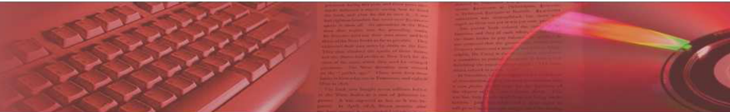

Volker Matthies. *The Siege of Magdala.* Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2012. xxiv + 209 pp. $170.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-55876-551-1; (paper), ISBN 978-1-55876-552-8.

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General Robert Napier's Magdala Campaign: A Curious Expedition

The Magdala Expedition (1867-68) led by General Robert (Cornelius) Dundas Napier (1810-90) on behalf of the British government against Emperor Tewodros (Theodore) II (1818-68) of Ethiopia was the most curious of expeditions, curious in its origin, curious in its execution, and curious in its aftermath. It is, nevertheless, significant in some respects. First, it portended the "New Imperialism" that resulted in the Scramble for Africa, its partition and conquest by the industrialized nations of Europe, both events demonstrating the exhibition of an unequal combat between those who possessed modern weapons and those who did not. Second, it also demonstrated the internal disunities in Ethiopia at the time that facilitated its conquest, a situation that was also the case during the wars of conquest in Africa in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Third, it was an early example of the industrialization of war. And fourth, "taken as a whole, the Magdala army was a complex, hybrid force consisting of both old and new elements" including "what would now be called the 'privatization of war"' (p. 170). The expedition, therefore, although curious was not as useless as the Crimean War that preceded it.

Using an impressive variety of sources–primary and secondary–in both English and German, Volker Matthies–professor in the Institute of Political Science at the University of Hamburg in Germany who specializes on issues relating to peace and conflict in the Horn of Africa–reenacts in this splendid book *The Siege of Magdala: The British Empire Against the Emperor of Ethiopia*, an expedition undertaken by Britain ostensibly for the sole purpose of liberating a small group of European hostages held in the fortress of Magdala in north-central Ethiopia by Tewodros in defiance of international law and civilized practice. Meticulously researched and copiously illustrated, Matthies's treatment of his subject is dispassionate, balanced, and professional, a work by a non-historian but with which many a historian may be delighted to be associated. Since this reviewer does not read German he cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of Steven Bull's translation of the German edition entitled *Unternehmen Magdala: Strafexpedition in Athiopien*. It should be noted, however, that this German edition correctly makes no mention of the British Empire, perhaps because the implication that the entire British Empire participated in the conflict is an obvious exaggeration. All he can also say, for what it may be worth, is that the translation is readable even though the prose is lacking in loftiness and elegance. But it should be equally noted that since the translation is apparently acceptable to Professor Richard Pankhurst, the distinguished doyen of Ethiopian studies, because he provides a succinct foreword to the book, all should be presumed to be well.

For the non-historian in particular it is necessary to provide the background for Europe's longstanding romance with Ethiopia–which nineteenth-century writers christened Abyssinia[1]–to appreciate why Napier's liberation expedition became a cause celebre in the mid nineteenth century. The early history of Ethiopia is filled with legend and romance. To the ancient Greek writers Ethiopians were among the ablest, wisest, richest, oldest, most civilized, and according to Herodotus, via Lady Lugard's widely read Edwardian history of ancient Africa, *A Tropical Dependency* (1905) "the tallest, most beautiful, and long-lived of the human races" and to Homer, they were the "blameless Ethiopians," "the most just of men," and very much beloved of the gods (quoted, p. 221). The Greek gods, he tells us, especially Poseidon, loved to resort to Ethiopia to relax and make love to beautiful women with whom they begat several children. Such writers as Diodorus Siculus (Diodorus of Sicily, first century BC) and Stephanus of Byzantium (Middle Ages) were convinced that the human race originated in Ethiopia, and other writers believed that that coun-

