

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE CAPUCHIN CATHOLIC
BISHOP OF HARRAR (1900-1940), MGR. ANDRE JAROSSEAU ON
TAFFARI MAKONNEN, LATER EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE***

(A Preliminary Study) By Aleme Eshete.

“C'est votre devoir comme Souverain. C'est votre devoir comme pere du peuple. Ne craignez pas de gouverner, car de meme que le laboureur doit labourer que le forgeron doit forger que le soldat doit combattre, le Roi doit gouverner, le Roi est d'autant plus aime qu'il gouverne et qu'il est craint car c'est la crainte qui tient l'ordre dans un royaume...”¹

Mgr. Jarosseau to Ras Taffari 5/1/17.
(Archives Capuchins Toulouse 2R190)

Could Jarosseau be more Machiavellian?! And what were the effects of such advice on Taffari?

Taffari, if we are to believe Mgr. Jarosseau, was entrusted to Mgr Taurin, the Bishop of the Capuchin Catholic Mission at Harrar, by his father Ras Makonnen, upon his departure to the battle of Adowa which took place in 1896. This information is noted by Mgr. Jarosseau after 1930, at the back of a picture of young Taffari aged, according to the Catholic bishop, four years.² We have not been able to verify the truth of this information by other documents. It is well known that Ras Makonnen and Mgr. Taurin lived on very friendly terms, but that he entrusted his son to a Catholic bishop in an environment of Orthodox predominance hostile to Catholicism, is rather hard to believe, more so if Makonnen had in mind any special mission for his son in the future.

However that may be, Ras Makonnen did, later on, upon his return from Europe in 1902, request the Catholic Mission of Harrar under Mgr. Jarosseau to undertake the education of his son Taffari. That was in June 1903.

But before we proceed with the influence of Mgr. Andre Jarosseau on young Taffari, it would be proper to examine briefly what type of a person Andre Jarosseau was. When Pere Andre arrived in Harrar for the first time as a simple missionary in 1882, he gave the impression of a dynamic young man, full of energy and good

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²This paper was first prepared for the conference of the Historical Society of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, May 1973.

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will. He loved adventure and accepted assignments to different new posts with pleasure. However, little by little, one could see the predominant character in Pere Andre: he was impulsive; his opinions and words were often contradictory and confused. If Mgr. Taurin his predecessor was very careful with what he did if he was very calculating, if he gave much importance to details, and to remote possible consequences of his actions, Mgr. Jarosseau was the contrary. He usually lost himself in generalities and idealism, and suffered more than once because he did not calculate properly the consequences of his actions. Politically if he showed himself at times a great friend of Ethiopia, at others he proved to be "imperialist" and prayed for an Italian victory against Yohannes in 1887-1888, and more important still at the battle of Adowa in 1896. Above all he was an out-and-out chauvinist. He loved France, and fought by all means to defend its interests. He insisted so much on this point in his letters to the Ethiopian princes, Taffari among others, that they may have started to suspect what the duty of the Catholic Bishop was: an emissary of God or an agent of France. And perhaps, this type of diplomacy instead of attracting Ethiopian friends towards France may have alienated a good number of them. Mgr. Jarosseau was anti-English, anti-German, etc. and "la France" alone, he repeatedly declared, was the only true friend of Ethiopia. Mgr. Andre Jarosseau, had, without doubt a number of qualities but these were the striking aspects of his character (as shown by his correspondence and his missionary life in Ethiopia) that may have a bearing on our subject.

It may also be good to see briefly the outstanding aspects of character of Taffari Makonnen. One sees in general in Taffari the antithesis of Jarosseau. Taffari was meditative and not impulsive. He was calculating and his actions have usually been taken after a detailed study of all possible consequences and solutions. Notwithstanding the fact that a number of Europeans had described young Taffari, as "Timid," he had early on generally proved to be quite an independent personality not so easily impressionable. His friendship with others was in like manner calculated, and if his interest was not served, appeals, advices, or proposals, even of a friend, especially of a foreigner, were silently rejected. In a word, he has always given the impression of a good politician and a diplomat. No one could, of course, claim to give a perfect picture of the personality of any leader but these were again the outstanding traits of character of Taffari as could be judged from his correspondence, and from his early political life.

