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By James C. McCann

Between October 1918 and November 1935 Leul Ras Kassa Haylu, a close associate of Ras Tafari Makonnen (later Haile Sellassie I), kept a written register of proceedings and edicts at his court. As absentee governor of several important areas of the northern highlands, Kassa recorded and indexed in his register 671 separate transactions concerning judicial procedures, taxation, court budgets, land registration, and appointments for his local agents. Despite Ethiopia's millennium-long tradition of literacy, these documents in their form – a collated, indexed, and bound collection – and their content represent probably the earliest example of a systematic, secular use of literacy for public administration in Ethiopia. While my long-term goal is to translate and annotate these documents, my immediate task is to examine the meaning of the documents as expressions of political culture. In particular, I wish to examine the Ras Kassa registers as signposts of a transition from orality to literacy in political and economic discourse as an expression of expanding central state authority.

Ras Kassa's documents tell us about specific political transactions, but perhaps more importantly they provide insights into a major watershed in political culture. I therefore intend to examine aspects of text (events recorded, language, orthography, aesthetics of production) with consideration of context (why a written form? what relation did the written register have to more common forms of political communication?, how was this oral-to-written transition related to the dominant political economy, what relationship to the chronology of central state expansion?).

Description of Documents

The total corpus of these documents consists of 671 documents/transactions recorded on 483 leaves bound in two separate volumes. The leaves are of modern, lined notebook paper stitched together between a thin leather binding. The first volume covers the period from September 1917 to December 1934 and includes materials from all of Kassa's governates. The second volume covers only the province of Bagamder. The documents are entirely in Amharic, including use of Amharic numerals. Each of the volumes has a table of contents listing document subjects in the order in which they appear. Though tattered and decomposed in places, probably from being buried in a church yard during the Italian occupation, the registers are nonetheless legible.

I became aware of these documents in the course of a series of interviews with Fitawrari Nabiyaleul Takla Tsadik, a secretary/retainer to the late Ras, who had preserved them among a collection of redacted religious tracts and historical memorabilia. I photocopied the originals, deposited one copy in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, kept one copy, and returned the originals to Nabiyaleul. In the initial state of analysis my research assistant and I prepared a preliminary table of contents, listing date, subject, and form of each document together with page numbers and document numbers. I subsequently interviewed Nabiyaleul about the setting and methods of the registers' composition.

Context: The Political Economy of Modernization

Although the process of central state expansion had been in progress since Emperor Menilek's accession in 1889, the rise of Ras Tafari Makonnen to the position of head of government in 1916 accelerated its pace and shifted its emphasis. If Menilek's state set about responding to the age of imperialism through traditional forms of expansion, Ras

Tafari sought to build a modern authoritarian state. In the north, and to a large degree in the south as well, two policies dominated imperial state actions after Tafari's accession as regent. The first was the policy of "fiscalism," in which the state attempted to generate its revenue in cash from new sources –mostly from the coffee-based rural economy of the south and west – to pay for ambitious programs of defense and infrastructure development. The second overall goal was to break the economic and political base of the traditional rural elite who still held northern governorships and dominated the local political economy of trade, land distribution, and income rights, which bound peasant producers to local elite and created a bar to expansion of central state authority. The defense of the state in the inter-war years required both centralized control over the historically unruly north as well as revenues in cash and kind to support a modern standing army and a new salariat. By the early 1920s Ras Tafari had been successful in creating conditions for the effective assertion of central government power over the traditional prerogatives of the local elite.

Leul Ras Kassa Haylu was perhaps Tafari's most important ally in the process of reforming administration as a means of preserving autocracy. The scion of a late-nineteenth-century political marriage, Kassa spent his early youth in a rural Lasta, the heartland of northern conservative Christianity, receiving a traditional ecclesiastical education in Ge'ez and Amharic. His later youth was spent closer to the imperial court, where relatives schooled him in the arts of warfare, the scriptures, and government affairs. As a young man Kassa accompanied the emperor on campaigns of conquest to the south as well as northern campaigns which affirmed central government control of the traditional Christian north. In 1909 he served as Ethiopia's representative to the coronation in London and visited Jerusalem. Kassa therefore had an excellent vantage point on the foundations of rural culture and the formative processes of the modern state.