try was the cradle of Egyptian civilization. Greek literature, too, celebrates the valor of Ethiopian soldiers in the defense of Troy during the Trojan War. Arctinus of Miletus and Quintus of Smyra tell us that no Trojan general or contingent displayed greater valor than Memnon, the Prince of Aethiopia, and his sons. Memnon's mother, they say, was Aurora, goddess of the Dawn, and his father was Pithonus, governor of Persia. It was Memnon who slew the mighty Greek warrior Antilochus. He later fell by the hand of the superhuman Achilles. We learn further that Cassiopeia (Cassiope) of Ethiopia, mother of the beautiful Andromeda (who later married the Greek hero Perseus) became one of the five w-shaped stars of the northern constellation. Finally, Zeus, supreme god of Greece, is said to have had among his numerous wives an African (Ethiopian) lady with the intriguing name of Europa. The above accounts are, of course, together with most of Greek literature, legendary and romantic, but they nevertheless demonstrate the reverence and awe which the ancient world showed toward Ethiopia and the value they attached to its friendship. If one adds to this romance the legend of the beautiful Queen of Sheba[2] that became a historic charter of Ethiopian national identity and unity enshrined in the Kebra Nagast (Glory of Kings), the antiquity of Ethiopian Christianity which antedates that of most European countries, the longevity of the Ethiopian monarchy that even by the nineteenth century had made it the continuously longest in the world, and the legend of Prester John,[3] then one may appreciate why the interest in the country and its mysteries became irresistible to mid nineteenth-century Europeans, even though they could not resist the vicariously racist pleasure of describing nineteenth-century Ethiopians as "barbarians."

What led to the expedition is analyzed in chapters 2 and 3 of this book. The story, briefly, is as follows. The collapse of the so-called Solomonic Restoration Dynasty of Ethiopia (1270-1779) that was at the height of its power during the rule of Jesus the Great (1600-1704) led to the rise of the nobility (rases). Thus began a hundred years of struggle for supremacy among them. Rival puppet emperors were enthroned and dethroned, and by 1800 there were six living emperors, all of whom were playthings for the ambitious rases. By the early 1800s four of these rases–those of Tigray, Amhara, Gojjam, and Shoa–emerged as the main contenders for power. By 1850, the rases Ali of Gondar (Amhara) and Goshu of Gojjam had perished in the civil wars that characterized the period. Thus, only the rases of Tigray and Shoa remained. However, the sudden entry into the contest by a third candidate–Kassa Hailu of Gondar–changed the political equation. Hailu's career was as strange as it was remarkable. The son of a minor chief in Kwara who claimed to belong to the royal line of the Queen of Sheba, he was reduced to penury following his father's death. To survive he resorted to hawking in the streets of Gondar Kosso, a drug reputed to cure tape worms. He later engaged in several other employments including, reportedly, that of a highwayman (not necessarily the "Robin Hood" some writers believed that he was) who was particularly a scourge to the Muslim merchants who used the caravan routes of the Ethiopian lowlands. Many malcontents and bandits joined him and he became so powerful that an expedition sent to crush "the kosso-vendor," as he was ridiculed, was unsuccessful. Consequently, ras Ali of Gonda confirmed him in possession of the territories under his control and even gave him his daughter in marriage (1847), thus legitimizing him. Hailu took advantage of the civil war among the rases to further increase his strength. And by 1854 he was the ruler of both Gondar and Gojjam. He was now poised to struggle for supremacy with rulers of Tigray and Shoa. In the meantime, the ras of Tigray had pronounced himself Negusa Nagast (King of Kings) of Ethiopia following the death of ras Ali of Gondar. But before his coronation, Hailu outflanked him by first getting himself crowned emperor. In the inevitable war between Tigray and Gonda, Hailu, utilizing effectively his standing army that was personally attached to him, carried the day. He took the ras of Tigray prisoner. On February 7, he was properly crowned Negusa Nagast, the Elect of God, choosing the official name of Tewodros II.