Whatever the case, following Ras Makonnen's request to the Capuchin Mission in June 1903 to give private lessons to young Taffari, Mgr. Jarosseau chose one of his brightest and most religious seminaristes, Abba Samuel. Whatever influence Mgr. Jarosseau practised on Taffari at this early period was therefore done through Abba Samuel.

Samuel was the son of Alaqa Walda Kahin, ex-Orthodox priest of Shoa, converted to Catholicism by Mgr. Massaja, Bishop of the Catholic Mission of the Galla (1846-1879). Alaqa Walda Kahin later followed the Capuchin missionaries in exile to Harrar after 1879. Samuel who had followed his father joined the

Seminaire of Lafto (Harrar) opened in 1898, for the formation of Ethiopian Catholic priests. At the Seminaire in Lafto the students were taught, among other things, French and Latin. A glance at the examination results of the Seminaire of Lafto usually shows Samuel at the top of his class; therefore, by his education, by his general culture and by his personality, Samuel was an impressive character. Henry de Monfried is reported to have written about Samuel: "Je ne pouvais m'empêcher de comparer cet homme remarquable aux sages de la Grace, tant sa pensée est profonde." (I could not stop myself comparing this remarkable man with the old Greek philosophers since his thinking is so profound) That was also the opinion of most people who had any contact with Samuel.

Therefore, from 1903 onwards Samuel was in charge of the education of Taffari. In his absence Tesfaye Chekol, another outstanding seminarist of extremely religious devotion (he had a strong ambition to become a saint one day) was charged to follow-up the education of the young prince. However, Tesfaye died in 1907 and the influence of his short contacts with Taffari may not have been profound. Thus with occasional interruptions, it was Samuel who continuously undertook the education of young Taffari and other children of the court of Harrar, among which we may mention the name of Imrou. This went on up to 1906 the date of the death of Ras Makonnen. From that time on Taffari was taken to the court of Menelik at Addis Ababa, where he was sent to a German school for some time and then to the newly opened Menelik School in 1908. However, Mgr. Jarosseau did not forget Taffari completely. And when in 1907 Samuel went to Addis for some business, Jarosseau told him to try and contact Taffari, and perhaps try to stay with him as long as possible. Later on in his letter to Samuel, the bishop wrote: "Have you been able to see Prince Taffari? Try quietly, my dear son, to cultivate this soul and to do him good; let him know well all the interest that our mission attaches to his person. Qui sait a quelle destinee la Providence le reserve? (Who knows what destiny providence reserves for him?)"

But as a whole it could be said that the contact between Taffari and the Capuchin Mission of Harrar of Mgr. Jarosseau, and more particularly between Taffari and Samuel was at its lowest between 1906 and 1910, the date of the appointment of the prince as governor of Harrar (Yakatit 24 1902 February-March 1910).

During this time, Abba Samuel had undergone important transformations. In 1909, he was consecrated Deacon by Mgr. Jarosseau (apparently in secret, perhaps, in order to avoid any unfavourable consequences on his relations with Taffari and was promised to become shortly a full priest. His religious devotion was showing itself more and more clearly, and for that Jarosseau held him in greater esteem and hoped secretly that the future depended much on Samuel, through his influence on Taffari.

Therefore, when Taffari came back to Harrar in 1910. The first thing that Jarosseau did was to call Abba Samuel from Bilalou (Harrar) where he was engaged as a Catechist, and came to the city of Harrar and stay by the side of Taffari who had asked for him in order to "teach him the French language and become his advisor."

