of Kufit in late 1885 Yohannes had to hurry to the Galla country where his son Ras Ar’aya Sellasé faced an overwhelming rebellion (FO 403/87, Smith to Baring, 12 March 1886). ‘ Yohannes ’, said the French Vice-Consul to Massawa on 26 February 1886, ‘ has made him (Alula) “ generalissimo ” with the government of all Tigre and superintendence of the frontiers of the north and west ’ (MAE, Mas. 5, Soumagne to MAE, 26 February 1886).

<sup>14</sup> The Tigrean nobles were naturally reluctant to agree to Yohannes’s decision to appoint Alula, a son of a peasant, over the northern marches of the empire. But Yohannes was determined : ‘ At Yohannes’s orders ’, Soumagne went on in his report of 26 February 1886, ‘ all the other commanders remaining in Tigre have joined forces with Alula at Asmara under his command. At the time when I arrived (February 1886) Dadjazmach Tedla (Ayba), governor of Makalle, Dadjazmach Hagos, governor of Adwa, and Balambaras Debab, in charge of Tamben, were in Alula’s camp ’.

called Abba Täklä Maryam, and said to him, 'Look at this seal'—because he was learned in the words of books, and he used to interpret to him all that was in them.<sup>15</sup> He read it, and explained all / that was in it.

Hearing this matter, he (*Alula*) rejoiced in his spirit, and he said to his troops, 'Rejoice and be glad, all of you, because we have heard a joyous word'. Because of his great joy, he gave the taxes of the country of Särayē to our Mother of Zion,<sup>16</sup> the great land, in order that it should be food for the poor and wretched who are within her walls. And he said to the people of Särayē, 'Be subject to our Mother of Zion, in fear, and to the God of Hosts. Study the Messianic wisdom that Christ prepared by shedding His blood'.

21b The monks and priests / who were with him praised and sang—these were Abba Täklä Maryam and Abba Kenfä Kirubē—saying, 'Praise be to the Father, who has given such glory to Ras Alula, and worship be to the Son, who has shown us His face in glory and praise; praise be to the Holy Spirit, who has made him great and has lifted him up above all nobles. This day is a chosen day and a day of salvation, for on it they crossed from death to life, and on it was done a deed which was done at the time of the birth of the Son, for like a star he led the people of Käsäla  
46a and the people of Däglä / l,<sup>17</sup> and they brought to him gifts of gold, myrrh, and incense'.

*1887: anti-Catholic policy in the Märäb Mellaš after Dogali* <sup>18</sup>

This Ras Alula, whom God sanctified like Jeremiah, and who was sealed in chastity like Elijah, and in purity adorned like John, he said to Abba Täklä Maryam—for he observed the word of the books which says, 'Do not give holy things to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs', and which further says, 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard, and you say to this hill "Depart", it shall be done for you'; and he was learned in the books of the prophets and apostles and diligent in works and in faith—he said, 'Remember me, father, in your holy prayers, and  
46b give me permission that there be / an assembly in this place and encampment; because there are wicked priests who separate the Word from

<sup>15</sup> According to a British envoy to Yohannes who saw Alula in late 1887, the Ras could not read or write: G. H. Portal, *My mission to Abyssinia*, London, 1892, 221.

<sup>16</sup> Aksum.

<sup>17</sup> The Egyptian garrison of Kassala. Some few of its troops managed to escape to Ethiopia after the town had fallen (see various evidence in SOAS microfilm M.518, reel 8). Dägläl is a village near Aylet whose people were probably attacked by the pro-Mahdist Ḥabbāb tribes in the period of the battle of Kufit. See Alula's letter to Saletta, Asmara, 15 October 1885, in Giglio, *Ethiopia-Mar Rosso*, v, no. 86, pp. 103–4.

<sup>18</sup> Expecting an Italian punitive mission, Alula intensified his activities against Catholic missions in his provinces (and also against Muslims—see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 195–8). For examples see: Puglisi, *Chi è?*, 14; M. Da Nembro, *La missione dei minori Cappuccini in Eritrea 1894–1952*, Rome, 1953, 18.



His Father and from the Holy Spirit, in honour and in form, in wish and in volition'.<sup>19</sup>

This Abba Täklä Maryam said to him, 'My lord, all that you have thought in your heart is good. What you say to me with your mouth is more tasteful to me than honey and sugar. And it pleases my heart like the scent of incense and like the flower of the pomegranate'.

They held an assembly, and he set up for them a testimony from the books, which says, 'And as the Father has life, so to the Son He gave  
47a life, in order that life might be with Him', and / this, and more like it. The men of Sārayē and Ḥamasēn who were assembled in this assembly lacked anything to say, and were troubled on that day. And the people who looked on marvelled at the flavour of the word and the answer of the mouth of Abba Täklä Maryam, for it came out of his mouth like a flame of fire. After the faith had been corrected, and they had worshipped the Word, Ras Alula said, 'Obey the Word, and do homage to His holiness'. And he praised God, saying, 'This which You have concealed from the wise, You have revealed to me'.