He immediately began to dream wild dreams of wiping out Islam, conquering Jerusalem, and sitting on King Solomon's throne. But to achieve this ultimate goal, he resolved first to crush the nobles and destroy or convert the Muslim Galla to Christianity. He transferred his capital from Gondar to Magdala (situated on the edge of the highlands), fortified it against invaders, and rebuilt churches and altars that had been laid waste by the Galla during the civil wars. He also crushed a major rebellion at Tigray but two British adventurers, John Bull and Walter Chichele Plowden, who fought for him, lost their lives. He captured Shoa effortlessly and took Prince Menelik of Shoa (who was to become the hero of the battle of Adowa in 1896) prisoner. But the Galla, neither totally crushed nor converted, were firmly checked. Most importantly, however, although the nobles had been subdued and the Christian empire saved, their loyalty to Tewodros was never assured. The disloyalty of the nobles proved to be perhaps the main reason for the success of the Magdala expedition. Success apparently got to his head and the

sources credit him with indulging in licentious living that disgusted "even the Gallas," and wanton murders, especially after he lost control of some of his soldiers. And after 1860, faced with constant rebellions and disloyalties, his reputedly terrible temper became uncontrollable. To achieve his ultimate objectives and secure his position at home he needed recognition by the big powers, especially Britain. Consequently, he wrote a letter to Queen Victoria (received February 12, 1863) proposing a joint attack on the Ottoman Empire, as rulers of Christian countries, as well as the exchange of ambassadors. The letter was arrogantly ignored by the queen, probably because she was told that he was a barbarian or that his background was disreputable.

Matthies describes in chapter 2 in some detail the curious history of this letter. What is important is that from Britain's point of view such an unprovoked attack at the time may have been seen as diplomatically, militarily, and especially politically a non-starter–because the prevailing philosophy of the Manchester School[4] vigorously opposed imperialistic involvements overseas–and the exchange of envoys not worthwhile, so the queen, abandoning all diplomatic courtesy, ignored the letter, something that she would not have done even to a minor European monarch. Enraged, Tewodros seized between 61 and 67 (the exact number is still disputed) British and other Europeans (mostly German) who have been moonlighting in his country for some years and for various reasons–some were even married to Ethiopian women and had children with them–as hostages, placed them in iron anklets and fetters, and threw them into a prison fortress at Magdala. He refused to respond to the queen's ultimatum (September 9, 1867) demanding their release, an ultimatum given some three years after the hostages were first taken. It would seem that the Liberal administrations of Viscount Henry John Palmerston (1859-65) and Earl John Russell (1865-66) had no stomach for any Ethiopian adventure. Earlier, when Tewodros defied the queen by seizing the British envoy (Captain Charles Duncan Cameron) sent to negotiate the release of the hostages and his assistants, putting them in chains, and imprisoning them with the rest of the hostages (January 4, 1864), no action had been taken. Thus emboldened, in the same year Tewodros defied another request by the queen for an amicable resolution of this petty diplomatic incident and instead seized more diplomats, led by Hormuzd Rassam, and imprisoned them with the rest.[5] Thus, a curious incident arising from not responding to a letter of fraternal friendship and bilateral cooperation was allowed to become a casus belli.