In 1914 Italian Minister Giuliano Cora described young Kassa as "serious, intelligent, and quite modern."¹

From the beginning of his tenure Kassa proceeded to install a new administrative, judicial, and fiscal structure to systematize procedures and put in place a cadre of loyal state functionaries. These actions included new regulations for the tithe, customs, and military service; judicial procedures were streamlined and centralized; local censuses were mandated and church revenues regularized. Although often couched in moralistic Christian metaphors, the purpose of these reforms was in very specific terms to break the economic base of the local elite and expand the reach of the central state.

Kassa, like Ras Tafari himself, understood the threat of European imperialism and was aware of the broad outlines of European colonial practice in taxation and record-keeping. A central feature to Kassa's efforts to codify customary law, regulate fiscal procedures, and eliminate prerogatives of local elite therefore was the systematic use of record-keeping. The registers thus go far beyond simple sources of facts about local rule and state policy in the formative years of the modern imperial system: the use of the written word itself was a weapon to restrict local privilege as well as an important sign of a larger battle to reorder the norms of political culture. Kassa's insistence on the use of tax receipts issued to illiterate peasants, customs ledgers, judicial transcripts, and the use of official seals to avoid malfeasance and forgery was an attempt to transform an oral, ambiguous political culture based on local political relations to a verifiable, accountable written one focused on the new political center.

From Orality to Political Literacy

A millennium-long tradition of clerical literacy as part of highland Christian society should not presume its use in political communication. The Ethiopic alphabet, derived

¹Cora to Addis Ababa, 19 November 1914, Archivio Storico della Ministero Africa Italiana, Rome, fasc. 54/35.

from Aramaic and Old Phoenician, was bound up with the spread of Christianity, but not the state. Though Amharic appears in a few royal songs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and during the brief ascendancy of Roman Catholicism in the seventeenth century, the main body of Ethiopian literature until the nineteenth century was composed in the liturgical language, Ge'ez. The written royal chronicles, which were composed in Ge'ez until the mid-nineteenth century, served less to record events than to associate secular leadership with the symbolic legitimizing power of religious dogma. The use of the vernacular Amharic language in written form and for overtly political purposes is a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of Ethiopian literacy.

The expansion of the scale of politics with the renaissance of Red Sea trade in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and the political consolidation of the traditional Abyssinian highlands under Emperor Tewodros II (1855–1868) brought on an increase in political correspondence and the exploratory use of both the Amharic vernacular and its written form for non-ecclesiastical purposes. The transition to Amharic in the nineteenth century was rapid: by 1840 extant official letters in Amharic outnumber those in Ge'ez by five to one (Rubenson 1987: vi).

The Amharic language only achieved status as an official written language at the court of Tewodros. The emperor was an erratic but charismatic reformer with a vision of military and fiscal modernization in which the use of vernacular language formed part of his overall strategy. Though classically trained in Ge'ez, the emperor used scribes, including a personal secretary, Aleqa Zenab, to produce written Amharic texts, including a large body of letters to foreigners, the first Amharic royal chronicle, tax records, and palace inventories. As a result, we have a body of documents which serve as a mid-nineteenth-century benchmark for the development of Amharic as a written language.

The evidence from Tewodros's documents reveals a written language and body of political documentation and communication only in embryonic form. The inconsistency of spelling of place names, dates, and use of figures indicates not a lack of erudition in

language as much as the absence of conventions in its written form. The heavily formulaic letters were written almost exclusively to foreigners; they were clearly not the means by which he communicated his political will to his constituents or his enemies. The tax records and inventories, as remarkable as they may be as precursors of modern fiscalism, were inconsistent, undated, and uncollated. Thus, it is obvious that the emperor and his functionaries never used these materials as the basis for governance. In fact, his tax records were found by a British soldier after the 1868 Battle of Maqdala under the royal bed along with letters to his concubine (Pankhurst 1979: 2-3).