The country of Ḥamasēn was sanctified by the passing of the foot of Ras Alula, and he ate the blessing of the land and the produce of the fields. Their many cows and sheep multiplied and became many in their  
47b pastures /. Their walls did not fall down, and there was no weeping in their land, because the word of the mouth of Ras Alula was sharper than a sword. Because of his majesty the ground trembled, and the mountains and hills melted.

*Late 1887 and early 1888: the Italian punitive mission*<sup>20</sup>

After this all the wicked and the apostates assembled and made an encampment in caves and pits in the ground, in order that the word of the book might be fulfilled which says, 'Foxes have holes',<sup>21</sup> for like foxes which are deceitful, so do they adulterate with falsehood the word of God; and which further says, 'They returned and angered Him in the waste lands, and troubled Him in the desert'.

He (*Alula*) made a long prayer and said, 'O Lord, look towards my

<sup>19</sup> The people under attack here are evidently 'dyophysites', who believe that the incarnate Christ (i.e. the Word) was 'in two natures'. From the Ethiopian Orthodox point of view this is criticized as 'adding a fourth member to the Trinity'—i.e. the human nature of Christ—and thereby improperly separating the Word from the Father and the Holy Spirit.

<sup>20</sup> An Italian punitive mission of 20,000 troops headed by General San Marzano concentrated at Massawa in late 1887. By January 1888 this Italian army was well entrenched in Sāḥaṭi and neighbouring positions.

<sup>21</sup> The Italian method of entrenchment embarrassed the Ethiopians, who were accustomed to do battle in the open. It was regarded with contempt by the Ethiopian warriors: 'In order to avoid war', Alula addressed General Genè, 'you stayed in the middle of the sea like fishes. Later you came out and like rats you have dug trenches . . .' (Alula to Genè, 20 January 1887, Giglio, *Etiopia—Mar Rosso*, VI, no. 6, p. 11).

assistance, O Lord, hasten to my assistance. Let our enemies see and be  
 26a ashamed'. He said this and more like it, / and having completed his  
 prayer, he sent to the king, saying, 'Rise up, O Lord, in your resting place  
 and in the ark of your sanctuary. For behold, our foes and enemies have  
 exulted and have made pride abound upon us, and have surrounded the  
 country of Ḥamasēn. For they do not know that which the book says,  
 "Do not be proud and do not shout in houses"'.<sup>22</sup>

The king, hearing this word, was angry.<sup>22</sup> 'How did Satan fill the  
 heart, and how did you dare to come towards me!' And the Italians rose  
 up and went to the country of Ḥamasēn, and arrived at a place called  
 Addi Nāfas.

There was a noble appointed over Wällo, by the name of Ras Mika'ēl,<sup>23</sup>  
 whom the king of kings Yohannes loved, because by his word and by his  
 26b command he (*Mika'ēl*) had entered / --- the great Christian faith  
 and had been baptized with Christian baptism, and had become one who  
 pleased God. He said to the king, 'Give authority to me and to Ras  
 Alula, that we may go to the snake and to the scorpions—who are the  
 Italians—who bite people and pour out the potion of death on the faithful—  
 namely heretical teaching'. And he said to them, 'Go in peace. May  
 God help you with the help of our Mother of holy Zion, and may all the  
 rebels and wicked men tremble and fear on account of you, and may God  
 give you power and strength in time of battle. I myself will come with  
 you, and I will not leave you to be orphans'. /

24a The two of them went to the place of battle,<sup>24</sup> Ras Alula leading him.  
 And when he came to the edge of that place in which the Italians were,  
 Ras Alula took off his adornments and made a crown of gold and clothes  
 of gold braid and of silver; and he took a shield of gold and silver and  
 girded his sword that was adorned with gold and silver. Many people  
 were startled because of the adornments that were in all this, and fell to  
 the ground and became like corpses, for like the lightning which comes  
 from the east and is seen as far as the west, so is the coming of Ras Alula.

And this Italian was startled and feared, and dug a deep pit and hid  
 24b in it, for / he could not look on the face of Ras Alula. As wax is melted  
 before the face of the fire, so were his enemies destroyed before his face.  
 He (*Alula*) said, 'Come, come out of this den, and let us see each other  
 face to face'. And he (*Italian*) said to him, 'I will not come out of this

<sup>22</sup> Yohannes was then (December 1887) at Lake Ashange receiving the British mediator Portal. Portal attributed to Alula's message the emperor's refusal to come to terms, i.e. to cede territory to the Italians, and also to remove Alula from the political scene (FO 403/90, Portal to Baring, 25 December 1887; Portal, *My mission*, 161–2).