The preparation, long march, siege, and final assault on Magdala discussed in chapters 4 through 9 of this book are also as curious as the reasons for the war itself. These chapters constitute the bulk of the book and Matthies's treatment of them is as detailed and masterful as it is fascinating. For several reasons Britain hesitated for a long time to authorize an expedition to rescue the hostages. First, public opinion was divided on the issue: the Little Englanders obviously were against it while the Big Englanders[6] were reluctantly for it. Indeed, a report by a Captain Henry Hozier states that "to the majority of men in England the Abyssinian Expedition appeared foolish and chimerical" (p. 29). Second, memories of the incompetent and disastrous charge of the Light Brigade (October 25, 1854) commanded by James Thomas Brudenell, 7th Earl of Cardigan(1797-1868) that resulted in the humiliating defeat at Balaclava still haunted the government. So did those of the earlier Sepoy Mutiny (May 1847) in India that had led to great slaughter, and the fate of Archduke Maximilian of Austria and his troops in Mexico, who were humiliated and shot on June 19, 1867, the consequence of Napoleon III's ill-advised intervention in Mexican affairs. There was a genuine fear "that English troops might suffer a similarly humiliating defeat in Ethiopia" (p. 27). And third, there was the prohibitive financial cost of an enterprise whose success was not assured and the utility not clear. Finally, although it was publicly conceded that the British government's failure to respond to Tewodros's letter was responsible for this minor diplomatic problem, the Tory British prime minister Edward Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby (1866-68),[7] was persuaded to authorize the expedition ostensibly for the following reasons: humanitarian venture, restoration of Britain's military and national prestige that had been tarnished for at least two decades, and to make an example "of an African savage" (p. 30) who had "mocked every human and international law" (p. 28). There was no mention, of course, of how disrespectfully the queen had treated the emperor, a point that a letter by an Ethiopian nobleman made clear. The letter states in part: "We–anxious to settle our doubts and be reassured of your friendship or enmity–sent, through your Consul, an autograph letter from our ruler, begging for your friendly alliance.... Well, what did you do with the courteous communication of the Negus? You treated it with the gross insult of silent contempt" (quoted, p. 32). The queen naturally was not amused. Logic historically has always been the last resort for the weak, or perhaps the "savage."

Privately, however, the British government over the years became sure of success as its envoys amply demonstrated the emperor's weakness, isolation, and vulnera-

bility. The task of accomplishing the rescue mission was therefore formally entrusted to fifty-six-year-old General Napier of the British Indian Army–who had accumulated a lot of experience fighting "Victoria's Little Wars"–on August 18, 1867. The expeditionary force was an imperial army of 62,200 men led by British officers, but only "4,038" of whom were "Englishmen ... [the majority being] 'colored' soldiers from India [who] were supposed to fight against other 'colored' troops in Ethiopia for the interests of their 'white' masters" (p. 39). It also included "officers from Prussia, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, and Holland" (p. 43) as foreign military observers, perhaps to demonstrate to them that Britain was not the washed-up military power that recent events suggested, and some civilian scientific staff–a geographer, an archeologist, a linguist/ethnographer, a zoologist, a meteorologist, and a geologist/naturalist–whose main purpose was to explore and pioneer scientific studies in a region they considered mysteriously fascinating. The author provides short but useful biographical sketches of some of the officers and the scientists. He devotes chapter 6 to describing a half-dozen war correspondents or "embedded journalists" who accompanied the expedition, the most prominent of whom were Dr. Charles Austin of the *Times;* the celebrated painter William Simpson[8] of the *Illustrated London News*, regarded as the "pioneer of war artists"; and the controversial Henry Morton Stanley of the *New York Post.* They had noncombatant status. For transportation the army had "44 elephants, 5,735 camels, 17,934 mules and ponies, as well as 8,075 oxen and 2,538 horses ... shipped from India to East Africa on 75 steamships, 205 sailing ships, and 11 smaller ships" (pp. 39-40).