In December 1910, Abba Samuel was consecrated Catholic priest, again it would seem, in "Magnum Silentium", for the same reason as before, that is, not to disturb his relations with Taffari by attracting opposition from the Orthodox circle. Indeed it would seem that few people outside the mission knew that Abba Samuel had become a Catholic priest; and Waizaro Menen, wife of Dajazmach Taffari always addressed her letters (dated 1914) to Ato Samuel and not to the "Abba".⁵

Whatever the case may be, Mgr. Jarosseau continued to exert all his force in order to see a solid band created between Samuel and Taffari, in the interest, above all, of the mission, now and in the future. "Do I have to tell you, my dear Abba," Jarosseau wrote to Samuel at the beginning of December 1911, "that I transfer the greater part of the weight of my worries to you? Let the Good Master render softer and lighter the burden that each day gathers over your shoulders."⁶

Indeed Samuel's task as tutor, advisor and interpreter (he knew excellent French) of Taffari was not an easy one; on one hand, he had to act with the greatest secrecy in order not to arouse opposition against himself and against Taffari, while on the other hand, people from all circles, Ethiopians as well as foreigners expected too much of him to solve their different problems (financial, administrative, land and commercial, etc.) through his influence on Taffari, and one close observer wrote in January 1912 that Samuel had become almost sick as a result of his "delicate Mission qui l'occupe nuit et jour pres du Dedjaz Taffari." (delicate Mission which keeps him busy night and day near to Dedjaz Taffari).

When at the end of 1913 Taffari left for Addis to pay homage to Lej Iyassu, Mgr. Jarosseau arranged for Samuel to follow the prince, and act as Jarosseau wrote, as the "ange conducteur" (guiding angel) of the young prince. Mgr. Jarosseau also entrusted Samuel with the responsibility of launching at Addis Ababa a popularity campaign in favour of Taffari and to discredit the allegation of "weakness, indecision and incapacity" of which Taffari was accused by his adversaries.⁸ The tempest that arose at Addis Ababa as a result of the presence of Samuel by the side of Taffari had the most undesirable result both for the prince and the young Catholic priest. Abuna Matewos followed by Lej Iyassu and the Orthodox conservative aristocracy, accused Taffari of embracing Catholicism, (in the same way, it was asserted, as his father had done!) and excommunicated him until such time as he accepted to separate himself from Samuel, his alleged "confessour particulier", to stop all contacts with the Catholics. It was thought at the time that behind the pretext of Catholicism was also Iyassu's fear of Samuel's strong moral and political influence on Taffari. Taffari argued that it was absolutely false that either his father or himself had any Catholic inclinations and that his association with Samuel was in no way religious; Samuel was simply his interpreter and advisor on foreign affairs. In any case, for some time Samuel was separated from Taffari. But shortly afterwards Taffari appealed to the Abun that he had not been able to reply to European letters nor accept talks with Europeans, while in Addis, because of lack of a good interpreter; he, therefore, requested to have Samuel back, if necessary with a clergyman who could watch him and report on the suspected issue of Samuel trying to convert him to Catholicism. The Abun accepted and Samuel was able

once again to appear by the side of Taffari. A student of the Coptic School (Mene-lik School) was assigned to check all letters that Samuel may write on behalf of Taffari. Iyassu, on his part, expressed openly his desire to have Samuel as his advisor.⁹ But this was not the desire of Taffari, and still less of Samuel, and Iyassu does not seem to have insisted on this point. But the whole incident helped to bring to light the two figures engaged in a bitter power struggle, or as Samuel put it, that Iyassu was "l'ennemi mortel de notre gouverneur (Taffari)."¹⁰

Dejazmach Taffari and Abba Samuel left Addis Ababa on the 29th of April, after almost five months of sojourn in the capital. They arrived at Harrar on the 2nd of May.¹¹

But Samuel did not live long and on the 8th of June 1915, he lost his life in a mysterious boat accident on Lake Haramaya - where he had accompanied Dejazmach Taffari in a boat promenade. Dajazmach Taffari was successfully brought to shore, while Samuel and a number of others were drowned. His death brought a great shock not only to the Mission and to Mgr. Jarosseau, but also to Taffari who lost in Samuel not only his advisor and interpreter but also, in his own words "his best friend and consolator."¹² Emperor Haile Sellassie wrote in his book published recently:

«አባ ሳሙኤል ትልቅ ዕውቀት ያለው ለመማርም ለማስተማርም የሚተጋ በደግ ነትና በትሕትና ከማንም ሰው ዕውቀትን እንደንብ የሚቀምም በፍቅር እግዚአብሔር ና በፍቅር ቢጽ የተጠመደ የነፍሱን እንጂ የሥጋውን ጥቅም ለማግኘት የማይጥር ደግ ሰው ነበር ። ይህንንም ማለቱ ዐሥር ዓመት ያህል አብረን በመኖራችን በጣም ስለ አወ ቅሁት ነው ።»

(... Abba Samuel was a man of great knowledge always keen to learn and teach, a man who kindly and humbly seeks knowledge like a bee from anyone, who was wrapped by the love of God and the love of friendship and one who toiled for the good of his soul rather than for his worldly life. I say this because having lived together for ten years, I have known him very well.)¹³

After the death of Abba Samuel, the contact between Mgr. Jarosseau and Dejazmach Taffari was largely reduced, and there was really no one from the Ethiopian members of the Capuchin Catholic Mission who took his place. Now Mgr. Jarosseau used as his contacts with Dajazmach Taffari either Abba Elias, another bright student of the mission who died very early, or Abba Petros senior. But both Abba Elias and Abba Petros largely limited themselves to transmitting messages from Mgr. Jarosseau or to translating texts for Taffari, and were far from being close associates of the young prince as was Abba Samuel.

In any case Dajazmach Taffari did not stay long as Governor of Harrar, for, following the Coup d'Etat of 1916 at Addis Ababa against Lej Iyassu, he became Crown Prince and Regent under Empress Zewditu. Mgr. Jarosseau did help Taffari all through this final stage of power struggle morally and materially. It was also to a great extent through the forceful intervention of Mgr. Jarosseau with the Governor of Djibouti that Taffari was able to get a considerable number of arms in order to assure his position once he was established at Addis Ababa. It was also from this

time onwards, through his uninterrupted flow of letters, that Mgr. Jarosseau attempted to give political education to young Ras Taffari. The text we quoted at the beginning of this study was a good example. There were several others; in all of these Jarosseau advised Taffari on how to govern, and quite often his thoughts were inspired by Machiavellian calculations. He gave such advice because, as he wrote, of "my affection to you and my desire to see you one day sitting on the throne of the Negus," and "so that you will be the saviour of Ethiopia."

"Gouvernez" he wrote on 29th August, 1919 "dans le style familier aux Abyssins; ne soyez pas muet. Ouvrez les yeux, ouvrez les oreilles, ouvrez la bouche. Montrez vous a votre peuple et comme a l'aprophe du soleil, toutes les hyenes s'enfuient, devant votre face, qui est le soleil de l'Ethiopie, tous les malfaiteurs disparaîtront."¹⁴

(Govern in the style familiar to Abyssinians; don't be dumb. Open your eyes, open your ears, open your mouth. Show yourself to your people and as, at the the approach of the sun, all the hyenas disappear, so also all the evil-doers will disappear when they see your face, which is the sun of Ethiopia.)

Perhaps the field of greatest influence of Jarosseau on Taffari was in international politics as well as on the introduction of modern European civilization and know-how into Ethiopia. As far as international politics is concerned during this disturbed period of World War I Taffari was clearly with the allied powers of France, Britian and Italy who largely contributed to the fall of Lej Iyassu - ally of Germany and Turkey, and to the rise of Ras Taffari. Mgr. Jarosseau exerted all his influence on Taffari to cause him to involve Ethiopia directly in the war, and the proposed treaty between the Allied Powers and Ethiopia was drafted by the Catholic Bishop. Indeed the issue of sending an Ethiopian contingent to join the war was in question. Other than this, Jarosseau was responsible for cementing the relations between Ras Taffari and the Vatican. In this respect, therefore, Jarosseau drafted letters to Europe, he proposed suitable gifts to European leaders, he was consulted on the choice of an Ethiopian representative or mission to Europe, etc. Moreover, Jarosseau supplied Taffari with world news, especially on the war, or sent him newspapers, etc. Last but not least, Jarosseau was instrumental in pushing Taffari in requesting Ethiopian membership at the League of Nations, in fighting together with their mutual friend Leonce Lagarde and Pierre Alype, the strong Italian opposition to Ethiopian Membership, and in proposing ways and means of achievng the condition requested by the League of all would-be members, such as the abolition of slavery.