<sup>23</sup> The Galla leader, formerly Muḥammad 'Alī, the future Negus Mika'ēl.

<sup>24</sup> For details of this Italian-Ethiopian confrontation see Ministero della Guerra, *Storia militare della colonia Eritrea*, Roma, 1935; WO [War Office in PRO] 33/55 A322, 'Eritrea, a history of the Italian possessions in the Red Sea'; also Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 205–12.

house of mine, unless you have gone away'. The king and his troops went away; and he (*Italian*) went away.<sup>25</sup>

After they had gone away, he (*Italian*) sent to his land, and said, 'O king, order us to return to our land, for we cannot contend against a man by the name of Ras Alula, powerful and very strong, and we became like dead men before him. To us he seemed like David the killer of ten thousand, or like Barak and Jephtha'. The Italians were subjugated, 25a their country trembled /, and the hills which have hills within them shook, which means not hills, but the kings and princes and nobles of that land. They said, 'It is fitting for us that we be subject to him, not willingly but by compulsion, in order that he should not destroy our land, and not kill our people'. They brought him everything that he wished; for all who seek shall find, according to the word of our Lord, which says, 'Seek, and you shall find'. The Italians who were in the enclosure saw him with fire coming from his face, and it burnt up the apostates. And they said, 'We have sinned and erred that we came against you. For we have become as sheep without a shepherd'.

1888: *the Mahdist threat* <sup>26</sup>

25b After this the king said to him (*Alula*), 'My son, / stay here, and I will go where God commands me'.

He arrived in the country of Aksum, in order that he might see the celebrations and the institutions of our Mother of Zion, the great land, which is above all lands, for he had wished for a long time to see the celebrations at our Mother of Zion. Is not the celebration of Zion as follows? The priests take up branches of plants, and the children and infants call out and say, 'Hosanna in the highest!'. The people, and the leaders who go before and come behind, say, 'Hosanna to the Son of David', while the chief priest is in the midst of them, seated on a female donkey.

The king was amazed, and he said, 'All the glory of the daughter of the king /  
36a [of the king of Rome. Ras Alula detained the king] (*and the king*) of kings revealed their impure religion and hateful works. Their religion says as follows, 'Say "No" to God, and "Yes" to the demon which is Muḥammad'.<sup>27</sup>

He spoke like this to the nobles and princes about these pagans, 'For

<sup>25</sup> On 25 March 1888 Alula failed to entice the Italians to fight in the open (see description in FO 403/91, Slade to Savile, 4 April 1888). Later, however, the Italian expedition had to leave without taking revenge for Dogali.

<sup>26</sup> While the emperor was facing the Italians, Gondar was destroyed by a Mahdist invasion (23 January 1888) (see Holt, *Mahdist state*, 172). Yohannes then decided, following Alula's failure to fight the Italians, to spend Easter in Aksum and to decide there about his next move.

<sup>27</sup> These are the Mahdists. Yohannes was deeply moved by the destruction of Gondar by Abū 'Anja and insulted by an aggressive letter from the Khalifa (see Shuqayr, *Tārīkh al-Sūdān*, 474).

behold, they have destroyed our land and burnt our churches, and blasphemed against our true faith. Among our people there are those they killed, and those they took captive, and those they made to enter their impure religion. What then should we do?'.<sup>28</sup> And the nobles<sup>29</sup> were silent. There was not one of them who spoke either good or bad.

36b At that time the Holy / Spirit filled Ras Alula, true of faith, for he was zealous for the faith of Christ and diligent in works and good deeds like Elijah the prophet and like John the Baptist. He opened his mouth and said, 'What are these pagans, who do not know God? Let us go and do battle with them, on behalf of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not fear the majesty of their appearance. Is it not written concerning us, that which says, "Do not fear death, that you may obtain life, because  
37a death does not relinquish you"? And / as for you, think upon that which is above, where Christ is'. By saying this, he strengthened them, and removed fear from their hearts; and they spoke like him, with one voice, as of one man. The king said to him, 'You have spoken well, O elect Ras Alula, a man faithful after my heart'. And the matter ended with this good counsel.<sup>30</sup>

After this, Yohannes king of kings went towards Begemdir,<sup>31</sup> and Ras Alula remained in Ḥamasēn, the land of his jurisdiction.<sup>32</sup> After a short time Ras Alula followed him, and the two of them arrived together at the place which is called Dābrā Tabor.<sup>33</sup> After this they passed on towards  
37b Gojjam, the other side of / the water of Geyon, which is the Abbay.<sup>34</sup> There they performed many great deeds by reason of the rebellion of the king of Gojjam.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28</sup> With the Italians still in a threatening position and the loyalty of his great vassals quite doubtful (see below, n. 31), Yohannes must have been reluctant to fight the Mahdiyya at that stage.