This evidence strongly suggests that despite the presence of historic literacy, the political culture of the Ethiopian state and the dominant form of social discourse were fundamentally oral. Despite the power of the written word in particular contexts – land grants or liturgy – oral performance and the creative use of verbal ambiguity constitute highland society's most prized social attribute. *Semna Warq*, "wax and gold," the oral poetry of double entendre has been a primary social idiom and what Donald Levine has called the genius of Amhara culture. In court as in the domain of local politics, the power of a litigant was less the precision of the evidence than the quality of oral performance (Levine 1974: 5).

In regional politics actors preferred fluidity and ambiguity in relations between patron and client. Political careers depended more on subtle shifts in alliances and patronage rather than a fixed set of hereditary rights to office or privilege. Political communication was primarily oral because the political actors preferred it to be. The absence of clear rules to succession to office and to privileges dominated traditional highland political culture; thus resistance to written codes of taxation or patron/client obligations was widespread in Ethiopia until the beginnings of modern imperialism. Written forms implied a fixed body of principles and procedures which could be verified and used as a means of control. Local officials and elite sought the ambiguity of oral form since it was context-bound and often fleeting. Janet Ewald argues that the literate

rulers of Taqali in Sudan's Nuba mountains chose orality over literacy as the basis for political relations because the written word had the power to be independent of the people who created it, whereas oral communication is embedded in historically specific social relations (Ewald 1988: 216). The shift from oral to written forms of political communication thus constituted an arena of what Pauline Peters has called a "struggle over meaning" as well as form.

The increasing attempts by the central state to use administrative literacy as a means to codify political relations parallels the rise of the penetration of the modern world economy. The state's desire to standardize taxation and fix previously ambiguous obligations went hand in glove with the need to substitute fixed and reliable revenues in cash for fluid, locally negotiated tribute relations. Tribute was as much a symbolic representation of authority as a payment, while fixed taxes were a more purely a financial transfer. Ewald argues:

A connection seems to exist between orality and gift exchange on the one hand and literacy and commodity exchange on the other. . . . Like the gift, orality is embedded in a unique social context. Spoken, face to face communication takes place only in human interaction. In contrast to gift reciprocity, market exchange reifies goods or labor into commodities. Standardized taxation, instead of a system of various tributes, likewise commoditizes goods. . . . Documents themselves are in a sense commodities, transforming words from sounds carried on living breath into objects that live independently of their creators (Ewald 1988: 216).

Written records thus threatened local political relations which historically were a product of fluid, situational mix of social, economic, and political factors.

Since orally based political culture tended to preserve local autonomy, the centralization of state power required the breaking down of orally based relations. Kassa's assertion of written codes of obligations, duties, and procedures were part of a transition to a new order of political culture. Tewodros's efforts at tax records and vernacular

literature had been an early but unfocused effort, but Kassa's documents represented the mature form.

Language, Orality, and Text

The transition from orality to literacy in political culture is also evident in the testimony of the texts themselves. Just as the evolution of state literacy paralleled the growth of involvement with the global political economy of Victorian imperialism, the evolution of the documents reveals the suppression of orality. Most nineteenth-century documents appear to have been written by secretary/scribes, even in cases where the principal was known to be literate. Texts appear to have been dictations or perhaps transcriptions rather than composed in written form (Girma-Selassie 1987: xxiii). This form allowed the occasion to retain the power of the spoken word, while the written version fixed the moment in time.

The language and form of mid-nineteenth-century documents suggest their relative weakness vis-a-vis the more powerful oral culture. The transformation of the temporal, oral dimension of speech to the spatial, fixed dimension of writing meant the evolution of new linguistic structures and nineteenth-century documents suggest that process was incomplete. The language of nineteenth-century texts conveys the strength of the oral form. Punctuation was erratic, particularly use of the *arat nateb*, which in the modern written language indicates end of a sentence; in nineteenth-century forms it often indicates only breath pauses (Girma Selassie 1979: xxi). Syntactically, the use of subordinate elements to precede the referent most common in modern written Amharic is absent in speech and frequently ignored in nineteenth-century documents.