As far as the influence the bishop had on Taffari's introduction of modern European civilization and know-how was concerned, we have a number of examples where the Crown Prince requested Jarosseau to arrange for the coming of all sorts of European experts, in law, in international relations in short all the specialists needed for the running of a new government. At the time Taffari wrote to Jarosseau:

«.....ሕዝቡ የሚያስበውና ሥራ የሚሠራበት መንገድ ልዩነቱ እንደሰማይና ምድር ይራራቃል ።ሥራው ብዙ ሆኖ የሚመረጥ ሰው ስለጠፋ የሥራው ሁሉ መዘግየት መጠን ያለው አይምስልም.....»

(“The way the people think and the way things should be done (in a modern government) are so far apart as the sky is from the earth...while there is so much to be done, because of the lack of personnel to choose from, you could not believe how much we are far behind with our work.”¹⁵)

On such matters of Administration and policy Jarosseau ordered, usually by the request of Taffari, a number of books of practical application. Thus for example Taffari had obtained through Jarosseau, a “Code Civil,” a “Code militaire,” “Historia diplomatica,” “Droit Compare” (several books on Comparative law) as well as French and English language books such as dictionaries, etc.

Moreover Jarosseau gave Taffari advice on economic policies (to declare the Maria Theresa dollar a national currency and stop its exportation as an article of merchandise) on personal behaviour (not to spend too much on luxury goods, etc.)

On the whole Taffari responded well. He was grateful for the advice and services of Mgr. Jarosseau, and attached special value to the problems undergone by the Catholic bishop on his behalf. In one of the letters Taffari thus expressed his gratitude to Jarosseau :

«እኔን የሚነካ ክፉ ነገር ሁሉ በጣም እንደሚያስጨንቅዎ አውቃለሁ ። እኔን የሚጎዳኝ ነገር እንዳይመጣ ጥልቅ የሆነ ምክርዎ ልቤን ነክቶታል ። ዘወትርም ስለሚያስቡልኝና ስለሚጨነቁልኝም እግዚአብሔር ዋጋዎን ይክፈልዎ ።»

(I know that you suffer very much whenever something bad happens to me. I have been heartily touched by your advice intended to keep away away any mishap that may befall me. Let God pay you the reward for your constant worries and anxieties on my behalf.)

What were the objectives of Mgr. Jarosseau in associating himself so much with Taffari for so long, either directly or through his disciples. One obvious reason was to serve the interest of his mission in Harrar, to save it from persecution, to secure important positions for Ethiopian Catholics to guarantee the security of land and other property of the mission, etc. Ras Makonnen is reported to have one day told Jarosseau: “I hope that Taffari will do for you what I have not been able to do myself.”¹⁶ Taffari first as governor of Harrar, and later as Crown Prince was very instrumental in this. Then Mgr. Jarosseau intended to serve the moral and material interest of France in Ethiopia. This included promoting the interest of the Franco-Ethiopian railway, the Ethiopian food and other exports to the French colony of Djibouti, and in general attempts to establish the supremacy of France and the French language in Ethiopia. His uninterrupted struggle to maintain the privileged position of the French language in Ethiopia was also an important aspect of his chauvinism.

But whatever the motive behind Mgr. Jarosseau's attachment to Taffari, it may perhaps be unjust to see in his relations nothing but vested interest. Although he never pretended that his affection to Taffari was wholly "desinteresse," he did repeat on different occasions that he had purely a fatherly love for the prince. One day Mgr. Jarosseau is said to have declared: "Yes, I have brought him (Taffari) up, and I have more particularly loved him as my own child and I love him still."¹⁷

But whatever desire Taffari may have had to follow the advice of Mgr. Jarosseau, there was substantial opposition against his putting them into practice. Thus for example, because of his insistence on signing a treaty with the allied powers, and in general his attempt to cooperate with European powers he was accused of trying to sell the country, of being a Catholic or at least a pro-Catholic, etc. Thus Taffari wrote:

«ኢትዮጵያን ለመጠበቅ የፈረንሳይ መንግሥት የሚገባውን ሁሉ እንዳላገደል በጣም ነው የማምነው ። ነገር ግን የፈረንሳይ መንግሥት ወዳጅነቱንና እርዳታውን እንዳይፈጽም የፈረንሳይ መንግሥት የኢትዮጵያን መንግሥት እንደዚህ አድርጎ መርዳቱ ጥገኛ ሊያደርገው ነው እያሉ ብዙ ጠላቶች አስወርተው ነበር ። ይኸንኑም የጠላቶች ወራ መሆኑን እኔም በተቻለኝ ለብዙ ሰዎች አስወርቻለሁ ። እኔ በፍጹም ልቤ የምመኝው የፈረንሳይ መንግሥት አሁን እርስዎ እንደላኩበኝ ወረቀት እርዳታና ወዳጅነት እንዲረዳኝ ነው ።»

(I believe very strongly that the French Government has respected all its obligations in view of protecting Ethiopia. But so that the French government may not pursue its friendship and its assistance to the end, many enemies had circulated the rumour saying that the reason for which the French Government was helping so much the Ethiopian Government was to make Ethiopia its protectorate. And I have tried my best to make it known that such information was fabricated by our enemies. What I heartily desire is, as you just said in your letter, to be friendly with and to receive the assistance of the French Government.)¹⁸

Before we conclude this chapter of our study it may be good to consider briefly the delicate issue of Taffari and Catholicism. Did Jarosseau ever try, or did he ever have the intention to convert Taffari? The history of Ethiopia has brilliant examples where Catholic missionaries tried to convert first the court, then the whole of Ethiopia and thus put an end to the Orthodox Church, qualified by them as "heretic" and "schismatic". What comes immediately to mind when we refer to this topic is the case of Susneyos (1607-1632). But in modern Ethiopian history, we have the case of Emperor Yohannes III of the Mesafint Zemen who was converted to Catholicism by the Catholic Lazarist Mission of Mgr. de Jacobis, who hoped that Yohannes, becoming one day a strong Emperor, would establish Catholicism in Ethiopia. But contrary to this provision Yohannes III ended his life in misery. Then we have the example of Agaw Negussie, who again through the influence of de Jacobis and Abba Emnatu, was converted, or at least pretended to have been converted to Catholicism. Both Yohannes and Negussie hoped to get material aid from France, the Protector of Catholicism in the orient, including Ethiopia. It will therefore be nothing new if Jarosseau had any intention of con-

verting Taffari. Both Ras Makonnen and Taffari were often accused of Catholicism. Taffari in fact was rebaptised by the *Echage* in July 1906 at Addis Ababa (after the death of his father), "pour etre purifié des souilleries qu'il aurait pu avoir contracter a Harrar au contact des Catholiques"... (so that he may be purified from the tarnish that he could have carried with him from Harrar, as a result of his contacts with the Catholics)¹⁹ On another occasion we have seen how Taffari was accused of Catholicism and excommunicated by Abuna Matewos in 1914. And even after his rise to power as Crown Prince and Regent his conservative adversaries never ceased to accuse him of being a Catholic, which in political circles of the period meant, one who lacked nationalism, and did not show enough patriotism against imperialists. But we have up to now no document or any reference by Mgr. Jarosseau or his co-missionaries that the bishop of the Capuchins had at any time in his career any intention of converting Taffari to Catholicism. But Jarosseau may have had no better wish than to see the whole of Ethiopia embracing Catholicism, and only in that sense could we say that he may have considered the conversion of Taffari to Catholicism. But, in practical terms, Jarosseau either directly or through his disciple seems to have used his influence on Taffari to promote and protect Catholicism rather than concentrate his energy on the conversion of Taffari or any other chief. Moreover, the independent nature of Taffari does not seem to have permitted any undue attachment to any religion, (at least during his early political life), if not for political expediency. And this may, in part, explain his relative liberalism to other Christian religions - Catholicism as well as Protestantism.