<sup>29</sup> According to Italian employed spies the following leaders were assembled in the emperor's camp in late April and early May 1888: Ras Mika'el, Ras Hagos, Dājjazmač Tädla of Ayba, Bäjerond Lāwtē, Dābbāb Ar'aya (he deserted the Italians and returned to Yohannes's camp in February 1888), and Ras Alula (ASMAI, DI (Diarri Informazioni), Inf. Sa'id Muḥammad, 8 May 1888).

<sup>30</sup> Thus, after his anti-Italian policy proved a partial failure and Alula was in disgrace with the emperor (see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 212-18), the Ras managed to re-establish himself by urging a war against the Mahdiyya.

<sup>31</sup> In late May Yohannes left Aksum for Mäqälē, where he planned to spend the rainy season (ASMAI, DI, 16 June 1888). But when he heard that Negus Menelik and Negus Täklä Haymanot had joined hands in rebellion against him (Lämlām, 36; Antonelli to MAE, 11 June 1888, LV, xv), he hastily left on 7 July 1888 for Dābrā Tabor.

<sup>32</sup> In late May Alula returned to Asmara but was immediately summoned to Mäqälē by Yohannes. He left on 14 June 1888 to meet his master en route to Dābrā Tabor (ASMAI, DI, 16 July 1888, Inf. Keflu Drar).

<sup>33</sup> Late July 1888.

<sup>34</sup> The Blue Nile.

<sup>35</sup> Yohannes crossed the Abbay on 6 August 1888. Alula followed him a month later to help besiege Täklä Haymanot on Amba Gībella. Again the author has preferred to avoid discussing most important domestic affairs, this time Yohannes's relations with Täklä Haymanot and with Menelik in late 1888 and early 1889.

*March 1889: the battle of Mätamma, the death of Yohannes*

Then Yohannes, king of kings, went down towards Mätamma, which is in the country of the west, while Ras Alula went in front of the encampment of the faithful,<sup>36</sup> remembering that which says, ' Be zealous for good '.

Arriving there, the king arranged all his troops on the right and the left, behind and in front.<sup>37</sup> The priests and bishops followed him, carrying the tabot with all the vessels for its service. Who is able to tell of the  
38a slaughter of that day, or how majestic / that hour was ? At that time Yohannes was like our Lord in his sufferings, for all his followers were scattered as the disciples were scattered, leaving their Lord. Ras Alula alone remained, as John the Evangelist remained while the disciples were scattered. Ras Alula was wounded <sup>38</sup> on four sides. As for the king, his right hand was pierced. These five wounds of the two of them were like the five nail wounds of our Lord. Yohannes, king and martyr, was stabbed on his right side ; this was like the stabbing of the side of the life-giving Lord.

They returned to their base, and the king sorrowed because he had  
38b not finished off / these impure Muslims. An angel of peace, a servant of (*the archangel*) Michael, consoled him, and said to him, ' Do not be troubled, my lord, because this is from God '. That night <sup>39</sup> the king passed the time in great pain.

When it was morning, Ras Alula came to him to know his condition, and he (*Yohannes*) told him a secret mystery concerning the house of the kingdom and concerning the house of his son Ras Mängäša.<sup>40</sup> And he (*Mängäša*) came to his father (*Yohannes*), and his father said to Ras Alula, ' O, my beloved and faithful one, behold your son, this Ras Mängäša. Protect your trust which I have handed over to you '. And  
39a to his son, / he said, ' My son, behold your father, Ras Alula ; do not reject his counsel, nor transgress his commands '.

Having spoken like this, he made a promise, and rested from the toil of this transitory world ; and there was no one who knew, except a few chosen ones.<sup>41</sup> They shrouded him in a good shroud, according to the manner of kings, and they placed him in a box which was made of wood which would not rot. On the next day they retreated, carrying his corpse.

<sup>36</sup> Ras Alula was not the commander of the Imperial Army. The command was given to the emperor's nephews Ras Häylä Maryam and Ras Mängäša.

<sup>37</sup> See description of the battle by Eçägē Tēwofelos in C. Conti Rossini, *Italia ed Etiopia*, Roma, 1935, 461-2.

<sup>38</sup> This is confirmed by ASMAI, DI, 2 April 1889, Inf. 'Uthmān 'Umān.

<sup>39</sup> Between 9 and 10 March 1889.

<sup>40</sup> See Tēwofelos's description in Conti Rossini, op. cit., 461-2. Concerning Mängäša, see Täklä Şadeq Mäkuriya, *Yä-Ityoḃya tarik*, 63.

<sup>41</sup> See Tēwofelos's description.

When those knew, they hunted them and did battle with them as before, and the faithful people were conquered and finished off.<sup>42</sup> They were all left to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the field. They  
 39b lacked any one to bury them. Those who escaped from death / fled individually, leaving the corpse of Yohannes, the chaste one and martyr. But to the Muslims, the corpse of the honoured body was not revealed.<sup>43</sup> I do not know if angels came down and took it up to heaven. God himself knows.