Tewodros's letters and most tax records generally appeared on loose scraps of paper, which had begun to be imported at that time, while some tax records appeared as marginalia in religious texts. No standard form for either letters or tax receipts was

evident in Tewodros's materials, suggesting the difficulty of and perhaps lack of intent to use these documents as tools of standardization. The lack of dating on the majority of nineteenth-century correspondence argues strongly for their role as minor players in the conveyance of political information. Most important, nineteenth-century documents, particularly letters, contain very little substantive information.

By contrast, Kassa's registers and the documents within them constituted a substantial evolution of the written form as a purveyor of political messages in the detail of information contained and the complexity of meaning within the written format. Not only are the Kassa registers dated and organized, but they were bound, i.e. placed physically in relation to one another. Thus, they were meant precisely to overcome the ambiguity inherent in orality in political relations. The register provided a precise account of what orders had been given, when, to whom, and in what sequence. The intent was to serve as verification of an oral transaction – written orders preserved with dates, seals, and addresses could not easily be denied by subordinates.

Evidence of the Texts: Events and Process

Specific documents reveal the importance of the written form and context. The presentation of material in the Kassa registers is organized and purposeful, quite dry in terms of the absence of metaphor, allusion, and hyperbole prominent in liturgical texts. The documents are bound and organized chronologically; 73 percent of the documents are dated, with a clear trend toward more precise dating from the earliest to the latest. Each volume contains a table of contents which contains a document number (though the documents themselves are not numbered) and the first line of the text, which usually but not always reveals the addressee and often the type of transaction. The very first document in the bound version specifically sets out procedures for distribution of the tithe and the prescribed method for recording it. The emphasis on written form is telling:

the document not only instructs local officials how to register payments in grain but admonishes them to use an official seal and forbids the use of pencil.

The imposition of state literacy on an orally based tradition required systematic procedures which produced records which were comparable, retrievable, and verifiable. The mechanics of registration thus occupy an important place in many of the documents. Document 84, for example, details eighteen specific procedures for protecting and authenticating written records of tax receipts, including the use of seals and ways to detect forgery. Document 147 gives directions on how to take minutes of meetings and record in them in the register, presumably the same style used by Kassa himself. Kassa also lays out penalties for judges whose scribes commit errors in recording, but making an interesting exception of a certain Qagnazmach Admasu because "he is illiterate." Document 173 (see Appendix) even specifies the annual budget for ink and paper consumed by local officials. Orality, however, is still an important metaphor since in Document 13 Kassa admonishes his readers to "*sema*" (listen!). In several documents Kassa referred directly to the relationship between his subordinate officials and the peasantry, intending to limit traditional local prerogatives of extraction. In Document 53, for example, Kassa fixes the tax rates for newly settled areas and for release from corvee labor.

Conclusion: Shadows in the Cave

The documents contained within these registers give us a closer view of the inner workings of rural administration than from any source to date. They thus represent an African voice telling us about the response of a non-colonial society to the exigencies of modernization in the age of maturing colonialism. At the same time, however, the documents themselves allude to the fact that they represent only half of a dialogue between the state and rural society. In Document 83, for example, the register refers to

petitions from rural folk "great and small" appealing for a return to former taxation procedures. In Document 53 the edict on banditry, unemployment, and vagrancy alludes to incidents, events, and implied knowledge for which we have no direct evidence. For historians it is a Platonic cave where we rely upon shadows of historical action rather than hard evidence of social reality.

A major challenge to this study therefore may be to determine the fate of "companion" documents, the local records, registers, tax receipts, and peasant petitions referred to in Kassa's register. If they were kept as ordered they would reveal actual tax receipts, litigation, and local census data over a decade and a half. Thus the imposition of state literacy would have produced not only Kassa's register but created a potential bonanza of rural documentation. Do these documents exist? Were they ever produced? Little if any evidence of these companion documents exists, though to date, historians may not have been looking for them in the right places. If these materials exist, they will provide evidence of local political economy, class relations, and economic life; but equally as important they will suggest the evolution of a political empiricism, the development of a secular political language in written form, and an indicator of the extent of penetration by a political culture prescribed by an expanding central state.