Whatever the case, as Taffari grew up in age and in political maturity, as he became deeply involved in state affairs - the correspondence between him and Mgr. Jarosseau was growing more and more scanty, and the relationship between them cooler and cooler. At times Taffari even showed himself quite harsh on Ethiopian Catholics, perhaps through the influence of anti-Catholic elements which according to Jarosseau now included the "Tsera Mariamoch," or Protestants mainly Swedish and British Protestant missionaries. During the later part of his regency, therefore, cases of arrest of Ethiopian Catholic employees accused of several offenses, including subversion, were not rare, and the intervention of Mgr. Jarosseau did very often, but not always, succeed in obtaining their liberation. We now find occasions where Ethiopian Catholics bitterly accuse Taffari of partiality. And Mgr. Jarosseau may then have felt that the good old days were gone, but he tried to understand Taffari's problems and loved to encourage Ethiopian Catholics never to swerve in their loyalty towards the "Crown Prince". The hostility which began just before the coronation of Ras Taffari as Emperor Haile Sellassie continued practically right up to the period of Italian occupation of Ethiopia, 1935. In 1932 Mgr. Jarosseau who was celebrating his 50th year in Ethiopia appealed to the Emperor to free the imprisoned Catholic Ethiopians on this occasion:

«ግርማዊ ሆይ የልጆቼን ወቀሳና ጥቃት እያየሁ ከጥቂት ወራቶች ዝምሮ በጣም እሰቃያለሁ ብዙም እተክሳለሁ ። የነሱ ጭንቀት መጀመሪያ በኔ ላይ መሆኑ በግልጽ አየዋለሁ ። ዛሬ ይህንን ቃል ለግርማዊ የምናገርበት ጊዜ ደርሶ ይመስለኛል ። ስለ ጉዳይ

ዎና ስለ ልዑል ራስ መኩንን ቤተሰብ አንድ ሰው እንኳ ከኔ ይልቅ እንደኔም አድርጎ የሠራ የለም ። በፈረንጅ አገር ፊት አንድ እንኳ በኢትዮጵያ ከልጆቹ ይልቅ የግርማዊን ጉዳይ የፈጸመና ያገዘ የለም ። ዛሬ እኛን የሚወቅሱ የሚያጣሉ የልዑል ራስ መኩንን ቤት የማይወዱ የነበሩ ናቸው ። ሁላቸውም መልካሙ የሥልጣኔ ሥራዎን ጠልተው ተጾይ ይሆኑ ነበር ። ይህ ነገር እጅግ አሳዘነኝ ። ግርማዊ ሆይ ፤ ስለርስዎ ያደረግነው ላባችን ትጋታችንና እምነታችን ትርፉ የጠላቶቻችን ጥቅም ሆኖ ቀረ ። በመጨረሻ ሕይወቴ እንዲህ ለማለት እችላለሁ ። በእውነትም ስለ ሕዝብ ኢትዮጵያ በሕይወቴ በመሬት ላይ ሁኑ ከሰራሁት ሁሉ የበለጠ በፍጹም ሰርቼአለሁ ። ስለኢትዮጵያ መልካም ሥራ እንደሠራሁ በቅን ሕሊናዬ እገልጻለሁ ። የሕሊናዬ እምነት ትካዜውን ያጠናል ። የደከመ ልቤን ያበረታል ። የሀዘኔን ጭንቅ ስለነገርሁዎ ምሕረትዎን እለምናለሁ ።»

(“Majesty, seeing the complaint and reproach against my children) (the Ethiopian Catholics) I am suffering and contemplating a lot for a few months now. I clearly see that their suffering falls first of all on me. I feel that the day has come when I should tell the following to your Majesty. There is no one who has done so much for the cause of your welfare and that of the family of Ras Makonnen, more than myself. There is no one in Ethiopia other than my children (the Ethiopian Catholics) who has served and promoted the cause of Your Majesty in foreign lands. Those who today reproach us and create conflict between us were the ones who did not like the family of Ras Makonnen. They were the ones who having disliked your progressist endeavours had quarrelled with you. This thing greatly distresses me. Majesty, the fruits of our sweat, efforts, and loyalties have been collected by our enemies. At the end of my life, I could say this: I have served the Ethiopian people more than I have served any cause on earth. I could say with clear conscience that I have rendered good service to the Ethiopian people. My faith in my good conscience fortifies my contemplation. It fortifies my weakened heart. I beg your pardon for thus telling you my sorrow and suffering.”²⁰)