At that time Ras Alula became strong in fighting and opted to die because of the love of Yohannes his lord. Nevertheless, he retreated, against his wish, because of those with him.

1889: *Alula fights for an independent Tigre* <sup>44</sup>

After four days the two of them met, Ras Mängäša and Ras Alula, and they decided to go towards their land. They passed along the road to Wägära and Semēn, and went down to the lowlands of Şällämt.<sup>45</sup> In  
 40a those days they did not eat / food, but the power of God strengthened them until they reached the land of Tānbēn.<sup>46</sup>

Passing on from there, they arrived at the country of Aksum,<sup>47</sup> and the people of Zion received them, weeping and making lamentation for themselves and for Yohannes their king. They said, 'Alas for us, woe to us; for Yohannes our light is darkened, and our songs are done away with. Our praise is silent and from all that is great Zion is sealed off'. They made great weeping and crying, saying, 'Yohannes was the honour of  
 40b kings, the glory of priests, the pride of young men, the riches of the poor, the hope of the hopeless, and the clothes / of the naked'. Then there was wailing, wailing without end. Then tears flowed like the water of the rainy season, which has no ending or completion.

Ras Mängäša and Ras Alula went in and greeted her (*the church*), the mistress, and kissed her doorposts, and went around all the sanctuary of

<sup>42</sup> According to a Mahdist historian this second clash took place on 12 March 1889 near the Atbara river, and 'Ras Alula, although he was the fire of the Abyssinians' fire, ran away' (Ismā'il b. 'Abd al-Qādir, *al-Tirāz al-manqūsh bibushrā qatl Yūhannā malik al-ḥubūsh*, MS, School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, fols. 125-30). See also Heruy Wäldä Sellasē, *Ityōpyanna mātāmma*, Addis Ababa, 1901/1908-9, 14; Conti Rossini, op. cit., p. 26, n. 2; Shuqayr, *Tārīkh al-Sūdān*, 485.

<sup>43</sup> Yohannes's head was said to have been captured by the Mahdists and sent to Omdurman for exhibition (Holt, *Mahdist state*, 174).

<sup>44</sup> Alula and Mängäša (who according to Tēwofelos was crowned in Mātāmma) returned to Tigre after the death of Yohannes, and refused to recognize Menelik as emperor. They had to spend the following year fighting for their lives against local rivals who were sent or supported by Menelik or the Italians.

<sup>45</sup> Districts between Lake Ṭana and the river Tākkāzē.

<sup>46</sup> Early April 1889.

<sup>47</sup> 20 April 1889 (ASMAI, DI, 24 April 1889, Inf. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥāfiz).

Zion, marvelling at the power of God. The priests and people of the country of Aksum, after they had finished their weeping and crying, said one to the other, 'Come, let us rejoice because of the coming of Ras Alula our lord, for he will protect our land, and he will save us from the hand  
41a of / the enemy that has no mercy'.<sup>48</sup> Having assembled, they went to Ras Alula, and they said to him, 'Praise be to God in heaven, and peace on earth to him who pleases man, for He (*God*) has shown us your face, and has spared for us even you, the seed from Yohannes. If He had not spared you for us from death, we should have been like Sodom, and we should have resembled Gomorra'.

After this, two nobles rose up in rebellion, and Ras Alula said to Ras Mängäša, 'Arise, let us go to fight Däjjač Seyum,<sup>49</sup> because he has come from the country of the east, in order to destroy us and to remove the kingdom of Yohannes'. The heart of Ras Mängäša rejoiced at this counsel,  
41b and they went together / towards the east<sup>50</sup> to search for him; but a trace of his path was not found.

And the second time, Däjjazmač Däbbäb<sup>51</sup> followed after them until he reached the country of Endärta, and Ras Mängäša and Ras Alula returned towards him. He feared and trembled. When all the nobles of the country heard the sound of the coming of Ras Alula, chief of the princes, did they not tremble because of his majesty, and did not all their power fail? Däjjazmač Däbbäb said, 'Have mercy on me, my lords; and especially my lord Ras Alula, forgive me'. And he made reconciliation and peace, and there was great joy at that time.

42a On the third day, he (*Däbbäb*) wished to return / to his former work, and the evil of his counsel and the deceit of his heart were known to Ras Mängäša and Ras Alula, the good lords. Ras Alula seized with his right hand that man (*Däbbäb*), and with his left hand his brother, and they did not move at all. Is not this man strong of arm like Samson, and resolute like Joab? They bound him with a strong chain, and when they returned,

<sup>48</sup> Probably the Italians and Menelik, who were soon to be parties to the Treaty of Ucciali, 2 May 1889.