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Appendix A

Texts and Draft Translations

Document 13

According to government regulations for tithe *sahafi* [lit. scribes], when a person who has harvested his grain comes with a letter signed by the *chiqa shum* [bailiff], bringing grain for the tithe to the government's granary, the registrar should as it was done previously, follow the following procedures:

1) Copy the name of the farmer and the name of the landlord from the receipt; 2) register the amount of grain; 3) return the letter with signature to the tithe payer; 4) when the scribe takes his ration out of the granary he should do it in the present of a *meslene* [sub-district governor]. It is forbidden to take the *qalab* [ration] alone or only in the presence of the *chiqa shum*; 5) grain income as well as expenditure in the name of a ration should be recorded in ink – the use of pencil is strictly forbidden; 6) when income or expenditure is recorded it should always be in the presence of local authorities; 7) the amount of grain distributed should be carefully recorded and the paper should bear an official seal and be preserved; 8) to make the work efficient and effective and avoid inconvenience, the scribe should make sure that income and distribution records are transcribed in the *shalaqa's* [military governor] register [*mazgab*] every two months and from there into the government's register every four months; 9) according to the tithe regulation Ferede Negash and one other man are assigned as supervisors to Qolla Mujja Giyorgis and Fikre Egzi as the scribe. For Dengabat and Yeleset the registration center is Lalibala Libanos and supervisors are Shalaqa Tasamma and one other person appointed by the *Dajzmach* [regional governor] and the scribe is *Ato* [Mister] Ayala. For those beyond Gibarra, the center for registration is Sebro Amba-Mariam. Supervisor is the *dajzmach's* appointee Gedamu Gwangul, the scribe. *Grazmach* Walda Mikael and Kabada should be at the place they are ordered to and they should assemble the *chiqa shums* and the *dambagna* [i.e. taxpayers] on Sundays in turn every fifteen days except St. Mikael's and God's holy day and collect the grains.

Document 53

Since the number of the men without work has increased, this has given rise to an increasing number of thieves, bandits, and vagrants. To control this situation the following procedures must be followed:

1. All traders must be registered with Grazmach Kabtyimer. Tenants [*chisanya*] should be registered with their *chiqashum*. When the *chiqashum* is deposed or replaced the list should be transferred to the new one.

2. The deposed *chiqashum* should also hand over the tenants and the rest to the new appointee.

3. All those who have registered by census should possess the seal of Dejazmach Qwachara and the signature of the scribe.

4. In every *sanga* [land division] those who possess arms or the peasants or those who live on government rations should be counted by the chief of the *sanga*.

5. Priests and beggars [i.e. monks] should be counted by the parish clergy.

6. When *afarsata* [a criminal procedure] is conducted, the judges must preside.

7. Five judges must witness whether a person has been registered or not. The registered ones should possess receipts. When a person wants to move to another area, he should get the permission of the judge to leave and be cancelled from the list. In the same manner, any newcomer must be registered and has to have a guarantor. If anyone allows a person to live without being registered by the five judges: the first punishment is \$40; the second is \$80; on the third offense, his land will be confiscated.

8. In Abuna, Qagnazmach Qwachera should observe that the rules are obeyed. He should get 1/3 of the fines as his salary and submit the remaining 2/3 to us.

9. The tenants should pay one *yoreda* [container of grain] and his payment of 1/4 should stop.

10. The *tef* land [i.e. unsettled land] should be encouraged for settlement and should be considered part of the Abuna wereda under Fitawrari Ensermu and Balambaras Yamachu. The Endarase Fitawrari Sisaye is responsible for collecting the tribute by counting the number of peasants. In Awattew wereda representatives should be sent by Balambaras Arado and Dejazmach Haylu Zalaqa to the *tef* area to make it productive under the supervision of Qagnazmach Bushi Meslene. He should be given some men to support him. The settlers should guard the boundary. They should pay 1/4 as tribute. Taxes collected from the area should be used to maintain the soldiers. The amount of taxes should be as follows: *qolla* [lowland] \$2.00, *wayna daga* [semi-highland] \$3.00, and *daga* [highland] \$5.00 per *kurman* of land, i.e. 1/4 of a *gasha*. The settled farmers should pay 1/10 as tithe, 1/10 to the landlord, and keep 8/10 for themselves.