Thus as we have just said, the Catholic Mission continued working under such unfavourable conditions up to fascist Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935 when the whole French Capuchin Mission was replaced by Italian missionaries by order of the Italian authorities, and Mgr. Jarousseau accepted to leave Ethiopia on the 14th of June 1938. According to Bernoville who studied the correspondence of Mgr. Jarousseau, although the Catholic Bishop was certainly unhappy about Italian occupation of Ethiopia, he was none the less happy because he thought that thus Ethiopia will come to accept Catholicism.

“...We could, in my opinion” Bernoville wrote, “Consider one point an established fact: His (Jarousseau’s) great dream...that of seeing Ethiopia bound by friendship to France alone, and then brought little by little in the bosom of the Catholic Church by means of a policy of rapprochement with the Vatican, this dream having irremediably vanished, at least for a very long time to come, he saw in the Italian domination of Ethiopia, the possibility for Ethiopia to finally get rid of its schismatic state and follow the doctrine of Rome... It would be knowing Mgr. Jarousseau too little to

think that he will give preference to anything at the expense of the Kingdom of God. Even his moving love of France, even his attachment to his dear Ethiopia do not have supremacy over this fundamental consideration. He will always think that there is for Ethiopia, as for every other nation, a benefit greater than political independence, and that is to reunite in the Church of Christ (The Catholic Church). Now, he hopes that this will take place under the new state of things (under Italian occupation)".²¹

In spite of this, Mgr. Jarosseau seems to have changed his attitude once he arrived France, for he now saw Fascism at work in Italy. His position, as could be ascertained by his correspondence with Taffari, then in exile in Bath (England), and by his articles in French Journals, was now clearly for independent Ethiopia and the restoration of Emperor Haile Sellassie. As Brenoville wrote: "une volonté d'hégémonie temporelle l'emporte, ... en Ethiopie comme ailleurs, sur des soucis des valeurs spirituelles."²² And Jarosseau's encouraging letters gave a great moral comfort to Emperor Haile Sellassie as practically all his letters (written in French) to the Bishop show. On September 24, 1938 the Emperor thus wrote to Jarosseau:

"I have received your very amiable letter which I read with great attention. It carried the expression of sincere sentiments of a Father and a Friend and I have found in it all the consolation in my unhappy, state of life, unhappy not only because of losing my country but also of being a witness to the tortures which my people have suffered and are still suffering."²³

In June 1940, when Italy joined the war on the side of Germany, against Britain and France, Mgr. Jarossia wrote to the Ethiopian Emperor in exile: "The time has therefore come, Majesty, for you to answer to the voice of people of Ethiopia who are waiting for you to launch the great combat that will give victory to the army of the Conquering Lion of Judah against the cruel Italian soldiers. With my ardent wishes for your triumph Majesty and for the salvation of your people of Ethiopia, please accept the homage of my respectable and faithful affection".²⁴

That is the last letter of Mgr. Jarosseau to Emperor Haile Sellassie, known to us. Mgr. Jarosseau was on his death-bed when he heard of the return of Haile Sellassie to Ethiopia by way of the Sudan with the help of the British, and the first victories of the Ethiopian army over the retreating Italian troops. On January 10, 1941, eight days before his death, the Bishop noted in his Journal:

"This news excited me all the more because last night I had dreamt a dream that brought me a message from the Emperor, saying 'My Father, I invite you to take part in my joy. By a great blessing of God I have recovered my throne. Make haste to come, so that we could rejoice together.'²⁵

Mgr. Jarosseau born at Saint-Mars-des-Prés (Vendée) western France, on April 14, 1858, died on January 18, 1941, at the age of 83.

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