<sup>49</sup> Däjjazmač Seyum 'Abba Gobaz' the son of Ras Gäbrä Kidanē of Zäbul and Yohannes's sister. Seyum was appointed by Menelik over Tigre and in early 1899 entered Endärta (ASMAI, DI, 22 June 1889, 'Informants who left Adwa on 16 June 1889').

<sup>50</sup> From Tämbēn to Mäqälē. Seyum did not capture Mäqälē, which was held by one of Mängäša's devotees. Following the arrival of the two Rases in Mäqälē he avoided fighting and retreated to Ashange (ASMAI, DI, 21 June 1889, Inf. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥāfiz).

<sup>51</sup> A son of Ras Ar'aya Demṣu, a brother of Amläsu, and Alula's greatest personal rival. Däbbäb had co-operated with the Egyptians in Massawa and later with the Italians. In February 1889 when Alula was with Yohannes near Mätämma he killed Alula's man in Asmara, and took the town in the name of the Italians. In early July 1889, Däbbäb penetrated Tämbēn (ASMAI, DI, 17 July 1889, Inf. Muḥammad Idris). Däbbäb was then promised by the two Rases the kingdom of Tigre and thus was tempted to enter Mäqälē where, probably on 17 July 1889, he was imprisoned by Alula and put on Amba Sälama (ASMAI, DI, Bahta Hagos to Baldissera, 25 July 1889). Däbbäb escaped in May 1891, and was killed by Alula in September.

he took him to the high hill which is called the burial place of Abba Sälama.

After this Ras Alula went to Ḥamasēn,<sup>52</sup> and all the nobles went each to his country. But Ras Mängäša remained alone in Adwa in the house of his father.

After this, in the fourth month, Däjjazmač Seyum came towards him 42b (*Mängäša*)<sup>53</sup> secretly, and not openly /; and when he knew the news of his coming, Ras Mängäša sent to the nobles, saying, 'Come to me'. But no one came. There were those who stayed away from fear, and those who stayed away from deceit.<sup>54</sup> But this Ras Alula was true without treachery, and fear did not enter into his heart. He arose with a burning heart and came with enthusiasm. He arrived at the place which they call Da'ero Tākli.<sup>55</sup> While he was there, Däjjazmač Seyum sent to him, saying, 'Come to me, my lord, and I will give you up to the half of my kingdom'.<sup>56</sup> But Ras Alula, hearing this, was very angry, and became like fire, and said, 43a 'What have I to do with you? For me, I have no king except / Ras Mängäša, son of Yohannes the king. But wait for me in the place you have chosen'. For the faith of Ras Alula was very great.

Having passed to the right of Aksum towards his lord, he arrived at the west of this land of Aksum; and Däjjazmač Seyum came suddenly, and they had a battle.<sup>57</sup> He fled before the face of Ras Alula, and the track of his path was lost; most of his troops were scattered individually, and not together. That man (*Seyum*) escaped from the hand of Ras Alula by deceit, saying, 'My lord, behold me, I am with you'.

Ras Alula sent to Ras Mängäša, saying, 'Come, enter your house, for 43b I / your father have conquered Däjjazmač Seyum, our enemy'. Ras Mängäša came with joy and gladness, and gave him (*Alula*) the throne of his father Yohannes, with the result that the nobles and troops were amazed, and said, 'How good is all the work of this Ras Alula!'. There

<sup>52</sup> On his march to Ḥamasēn, Alula learnt that the Italians had taken Asmara (2 August 1889). So he spent the period of August–November 1889 in Qohayn (ASMAI, DI, Tenente Zuiraghi, 30 August 1889).

<sup>53</sup> In late October 1889 Seyum took Mäqälē and led his 1,500 troops towards Adwa (ASMAI, DI, 9 November 1889, unlike Conti Rossini, *op. cit.*, 20).

<sup>54</sup> Däjjazmač Tädla Ayba and Wagshum Berru 'stayed away from fear', while Däjjazmač Sebhat Arägawi of Agamē 'stayed away from deceit'. Sebhat, a descendant of Sebagadis and hereditary ruler of his province, swore allegiance to Mängäša in early September 1889. Later in that month he sent to the Italians declaring himself an obedient servant of Menelik (ASMAI, DI, 30 September 1889, Sebhat to Baldissera).

<sup>55</sup> Between Adwa and the Märäb.

<sup>56</sup> Seyum and Mängäša fought in Adwa on 2 and 3 November 1889. Mängäša was defeated, but managed to flee on the next day and to send for Alula from Qohayn. The two Rasēs were probably reunited in Da'ero Tākli (L. De Vito, *Esercizi di lettura in lingua tigrigna*, Roma, 1893, 19; ASMAI, DI, 10 November 1889, Inf. 'Ali Hamad Nūr, Seyum to Baldissera, 8 November 1889; Conti Rossini, *op. cit.*, 19).