The advance party of the expedition left from Bombay and arrived in Zula, a Red Sea coastal town, in October 1867. The cooperation of the local population–the Sahos, nomadic Muslims–was purchased by promising them rich rewards. Overnight, as it were, they built a harbor city at Zula where Napier arrived subsequently on January 2, 1868. From here he planned the rest of the expedition to Magdala, traversing some 400 miles of difficult and dangerous terrain through the heart of the country. Adopting the time-honored imperial policy of divide and conquer, he was able to convince the rases, governors, chiefs, religious leaders and the Galla[9] hostile to the emperor (a) that the expedition was not interested in conquering and occupying Ethiopia but rather in liberating the hostages and punishing their enemy, Tewodros, and that they had nothing to lose but much to gain by a British alliance; (b) that he did not need their military help but rather desired their neutrality; (c) that ample rewards would be given for their cooperation and that he would remain neutral in their internal conflicts; (d) that his soldiers would not despoil and plunder the land through which they passed, but on the contrary he would pay for their food and other necessities in cash with Maria-Theresa Thalers;[10] (e) that Britain would not aid any Egyptian expansionist ambition in Ethiopia; and (f) that after overthrowing Tewodros and rescuing the hostages, he would, on orders from his government, withdraw from Ethiopia completely, without leaving a consul behind. With these assurances–which Napier, to his credit, kept to the letter–his expeditionary force progressed toward its objective unmolested. The most important of the rases he dealt with personally was Prince Kassai of Tigray, thirty-five years old, whose territory comprised almost half of the road to Magdala, and without whose cooperation the rescue operation most likely would have failed.

After overcoming incredible logistical problems Napier's forces arrived at Aroge plateau. On April 5, Napier sent a messenger to Tewodros demanding the unconditional release of the hostages, a demand the latter brusquely rejected. But, surprisingly, a few days later he released unconditionally hundreds of his Ethiopian prisoners but killed over 200 Galla prisoners, whom he regarded as Muslim unbelievers, by throwing them over a steep cliff, to the horror of the European hostages. Apparently in retaliation, "the Galla warriors ... blocked [Tewodros's] escape route from Magdala to the south, which was an important precondition for a successful attack on the fortress" (p. 104). On April 10, 1868 Tewodros, estimated to have an army of more than 10,000 warriors, seized the initiative by attacking Napier's mule train. That turned out to be a calamitous blunder. His antiquated weapons were no match for Napier's modern weapons, nor were his warriors any match for the Indian units in the hand-to-hand fighting that followed. Although the Ethiopians fought with reckless abandon, the result was a massacre–an estimated 800 Ethiopian fighters killed, between 1,200 to 1,500 wounded, and on the British side only 2 dead and 18 wounded. The emperor got the message and wished to arrive at an amicable settlement. Napier, convinced that his victory was assured, demanded an unconditional surrender, promising, however, to treat the emperor and his family with appropriate decorum. Regarding Napier's demand as an ultimatum, Tewodros wrote this memorable letter to Napier on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1868 saying, inter alia: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God in His Trinity and in His Unity. Kasa, whose trust is in Christ, thus speaks: Believing myself

to be a great lord, I gave you battle; but, by reason of the worthlessness of my artillery, all my pains were as nought.... I had intended, if God had so decreed, to conquer the whole world, and it was my desire to die if my purpose could not be fulfilled.... You people, who have passed the night in joy, may God do unto you as He has done to me! I had hoped, after subduing all my enemies in Abyssinia, to lead my army against Jerusalem, and expel from it the Turks. A warrior who has dandled strong men in his arms like infants will never suffer himself to be dandled in the arms of others" (quoted, pp. 116-117).

His first attempt to commit suicide was thwarted by his secretary. After this, ignoring the suggestion of his advisors that the European hostages should be killed and that they should fight to the bitter end, Tewodros released the hostages unconditionally, sent a gift to Napier, and even addressed him as "my friend," believing, it would seem, that the odds against his winning in the end were insurmountable. By all accounts the hostages were treated well throughout their captivity. Napier, nevertheless, pressed his advantage, and sent his gift back and did not even reciprocate his friendly attitude, deciding instead to storm the fortress beginning at about 9 a.m. on Easter Monday, April 13. There was little resistance by the Ethiopians. And seeing the handwriting on the wall, Tewodros shot himself through the mouth with his pistol and died. Clearly he had no more fight left in him, but he denied Napier the satisfaction of capturing him alive.