11. In lieu of the corvee, the peasants should pay \$1.50. Out of this \$0.50 should be income tax and \$1.00 should be given to the *shalaga*. The *shalaga* should not force the farmers to pay out of the 8/10. If this is not done the farmers have the right to appeal.

13. I [sic] the landlord or owner refuses settlement because of the above rules, the settlers have the right to occupy the *maderia* land.

14. For now, work according to the procedures I have given. For the future I will follow the case; register your land in the government's register for new taxation regulations.

15. The landlords of Abuna who possess arms should make sure that they have commanders. But those who do not possess arms and do not have commanders could become chief of the *sanga* provided they organize those who have arms in the area. Anyone who possesses arms and claims to have a commander should have a seal and a guarantor. Fitawrari Woyessa has been made the commander for Abuna to execute these policies.

16. Regulations for the *wereda*. There has been a repeated complaint by the *wereda* people against the increased number of *shums* and this has led to a mass exodus of the poor. The number of *shums* has been increased because all those who wanted positions used to pay money to become appointed within a division. In order to pay that money and get a post they squeezed the peasantry. Therefore, such practice should stop and each *sanga* should be under the *chiqashum* on his father's land. If payment of the tax is delayed, the landlord of the *sanga* should pay us and collect the money from the peasants after.

17. The landlords of the *sanga* should obey the Amhara *meslene*. The Amhara *meslene* should obey the *wereda meslene*.

Written Yaquatit 16, 1914 E.C.

Document 83

Orders sent to the endarase Lasta:

The Lasta peasants have appealed to us for big and small matters, complaining that they were maladministered. The distance of the court of appeal has become the main source of discontent. Therefore, we have decided that the following procedures should be adopted. Matters connected with the land, cattle, or ordinary quarrels should be taken to the court at Giden as before. But for matters connected with marriage, they should come to us in turn. Keep the rules and regulations given to you at Warailu intact and take the ones we are sending you as amendments. Work smoothly in cooperation.

Written Yaquatit 17, 1915 E.C.

Document 85

Procedures given to inspectors are as follows:

1. Count the number of registers, put them in a box, lock it and keep it in Abba Makonnan's compound and be there with the scribe overnight.
2. Notify all the other scribes to submit the registers within three days of his arrival with the help of the chief scribe.
3. Examine each register to see whether omissions, scratchings, cancellings or misrecordings have been made.
4. Separate the income registers, add the total income and obtain the signatures and the seals of the *shum* and his scribe.
5. Counter-check the receipts given to the peasants with those originals in the treasury.
6. Take the expenditure register and closely examine the calligraphy to see whether it corresponds with the handwriting of the first scribe.
7. Counter-check the expenses made under the signature and seal of the *endarase* with the expenditure register.
8. Counter-check the letters of orders made from our office with those order letters given by the *endarase*.
9. Given orders to present him with judicial registers and audit the amount of money the court has collected in its casework.
10. Ask the reasons why the money which should have been collected has not been obtained. Examine each of such cases and record the reasons.
11. After examining all the registers and finding the amount of money reduced from the normal government income because of errors by certain officials, the inspector should not disclose it to anyone under any circumstances. It is also expressly forbidden for the inspector to stay at the home of the officials or the scribes in the course of his investigation. He should stay in our house [i.e. state rest house] wherever one exists. In the areas where our house does not exist, he should stay at the judge's house and complete his work.
12. Keep the account of the money deposited in the treasury and write down the actual income and the money lost.
13. If the appointees refuse to cooperate with the inspectors, they must pay a fine at the rate of \$2.00 per day under the order of the judge. The judges are to give the inspectors a written affidavit explaining the reluctance of the officials to cooperate.
14. Before they leave, the inspectors should carry a written testimony of order to the officials as well as to the judges so that all should cooperate with them.
15. They should be given three guards at every station who should help them with any problem of security. When they move from one region to another, the official of the region they are leaving should escort them until they reach their destination.
16. The inspectors should also audit the market tax as well as customs duties at every gate from the traders and record all their findings in their special register.
17. They should sign and put their seal on their register book together with the total account carefully tallied, and submit it to the lord [i.e. Kassa] and receive their pay from the Fitch treasury according to their work. They should also record it in the main register.
18. But when they go to counter-check the receipts they should stay with the *meslene* at his house and present all the documents they ask for. If the *meslene* fails to help them with that, he is supposed to feed them.