<sup>57</sup> 6 November 1889 at Enda Abunä Pāntälēwon (Conti Rossini, *op. cit.*, 19; ASMAI 3/5–33, Baldissera's report of 15 November 1889). Seyum fled to Asmara.



were those who said, 'But I would not have given honour to a non-relative', and some said, 'He has done well'.<sup>58</sup>

After a few days he (*Alula*) returned from the place where Däjjazmač Seyum had escaped, and arrived in the country of Agamē.

Däjjazmač Sebhat and Däjjazmač Seyum were united in one counsel and one wish.<sup>59</sup> Ras Mängäša and Ras Alula, hearing this, went towards 44a them, and they found them in a place which they call / Zeban Čä'a.<sup>60</sup> They had a battle and fighting, so that all the nobles were scattered separately. Some fled as far as Tānbēn and some to Endārta, some to Šera' and some to Hahaylē, and some to Adwa. Ras Alula alone remained with him, and did not leave Ras Mängäša alone. He did battle for three days and three nights, without anyone causing him alarm, nor anyone overpowering him. But many chiefs of his troops died—those called Bayša Märša, Assällafi Zällälāw, and Abba Ga'i; and Bayša Tälla and Fitawrari Asrobälla were wounded. From among them there were those whom they killed and those whom they captured.

44b That Däjjazmač Seyum escaped as before<sup>61</sup> / and preceded them on the path as far as the boundary of Enda Mäkwāni. He arrived there, and they followed after him. They found him at the foot of Alajē, and did battle with him for many days. His tent was torn, and powerful troops brought it; they brought it together with his bed.

In this battle Ras Alula was wounded, and fear and trembling entered the heart of the nobles. They spent the whole night saying, 'O lord, Ras Alula, protect us, and seek refuge for us from this people of the country of Enda Mäkwāni'. For against them were assembled the men of Enda Mäkwāni and the men of Azäbo, the men of Wajerat<sup>62</sup> and the men of 45a Endārta,<sup>63</sup> and they were troubling them as / the men of the Philistines assembled against Israel to do battle with them and camped in Aphek.

Ras Alula led them out of the place of battle as Moses led Israel out

<sup>58</sup> For the popular song praising Alula's quick march to help Mängäša against Seyum and his 'restoring the throne to the owner of the throne', see Conti Rossini, *Proverbi tradizioni e canzoni tigrine*, Roma, 1912, 297; and Abba Gasparini, *Yä-Ityopya tarik*, Asmara, 1955/1962-3, 187.

<sup>59</sup> The Italians rearmed Seyum and united him with Sebhat of Agamē who had claimed to be also a supporter of Menelik (see p. 324, n. 54).

<sup>60</sup> East of Amba Šeyon in Haramat on 2 December 1889 (ASMAI, DI, Albertone, 9 December 1889, 16 December 1889; ASMAI 3/5-33, Orero to MAE, 11 December, 1889).

<sup>61</sup> Seyum probably tried to return to Mäqälē and expect there Menelik's help. Alula and Mängäša followed him, and they joined battle near Amba Alajē probably in late December 1889.

<sup>62</sup> Districts around Lake Ashange. 'The men of Azäbo, the men of Wajerat' are the Azabo Galla, who are notoriously known as ferocious lawless people. The Azabo Gallas were one of the few Galla tribes which had not intermarried with the Amharas. For an Ethiopian attempt to pacify this area as late as 1929, see C. Zoli, *Etiopia d'oggi*, Roma, 1935, 139-52. For the Azabo Gallas' treacherous behaviour in the battles against the Italians in the second World War, see L. Mosley, *Haile Selassie*, London, 1964, 222, 224, 226, 261.

<sup>63</sup> Endārta, unlike Tānbēn and Adwa, was not a centre of resistance to Shoan hegemony in Ethiopia. (For reasons, see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 251, 256.)

of Egypt. And he returned to Tānbēn, the land of his birth, which is Mānāwē,<sup>64</sup> and Ras Māngāša followed after him.

*March 1890: Māngāša submits to Menelik against Alula's advice*

When they were in their land, the king Menelik came, and arrived at Māqālē, the residence of the king, and entered into the throne-room of the king.<sup>65</sup>

When Ras Alula heard that he had gone into the throne-room of the king, spiritual zeal seized him, and he sorrowed greatly. His viscera  
45b blazed like a reed stem before the face of the fire, and he said / , ' Where is the country of Yohannes, and where is his resting place? Where will be found the traces of his path? '. He further said, ' I will not pay homage to him (*Menelik*), and I will not bow down to the glory of his kingship, because he is --- (*an intruder in the*) house of the king '. Ras Alula did not change his word at all, because he did not fear anyone, neither king nor anything that is.<sup>66</sup> Is he not a man powerful and warlike? And he counselled against him (*Menelik*) that he should seize him on the path and take his possessions. But the nobles and princes were not in agreement with this counsel,<sup>67</sup> and they said to Ras Māngāša, ' Go in to him, and bow down to him '. And he went in against his will, because the counsel of the nobles overruled him.<sup>68</sup>

#### APPENDIX

During the seven years from early 1890 to his death on 15 February 1897, Alula continued to play a significant role in his country's history. As the champion of the Tigrean cause, Alula did not let Māngāša travel to Addis Ababa, as Menelik demanded. Alula's policy was to persuade the Italians in Eritrea to regard Tigre as a buffer state and help it preserve its independence. In late 1891 and early 1892, Alula's policy proved to be a temporary success

<sup>64</sup> It was in the church of Mānāwē that this MS was found.