The looting of Ethiopia's treasures that followed and the continuing effort to return them to Ethiopia are discussed in chapter 10; the orderly withdrawal of the expeditionary force and the difficulties it faced (not from the Ethiopians), as well as that of the emperor's army is the focus of chapter 11; and the rescue expedition's triumphal return to England and how the victors were rewarded are the subject of chapter 12. Matthies supplies also in this chapter the later histories of the former hostages and says that some of them, having lived in Ethiopia for many years, went back to that country afterwards, feeling that living in England would be surviving like fish out of water. That was particularly so for those with Ethiopian wives and their children, who were well aware of the racism of most British people. Napier also kept his word and left no occupying force behind. He also ensured that the Ethiopian population was not molested and the land was not despoiled after his victory. The Ethiopian royal family, too, was treated with appropriate dignity. Even Queen Victoria is said to have taken a liking to Prince Alamayou, Tewodros's very young son and successor, at their first meeting in England and to have made adequate provisions for his upbringing and education. Unfortunately, the young boy could not adjust to life in an English public school and died of pleurisy on November 4, 1879, at the tender age of nineteen.

The more one looks at this massive expedition and its aftermath, as Matthies correctly points out, the more curious it becomes. What, for example, were the true reasons why it was undertaken? If liberating the hostages was the real reason, did Britain have "to expose thousands of its sons to incalculable risks by sending them on a precarious enterprise, merely because a letter from a sensitive half-barbarian to the queen got lost in the Foreign Office," as the German historian Gustav Adolf Rein wrote (quoted, p. 173)? Tewodros was known to have admired Europeans, particularly the British, immensely. A polite communication to him fabricating a reason why his first letter was not responded to would, indeed, have satisfied him, and the hostage farce would have been resolved. But if this was not done because Britain saw an opportunity for an imperial venture, the successful outcome of which would be the expansion of the Indian empire westwards, why was the country not occupied after incurring the enormous financial cost? If the expedition was motivated, as one of the officers believed, "by no thirst for glory, by no lust of conquest" (p. 175), it must then have been a humanitarian venture, as the British government proclaimed, but students of the expedition reject such an explanation. Indeed, as a German officer who accompanied the expedition concluded, it was generally thought "that the sole objective was the occupation of what was assumed to be the fertile and material-rich land of Abyssinia"(quoted, p. 175); and according to another German: "No one ... had ever imagined that such a large campaign would be undertaken and millions of pounds willingly expended just to liberate an English consul and a few prisoners unless in addition other, more relevant ... grounds had served as the basis for this strategic operation. Even in the army, from the most superior general to the most ordinary soldier, the men were firmly convinced that after Tewodros was subjugated and the Europeans were freed, a golden profit would somehow have to be drawn from the presence of the troops in this African mountain world" (quoted, pp. 175-176).

The problem with these statements is that while such expectations were true, except for the looted cultural treasures which, in financial terms, did not amount to much at the time, there is no other evidence to sustain an economic motive as the explanation for the venture. Perhaps, then, the restoration of Britain's tarnished *amour propre* was the real motive. If so, winning an uneven combat over a politically isolated and religiously beleaguered foe whose people by 1868 had completely lost

confidence in him, and who was outnumbered by the British six to one, settled nothing in that respect. As, indeed, the historian Bahru Zewde put it: "The war was won by the English before a shot was fired" (quoted, p. 174). From a military organizational perspective, however, Napier performed splendidly, just as he did politically. Unfortunately, Matthies is unable to provide any convincing reason of his own for this bizarre expedition because the available evidence was not of much help to him. For whatever reason it was undertaken, and the popularity of its success in Britain notwithstanding, the Tory government that authorized it lost the next general election to the Liberals and William Ewart Gladstone became prime minister for the next six years (1868-74).

Tewodros may have been a strange and delusional ruler; but he also may have meant well. However, he attempted to achieve too much in a hurry. Before consolidating his hold over the newly conquered provinces, he thoughtlessly plunged himself at the same time into conflict with such formidable groups as the church, the nobility, Islam, and the Galla. That was not all. He also rashly resolved to reform expeditiously Ethiopia's time-honored and veritable institutions. Thus he created a revolutionary situation that provided Napier favorable and "fortunate circumstances" that led to the success of his rescue mission. Nevertheless, his rule is the stuff of which legends are made and therefore deserves this study.