Document 144

[Slave Contract]

Contract regulations between masterless ignorant

Galla and a Master

The master [*geta*] unequivocally agrees to the following obligations:

First, I, the master will provide him with food and clothing – he the Galla servant will not make any trouble with these provisions.

2. I will provide him with church education to save his soul.

3. I will also educate him as much as possible to serve his body.

4. If the Galla servant wants to take another master or wants to go away, I will calculate the cost of my provisions in educating him and taking care of him to make sure that he pays it back or is included in his price before he is allowed to leave. If he runs away or escapes, I will not claim him as my slave.

5. I will not lend him as an object to another person. I will also refrain from overworking him or forcing him to work beyond his capacity.

6. I will refrain from selling or misusing him covertly by exploiting his ignorance.

7. I will keep his property and his body from an outside enemy. If any damage is done against him or his property by others, I will retaliate for him.

If I do not undertake the above regulations, let God burn my soul and I shall lose my property. To make sure that these rules are followed, I as a master give a guarantor. Both the servant and the master put their signature on the contract. There will be two copies of the contract, one for the slave and the other for the master. The agreement will be written in the government's register. Written Hamle 15. The cost of providing food and clothing over a year is 6 *kunna* per month, 1 *dawla* of grain costing \$3.50. For salt \$1.00, clothing \$3.00. All together the total cost is \$7.50. The working hours for the servant is eight hours per day.

Document 173

[Budget for Scribes' Supplies]

A. 2400 papers for \$24 [Maria Teresa talers] over a year. Ink for writing - \$12, for seal - \$10. Total cost \$46 for the court only.

B. For auditor's office 1200 papers for \$12. Ink for writing for \$3 over a year.

C. For judicial scribes (5 of them) \$7.25 for ink over a month. For four assistants for ink \$4.08; for four lower scribes \$4 over a month. Total cost for a month is \$14.75.

D. Ato Zalaqa who is in charge of providing stationery should get 1/20 as pocket money. The total cost \$232.75 should be expended from the government's income and the rest should be deposited in the treasury separately. It should not be included with the expenditure of the six *shalaqa*. It also should not be spent on any household materials. The expenditure for stationary should be made under the signature of Qagnazmach Chebud. Kassaye Tiqi the scribe should prepare separate registers for the income and the expenditures. For the four judiciary divisions, the money to be spent for the stationery office comes from the following collections: \$0.50 from Qagnazmach Tura, \$0.50 from Grazmach Dadi Beda, \$0.50 from Balambaras Tashoma Hirko from income tax from Grazmach Dubale's salary. All these should be collected by Ato Zalaqa until it amounts to \$10 when it should be distributed as follows: \$2 to Qagnazmach Chebud, \$2 to Qagnazmach Tasamma, \$1.50 to Qagnazmach Tura, \$1 to Dasta Gadla, \$1 to Qagnazmach Azana, \$1 to Fitawrari Birru, \$1 reserve for the most knowledgeable man, \$0.50 to Ato Zalaqa.

Written Miazia 7, 1917 [E.C.]

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In 1918 E.C. [1925 A.D.] the following order has been given to Qagnazmach Gabre on the telephone concerning the tithe payment: every *rist* owner should pay 5 *dawla* of grain. If what the farmer brings in is less, he should be asked to pay over time until the requirement is fulfilled. But non-*rist* owners [i.e. tenants] should pay according to the previous rules.