<sup>65</sup> i.e. Yohannes's palace. Menelik, upon hearing about the failure of Seyum, marched northwards and entered Māqālē on 23 February 1890 (Conti Rossini, *Italia*, 27; WO 35/55, ' Eritrea Report ').

<sup>66</sup> In Tāmbēn in early 1890 Māngāša and Alula were facing possible immediate destruction. On 26 January 1890, Adwa was occupied by an Italian force of which the aim was ' the sending to Italy of Ras Alula ' (General Orero's letter of 22 February 1890 in R. Truffi, *Precursoni dell'impero africano*, Milano, 1936, 176). (This invasion was disapproved of by Menelik, and the Italians had to retreat.) Agamē under Sebhat was hostile and Endārta was occupied by the emperor's army. The few followers of Alula and Māngāša suffered heavily from the famine. (For the famine see R. Pankhurst, ' The great Ethiopian famine of 1889-1892 ', *University College Review* (Addis Ababa), Spring 1961, 90-103, and L. Mercatelli, ' Nel paese di Ras Alula ', *Corriere di Napoli*, 13-14 May 1891.)

<sup>67</sup> These were probably headed by Ras Hagos, Dājjazmač Embayē, and Bājerond Lāwtē, the only other prominent leaders known to be then in Māngāša's camp (Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 269).

<sup>68</sup> On 16 March 1890 Māngāša submitted ceremonially to Menelik. Tigre had to be divided between Māngāša, Seyum, and Māšāša Wārḡē, one of Menelik's most loyal officers. Ras Alula had to be removed from the political scene.

and Mängäša started regarding himself as a sovereign. A change in Italian policy rendered it a failure and Alula's only way to stop Mängäša from going to Menelik was to revolt against him. He did this twice in late 1892 and early 1893, only to be defeated and publicly humiliated. Alula was then, ironically enough, saved by Menelik's envoys. The emperor, whose relations with Italy deteriorated, understood that Alula, the living symbol of the Italians' previous military defeat at Dogali, might well serve him in future developments. Thus when Mängäša finally marched to Addis Ababa in 1894, Alula followed him to remain there as Menelik's man. His activities during the period 1894-7 were in the service of this emperor whose hegemony over Ethiopia was most obviously recognized by Alula.

'I then turned to king Menelek', Alula told Wylde in their meeting of 21 June 1896 at Aksum, 'as the only man who could restore order, and since that time I have thrown all my influence on his side, in order to unite Abyssinia once more' (A. B. Wylde, 'An unofficial mission to Abyssinia', *Manchester Guardian*, 14 May 1897).

Alula contributed substantially to the great victory of Adwa over the invading Italians. He died ten months later after a clash with Ras Hagos.

It is a pity that this MS is not complete. One may think of several reasons for the interruption of the writing in early 1890. It may be that the biographer met his death in such a period of famine and epidemic (for the high rate of death in Alula's camp see L. Mercatelli, 'Nel paese di Ras Alula', *Corriere di Napoli*, 13-14 May 1891). Another possible reason is that the biographer may have been a priest, a native of Mänāwē, affiliated with the church of Aksum (possibly the Abba Täklä Haymanot mentioned in leaf 6b, or the Abba Täklä Maryam mentioned in leaves 23b, 21b, 46a, 46b, 47a); in April 1890 Adwa and Aksum were given by Menelik to Däjjazmač Mäšäša Wärqē, a sworn enemy of Alula, and the biographer would then have had to leave. It was probably then that the MS was transferred to Mänāwē, where the church was rebuilt by Alula in 1890, 1891 (see Erlich, *Ras Alula*, 311, and the inscription on the bell of the church). A third reason could be that the biographer, keen on describing Alula's heroic activities against national enemies, was reluctant to write about the subsequent period, during which Alula was active mainly in domestic affairs and was quite frequently a loser. Fourthly, it may be that the last part of the MS was lost or destroyed, as four sections from the middle have been.

The career of Ras Alula, a man of low birth who managed to become a prominent leader, is not only a personal drama, but is a career which strongly influenced history during the late nineteenth century. We are very fortunate in possessing such a fascinating and illuminating contemporary Ethiopian biography of him.