Officially Napier was the "Lord of Magdala," but as Matthies points out the main beneficiaries of the conflict were Prince Kassai of Tigray, who succeeded Tewodros as Emperor Johannes IV, and paradoxically Tewodros himself who, after his death, became a national hero, an icon whose defiant stand against the British at Magdala was viewed by Ethiopian nationalists as "a heroic act of anti-colonial resistance" (p. 178), and an unselfish revolutionary and reforming idealist as well as the father of modern Ethiopia. And yet because of virulent European propaganda against him, he is little regarded outside of the circle of Ethiopian studies. The average African historian knows him as a violent and ambitious man who brought trouble and humiliation to his country and compares him unfavorably with the legendary Queen of Sheba, Jesus the Great, Menelik of Shoa, and Haile Selassie. Matthies's *Siege of Magdala*, in addition to being the first detailed account of this siege, provides a balanced account of a proud, colorful, and controversial African emperor on the eve of the Scramble for Africa. The lessons learned from the expedition were to prove invaluable during the European conquest of Africa that began about a generation later.

Notes

[1]. The name Ethiopia is believed to have derived from two Greek words meaning "burnt" (*ethios*) and "face" (*ops*). Thus, Ethiopia meant to them land of the people with burnt faces, that is, black people. This land comprised Aethiopia Interior (East Africa), Hesperii Aethiopes (West Africa), and Aethiopia Australe (Central and Southern Africa). The name Abyssinia was derived from Habashat, the name of Arabian immigrants who fused with the original inhabitants and adopted Ethiopia as their country. Probably because of this, Europeans, always obsessed with race and color in their nineteenth-century meaning–"black" is African, signifying evil, uncivilized, gross, and barbarous, while "white" is European, signifying all that is good, civilized, admirable, and cultured; and the "races" between these two were just a bit better than "black" and much lower than "white"–preferred to call Ethiopians Abyssinians, meaning half-castes, and yet not all Ethiopians were half-castes even in the European sense.

[2]. The identity of the Queen of Sheba is contested between those writers who have identified her as an Ethiopian queen called Makeda, who descended from Aksum, and those (Arab writers) who claim that she was called Belkis, an offspring of a Yemenite king and an Ethiopian princess, who reigned over the Yemenite kingdom of Saba or Himyar. It is probable, however, in my view, that the Queen of Sheba was one of those Habashat I discussed earlier (see endnote 1 above).

[3]. It is amusing that even Pope Alexander III wrote a letter to this imaginary emperor whom he addressed as "John, the illustrious and magnificent king of the Indians," rebuking him for being vainglorious and boastful. The pope, of course, received no reply to his letter since no such individual ever existed. A. H. M. Jones and Elizabeth Monroe, *History of Abyssinia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 61.

[4]. They were an influential group of British intellectuals and politicians–derided by opponents as "Little Englanders" or "Faddists"– because of their opposition to their country assuming imperial and colonial responsibilities abroad.

[5]. He was born in Mosul (Syria) in 1826, converted to Christianity in his youth, and joined the British Foreign Service. He was chosen to lead the delegation because of his diplomatic and linguistic skills.

[6]. This is the name I choose to call those in opposition to the Manchester School. Popularly called the "Jingos," they peddled the concept of mid-Victorian English exceptionalism.

[7]. It was during his premiership that the important 1867 Reform Bill, which for the first time granted the franchise to a large pool of working-class people living in the urban areas, was passed.

[8]. He became famous after providing the illustrations of the Crimean War and Sepoy Mutiny (1857-58).

[9]. The Galla were in occupation of the Magdala area before Tewodros defeated them and repossessed it.

[10]. This was the only currency Ethiopians would accept.

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